

In the spirit of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Bessemer workers fight for justice

By Monica Moorehead

A historic union election concluded March 29 after 5,800 Amazon warehouse workers, over 80% of them African American, voted on whether to be represented by the Retail, Warehouse and Department Store Union in Bessemer, Ala., near Birmingham. It could take weeks or even months before the outcome of the vote becomes official.

If the majority vote is yes, this will be the first union of Amazon workers to be organized inside the U.S. But whether the Bessemer workers win or lose the election, their attempt to unionize within one of the largest privately owned corporations in the world will inevitably cause a domino effect in worker organizing, not only for 1 million Amazon workers to organize in the U.S., but for workers in other industries, be they full-time or part-time, to organize as well. (tinyurl.com/z436k92j)

What is happening in Bessemer is having tremendous international implications. On March 22, Amazon workers throughout Italy, organized by three unions, called a one-day strike that galvanized 30-40,000 workers and impacted Amazon's entire logistics chain in the country. And workers in Germany have called a four-day strike before April 4 at six Amazon sites to force the conglomerate to recognize collective-bargaining agreements.

An important impetus for the Bessemer Amazon workers, besides demanding better working conditions and pay, has been the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been reported that over 20,000 Amazon workers have contracted the virus due to unsafe working conditions inside the company's warehouse and distribution centers.

When a corporation like Amazon nets a profit of over \$386 billion in 2020 — an increase of 38% from the year before — and its CEO and founder Jeff Bezos is worth \$186 billion, there is no excuse for any worker to be exposed to COVID in any Amazon plant, except for corporate capitalist greed and callous disregard for the workers' well-being.

**Dr. King and the 1968 strike**

April 4 will mark the 53rd anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. Just days before he was shot on the balcony of his room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tenn., King had supported the strike of 1,300 Black sanitation workers at the Memphis Department of Public Works, who were demanding safe working conditions and better pay. These workers made a slave wage of 65 cents an hour.

What precipitated the Feb. 12, 1968, strike was that two sanitation workers, Robert Walker and Echol Cole, were crushed to death Feb. 1 by a



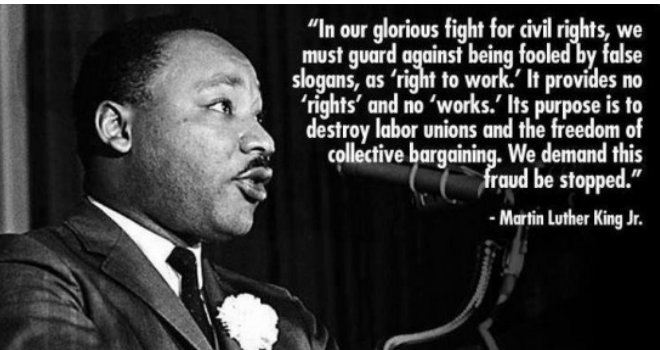
Alabama Amazon warehouse workers with Sara Nelson (center), international president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, and local worker leader, Jennifer Bates (second from right), at the RWDSU hall in Bessemer, March 17.

malfunctioning truck they were working on. The city refused to compensate the families for their avoidable deaths.

The strike might have been averted if the racist mayor of Memphis, Henry Loeb, had endorsed the resolution passed by the local city council recognizing the workers' right to be organized by AFSCME. Instead Loeb overruled the vote, which led to the strike. The Memphis police brutally attacked the strikers that Feb. 23.

Dr. King had hoped to announce a city-wide work stoppage in March to include

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Solidarity with Bessemer workers, Harlem, N.Y., March 20.



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

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# Hundreds rally, march against racist violence



Cleveland, March 28.

WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Hundreds of Clevelanders from the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, along with multinational allies, rallied in the Asia Town neighborhood March 28. Sponsors of the “Stop Asian hate” rally were the Cleveland chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, Ohio Progressive Asian Women’s Leadership, Asian Services in Action, Asian Pacific Islander Public Affairs and Asia Town Cleveland.

The rally was one of dozens held across the U.S. the weekend of March 27-28, some called by community groups and many by the Answer coalition, demanding an end to racially motivated attacks targeting Asians, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

Speakers, who addressed the crowd in Mandarin, Cantonese and English, represented the sponsoring organizations as well as the InterReligious Task Force on Central America, the arts collective Shooting Without Bullets, and City Council Ward 7 which includes Asia Town. Dr. Shemariah J. Arki of the Ellipsis Institute for Women of Color in the Academy led everyone in Assata Shakur’s chant: “We are determined to fight for our freedom. We are determined to win. We must love and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains.” A march through Asia Town followed the rally.

—Report by Martha Grevatt

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Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

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

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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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# Philadelphia Marchers protest anti-Asian violence

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Over 300 people gathered for a rally and march against anti-Asian violence and hatred March 25 at Vine Street Park in Philadelphia's Chinatown. The grassroots protest galvanized people from multiple Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in the region, along with a racially diverse crowd of supporters. The crowd was overwhelmingly young people.

Under the motto #Philly4Solidarity, the event kicked off with a traditional lion dance with drumbeats and crashing cymbals. Speakers shared stories of anti-Asian racism they had personally experienced. They dressed in black to mourn the Atlanta shooting victims: Delaina Ashley Yaun, 33; Xiaojie Tan, 49; Daoyou Feng, 44; Yong Ae Yue, 63; Hyun Jung Grant, 51; Soon Chung Park, 74; Suncha Kim, 69; and Paul Andre Michels, 54. Several women described being

recipients of racist and misogynist verbal and physical attacks. Mel Lee, director of the Woori Center, who read the names of the Atlanta victims to the crowd, described having flashbacks during news coverage of the shooting: "I feel vulnerable, and I do not feel safe in this country I call home."

Many speakers called out for "breaking the silence" about the anti-Asian attacks that have become more prevalent over the last year from Pennsylvania and New Jersey to California. Several linked these demands to the broader upsurge against racism and police brutality that brought millions to the streets in 2020.

Some signs and face-masks carried a picture of Xiao Zhen Xie, the 75-year-old Asian woman who fought back successfully to defend herself when she was punched by a man in San Francisco.

After the rally, demonstrators marched to City Hall, chanting "Enough is enough!" and "Hate is a virus." There protesters observed eight minutes of silence to honor the Atlanta shooting victims.

Philadelphia is home to around 120,000 Asian residents. Vine Street Park pays tribute to neighboring Asian



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

'History of Chinatown' mural provides background to anti-Asian violence rally, Philadelphia, March 25.

communities' long resistance to gentrification. The 'History of Chinatown' mural by Arturo Ho, on the wall of a nearby building, was commissioned for Chinatown's 125th anniversary in 1995. It depicts the early arrival of laundrymen in 1870 and subsequent history of Philadelphia Chinatown through the fight against "urban renewal" in the 1960s and '70s. The mural marks the location where protesters — carrying signs "Homes, not highways!" — stopped bulldozers from demolishing buildings to construct the Vine Street Expressway, which now runs below the park. □

## New York City

### 'Keep Jing Fong restaurant open!'



A demonstration was held in New York City's Chinatown March 25 to protest the mass firings of 180 restaurant workers when the Jing Fong restaurant closed. The workers are members of the 318 Restaurant Workers Union. The owners of the restaurant are the Chu family, bankers and landlords in Chinatown and the Lower East Side, Manhattan, N.Y.

— Report and photo by Toni Arenstein



## UNAC says 'No to U.S. war threats against China!'

*This slightly edited statement was issued by the United National Antiwar Coalition March 24.*

The Biden administration is intensifying its aggression against China. The Pentagon's new Pacific Deterrence Initiative includes increasing U.S. military encirclement of China and deploying nuclear missiles previously banned by the U.S.-signed Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

Recently President Biden met with leaders of Japan, India and Australia known as the "Quad," a military and economic alliance against China. The Pentagon is calling for its annual Pacific budget to be doubled over last year's multibillion dollar allocation.

**U.S. military bases around the world**

During a recent visit to Japan, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin threatened to "push back" against Chinese "aggression." This Chinese "aggressor," we note, has a single military base outside its borders, in Djibouti, Africa.

In contrast, the U.S. military has more than 20 times the number of foreign military bases as all other countries combined and has its military in 172 countries. The U.S. imperial arsenal includes mercenary armies, death squads, Special Operations assassination teams, drone murder, as well as deadly sanctions, blockades and embargoes against some 39 nations.

**Biden's focus on China**

Biden is keeping the nearly \$1 trillion in punitive tariffs imposed by the Trump

administration on Chinese goods. In early March, Secretary of State Blinken made U.S. policy toward China absolutely clear, stating, "China is the only country with the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to seriously challenge the stable and open international system, all the rules, values and relationships that make the world work the way we want it to, because it ultimately serves the interests and reflects the values of the American people." (Emphasis added.)

In our view Blinken's "we" refers solely to the interests of the U.S. corporate elite, not the people of the U.S.

The "international system" Blinken refers to is the one that established the U.S. after World War II with unquestioned military and economic superiority. The U.S. dollar was established as the world's reserve currency. The U.S. corporate elite resent any challenge to their domination.

**U.S. 'pivot to Asia'**

Today, the U.S. "pivot to Asia," first established under the Obama administration, includes the presence of warships and massive military forces throughout the Asia Pacific region. China has not reciprocated in the Gulf of Mexico or with military forces encircling U.S. borders.

**U.S. claims to champion democracy**

The U.S. claims to be the champion of freedom and democratic rights around the world. Yet it has been challenged within its own borders by the largest democratic, human rights and anti-racist mobilizations of the modern era, with some 20 million Black, Latinx, Asian

American and Native protestors — joined by white working-class youth — mobilizing in 2,000 U.S. cities, decrying U.S. systemic racism and demanding Black Lives Matter! The U.S. has no standing to demand of others what it denies to its own poor and oppressed people.

The U.S. threatens China, while its "friends," such as the brutal rulers of Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Haiti and Israel, are spared any criticism since they support U.S. imperial policies around the world.

**U.S. threats of nuclear war**

Recently the U.S. Indo-Pacific Commander, Adm. Philip Davidson, told a Senate Armed Services Committee that China is the only nation with the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to challenge the United States. He stated, "I think the threat is manifest during this decade, in fact, in the next six years." Davidson continued, "We absolutely must be prepared to fight and win should [this economic] competition turn to conflict." Davidson's "fight and win!" evinces an irrational threat of nuclear war. The U.S. and its British junior imperialist partner are increasing their nuclear capabilities, while Biden pursues Trump's Space Force, threatening to extend the arms race into space.

**COVID-19 and U.S. sanctions**

The COVID-19 crisis of this past year has been used to accelerate U.S. aggression toward China. China was able to employ decisive measures to contain and defeat the virus and return to economic growth. It has sent its vaccines to poorer

countries along with other medical aid. In sharp contrast, the U.S. has failed to contain the virus. It has recorded more deaths and infections than any other country; its economy has not recovered. During the pandemic the U.S. has increased sanctions on countries that refuse to abide by Washington and Wall Street dictates. These have included increased sanctions on medicine and medical equipment. These facts have not been lost on the people of the world or people in the U.S.

**The right of self-determination**

UNAC supports the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, that is, to be free from military intervention and economic domination. This includes their right to seek and accept aid from other nations to help defend their sovereignty, as with Venezuela, Iran and Syria. It includes their right to be free from U.S. threats of war, regime change and intervention.

We demand: End U.S. aggression towards China! No to a new cold war! No militarization of space! Ban U.S. nuclear weapons! Money for jobs and health care, not war! End racist anti-Asian slander and attacks!

*UNAC is a broad national antiwar organization with 160 affiliates in cities across the U.S. We are united in opposition to all U.S. wars against working people at home and abroad. While our affiliates have a broad range of views on the policies and practices of the governments of other nations, we stand together in defense of their right to be free from U.S. domination.*



# Bessemer workers fight for justice

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workers and students in solidarity with the sanitation workers, but a snowstorm thwarted that effort, along with political factors.

Speaking before a mass gathering of 25,000 civil rights leaders and labor leaders in Memphis that March 18, King told them: “You are demonstrating that we can stick together. You are demonstrating that we are all tied in a single garment of destiny, and that if one Black person suffers, if one Black person is down, we are all down.” ([tinyurl.com/66wj45w](https://tinyurl.com/66wj45w))

The night before his assassination April 3, King made his famous “I’ve been to the mountaintop” speech. On April 16, after his death, the strike ended with a tentative deal between AFSCME and the city.

King had hoped that the success of the Memphis strike would be a springboard for his national Poor People’s Campaign — to link the ongoing struggle for civil



Sanitation workers strike, Memphis, Tenn., 1968.

rights with the struggle against poverty and for economic justice. But his murder brought this effort to an abrupt halt.

## From Memphis to Bessemer: same struggle, same fight

Despite his bourgeois, pacifist and non-violent views, Dr. King was willing to give his life to all aspects of social justice from civil rights to workers’ rights. He understood that you can’t have one freedom without the other. Dr. King was expanding his political outlook beyond the U.S. when he criticized the criminal, imperialist U.S. war in Vietnam.

In his powerful “Beyond Vietnam” speech given April 3, 1967, at Riverside Church in New York City, Dr. King stated, “The bombs in Vietnam explode at home” in relation to growing poverty in the U.S.

If Dr. King were alive today and physically able, he would be in the streets with Black Lives Matter fighting against police brutality and white supremacy.

Starting in 1955, Dr. King began his political activism with being the most visible spokesperson for thousands of Black people, who collectively participated in the Montgomery Bus Boycott to end racist segregation on the buses, where Black riders were relegated to the back of the bus at the behest of white riders. As Black people showed their power by walking to work every day for a year and organizing their own car pools, they not only defeated this local segregation edict but ignited the modern day Civil Rights Movement.

A next big step happened 10 years later with the Selma to Montgomery march in March 1965 to demand voting rights for Black people. After the vicious beatings and murders of martyrs such as Jimmy Lee Jackson, Viola Liuzzo and Rev. James Reeb, the racist President Lyndon Baines Johnson was forced to sign into law the Voting Rights Act three months after the march and other mass protests.

This bourgeois democratic right to vote is now being challenged once again by mainly right-wing Republican forces, who seek more and more voter suppression amongst Black people and other people of color in Georgia and elsewhere.

Today, Dr. King’s voice would be among the loudest to show solidarity with the Bessemer Amazon workers’ right to



WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

**Staten Island, N.Y., rally for Bessemer workers organized by Congress of Essential Workers and fired Amazon worker, Chris Smalls, March 30.**

organize. He would uplift the leadership role of Black workers against the racism they face on the part of white managers and owners at Amazon, and he would speak for the right to unionize for all workers, which has always been a challenge in the U.S. South.

The Bessemer Amazon workers would have had an important friend and ally in Dr. King, based on his heroic legacy of struggle for the most oppressed workers. □

# Education workers organize the South

By calvin deutschbein  
Elon, N.C.

Two years after voting by a 2-to-1 margin to unionize, on March 4 the embattled Elon Faculty Union finally forced the greedy administrators of Elon University to the bargaining table. EFU is Local 32 of the Service Employees Union, Workers United Southern Region.

## A victory for all of us

The faculty union represents hundreds of adjunct and contingent faculty, a powerful presence of organized educators on this rural campus near Greensboro, N.C. The university sits in one of the most reactionary locales in the U.S., home to unusually violent voter suppression and family-separation actions by local law enforcement. U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, one of the leading architects of the Trump campaign to disrupt the 2020 presidential election, is a trustee of the university and was awarded Elon’s Medal for “Entrepreneurial Leadership” in 2017.

But none of this was enough to overcome the power of a united working class.

EFU’s victory came two days after a solidarity action by students of the Boldly Elon Solidarity Collective, a group of student organizations demanding racial, social and economic justice at the university. On March 2 during “Elon Day,” a major annual fundraiser, BESC staged protests around campus against the school’s union busting.

Facing a well organized union and a campaign to withhold donations because of the university’s anti-worker stance, the uprising within the Elon community left university administrators with no choice but to bargain.

## Alamance attacks on union organizers

The victory at Elon — especially in the context of the Alamance County Sheriff’s Office’s racist attacks on voter registration, which included Elon organizers — must be seen in the historical context of efforts by the Communist Workers Party to organize textile mills there in the 1970s.

On Nov. 3, 1979, five of those organizers were killed in Greensboro by the Ku Klux Klan, the American Nazi Party and various federal and local law enforcement agencies. The dead included Sandra Neely Smith, a nurse and the former student body president of Bennett College — one of only two Historically Black Colleges for women. Others killed were Dr. James Waller, Dr. Michael Nathan, William Evan Sampson and Cesar Cauce.

Every day of struggle for Black liberation and worker power in North Carolina since 1979 has taken place in the context of this horrific attack. Union victories at Elon University — including a now-unionized School of Law — testify to the power of solidarity amid harsh conditions in North Carolina and throughout the South.

## Organizing the South

Organizing educators is an uphill battle in a state where collective bargaining for public workers is still banned. Called “the Jim Crow law” by the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, UE Local 150, the ban originated in legal segregation.

But recent significant victories in the state in health care, education and public sector worker organizing — and the emergence of powerful worker organizations such as the Southern Workers Assembly and Durham Workers Assembly, an ally of the Elon Faculty Union — show the tide is turning in favor of workers across the South.

On Sept. 19, 2020, National Nurses United won the “largest hospital union victory in the South since 1975” at Mission Hospital in Asheville. And in public education, the North Carolina Association of Educators has been largely successful in winning school shutdowns and early vaccine access to keep education workers — including teachers, facilities workers and administrative staff — safe as the pandemic rages on. The public sector generally has been well organized, with UE Local 150 in recent years winning a \$15 an hour minimum wage for public employees, including those in school districts, municipalities and the UNC System.

The victory at Elon ties together education workers in that public system and private universities across six contiguous counties through the central part of the state, creating a strong regional community of workers organizing against efforts by bosses, politicians and billionaires to dominate these institutions.

## A victory over systemic white supremacy

White supremacy — which pervades every aspect of life in the U.S. — can be especially sharp in private education. Many of the gains of the Civil Rights Movement to ensure adequate access to people of color end up interpreted through boards of trustees and presidents, who approach the university as if it were a real estate company or the research arm of a corporation guarded by a private police force.

In defiance of anti-discrimination law, U.S. universities continue to offer high paying jobs with benefits and job security disproportionately to white men. At Elon University, while the majority of full-time faculty are still men, the majority of part-time adjunct faculty are women and gender-oppressed people — with similar sharp disparities existing across lines of nationality as well.

By exercising the maximum achievable discrimination at every stage of the educational process, from admissions to costs to hiring, private universities preserve white patriarchal supremacy while cultivating the appearance of “diversity” or “inclusion” through the use of adjunct instructors.

Unionization offers higher pay, better benefits and better job security for adjuncts, limiting the university’s ability to divide and conquer classroom instructors by race and gender. Student organization, faculty

unionization and community solidarity all limit the university’s discriminatory capacities and offer the promise of education by workers for workers — a threatening prospect to the anti-Black, anti-woman and anti-worker status quo.

## Next steps

As the EFU prepares to negotiate at Elon, pressure has not let up. Elon dining and physical plant staff, alongside the Boldly Elon Solidarity Collective, are now demanding hazard pay for campus workers. This recognizes that all workers — not

just adjunct faculty — have shared interests against their greedy administration.

Students have demanded the resignation of Police Chief Joseph LeMire. He left his last job as campus top cop at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2019, after going along with neo-Nazis who attempted to disrupt a Jewish community event.

Throughout North Carolina communities, the working class continues to unite and challenge the white supremacist, sexist operations of university management. And as EFU’s organizing committee leader Anna Love has said, each victory is “a victory for all of us.”

*calvin deutschbein is a North Carolina-based education worker and member of Workers World Party-Durham. In late 2019, hired by Elon University as an adjunct in Computer Science, calvin joined the Elon Faculty Union Organizing Committee, supported student organizing efforts, and participated in county-level campaigns against policing and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, voter suppression and Confederate monuments.*

**North Carolina is the only state in the U.S. where more workers are employed in education — the University of North Carolina system — than by Walmart.**



# WW COMMENTARY

# Secretary of Labor, which side are you on?

By Steve Gillis

On March 23, after a bipartisan Senate backrub, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh was confirmed as Biden's new Secretary of Labor. Walsh — previously president of the Boston Building Trades Council — promised “a new era of cooperation between commerce and labor.”

For nearly 40 years, I have been an elected leader of the 1,000-member-strong Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751, a predominantly immigrant and Black local. During this time unions throughout the U.S. have seen declining membership and been put on the defensive, while the government and corporations broke unions beginning when President Reagan fired every striking air traffic controller in 1981.

Walsh's confirmation as Labor Secretary leads me to ask the same question we posed directly to him in his mayoral office during life-or-death union struggles: Which side are you on?

During the first two years of Walsh's mayoral administration — 2014 to 2016 — I and three other leaders of Local 8751 were fighting for our jobs after being fired by the private school bus management company, Paris-based Veolia/Transdev, in October 2013. It took us two years to force Walsh to “take a side” and settle with the union. His waffling occurred despite whispered promises made in response to two years of rank-and-file pickets, mass solidarity actions, fighting off a police frame-up, election of the four fired leaders to the union's top positions and finally a strike deadline.

On May 31, 2020, Local 8751 was running the sound system during the Black Lives Matter march to Boston Common following the police lynching of George Floyd. Walsh's police department, assisted by forces of the state and federal government, fired chemical weapons, violently arrested scores of people and rioted for hours against over 20,000 mostly young and peaceful protestors.

During our last contract negotiations held in Walsh's “Eagle Room,” Local 8751 demanded that the words “Indigenous Peoples Day” replace “Columbus Day” in our paid holiday calendar. While this is the pattern in every neighboring city,

the Boston mayor refused, telling us, “The people are not ready for that, yet.”

Walsh's last mayoral act before departing to the Department of Labor was to order, under threat of termination, all union workers back into the Boston public schools — more than 10,000 teachers, bus drivers and monitors, custodians, food service workers and administrative staff. Walsh ignored strenuous objections from every union; meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic surges again in Boston's oppressed communities.

Most of Local 8751's members have now been forced to flee the skyrocketing rents in Boston as million-dollar condos rise on every corner. The Boston Globe reported that Boston's Black families have an average net worth of just \$8, compared to \$250,000 for white families. (Dec. 12, 2017)

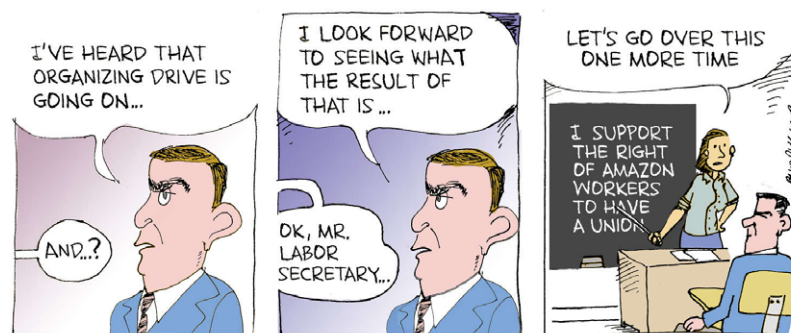
## The struggle calls the question

Under the Trump years of police-state repression, giant monopolies of the high-tech capitalist system like Amazon and Uber/Lyft destroyed their competitors and spread like a virus. Now millions of gig workers and low-wage workers, especially in oppressed communities, depend on them for both employment and as consumers.

The struggle led by Black workers, facing off against



Steve Gillis (bottom row, far left) and the executive board of the Boston School Bus Drivers, United Steelworkers, Local 8751.



police and corporate attacks across the country, has clarified the old question: “Which side are you on?” So how will Walsh respond?

On March 30, the National Labor Relations Board began tallying the union votes of nearly 6,000 predominantly Black workers at an Amazon distribution center in Bessemer, Ala., where close to half are women. But Walsh waffled about this attempt to form the first-ever U.S. union in centibillionaire Jeff Bezos' Amazon. In a March 25 Washington Post interview, he said, “I've heard that organizing drive is going on. I look forward to seeing what the result of that is.” Even President Biden has spoken more strongly for the Bessemer workers.

Walsh had not one word to say about Amazon's illegal tactics in Bessemer — captive audience meetings, Pinkerton-type lawyer interference, terminations of union advocates, propaganda in the bathrooms and the Unfair Labor Practice of “direct dealing” with employees threatened at home. These are blatant violations of long-established labor that Walsh is now sworn to uphold.

Catalyzed by the Retail, Warehouse and Department Store Union in Alabama, now the Teamsters, building trades and postal workers' unions are talking of challenging Amazon — and have set their sights on Uber/Lyft.

With new Black, Indigenous, people of color and women in leadership, labor councils coast to coast are reinvigorated.

Right now is the time for every workers' organization to force the question on Walsh and company — soon, perhaps even on the streets of D.C., with every resource and with the most vigorous street and legal offensive actions we can muster, in solidarity with Black workers on the front line — “Which side are you on?”

*Steve Gillis began driving a school bus in 1985, has been a strike captain four times and arrested 13 times while representing the union. He is currently the financial secretary of Local 8751, having been elected to terms as president and vice president from 2003-2015.*

# Amazon workers rally for Alabama siblings

By Jim McMahan  
Seattle

The rally to “Support the Alabama Amazon Workers” was held here March 26 to boost the homestretch drive for a union by Bessemer, Ala., warehouse workers. There was a national surge of 53 support demonstrations March 20, along with worker strikes breaking out at Amazon hubs in Europe. There is optimism that the workers' resilience in Bessemer has defeated all of Amazon's anti-union tactics. But whatever the outcome of the union election vote, it's believed that a higher stage in union organizing has been achieved.

In Seattle, more than a hundred solidarity workers

came together to rally at Amazon Spheres, the company's international headquarters. The rally, organized by the Democratic Socialists of America, was called off the week before after Seattle's Democratic Mayor Jenny Durkan demanded its cancellation. She was likely acting under the pressure of Seattle property owner, Amazon.

The March 20 rally was held anyhow, in defiance, with 40 people. The second rally March 26 pulled much more support. Many unions and rank-and-file labor organizations, such as the Seattle Education Association and UAW Local 4121, attended, along with anti-racist police brutality groups.

Speaker Nikkita Oliver, a city council candidate, spoke representing Decriminalize Seattle. They said the struggle

of the Bessemer workers to be represented by the Retail, Warehouse and Department Store Union could change the landscape for the equal rights of workers, just like the struggle of the Memphis, Tenn., sanitation workers over 50 years ago. Gabriel Prawl, former president of International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 52, spoke in support of the PRO Act — the Protect Union Rights to Organize Act — now introduced into Congress.

After the rally the crowd marched at rush hour through the “Amazon Empire,” a huge group of gleaming office towers with some AmazonGo stores on the street level. Marchers chanted: “I don't know, but I've been told; Bezos' pockets are lined with gold,” before ending at Amazon's Whole Foods for a closing rally. □

# Oregon unions update organizing

By Johnnie Lewis  
Portland, Ore.

March 17 marked the one-year anniversary of the historic sit-in of 27 fired Crush Bar Workers Collective members at Crush Bar, a queer bar, and at Woody's, an adjacent eatery owned by the same petty capitalist. (tinyurl.com/3cbpxzjv)

In March 2020 both establishments were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the workers fired and provided with no benefits. The workers demanded accrued sick-time payouts, half pay for scheduled hours and a rehire plan. The owner had all the workers arrested and carried out of the bar and eatery by the notorious Portland police. But in the end they won their demands!

The CBWC remains strong a year later. Following the mass layoff, the union provided benefits including food boxes and funds from their GoFundMe account on a needs basis. In July 2020, workers filed Unfair Labor Practice claims with a National Labor Relations Board appointed by Trump. With Biden's newly appointed labor board, they

are more optimistic about getting a fair claims hearing.

The workers gained community support through picket lines and social media, on which they posted: “[We] avoided centering our organizing around the loud, demanding white men who attempt to police how the oppressed go about their liberation. As workers re-entering this workplace [we have] a strong conviction to continue our struggle for positive change, [which] puts us in a frighteningly precarious position, but nonetheless we're hopeful. After all, look at how much we've already accomplished!”

## Workers win NLRB election

On March 25, after a long hard struggle, Doughnut Workers United, a local Portland union, secured the right to vote for a union at the Old Town store of the Voodoo Doughnuts national chain. The right to an election for union representation is granted only by the NLRB.

As soon as the victory came, the company began its union-busting tactics by hiring five new workers, rather than bring back workers who had lost their jobs due to



Doughnut Workers United

PHOTO CREDIT: DWU

the COVID-19 shutdown. (tinyurl.com/4dfpknd5)

The company is punishing workers through arbitrary shift/hours limitations.

Since the March 2020 shutdown and layoffs, the DWU has provided, through its GoFundMe Strike and Hardship account, union benefits for workers in need including alternative housing, food boxes and fresh water during last September's wildfires.

Before Oregon banned eviction, the union provided cash stipends to laid-off members for rent. The union is still providing these benefits to members not rehired and for those having their hours cut as an anti-union tactic. □



# ‘It’s now or never’ We must free Mumia!

By Larry Holmes

*These slightly edited comments were given during the March 18 Workers World Party webinar, “Mumia Abu-Jamal: The Only Treatment is His Freedom!”*



Larry Holmes

WW PHOTO: LIZA GREEN

A quarter of a century ago, in the summer of 1995, Mumia was facing an execution date. That date was Aug. 17, [the birthday of Black Nationalist leader, Marcus Garvey]. We had one mission — for the movement to stop the execution. And through mass mobilization, through a lot of unity and a lot of coordination, we helped stop that execution. We did it.

Since then, it’s been a long quarter of a century, almost 26 years. We have raised a bold, never ending, sometimes frustrating and disheartening struggle to free comrade Mumia, our political prisoner in jail, who was almost killed fighting for the freedom of the Black nation.

Now we face a similar situation in my view as one we faced in 1995, when there was an execution date for Mumia on the calendar.

We have to get him out of prison, comrades, and it must be now! There can be no hesitations. There can be no waiting. His health is such that Mumia’s birthday, about a month from this weekend [April 24] will probably be his last if we do not free him.

That says it all; that explains the critical moment that we’re in. Mumia must not be left to die in a dungeon. It’s what the police want. It’s what the Fraternal Order of Police wants. It’s what the oppressor wants. They wanted to execute him; they didn’t get that [in 1995]. So they stole 40 years of his life. Now, we must deny them the final victory of watching Mumia die in the dungeon.

### ‘By any means necessary’

Now, comrades, we have to do whatever is necessary, as Malcolm said, “by any means necessary,” to wake up the movement. A lot of good people, a lot of good leaders have come to Mumia’s support over the years, but they’re busy. They may not know about Mumia’s health.

In this era of social media, we are bombarded with information. So we have to somehow blow away all that information that many of the forces around the world are bombarded with, to make it clear to them that right now we face another life-and-death moment.

We especially must wake up the Black movement. And I’m talking about all the wings of the Black movement — the militant Black Liberation fighters of every generation from Black Lives Matter to those of us who are the veterans of the struggles of many decades ago, when we had the Black Panthers and all the other forces that led us to where we are now. This includes the ministers, the civil rights forces, the leaders — many of whom are still alive. We’ve got to get them on board and make them realize that we’ve all got to realize that this is the time to act.

We are running out of time, comrades, so we’ve got to devise a plan. Part of that plan is already in motion. Many of you are working on the events that will take place, mass events, mostly in Philadelphia, around the birthday of Mumia near the end of April. We’ve got to come up with a strategy that brings all these forces together, not just in Philadelphia, but all around the country and all about the world with a conviction and a dedication to free Mumia.

Mumia is our hero, comrades. He’s one of our icons. He’s the most renowned political prisoner of the Black

Liberation struggle in the world. This is not to take anything away from Imam Jamil Al-Amin, Mutulu Shakur, Ruchell Cinque Magee and all the other prisoners, political prisoners.

Look at it this way. How can we possibly free these comrades, if we cannot free Mumia now, when his life is at risk behind those bars? The chances of him dying in prison are 100 times greater than if we can free him. And he may have an opportunity to have a little bit of what’s left of his natural life. We’ve got to make it clear.

This is the moment to everybody who is responsible — politicians, governors, prosecutors, the Democratic Party — that if Mumia dies in prison, if you allow him to die in a dungeon, then this will be an unforgivable insult to the Black freedom movement. And anyone who is complicit in this, you will share this blame, this responsibility and consequences, and you will take them to your grave.

If we reach out to others, we must get them to understand this—that Mumia will walk out of that prison or, if necessary, be rolled out in a wheelchair free, and not die behind bars. That’s our revolutionary mission. At the moment, I can’t think of anything more important than that.

### Mumia: more than a political prisoner

The struggle to free Mumia is in one way or another linked to consciousness about all the other political prisoners, because of his unique status as an international political prisoner in the struggle against white supremacy, racism, capitalism and imperialism in this country. This is how he’s known all around the world.

A little more than 20 years ago, I was privileged to share the stage with the late Ossie Davis, the actor, along with his partner, Ruby Dee. Ossie Davis told a large crowd of thousands of people in Madison Square Garden Theater in May of 2000, the millennium, that it was the mission of young radicals to free Mumia. A lot of those young people he was speaking to then are now middle age.



Mumia may be more renowned because he is a political prisoner, because of the circumstances around being framed up and the fact that they did it because they were afraid of him, and they wanted to silence him.

But Mumia’s more than a political prisoner. To know Mumia, to have read not all of his works, but even just a few of them, is to have insight into his revolutionary brilliance, his intellectual insight. He’s a Black working-class, revolutionary intellectual. Mumia is a Black leader. He’s a bona fide global Black leader. I look at this from the point of view of history.

At this moment we face the prospect of Mumia expiring behind bars, and we realize that we must act now. We must look at it historically, because it will be remembered what was done, what

was not done, who did it, who was unconscious, what was their excuse? And, of course, what the enemy did and how the enemy responded.

I truly believe, comrades, that after all this time — and many of us have been involved in the struggle for many decades now — I first met Mumia in 1996 — that we must be prepared to bust a move to take it to another level, to be prepared to make sacrifices, sacrifices that I can’t even speculate about or imagine.

If we get the seriousness of the moment, I believe we will all be called upon, no matter

what we’re doing — and it’s all important business in the revolutionary struggle — to make some sacrifices now. Because it’s an old cliché, but it was never truer: For Mumia, it’s now or never. □

*If we reach out to others, we must get to understand this, that Mumia will walk out of that prison or, if necessary, be rolled out in a wheelchair free and not die behind bars. That’s our revolutionary mission. At the moment, I can’t think of anything more important than that.*

# THE JAMAL JOURNAL IS BACK!



**The Jamal Journal**  
Published by the uncompromising International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal

**To DA Larry Krasner: Stop Defending the Unjust Conviction of Mumia Abu-Jamal**  
Full text of the Color of Change petition written by the uncompromising International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Sign here: [www.JamalJournal.com](http://www.JamalJournal.com)

We, the signers of this petition declare:

Mumia Abu-Jamal's 1982 conviction is a travesty of justice obtained through a combination of police, prosecutorial, and judicial misconduct, as documented by Amnesty International. Abu-Jamal has suffered from extreme injustice at all levels of the criminal justice system. These numerous improprieties have tainted Abu-Jamal's conviction beyond repair.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is currently represented by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. We the petitioners are not his lawyers and do not speak for them. Instead, we are the grassroots movement of people united by the fact that we care about the fate of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

We are outraged by the many different ways that racism and institutionalized white supremacy have irreparably harmed Mumia Abu-Jamal's civil and human rights, and his rights to the fair adjudication of his case. The District Attorney's continued defense of the 1982 conviction & subsequent appeals process only affirms the longstanding racial injustice that has marred this case.

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**Pam's Message to the Movement: People Power Will Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!**

**Colin Kaepernick Declares His Support for Mumia**  
This statement from activist football player Colin Kaepernick was released on Nov. 18, 2020.



**@JamalJournal**

Returning to circulation for the first time in years, The Jamal Journal is published by the uncompromising International Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal. It is an exhaustive compendium of information on the current struggle to FREE MUMIA!

Read, donate, and order copies at [jamaljournal.blogspot.com](http://jamaljournal.blogspot.com)



# Death penalty abolished in former Confederate state

WW Commentary

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

On March 23, I was sad and gloomy all day as I am every year on this date — the day in 1993 that I witnessed a dear friend, Carlos Santana, be legally lynched by the state of Texas. He was executed, even though he did not kill anyone.

But March 24, I heard the news that Virginia had just abolished its death penalty. I smiled and let out a whoop and holler, thinking that this racist, terrorist practice must be coming to an end if a Southern, former Confederate state could abolish it. My gloom was gone.

The capital of the Confederacy was a city in Virginia — Richmond. And now one of the legacies of slavery, legal lynchings, has been outlawed in Virginia.

“The symbolic value of a legislature sitting in the former capital of the Confederacy dismantling this tool of racial oppression cannot be overstated,” said Robert Dunham, the director of the Death Penalty Information Center. ([tinyurl.com/2k63fydu](https://tinyurl.com/2k63fydu))

Virginia’s death penalty, like other states in the South, “has deep roots in slavery, lynching and Jim Crow segregation. Virginia explicitly provided different penalties for white people and its enslaved population,” he continued.

## 50 years of abolition work

I have been a prison abolitionist since the 1970s and a death penalty abolitionist since I stood outside Texas’ death house on Dec. 7, 1982, when Texas carried out its first execution in the so-called “modern” era of a Black man named Charlie Brooks.

The more I visit prisoners, the more I learn about capital punishment, the more I sit in courtrooms and see the parades of poor people, particularly Black and Brown people, taking plea deals, the clearer it is that this whole criminal injustice system must be abolished.

It has been proven time and again that racism and the death penalty work hand in glove. In fact, police in the U.S. South came about as a result of the slave patrols. Prisons in the South came about after the Civil War and Reconstruction to incarcerate people so that they could be leased out to plantation and business owners, who needed workers to harvest their crops or dig in their mines.

Don’t ever let anyone tell you that the lynchings after the Civil War, during the high times of the Ku Klux Klan, weren’t connected to legal executions in the prisons. As the title of a book on Texas history, “The Rope, the Chair and the Needle,” lays out, there was a direct development of capital punishment from illegal and legal lynchings to today’s practice of executions in the South.

In late summer 1923, a bill was passed in Texas that changed the method of executions from hangings in individual counties to using the new electric chair in one central location. On the first day that the electric chair was used in Texas, Feb. 8, 1924, five African American men were electrocuted in Huntsville. Five men and all were Black!

I have found their graves at the prison cemetery in Huntsville, and I visit them every so often. One man has always stuck in my mind, because his name was George Washington. I think about his momma, and how she named him after the first U.S. president, and how she

probably had high hopes for her baby. He did make history, but surely not what his momma had in mind. He became part of this group of five Black men who met the modern device of the electric chair for the first time in Texas history.

## After 413 years, Virginia makes history

March 24, outside the correctional center in Virginia — where 101 people have been executed in recent times — Gov. Ralph Northam signed a bill that ended the death penalty in that state. It was a move that came sooner than expected even by people who have long been fighting to abolish the practice.

In 1991, the founders of Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty took the first steps toward ending state-sponsored killing.

VADP commented on the bill: “Virginia’s use of the death penalty dates back over 400 years — to 1608, when Jamestown settlers carried out the first recorded execution in the then-European colonies. In the centuries since, amid periods of slavery, Reconstruction and Jim Crow segregation, Virginia has executed hundreds of people. Since 1976, Virginia has executed 113 people, a higher percentage of death row inmates than any other U.S. state, and the highest number of state executions second only to Texas. After 413 years, after 1,390 executions, it is over.”

## Texas prison activist speaks on abolition

In a phone call with Texas prison activist Nanon Williams, he told Workers World, “I was on death row for over a decade and only got off because I was 17 when arrested for a crime I did not commit. So, I still sit here in prison, an innocent man, but no longer facing execution. I applaud the state of Virginia. It certainly signifies changing mentalities, especially for the South.

“At the same time, I fear that Texas may hold on to their views even stronger now,” said Williams. “Texas took pride



Charlottesville, Va., 2015.

PHOTO: VIRGINIANS FOR ALTERNATIVES TO THE DEATH PENALTY

***‘Virginia’s use of the death penalty dates back over 400 years — to 1608, when Jamestown settlers carried out the first recorded execution in the then-European colonies. In the centuries since, amid periods of slavery, Reconstruction and Jim Crow segregation, Virginia has executed hundreds of people. Since 1976, Virginia has executed 113 people, a higher percentage of death row inmates than any other U.S. state, and the highest number of state executions second only to Texas. After 413 years, after 1,390 executions, it is over.’***

in seceding from the Union. They take pride in being tough on crime. Their old weapons of war like the death penalty are well-oiled machines used against people of color

and poor people. Texas was the last state to allow phone calls from prison, the last state to stop executing kids. I hope others will follow Virginia, but I know Texas takes pride in keeping their old racist system intact.”

## More abolition in the South?

What the news in Virginia signifies is that the number of states abolishing the death penalty in the U.S. continues. Twenty-three states have now enacted abolition, and three more have moratoria on executions. That is 26 states, a majority of the 50 states.

But even more important, it means that the Southern states, where most executions have been carried out, can change. The former Confederate states have been taking down statues and monuments honoring the Confederacy. Now one of the largest companies in the world, Amazon, has almost 5,000 majority Black workers in Bessemer, Ala., fighting to join a union.

The days of Southern states executing its people could be heading to an end. The days of nonunion shops proliferating in

the South may be coming to an end.

Change is inevitable, and change is coming. There is always light at the end of a tunnel, including in the South! □

# COVID crisis exposes prison profiteers

By Cindy Lou Miller

*“If you want to understand any problem in America, you need to focus on who profits from that problem, not who suffers from that problem.” — Dr. Amos Wilson. ([tinyurl.com/utdbphu6](https://tinyurl.com/utdbphu6))*

One of the main rules of caution about avoiding COVID-19 has been social distancing, which has proven to be impossible in crammed jails and double-celled prisons. The guards have brought the virus in from the outside world.

Prison abolitionists across the country have been frustrated by the miniscule

release rate of incarcerated people. Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf promised the release of 1,800, but only released 159. Bruce Norris was paroled from SCI Phoenix in December 2020 after serving 45 years. His commutation papers sat unsigned on Wolf’s desk for a week. While waiting, Norris contracted COVID-19 and died.

Protest marches, car caravans, vigils, legislative visits, Zoom meetings, phone zaps and letter writing campaigns have been held, raising that release is the answer to stem the prison spread of COVID — all to little avail. Food Not

Bombs Solidarity, a group of activists inspired by the research of an incarcerated member, held a demonstration outside Aramark headquarters in Philadelphia. They decided that exposing and naming some of the corporations the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections contracts to provide the services used by incarcerated people might help up the ante.

Aramark is the shameful company that provides shoddy meals consisting of low-grade, poorly prepared “food” for 99 cents a portion. Aramark also contracts with Immigration and Customs Enforcement

(ICE) detention camps, hospitals and colleges. For workers at Aramark, average pay is \$11 per hr. The multibillion dollar company has been sued many times in the last 20 years — all over the country.

## The Company Store

To supplement the lousy quality and limited portions of Aramark meals, incarcerated workers, with wages as low as 19 cents an hour, are forced to use the prison commissary. This harkens back to the sharecroppers and coal miners who were forced to use the “company store.”

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# Five years since Cáceres’ murder

## U.S. collaborates with Honduras’ coup regime

By Ted Kelly

It has been five years since the assassination of Berta Cáceres — an environmental activist from the Lenca people, a founder and leader of the Council of Indigenous and Popular Organizations of Honduras. Though some of her killers have been identified and convicted, the governments and corporations that hired and trained them remain unpunished.

They murdered Cáceres during a campaign to stop the construction of a hydroelectric dam funded by a corporation called Desarrollos Energéticos SA (Desa). Desa’s security chief was among the seven men convicted for her assassination. This killer, a former Honduran army lieutenant, along with one of his co-conspirators, received U.S. military training.

At the time of the killers’ arrest, the Guardian reported that the Cáceres hit was “an extrajudicial killing planned by military intelligence specialists linked to the country’s U.S.-trained special forces.”

“Those who were captured and convicted were the weakest people within the criminal structure that attacked my mom,” Cáceres’ daughter, Laura Zúñiga Cáceres, said last year. (Democracy Now, Jan. 17, 2020)

Workers World reported on Dec. 4, 2018: “The close relationship among international finance capital, the Honduran military and local companies keeps wages and costs low and enables a transfer of the ‘savings’ back to Europe and the U.S. as profit. Local oligarchs and foreign bankers get rich, while the working masses are faced with the choice of suffering at home or risking their lives to migrate to the U.S.”

President Joe Biden’s tenure as vice president was bookended by his administration’s disastrous policy toward Honduras. In 2009, shortly after taking office, President Barack Obama and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gave political cover to coup plotters who deposed then-President Manuel Zelaya.

The coup government, headed by Roberto Micheletti, immediately directed violent repression at opposition groups and former members of Zelaya’s government. It harassed and assaulted diplomats from Venezuela and Cuba and drove many left-wing politicians into exile or hiding. Washington then funneled over \$43 million to



Berta Cáceres

the Honduran coup government, according to USAID, mostly allocated through the Department of Defense.

### Hillary Clinton protected coup

Emails obtained by Wikileaks show the U.S. State Department covered for the coup government, protecting it from the country’s own neighbors. “Clinton and her team worked behind the scenes to fend off efforts by neighboring democracies through the Organization of American States to restore the elected president to power. ‘The OAS meeting today turned into a non-event — just as we hoped,’ wrote one top State official, celebrating a strategy of slow-walking a restoration.” (tinyurl.com/fjbc4bze)

Secretary Clinton’s own memoir originally admitted, “We strategized on a plan to restore order in Honduras ... which would render the question of Zelaya moot.” This section was removed from later printings of the book.

Thousands of the migrants who took the long journey to the U.S. border fled the violence caused by the 2009 coup, only to end up deported or separated from their children and held in cages built for them by the

Obama-Biden administration. One year before Obama turned the reins over to Donald Trump, on March 2, 2016, a squad of U.S.-trained, corporate killers-for-hire assassinated Berta Cáceres.

*One year before Obama turned the reins over to Donald Trump, March 2, 2016, a squad of U.S.-trained, corporate killers-for-hire assassinated Berta Cáceres.*

But there is now mounting pressure to stop U.S. collaboration with the coup government. Five U.S. Congressional representatives have proposed the Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act, which if passed would purportedly cut off U.S. funding sources for Honduran security forces, “unless the Honduran government investigates and prosecutes blatant human rights violations by their police and military forces.” (tinyurl.com/3jre5xen)

It is unclear if this act would curb the violence committed against workers and Indigenous communities or whether it would only serve as a form of sanctions to further starve and terrorize the Honduran people. And it is unclear if the Biden administration would comply with the act even if it did pass Congress.

Now Secretary of State Antony Blinken was Vice President Biden’s National Security Advisor from 2009 to 2013, during which time the U.S. gave the coup government over \$350 million in aid.

Current President Juan Orlando Hernández, a deeply unpopular figure inside Honduras who has faced tremendous backlash from the working class, is the subject of an ongoing corruption investigation due to his collaboration with drug traffickers. Still, President Biden has so far retained friendly ties with Hernández. □

# COVID crisis exposes prison profiteers

Continued from page 7

If they lack the funds, they must rely on family members — meaning that families are forced to subsidize the prison system.

All items must come from the commissaries, notorious for highly inflated prices. In many states prison commissaries are operated by private companies. **Keefe Group and Oasis Management Systems** are two used in many Pennsylvania prisons and jails. These private companies often pay a portion of their profits back to the host prison.

### The high cost of contact

Incarcerated persons and their families are forced to pay outrageous per-minute prices for phone calls. **Securus Technologies**, which controls the phone service, has faced numerous lawsuits. Tom Gore, investor in Securus and multimillionaire owner of the Detroit Pistons, was recently called out by Black Lives Matter activists, who demanded he pay reparations to their community after scamming hundreds of dollars through these predatory phone charges. Calls are also recorded.

In August 2018, the PA DOC falsely claimed that drugs were being sent through the mail. In a no-bid contract, DOC Secretary John Wetzel immediately hired **Smart Communications** to handle mail. Letters and cards are now sent to the company’s processing facility



Food Not Bombs Solidarity launches campaign against prison profiteers outside Aramark in Philadelphia, March 15.

in Florida, where they are photocopied. The people they were intended for are sent copies, while the original letter is on record. Smart Communications is paid \$4 million a year to maintain a searchable database called MailGuard, which not only tracks incarcerated people but their friends, family and anyone sending them mail. (tinyurl.com/353skxsb)

Pennsylvania incarcerated workers are also charged an average of 25 cents per email by **Global Tele Link**, whose transmission and delivery times are measured in days. Tablets to send email must be purchased at the commissaries at pumped-up prices. All emails are recorded.

Pennsylvania prisons have used the COVID-19 pandemic to eliminate in-person contact visits. They initially provided

free Zoom visits. However, since Zoom would not record the calls, the DOC switched to **Polycom**, which records all visits.

### Death by medical neglect

Notorious for their shoddy services, **Wellpath** and **Corizon** are two of the corporations contracted to provide health care on a by-the-hour basis. Doctors and nurses — who visit the facilities only once or twice a week — are mandated to spend a certain amount of time with a patient, who is charged \$5 per visit. Aspirin is usually the prescribed medical remedy at 10 for an additional \$5.

Many medical personnel people have refused to believe the cries for help or offer treatment to incarcerated people. When it is offered it is usually substandard. It is

no coincidence that many of our elders and political prisoners suffer from cancer.

When Mumia Abu-Jamal contracted hepatitis C, SCI Mahanoy prison refused to administer the treatment until they were sued and ordered by the court to do so. Poor quality food, air and water caused MOVE 9 member Delbert Africa to contract cancer. Released in January 2020 after 42 years, his treatment had been so terribly botched that it could not be reversed. He died 6 months later. Many political prisoners have died mysteriously in prison or soon after their release. We call this death by medical neglect.

By contracting with outside companies, the PA DOC insures itself against litigation and grievances. If sued, they simply refer the matter to said corporation, who usually has plenty of funds and lawyers on staff. Also, much of this info is hidden — these corporations are protected by non-disclosure clauses in their contracts. The DOC also benefits from kickbacks contained in some of these contracts.

We challenge and call out these profiteers who drain resources from our incarcerated loved ones and their families. We call out the systemic racism built into the “injustice” system. We are still building our campaign and deciding next moves, but putting out information about these leeches is a strong first step.

*Miller is a prison abolitionist and organizer with Food Not Bombs Solidarity and Mobilization4Mumia.*



# Megan Rapinoe: soccer star, political activist

By Lyn Neeley

March 21 — Megan Rapinoe’s captivating autobiography, “One Life,” traces how her upbringing and lifelong joy of playing soccer led to stardom and political activism.

Rapinoe has used her superstar status to advance the fight of workers and the oppressed. In 2012 she joined the handful of professional athletes who are out lesbians. In 2016 she took a knee during the national anthem protesting police brutality and systemic racism. Now Rapinoe is fighting for equal pay for women.

Rapinoe is co-captain of the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team (USWNT) and has been essential to their winning record: four Women’s World Cup titles, four Olympic gold medals and eight Concacaf (Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football) Gold Cups. In 2018 she became the fourth woman to be named Sports Illustrated’s Sportsperson of the Year. In 2019 she won the Golden Cup for best player and the Golden Boot award for best scorer at the Fédération Internationale de Football Association tournament.

Rapinoe began reading about gay rights and the law in 2011. During that time her skill on the soccer field was making her a public figure. She started asking herself, why she was not out? And none of her gay teammates out? She told her lesbian soccer friend Ali Krieger, “There are young kids who are too scared to be themselves, and if we keep hiding, it doesn’t make it normal to be in a lesbian relationship.”

In 2012 Rapinoe came out publicly in an interview with Elle magazine, “I feel like sports in general are still homophobic, in the sense that not a lot of people are out,” she said, “People want — they need — to see that there are people like me playing soccer for the good ol’ U.S. of A.” ([tinyurl.com/zvtabe7d](https://tinyurl.com/zvtabe7d))

**On taking a knee**

With the LGBTQ2S+ movement a jumping off point for her politicization, she said that in 2015, “In the wake of Ferguson, I read every piece on racial injustice that came out in the press.”

After reading how white supremacists razed the Black towns of Tulsa and Rosewood, she realized that, “For Black Americans there have never been gains without



Megan Rapinoe kneels during the U.S. national anthem before a U.S.-Netherlands match, Sept. 18, 2016, Atlanta.

backlash.” She said it became clear to her that white supremacy was the system from which all other inequalities flowed. She realized “fighting racism was also my fight,” and that “we’re not free until we’re all free.”

Inspired by Colin Kaepernick, Rapinoe took a knee during the national anthem in 2016 in Chicago and again a few days later in Maryland. She recalled “the furor was instantaneous and huge. Whew, were white people mad.”

She was booed and jeered by fans. Trump and conservative commentators chastised her for disrespecting the military. Her family in Redding, Calif., a conservative town, received hate mail; local bars tore down her pictures. “I realized,” she said, “there is a particular kind of baffled outrage reserved by white people for other white people they consider to be ‘betraying’ their race, and that week I felt the full force of it. People called for me to be fired from the team. My social media feed filled up with abuse.”

Rapinoe explained, “When I campaigned for LGBTQ rights or pay equity, I had always been warmly received. I knew racism was different.”

Rapinoe didn’t lose her big sponsorships like Nike, but she didn’t get any new sponsorships or opportunities. While recuperating from an injury, the soccer league

used her injury as an excuse to not play her. She kept her contract, but she wasn’t allowed to play until a ruling was passed that made players stand for the national anthem during games.

Rapinoe said she doesn’t regret kneeling but realizes that for Kaepernick, kneeling during the national anthem meant the end of his career. For her, it eventually became a rebirth. She regrets that she stopped kneeling: “That’s something that I feel like I still struggle with. I didn’t want to lose my job.”

Rapinoe wanted to keep playing for the national team, which gave her a platform from which to speak: “That was a really tough decision. I mean, I think in one sense, I probably made the right decision, because I sort of battled back and got to a level where I was then undeniable. And then they had a really big problem on their hands, because I really wasn’t going anywhere.”

### Equal pay for women

Despite the fact that the men’s national soccer team has never won a World Cup title, and the USWNT has won four, men players make over four times what women players make in salary. A woman’s minimum in 2019 was \$16,538 compared to men’s \$70,250. ([tinyurl.com/4n679tss](https://tinyurl.com/4n679tss))

Working with members of the USWNT, Rapinoe has been a leader in fighting for equal pay. In March 2019 USWNT filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Soccer Federation for pay discrimination. In May 2020 a federal judge dismissed the claim, but the team plans to appeal.

On March 24, National Equal Pay Day, President Joe Biden invited Rapinoe to testify for the need to close gender-based pay gaps. Rapinoe told the press, “I know there are millions of people who are marginalized by gender in the world and experience the same thing in their jobs.” And in her prepared statement, she wrote: “The women’s national team has won four World Cup championships and four Olympic gold medals on behalf of our country. Yet despite all this, we are still paid less than men — for each trophy, each win, each tie, each time we play.” If that can happen to women “with the brightest lights shining on us,” she added, it can happen to women in any industry. ([tinyurl.com/33fz3pmu](https://tinyurl.com/33fz3pmu)). □

## Women’s basketball NCAA exposed for sexist practices

By Monica Moorehead

March Madness is underway — an annual two-and-a-half week tournament that seeds 68 men’s basketball teams belonging to National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I. Culminating in the Final Four playoff and a championship game April 3-5, the men’s tournament will likely generate about \$850 million, mainly through TV and cable revenue.

Not even the pandemic has altered this huge abundance of sports riches, despite the lack of large crowds of fans packing sports arenas to see their favorite teams play.

The astounding amount of revenue will go into the coffers of the NCAA to cover scholarships and athletic programs. Not one player will be financially compensated for their skills and popularity with fans.

March Madness also exists for women’s NCAA basketball with 64 teams within the same time frame as the men’s teams. That Final Four playoff and a championship game will happen April 2-4. But the women’s tournament is expected to bring in only \$42 million in revenue from TV and cable rights. This alone shows a dramatic gap that exists between what the networks pay to show the women’s and men’s events.

Gender inequities in revenue reflect how little value is placed on women’s basketball — and on women’s collegiate sports in general. Only a struggle initiated by the women’s liberation movement won Title IX — part of the 1972 Education Amendments — that bars sex-based discrimination, including in sports, in any school or other education program receiving federal money.

What is on paper is one thing, but any equal funding between women’s and men’s sports programs has a long way to go.

The huge gap was brought home when a University of Oregon player, Sedona Prince, posted a March 18 Twitter video showing the lack of exercise equipment for women basketball players in the San Antonio, Texas, facilities where their Final Four games are played. The video showed there was only one set of barbells sitting in a large empty weight room.

Prince then put up a video revealing the wealth of elaborate equipment that male players have at their disposal in Indianapolis, where they will be playing their Final Four games. The elaborately outfitted weight room was twice the size of where the women were expected to work out.

Prince also posted a video showing the food the women received — soggy vegetables and unrecognizable meat — compared to the gourmet food provided for their male counterparts in buffet style, including lobster, beef filets, grilled asparagus and more.

### Demands for long-term solutions

Prince’s posts created a firestorm of outrage and condemnation of the NCAA hierarchy’s sexism. Mark Emmert, the president of the NCAA whose salary is \$3 million annually with added perks, was forced to apologize.

Emmert had to acknowledge that there were “different methods” for COVID testing for the men and women basketball players in their controlled “bubble environments.” A New York Times article pointed out: “The method in use at the men’s event in Indiana is called a polymerase chain reaction test, or a P.C.R. test, which is considered the gold standard of virus testing. It is highly sensitive and almost always

detects infections. The method for the women’s tournament in Texas is a rapid antigen test, which is cheaper and generally provides quicker results but is less sensitive and more likely to yield false negatives.” (March 19)

Some immediate changes were made to right some of the wrongs, like providing more equipment for the women players. But according to the players and their supporters, they plan to call for an investigation to help bring about more permanent solutions before March Madness begins again in 2022.

To add to the list of grievances against the exploitative NCAA system, a number of male and female players are wearing #NotNCAAProperty shirts. These express their dissatisfaction at NCAA rules that do not allow them to profit off their likenesses being used — whether their faces or their jersey numbers — on the sports merchandise which brings millions of dollars into the NCAA coffers. □



Stark differences documented between equipment in women’s and men’s weight rooms during March Madness 2021.



# Smash Georgia’s anti-voting law

The Republican Party-dominated state government has pushed through a bill making Georgia the first state to pass a broad anti-voting law. This law drags voting protection for African Americans back to the racist norms before the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Losing the national presidential vote and two Senate seats terrified the Georgia Republicans into suppressing Black voters. Other states have similar laws in the works.

Resistance has begun. There is already talk of moving baseball’s All-Star Game out of Atlanta this summer. A mass movement like the one that won the 1965 law can still reverse this racist offensive and broaden voting and other civil rights.

While its sponsors deny the racist content of the Georgia law, it’s easy to demonstrate this by going through the law point by point. We’d rather first thank a courageous Black woman, Georgia State Representative Park Cannon, for tearing the cover off this law and exposing its rot.

Rep. Cannon tried to confront Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp as he signed the bill — in his private office. She aimed to witness this historically reactionary act.

Rep. Cannon knocked on the heavy wooden door to Kemp’s office. The visibly white Georgia state troopers stopped, handcuffed and arrested her. They charged her

with two invented felonies — since no law exists denying elected representatives the right to knock on the governor’s door. The video of the arrest went viral.

Such a video disrupted Gov. Kemp’s “optics,” which already had problems. Photographs show six white men in suits flanking the governor as he signs the Jim Crow bill. A large painting hanging on the wall behind them shows a plantation straight out of the slavocracy. One can imagine the only restraint the suited white men showed was to wait for the photographer to leave before donning their KKK hoods.

The new law includes the following points:

- New voter ID requirements created for absentee ballots;
- State officials can oversee local election boards;
- There will be limited ballot drop boxes; and
- Giving food and water to voters waiting in line will be a crime.

The first and third points inhibit voting. They especially obstruct voters in majority African American cities and poor rural areas. Point two takes the development and monitoring of voting procedures away from majority African American cities and towns.

The fourth one about food and water has already

outraged large majorities, according to polls. In its obvious inhuman cruelty, it mimics the laws that prevent people from giving water to their parched fellow humans migrating across the deserts in the U.S. Southwest.

These new restrictions are also reminiscent of those placed on Black people seeking to register to vote prior to the 1965 federal law, like the illegal poll tax or voting fee.

Those laws sparked resistance. And Georgia’s law cries out for massive resistance.

Following her release from the Fulton County Jail, Rep. Cannon wrote on social media: “We will not live in fear, and we will not be controlled. ... We have a right to our future and a right to our freedom.”

We applaud Democratic Rep. Cannon’s courage. Still, we distrust the Democratic Party’s national leadership in this struggle. Despite the president’s rhetoric attacking this law, and despite his party’s self-interest in expanding voter turnout, we expect this other imperialist party to avoid a serious confrontation with Republicans on this question.

Like the Black Lives Matter movement of last summer, a new voting rights struggle needs to be independent of both big capitalist parties.

Drop all charges against Rep. Cannon of Georgia! Smash the Georgia voting suppression laws! □

## Suez Canal

# Capitalist greed confronts physics — and loses

By G. Dunkel

The Ever Given, a Panamanian-flagged, Taiwan-operated, Japanese-owned, German-managed, Indian-crewed Ultra Large Container Vessel (ULCV), blocked the Suez Canal in the early morning of March 23. Each day the canal was blocked cost \$10 billion in international trade.

The only alternative route between Europe (and the East Coast of the United States) and East Asia is around the Cape of Good Hope. That route is 15,000 miles longer and requires two weeks to a month extra travel time, depending on the speed of the vessel. As of March 27, 369 vessels were still waiting to go through the canal, including 13 carrying livestock, where the concern was providing food and water.

The crisis in the Suez, an artery through which over 15% of the world’s trade flows, has been major news, covered in the New York Times, BBC World News, Fox News, NBC News, ABC News, Reuters, the Sydney Morning Dispatch, Le Monde and CNN and many other sources.

This level of coverage means the capitalists are stressing out.

ULCVs were developed on an enormous scale to save labor costs and increase profits. So to move all 18,000 of the 20-foot containers currently on the Ever Given by truck would require at least 18,000 truck drivers. To move them all by rail, a train would have to be 70 miles long.

After the ULCVs were developed, a whole infrastructure of ports and waterways had to be created because of their size — mostly with public money. For example, the Panama Canal, which uses locks, required extensive renovation work. Ship crews, tugboat crews, dock workers, crane operators — all needed retraining for this new class of vessels. While the costs were public, the profits were mainly private.

**‘Bigger, better’ vs. the elements**

The Ever Given is 1,312 feet long (about as long as the Empire State Building is high) and 194 feet wide. When fully loaded with containers, it weighs in at 240,000 tons. The top of the containers can be 150 feet (12 stories) above the water line. Bigger ships are under consideration!



The Ever Given, aground in the Suez Canal, March 23.

Given the tremendous area of the Ever Given exposed to wind, even with skillful handling it is not surprising there was an accident when the wind was blowing hard and visibility was low.

In the March 27 gCaptain.com blog, Captain George Livingstone, who is a San Francisco bar pilot, says, “When incidents occur at sea, the focus will be on human error, even if there are underlying fundamental flaws in concept or design.” His post makes it clear that the development of these ULCVs was done without much regard to the crew, safety or making these vessels easier to operate. (tinyurl.com/eye6dd9d)

The Ever Given had a crew of only 25 people, and since running a ship is a 24-hour, seven day operation, only 8 to 12 crew members would handle the vessel at any one time. This is a “human error” accident waiting to happen.

The drive to reduce labor costs — which is a capitalist’s way of saying reduce the number of workers to a minimum while squeezing out maximum “productivity” — leads to catastrophic situations.

Meanwhile, the whole debate in the press over the blockade of the Suez Canal, raising the issues of “supply chains” and “just-in-time inventory,” reflects the bourgeois view that providing safety or producing “excess” inventory is a waste of money. Already the spot prices for petroleum products are gyrating, along with the prices of toilet paper and other essentials.

Now the wealthy are losing big money, but it is workers who are working long hours doing the dangerous job of unblocking the Suez Canal. □

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COVID-19 has exposed everything wrong with capitalism in the U.S.:

- No national system provides free health care for all. Inadequate access to care, including vaccines, for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, im/migrant and poor communities, results in their high rates of COVID-caused illness and death.
- No provisions to support workers and their families with childcare, housing or other necessities.
- No guaranteed jobs or liveable income. The pandemic downturn hurt 25 million workers and their families; over 10 million are still jobless.
- No mandatory paid sick time or benefits for essential workers.
- Lack of sufficient nutritious food; hunger is widespread.

- Institutionalized racism, sexism, anti-im/migrant, anti-LGBTQ2S+ bigotry, ableism. Police brutality continues unabated.
- Incarcerated people are kept in prisons where COVID-19 is rampant.
- Class system rigged in favor of the 1%. Billionaires’ wealth increased by \$1.3 trillion since the pandemic began.
- Congress allocated \$740 billion for the Pentagon, while government programs providing for human needs are insufficient or nonexistent.

Workers World provides the theoretical and organizational ammunition needed to crush this inhumane system and create one that supports the working class and all oppressed people: socialism. The need for that becomes clearer every

day during this devastating pandemic, when everyone has been called upon to show solidarity and form a united front.

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During the pandemic, articles are posted daily at workers.org. Printed copies are mailed out once a month. Weekly printed issues will resume as soon as the crisis lifts.

Write monthly or annual checks to Workers World. Mail them to Workers World, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/.

We are grateful for your help in building Workers World! □



# Paris Commune

## Icon of workers’ revolution for 150 years

By John Catalinotto

An uprising in Paris on March 18, 1871, toward the end of the Franco-Prussian War, burst open the structure of 19th-century European capitalist society. The 72-day social explosion in what would become the capital of the French Empire became the iconic blueprint for workers’ revolution.

Lessons of the Paris Commune, established 46 years earlier, laid the groundwork for the 1917 Russian Revolution, an event that dominated 20th-century class-struggle history.

After the 1789 French revolution executed and deposed the French monarchy, opening the road to political power for the capitalist class, France often set the pace for social conflict and social change in Europe. Uprisings took place in 1830 and 1848 that kept advancing the demands of the working class and city poor. The ruling capitalists used the army and police to crush these uprisings.

Marxists, anarchists and utopian socialists — who aimed to eliminate exploitation and create a society of equals — needed to answer the following question: Can an oppressed and exploited class seize power and run society?

The Paris Commune was the first event in European history that answered this question.

Setting the scene for the Commune was the disastrous war that Louis Napoleon (nephew of the first Napoleon and emperor of capitalist France from 1852-70) had begun against Prussia in the summer of 1870. By September, the Prussian army had taken prisoner 200,000 French troops and officers, including the emperor himself.

Political parties representing French capitalists deposed the emperor and set up a French republic. To consolidate their rule, they had to surrender to the Prussians.

The workers and poor of Paris, however, set up a National Guard that was more like a popular militia, refusing to surrender Paris to the Prussian army. The National Guard also began to defend the interests of the Parisian workers against the capitalists. By March of 1871 the conflict between the pro-capitalist National Assembly and the various revolutionary workers’ organizations of Paris, concentrated in the National Guard, had reached a boiling point.

### The pot boils over

On March 18, the bourgeois (capitalist) assembly ordered 40,000 troops from what was left of the regular national army to seize the 300 cannons held by the National Guard in the hills of Paris, known as Montmartre. The operation aimed to provoke a battle with workers that would lead to the mass arrests of

working-class leaders.

According to the revolutionary anarchist Louise Michel, at 8 a.m., the people in Montmartre, and especially the women, begin to fraternize with the troops of the regular army. At first, there was mutual fear. Then recognition. Soon there was solidarity.

Michel wrote: “The Butte of Montmartre was bathed in the first light of day, through which things were glimpsed as if they were hidden behind a thin veil of water. Gradually, the crowd increased. The other districts of Paris, hearing of the events taking place on the Butte of Montmartre, came to our assistance.

“The women of Paris covered the cannon with their bodies. When their officers ordered the soldiers to fire, the troops refused.” (Nic Maclellan, “Rebel Lives — Louise Michel”)

The troops then arrested their commanding officers. By that evening, some of these generals, who in 1848 had massacred the workers, had been executed.

Before midnight, the uprising had seized the National Guard headquarters, the central police headquarters and Paris City Hall. The rebels held most of the city.

### Military mutiny gave birth to workers’ power

At dawn on that day, the central committee of the National Guard had set out merely to defend themselves from a military coup. By midnight they had, de facto, seized power.

This was Day 1 of the 72 days the Paris Commune existed — the democratic rule of the poor, led by the working class.

This uprising of Parisian workers was the essential prologue to the European revolutions of the 20th century. It was the first revolution in a European capitalist society where the wage workers — the working class or modern proletariat, those who live by selling their labor power — succeeded in setting up their own government and their own state.

The Commune could exercise its power only within the city of Paris, the largest city and largest working-class center in the centralized capitalist state of France. But Versailles, where the French king had his palace before 1789, was just 10 miles away. Commune rule arose in some of the other major cities, like Lyon and Marseille, but could not sustain itself outside Paris.

And conversely, without support from the provinces, the Paris Commune was unable to control the destiny of France. Nevertheless, the historical lessons from this first workers’ revolution allowed revolutionary leaders elsewhere to prepare to carry out revolution in the next century.

The theoretical leader of the International Workers Organization, Karl Marx — who with Friedrich Engels

had written the “Communist Manifesto” in 1847 — saw in the Paris Commune the first historical experience of how the working class could overthrow the capitalist ruling class and begin to run society in the interest of all the oppressed classes.

The living experience of the Commune showed that it was impossible for the working class and oppressed sectors of the population to simply win over Parliament and thereby start building a new social system. The old government, bureaucracy and armed forces were tied by innumerable strings to the old ruling class. Only by destroying this old state and building a new one, bound to the working class, could society be changed.

By the end of the day on March 18, 1871, most of the 50,000 rank-and-file troops of France’s regular army who had been in Paris had either changed their allegiance to the National Guard, deserted or been withdrawn from the city, while most of the French soldiers outside Paris were prisoners of the Prussians.

This meant that within Paris, the National Guard was both the political body directing the Commune and the armed force keeping order in the city. The National Guard constituted the new state power, which defended the unemployed, the workers, and the small producers and shopkeepers, all of whom saw the Commune as their government — a type of popular assembly, or what in Russia was called a council or soviet.

### Marx, Lenin analyzed lessons of the Commune

Marx wrote of this in his pamphlet, “The Civil War in France,” published in 1871. Marx’s pamphlet became the basis for key chapters of the pamphlet “State and Revolution,” which the revolutionary communist leader V.I. Lenin wrote in the summer of 1917 on the eve of the Russian Revolution, an event which was to shape 20th-century history.

Lenin’s pamphlet provides a clear explanation of why it was necessary to smash the old state, which enforced capitalist rule, and replace it with a new state based on the rule of the working class. Only then could one change society.



For anyone seriously interested in a revolution that frees the downtrodden and oppressed, these two works are indispensable. And they are based on the living experience of the Paris Commune.

The Commune lasted only 72 days, but they were great days, during which laws were passed protecting the workers, poor and women and establishing a popular democracy.

The French ruling class government made what any French patriot would have to consider a “treasonous” deal with the Prussian generals. It ceded to the Prussians the province of Alsace-Lorraine. The Prussians, in return, released the French prisoners of war — soldiers whom the bourgeois government used to drown the Commune in blood.

These troops had been held as prisoners far from Paris, far from the revolutionary Parisian workers. They came mostly from rural areas and remained brainwashed by the lies of the rulers, who had moved their government from Paris to Versailles in 1862. In May, these troops obeyed their officers. They slaughtered the Communards who dared to defend Paris, including many of the women fighters of the Women’s Union, who were the most resolute defenders of the Commune.

Thirty-six years later, the workers of Russia seized state power in that country, using as a blueprint the experiences of the Paris Commune.

*Catalinotto is author of “Turn the Guns Around: Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions,” which contains a chapter on the Paris Commune. The works by Marx and Lenin mentioned in the article are available free online.*

## El costo de la guerra de clases de COVID

Continúa de la página 12

Trump, costarían casi tanto como todos los cheques de estímulo juntos. Estas medidas dieron beneficios inmensamente mayores a las corporaciones y a un puñado de ultrarricos.

A lo largo de la pandemia de coronavirus, la mayor preocupación de la mayoría de las corporaciones estadounidenses no ha sido el aumento del número de muertos, sino la caída de sus resultados.

Los capitalistas pueden apostar en el mercado de valores y se beneficiarán de las exenciones fiscales que les otorgan los políticos lacayos. Pero sin trabajadores en el trabajo, que produzcan más riqueza para los jefes de lo que éstos les pagan en salarios, su sistema de beneficios empieza

a desmoronarse.

En el capitalismo, el trabajo es la fuente de toda la riqueza. La presión para que los trabajadores vuelvan a trabajar es lo que motivó a los políticos pro-capitalistas a tirar la cautela de COVID al viento y aprobar sólo medidas mínimas de alivio económico.

Los trabajadores necesitan que se les garanticen unos ingresos mensuales dignos, que se les proteja contra los desahucios y que tengan un acceso adecuado a la alimentación y a la atención sanitaria, para que no se vean obligados a trabajar en condiciones inseguras durante la pandemia de COVID-19 sólo para sobrevivir. Esto es lo que tienen los trabajadores en los países socialistas. □

## Turn the Guns Around

### Mutinies, Soldier Revolts & Revolutions

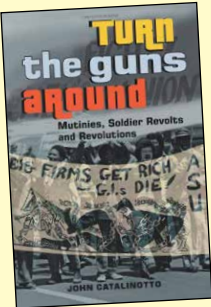
by John Catalinotto

“If schools in the United States really wanted to impart historical truth, John Catalinotto’s ‘Turn The Guns Around’ would be required reading. He tells the true story of this epoch. Few participants know more about the massive GI rebellion against the Vietnam War, the anti-war veterans’ movement or the history of soldier revolts from the Paris Commune to the Portuguese coup.”

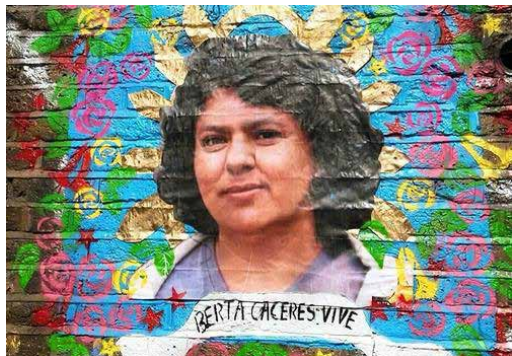
– Pvt. Larry Holmes

GI resister and organizer for the American Servicemen’s Union 1972-74

Available at online booksellers







Berta Isabel Cáceres Flores, 1971-2016 ¡presente!

## ¿Quién es el asesino?

El 18 de marzo, el presidente estadounidense Joe Biden llamó “asesino” al presidente ruso Vladimir Putin.

Dado que nadie ha retirado este insulto gratuito, suponemos que no fue una metedura de pata de Biden. Por el contrario, indica un aumento de la hostilidad de Estados Unidos hacia Rusia, al igual que las recientes conversaciones en Alaska mostraron un conflicto en desarrollo con China Popular. Tanto Rusia como China, al igual que Estados Unidos, son potencias nucleares.

La primera pregunta que plantea este insulto es: ¿Es Biden un asesino?

Revisamos el historial de Biden en importantes decisiones de política exterior en este siglo que tenían que ver con

matar gente. ¿Muestra alguna decisión una aversión a matar?

En 2001, como senador estadounidense por Delaware, Biden, nunca conocido por su valor político, se sumó al voto unánime de apoyo a la llamada guerra contra el terrorismo. Esto condujo rápidamente a la invasión de Afganistán, donde Estados Unidos sigue teniendo tropas 19 años después. Muchos afganos han muerto. Las tropas estadounidenses también.

En el otoño de 2002, Biden fue presidente del Comité de Relaciones Exteriores del Senado. Votó y habló en apoyo de la guerra contra Irak. Murieron millones de iraquíes. También miles de tropas estadounidenses murieron.

Como vicepresidente en 2009, Biden

apoyó el derrocamiento de Manuel Zelaya en Honduras. Este golpe desencadenó un saqueo neoliberal de ese país centroamericano. A su vez, muchos hondureños fueron asesinados. Perturbó tanto la vida que muchos hondureños huyeron, tratando de emigrar a Estados Unidos.

Mientras tanto, el gobierno de Barack Obama/Biden deportó a muchos hondureños y otros centroamericanos de vuelta a la América Central que Estados Unidos había desbaratado. Esto provocó más muertes.

En 2011, el vicepresidente Biden elogió la guerra de la OTAN contra Libia. Esta guerra destruyó un país africano estable y próspero. Junto con las guerras en Siria, Irán, Afganistán y Yemen, el colapso libio provocó una nueva ola de migración hacia Europa. En esa ola mueren miles de personas cada año en naufragios, entre otros

desastres causados por esta desastrosa guerra contra Libia.

Ya, con sólo 36 días de gobierno del propio Biden, éste autorizó el ataque aéreo a Siria.

Independientemente de lo que opine Biden sobre ese tipo de decisiones, ha demostrado que está dispuesto a matar. Biden hizo una campaña dura y frecuente para convertirse en presidente. Ser presidente de Estados Unidos significa ser el jefe ejecutivo del imperialismo mundial.

Es la persona con la autoridad legal para dirigir el Pentágono, el Departamento de Estado, la CIA y otros centros más sombríos de la política exterior estadounidense para supervisar la explotación de la humanidad en interés de un relativo puñado de multimillonarios.

Ser un asesino es parte de la descripción del trabajo. □

## El juego de la culpa

De los dos partidos políticos del gran capital en Estados Unidos, los demócratas han sido considerados durante más de medio siglo como los más “liberales”, y los republicanos como los más reaccionarios. Pero cuando se trata de su actitud hacia la China Popular, ambos irradian hostilidad.

El gobierno de Biden está ampliando lo que hizo Trump para azuzar el sentimiento antichino, no con un vil discurso de odio sino con una política exterior antichina. Biden ha impuesto ahora sanciones a 24 funcionarios chinos, acusándolos de “coerción y agresión” en relación con Hong Kong, que Washington parece considerar como parte de su propio territorio.

Con toda esta actividad antichina al

más alto nivel, ¿es de extrañar que se desborde hacia la violencia antiasiática dentro de Estados Unidos? Eso es lo que ha ocurrido en una confluencia de ataques anti-mujeres y anti-asiáticos en las últimas semanas.

El grupo Stop AAPI Hate ha hecho un seguimiento de casi 3.800 incidentes de odio, discriminación o ataques a asiáticos en Estados Unidos desde marzo de 2020 hasta febrero de este año. Esa cifra está aumentando considerablemente. En Atlanta (Georgia), seis de las ocho personas asesinadas en un reciente tiroteo eran mujeres asiáticas que trabajaban en salones de masaje.

Se está culpando a China de la

pandemia, ya que el virus parece haber saltado primero de los animales a los humanos allí. Lo que no se menciona es que China ha hecho un trabajo increíble para derrotar al virus y proteger a su enorme población.

El sitio web Coronavirus Update informa de que, hasta el 21 de marzo, China había registrado 90.099 casos y 4.636 muertes, con una población de poco más de 1.400 mil millones de habitantes. En cambio, en Estados Unidos se registraron 30,5 millones de casos y 555.300 muertes, con una población oficial de 332 millones de habitantes. Dicho de otro modo, con una población más de cuatro veces superior a la de EE.UU., China ha experimentado menos de 1/100 o el 1% de las muertes de EE.UU. por COVID-19.

Esta enorme diferencia dice mucho

sobre estos dos sistemas que compiten entre sí, uno basado en la propiedad privada capitalista y el otro en la propiedad social de los medios de producción. En China, la atención sanitaria es un derecho humano; aquí, es una necesidad por la que debemos luchar y pagar continuamente.

Ahora es el momento, más que nunca, de solidarizarnos con nuestras hermanas y hermanos asiáticos que están siendo atacados. Son el objetivo no sólo de individuos odiosos, sino de un sistema que valora la riqueza y la propiedad por encima de las vidas humanas.

Este sistema lucrativo necesita crear chivos expiatorios para la miseria que provoca. La solidaridad de la clase trabajadora es el único antídoto real contra el odio engendrado por este sistema perro come perro. □

## El costo de la guerra de clases de COVID

El 22 de febrero, las muertes relacionadas con el COVID-19 en Estados Unidos superaron las 500.000. Desde entonces, otras 55.000 personas han muerto a causa del virus, y las cifras tienden a aumentar. Se han perdido más vidas estadounidenses en esta pandemia que en los combates de la Primera y la Segunda Guerra Mundial juntas.

El gasto militar combinado de Estados Unidos en esas dos grandes guerras fue un equivalente a más de \$5,07 billones en dólares del 2019. Y el gasto militar se ha priorizado desde entonces. El presupuesto militar de 2020 — \$721.500 millones — fue la mayor parte del presupuesto federal discrecional de Estados Unidos.

En 2019, Estados Unidos gastó \$35.400 millones en armas nucleares. En las próximas tres décadas, los planes de modernización de las armas nucleares podrían costar hasta \$2 billones.

Pídele al Congreso dinero para gastar haciendo la guerra y/o produciendo armas nucleares y probablemente

desembolsarán más de lo que pediste. Eso llena las arcas de sus patrocinadores en el complejo militar-industrial.

Pero sugiere aumentar el salario mínimo por hora a 15 dólares -lo que beneficiaría a más de 27 millones de trabajadores- y los políticos lucharán en contra con uñas y dientes.

Los políticos de ambos partidos burgueses estaban dispuestos a ir a la guerra para bloquear la aprobación de un alivio largamente esperado para los trabajadores de bajos salarios — predominantemente la gente de color, los inmigrantes, las mujeres y los oprimidos de género — porque la nueva legislación del COVID incluía inicialmente el aumento del salario mínimo.

Millones de personas que sobrevivieron al COVID-19 siguen enfrentándose a la pérdida de empleo y a los desahucios. Dos millones de personas pueden sufrir inseguridad alimentaria en Estados Unidos este año, pero aparentemente abordar la hambruna no es una prioridad del

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**Necesidades de los trabajadores frente a codicia capitalista**

Los políticos que votaron en contra del proyecto de ley afirmaron que estaban motivados por la preocupación de aumentar la deuda nacional. Retrocede

a marzo de 2020, cuando Trump firmó la Ley CARES de \$2,2 billones rodeado de los principales líderes del GOP. O viaja a 2017, cuando Trump firmó la Ley de Recorte de Impuestos y Empleos que recortó los impuestos a las empresas en \$1,5 billones, lo que provocó que el gasto deficitario alcanzara los \$984.000 millones y que el endeudamiento federal se disparara.

La Ley CARES y tres medidas más pequeñas aprobadas en 2020, con el apoyo de ambos lados del pasillo, fueron elaboradas para asegurarse de que los mayores beneficiarios fueran las corporaciones y los individuos más ricos del país. Mientras que la Ley CARES dio pagos de estímulo de \$1.200 a unos 159 millones de personas, esto fue un cambio pequeño en comparación con los miles de millones en exenciones fiscales adicionales entregadas al 1% durante varios años o con los costos totales de las guerras.

El Comité Conjunto de Impuestos del Congreso descubrió que cinco disposiciones fiscales dirigidas específicamente a las familias más ricas, incluidos los

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