

NO STALLING

U.S. out of Afghanistan!

By Sara Flounders

On Feb. 29, 2020, after rounds of negotiations in Doha, Qatar, with the Taliban — the insurgency they have fought for 20 years — the U.S. signed an agreement to withdraw from Afghanistan all U.S. and NATO forces within 14 months — by May 1.

In return the Taliban agreed to hold back on direct attacks on U.S. forces and give time for withdrawal. A swap of 5,000 Taliban prisoners and 1,000 Afghan government captives was included in the agreement. It was also agreed to end more than 20 years of sanctions that had put every shipment and transaction, even of humanitarian supplies, under U.S. occupation control.

In accordance with the Doha agreement, by June 2020 the U.S. initially reduced its military presence from 12,000 to about 8,600 troops, closed several bases and then further reduced to 2,500 troops before the Biden administration

took office. Under U.S. command 10,000 NATO troops from 36 countries remain. At least 1,000 other U.S. troops were simply reclassified and shifted around in the country. (tinyurl.com/udfnt3v)

Will the U.S. withdraw troops?

Like every agreement or treaty the U.S. government has ever signed with any tribe, country or group of nations, this withdrawal agreement with the Taliban is now being reconsidered. The excuses are endless — there is not enough time. It is too hairy.

The corrupt government the U.S. put in place won't be able to survive without massive U.S. firepower. Several new rounds of negotiations are suddenly proposed. Are there any real plans for the U.S. troops and mercenaries to actually leave Afghanistan or for the U.S. and U.N. sanctions to end?

More than 1.25 million U.S. and U.S.-commanded NATO troops have cycled through Afghanistan in the past 20 years

in an undeclared war of terror on the 40 million people living in this Texas-sized country. According to figures from U.S. Central Command, the Pentagon employs more than seven mercenary contractors for every service member in Afghanistan. Their number currently remains at 18,000.

For 40 years the U.S. has been involved, through the CIA, in arming mercenary forces — twice the number of troops. This imperialist occupation and the arming of mercenary forces has never brought democracy, progress, development, national reconciliation or peace to Afghanistan. Nor was it ever intended to bring any of these lauded excuses for U.S. involvement.

Afghanistan is potentially one of the richest countries in mineral wealth, with reserves including gold, copper, lithium, uranium, iron ore, cobalt, zinc, semiprecious stones and gemstones, natural gas and oil. How to maintain control of this

enormous potential wealth and strategic location in Central Asia is often cited as motivation to stay, by corporate think tank strategists and military planners.

Afghanistan poorer today

Outrage at the brutality of U.S. occupation is the greatest recruiting advantage of the Taliban insurgency.

Afghanistan, after two decades of massive U.S. military occupation, is poorer, less developed. Life expectancy is one of

lowest in the world and has steadily deteriorated under the years of occupation. There is no accurate estimate of the number of deaths from decades of war. Deaths in rural areas, where four out of five people live, are largely uncounted.

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the Afghan government's own calculations, 42% to 55% of the population live below the poverty line, defined as less than \$1 a day.

The country has among the highest illiteracy, and infant and maternal mortality rates in the world. Nearly 55% of children under the age of 12 years suffer from physical and mental incapacity — stunting due to poor diet.

The U.S. war in Afghanistan was publicized as a war for the "rights and dignity of women." Yet women have no rights that are enforced; violence against women, including domestic abuse, is not considered a crime. The majority of women are married before the age of 18. And the average age of widows, the very poorest of the population, is 35 years.

U.S. occupation operates by consciously playing off and further inflaming the antagonisms between the many

Continued on page 9



PHOTO: PAYDAY REPORT

Bulletin — In an April 6 statement, United Mine Workers International President Cecil Roberts announced striking Alabama miners have reached a 'tentative agreement' with the Warrior Met Coal company, and will vote on the contract within a week. Roberts said: 'They have shown tremendous unity on the picket lines. Their story is being told across the world right now, and it is one of strength, determination and solidarity.' Above, Brookwood, Ala., coal miners, April 2. See article, page 3.



Cesar Chavez

What Bessemer union drive means	3
Philly: Protect Squirrel Hill	5
George Floyd's killer on trial	4
Cesar Chavez Day	4
Georgia anti-vote law strikes out	5



Georgia, 2020.

PHOTO: ANNE MEADOR

TEAR DOWN
THE WALLS

Detention centers exploit trans people

Evaluating DAs, from inside out

Behind 'Murder, Inc. – Book 3'

6-7

Editorial

Wanna pay no taxes?

10

Solidarity with Alabama Amazon workers

Members of the ATL Amazon Workers Solidarity Network in Atlanta, Ga., on March 30 publicly thanked the BAmazon Union for leading the way to organize the unorganized. They were gathered in front of the new office site of the National Labor Relations Board one day after the voting period ended for Amazon workers in Bessemer, Ala., to cast their ballots to join the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

With attention now turned to the NLRB to count the votes, the Network's signs also demanded an investigation into Amazon's



PHOTO: ALEKSANDER KLINE

numerous violations of the workers' rights by its unrelenting union-busting tactics.

— Story by Dianne Mathiowetz

Texas solidarity with Mumia Abu-Jamal



Books, T-shirts, and literature on the death penalty and the health of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal were promoted at the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement's booth during a festival held by the National Black United Front on March 21 in Houston. Almost 100 copies of the newly published Jamal Journal were given out to those enjoying the sunny spring weather. The Abolition Movement announced an event for April 24 at the S.H.A.P.E. Community Center to celebrate Abu-Jamal's 67th birthday. Booth staffers encouraged people to protest the next scheduled Texas execution, that of Ramiro Gonzales on April 20 in Huntsville.

— Report by Gloria Rubac

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

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

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

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, 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

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Austin
austin@workers.org

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

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

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

Central Gulf Coast
(Alabama, Florida, Mississippi)
centralgulfcoast@workers.org

Cleveland
cleveland@workers.org

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

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

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

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio
sanantonio@workers.org

West Virginia
WestVirginia@workers.org

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD this week

In the U.S.

Solidarity with Alabama Amazon workers	2
Texas solidarity with Mumia Abu-Jamal	2
Renewal of working-class organizing	3
Alabama mine workers go out on strike	3
Minneapolis demands justice for George Floyd	4
Cesar Chavez Day	4
Baseball's All-Star Game removed from Atlanta . . .	5
Philadelphia: Protect Squirrel Hill	5
'There should not be for-profit detention centers' . .	6
District Attorney's office past and present	6
Talking with Mumia Abu-Jamal	7

Around the world

No stalling: U.S. out of Afghanistan!	1
The cynical abuse of 'women's rights'	8
U.S. Army unleashes 'Defender-Europe 21'	9
Ecuador: Moreno uses pandemic	10
Haiti: 'Don't change our constitution'	11
Solidarity with the Haitian struggle	11

Editorial

Wanna pay no taxes? Be a corporation!	10
---	----

Noticias en Español

Trabajadorxs de Amazon	12
Georgia y el voto	12

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

Vol. 63, No. 14 • April 8, 2021
Closing date: April 7, 2021

Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

Prisoners Page Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly

Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly, Sasha Mazumder, Scott Williams

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, S. Hedgecoke

Contributing Editors: LeiLani Dowell, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Sara Flounders, Teresa Gutierrez, Joshua Hanks, Makasi Motema, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Teresa Gutierrez, Carlos Vargas

Copyright © 2021 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

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

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.



WW COMMENTARY

The real victory in Bessemer

Renewal of working-class organizing

By Scott Williams

“The workers in Bessemer never thought they’d spark a national discussion. This is their moment, but it’s not just about Amazon. This is about every employer and the right of every worker to fair pay, safe workplaces, a voice in their workplace and the right to organize unions without illegal harassment and intimidation. It is about the inseparability of racial and economic justice. By taking the fight to the world’s most powerful company in a way that previously seemed unthinkable, Amazon workers are proving that change is within the grasp of any worker, anywhere. Employees in workplaces large and small can look at the progress being made in Alabama and realize that they too can stand together with their fellow workers and demand justice. With their historic campaign, Amazon workers have already won. It’s up to all of us to build upon their victory.”

—Stuart Appelbaum, President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU)

It is unusual to begin an article about an epic rank-and-file worker struggle by quoting union leaders. Yet this is not a typical story. The majority Black workers in Bessemer—in their fight against the ultimate symbol of monopoly capitalism, Amazon—represent the iconic battle of working-class underdog vs. capitalist bully.

The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, a relatively small organization with around 60,000 members, has ignited a spark of union organizing that has encouraged mass solidarity with their struggle.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE
Scott Williams, Philadelphia, March 20.

The all-powerful Amazon has exposed its weakness—the problem of all capitalists—that it depends upon the exploitation of workers. This is particularly true in the logistics and distribution sectors, which can be important choke points for the working class to control the flow of commodities.

The courage of the RWDSU and its members has exposed this weakness and raised major questions about the future of working-class organizing.

We are at a crossroads in the history of the working class. The Alabama Amazon struggle provides us the choice to go in a new direction. Following this struggle can change everything we know about the working-class movement and the left.

For all of us involved in this struggle, we must answer the question: Is the Bessemer union drive a one-off event, or will this struggle lead to a renewal of working-class organizing? Can this lead to a historic transformation of working-class organizations, unions and the left?

The BAmazon Union has brought the question of workers fighting for unions into mass consciousness like no other struggle in decades. Thousands of Amazon workers across the world have likely heard this news and begun talking with their co-workers about why they need a union. The popularity of unions with workers everywhere continues to increase, as the public outcry against the billionaire ruling class grows.

Mass solidarity critical for inside organizing

Workers World Party, along with our allies in the workers movement and others in other left parties, initiated a campaign

called Support Alabama Amazon Union (SupportAmazonWorkers.org), to build mass solidarity with the Bessemer workers.

WWP turned to the many sectors of the political movement, to the Black Lives Matter activists, to those struggling against gender oppression and against the U.S. empire, and said, “Let’s organize mass support for Alabama Amazon workers.”

The party said it was critical that the revolutionary left, which has a strong analysis of oppression and exploitation, be at the forefront of supporting Black workers in the U.S. South organizing unions.

WWP turned to our allies in the Southern Workers Assembly, an alliance of primarily Black unionists and community organizations across the South, and built the call for mass solidarity actions. By Feb. 20, there were 53 actions held across the U.S. in solidarity with Bessemer workers. In March, there were even more solidarity actions across the U.S. and beyond.

No doubt some serious union organizers might ask: “Why turn to the movement? We should be organizing Amazon workers instead!” To them we would reply, we need to do both! We need a strategy which combines rank-and-file organizing with one of mass, working-class solidarity.

To our surprise, many local union leaders enthusiastically supported this effort in cities all across the U.S. and even in Canada and Europe. The leadership of the World Federation of Trade Unions supported the call for March 20 international actions in solidarity with Amazon workers.

Why did this work so well? How did left forces have such an impact? Not only is supporting these Amazon workers a critical struggle for rebuilding working-class organizations, we believe that the appeal of a united front of the left to organize



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

March 20 rally in Harlem, N.Y.

Not only is supporting these Amazon workers a critical struggle for rebuilding working-class organizations, we believe that the appeal of a united front of the left to organize the unorganized and build solidarity, one which emphasizes the needs of our entire class over the needs of one organization or tendency, is the most important project we could initiate.

the unorganized and build solidarity, one which emphasizes the needs of our entire class over the needs of one organization or tendency, is the most important project we could initiate.

Uniting to organize Amazon

To defeat the multitentacled monopoly that is Amazon, the working-class movement will need to undergo a massive transformation. No longer can each union organize purely within its own

Continued on page 4

After BAmazon

Alabama mine workers go out on strike

By Devin Cole

On April 1, the United Mine Workers of America announced that more than 1,100 workers at the Brookwood, Ala., locations of Warrior Met Coal (WMC) had gone out on strike and were walking the picket line. The strike involves workers at two mines, one preparation plant and Central Shop.

The Brookwood mines are located 40 miles southwest of Birmingham and 30 miles southwest of Bessemer, where Alabama Amazon workers await the result of their recent vote on representation by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

The BAmazon campaign focused international attention on the majority Black Alabama workers going up against the second-largest employer in the U.S. The spark of those workers appears to be igniting a new defiance in worker actions.

Now the UMWA strike in Alabama is ramping up even more pressure on global capitalism, with determined miners who are rooted in a long tradition of union actions in the state. (See Workers World, “Lessons of ‘The Hammer and the Hoe,’” Dec. 21, 2017.)

S&P Global/Platts noted that Warrior Met’s inventory of coking coal, used in steel production, is currently very low. Inventory dropped 7.2% in 2020 due to weaker demand after the



COVID-19 pandemic began, and then fell sharply after the beginning of 2021. (tinyurl.com/38bewj36)

The workers have taken action just as demand is quickly rising from Warrior Met customers, which include steel producers in Europe and Asia, particularly China—demands the company will be pressed to meet during a strike.

The strike’s impact will be felt within the state as well, since metallurgical coal, shipped out of the port of Mobile, accounts for 50% of revenue generated by the Alabama State Port Authority.

Miners save coal company

A 2001 methane gas explosion at Walter Energy, a coal mining company headquartered in Birmingham, had killed 13 miners as a result of inadequate safety measures. In 2016, Walter Energy went bankrupt and was acquired by Warrior Met.

Under Warrior Met ownership, miners have worked tirelessly to lift the company

out of bankruptcy.

UMWA International President Cecil T. Roberts said: “Warrior Met has capitalized on their hard work, earning tens of millions in profits for their Wall Street owners. They have even rewarded upper management with bonuses of up to \$35,000 in recent weeks.” (umwa.org)

A “United We State” statement on the UMW website adds: “The people who manage the Wall Street hedge funds that own Warrior Met don’t know us, they don’t know our families, they don’t know our communities. And they don’t care. All they care about is sucking as much money as they can, every day that they can, from central Alabama.”

As a response to WMC exploitation, the UMWA has filed unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board, particularly concerning WMC’s conduct during bargaining and negotiations that caused turmoil and hardship for the workers.

UMWA’s Roberts commented: “Instead of rewarding the sacrifices and work of the miners, Warrior Met is seeking even further sacrifices from them, while demonstrating perhaps some of the worst labor-management relations we’ve seen in this industry since the days of the company town and company store.”

During the strike, UMWA dues-paying

members who participate in picket line or other strike duty will receive strike assistance payments from the union, which is arranging for health care coverage for members and their families for the duration of the strike.

WMC’s refusal to treat its workers fairly, while continuing to line the pockets of the bosses, highlights the ongoing labor struggles not just in mining, but in other industries across the world.

Statements of support are beginning to pour in from other unions, including the RWDSU, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, Airline Pilots Association, Machinists Union, and the AFL-CIO, which tweeted: “The entire labor movement stands with Striking @MineWorkers at Warrior Met #1u.”

From mining to retail, from warehouse to grad students, one truth is this: Workers make the world, so workers should run the world!

All power to the mine workers in Alabama! Solidarity from Workers World Party!

Go to tinyurl.com/4a6dbf6s for the full statement of the United Mine Workers.

Devin Cole, a transgender Marxist organizer and member of Workers World Party—Central Gulf Coast branch, was born and raised in Alabama.

Minneapolis protest demands justice for George Floyd

By Jess Sundin
Minneapolis

This is a shortened version of an article originally published in Fight Back! News about ongoing protests against the May 23, 2020, police murder of George Floyd, which sparked massive U.S. demonstrations against racism. The full article can be read at tinyurl.com/uzzkd74w.

March 31 — Hundreds of people protested Monday, March 29, to demand justice for George Floyd and the conviction of Derek Chauvin. The demonstration took place after opening statements and the first witnesses testified in court. Many were still reeling from an emotional day in court, where videos of Floyd’s murder were replayed several times, and the proceedings were broadcast live.

In opening arguments, special prosecutor Jerry Blackwell told jurors that George Floyd said he could not breathe 27 times while Chauvin kneeled on his neck and back. He played one of the bystander videos taken the day that Floyd was killed, which some jurors had not seen before. He said that Chauvin’s decision was not a split-second one, but instead deliberate, as Chauvin ignored pleas by Floyd and the nearby crowd for nine minutes 29 seconds (popularly reported as eight minutes 46 seconds, based on a viral video of the murder).

Blackwell said Chauvin’s actions were an exception, in a violation of Minneapolis Police Department use of force policies, and that several officers, including the chief of police, would testify for the prosecution.

To suggest that Chauvin’s brutality is not typical of MPD behavior overlooks that MPD kills unarmed civilians every year, as do police forces across the country. What is unusual is that Floyd’s torture and murder were captured on video and broadcast live on social media, as it was happening.

Three prosecution witnesses testified March 29. Jena Scurry is a 911 dispatcher who had watched Floyd’s murder unfold on police surveillance cameras in the area. Scurry testified that, despite never having done so in her several years working dispatch, she called to report the situation with George Floyd to the MPD sergeant supervising Chauvin and his accomplices. ... The second witness was Alisha Oyler, a worker who was on duty at the Speedway gas station across the street when Floyd was killed. When asked why she took several videos of the murder, Oyler said it was because police “are always messing with people, and it’s wrong.” ... The third prosecution witness was Donald Williams, a mixed martial arts fighter who said he witnessed Chauvin torturing Floyd with what he called a “blood choke.”

Protest outside trial venue

Emcees Sam Martinez, DJ Hooker and Angel Smith El energized the crowd with chants and invited them to get involved with ongoing organizing efforts, including the fight for community control of police. They work with Twin Cities Coalition for Justice 4 Jamar (TCC4J).

Michelle Gross, of Communities United Against Police Brutality, began by speaking about the razor wire and barricades around the courthouse: “That’s because the city and state are more afraid of the community than they are of violent police. What does that say about our city and our state?”

But Gross and others are not intimidated. “We are going to watch this trial very closely. In the meantime we are going to be out here demanding the changes we seek. ... Rein in those brutal-ass cops, who are still brutal to this day. We won’t quit until these cops are reined in.”

Toshira Garraway, founder of Families Supporting Families Against Police Violence, organizes not only for other families but also for her son’s father, Justin Teigen, who was brutally beaten to death and thrown in a trash dumpster by Saint Paul police. She says that because state officials have allowed so many police murders to go ignored, they are responsible for George Floyd’s death. ...

Kaia Hirt and Chaz Neal spoke about the Locks for Loved Ones Lost project, an ongoing effort of community members to attach padlocks to the police-state fencing around the Government Center. The organizers say the locks are to “remember the people they killed and the families they shattered. They keep cutting them down, and we keep putting them back. We’ll never stop.” As a song played, hundreds more locks were placed on the fence.

Then the group marched from the courthouse to the temporary headquarters of the Minneapolis police 3rd Precinct. The old 3rd Precinct building was destroyed by protesters just a few nights after George Floyd was killed.

Organizer Jae Yates spoke: “I’m representing Twin Cities Coalition for Justice 4 Jamar today, but I’m also representing myself as a Black trans American. I feel like trans people — specifically Black trans people — we always show up. Every time a Black person is killed, trans people are there, because trans people know that if they’re coming for us, and they’re coming for Black men, they’re coming for all of us. ...”

They concluded, “And when we fight together, they cannot beat us. There are not enough cops to stop us. There are not enough bosses to stop us. We outnumber every oppressive institution that is over us. When we fight, we win! All power to the people!”

[After other demonstrators spoke,] the march returned



Hennepin County Government Center, Minneapolis, April 1.

to the courthouse [where] Kaia Hirt chained herself to the fencing and vowed to stay until state and city political leaders meet with families of those murdered by police. As of Tuesday afternoon, March 30, Hirt was still chained to the fence, surrounded by supporters. □

Cesar Chavez Day

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Residents here honored labor leader and United Farm Workers founder Cesar Chavez March 27 with a caravan through the East Side, led by over 25 motorcycles, dozens of Chicano lowrider cars and other cars with signs and union flags on them. They met up with a large contingent of marchers who had gathered on Cesar Chavez Blvd., led by children on bikes and walking with UFW flags.

The Southeast Tejas Brown Berets organized the event, which ended with a rally at Magnolia Park, which was once the only park that Mexicanos could use in Houston. Historian Jesus Medel and poets Johnny Torres and Tonāntzin Rodríguez were among the speakers at the rally which was opened by a performance of Aztec dancers.

Food was free for all, and the low riders, motorcyclists and activists rallied together in honor of their hero. DJ Simmerdown provided music. Cesar Chavez



Day is an annual U.S. federal commemorative holiday to celebrate the birth and legacy of the civil rights and labor movement activist on his birthday, March 31. Chavez died April 23, 1993. During his lifetime, Chavez organized Chicano and Filipino farmworkers, opening the first struggle organizing agricultural workers in the U.S. in 1962 and using the weapon of the historic Grape Boycott in his years-long efforts. □

Renewal of working-class organizing

Continued from page 3

trade or sector of our class. We need major unions like the Teamsters and the American Postal Workers Union, along with smaller progressive unions like the RWDSU and United Electrical Workers (UE), to come together to launch joint workplace organizing campaigns.

Initiatives like the Emergency Workers Organizing Committee, a project of the Democratic Socialists of America and UE to support workers organizing, should be expanded. Bringing the left, including thousands of radical people who are not part of any organization, into union organizing programs will be critical. In fact, it is how the unions were organized in the first place. Young revolutionary workers in particular should see union organizing as a duty, a part of their work toward building a new society.

Workers assemblies — connecting organizing and solidarity

Yet we must not forget about mass solidarity with workers’ struggles. Not everyone can or will organize their workplace. Mass solidarity, along with supporting workers organizing on the job, can be coordinated through the development of local, statewide and regional workers assemblies.

Workers assemblies connect workers and community members into a body designed to build solidarity, to amplify the struggle and to organize the unorganized. Workers Assemblies educate workers across different

industries on the issues impacting their class, agitate workers to take militant action and organize workers to dig deeper into our class to win union campaigns.

The Southern Workers Assembly is an example of this type of project, connecting various local unions across the traditional borders of their national organizations with community organizations to build an inside-and-outside approach to organizing the South, with particular focus naturally on Black and women workers. This effort should be studied seriously and serve as a model for our future work.

Next steps

Workers assemblies can be a critical tool for the reorganization of our class, unifying people from various backgrounds, unions, community organizations and political ideologies through a process of collective struggle. These bodies can build campaigns for the PRO Act, an important bill needed to increase workers’ rights to organize unions, the same rights that are continuously violated by companies like Amazon.

They can serve as supporters for various local workers’ struggles, whether it’s more Amazon workers fighting for a union, communities fighting to end police brutality, or migrant workers and other workers of color, including Black, Latinx, Asian and Indigenous communities, defending themselves from racist attacks. This type of solidarity is what we need to chart a new path toward rebuilding the union movement and reorganizing the left into an entirely new force in society. □

Due to repressive voting law

Baseball’s All-Star Game removed from Atlanta

By Monica Moorehead

Major League Baseball announced April 2 that its annual All-Star Game, scheduled for July 13, would be moved from Atlanta to an out-of-state site to protest a blatant new attack on the right to vote in Georgia. Related events would also be moved.

A similar stance was taken in 2017 when the National Basketball Association moved its annual All-Star Game out of Charlotte, N.C., due to the passing of a state law that discriminated against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

‘This act is Jim Crow 2.0’

On March 26, Republican Governor Brian Kemp signed a reactionary law severely restricting voting rights in Georgia. As Kemp signed the bill, he was surrounded by several white male Republicans standing in front of a landscape glorifying a plantation in the days of slavery. Georgia’s law has been met with mass opposition and protest in the state and around the country — and rightfully so.

The law has several components that negatively affect poor people, people in oppressed communities, people with disabilities and workers with restrictive schedules. Absentee voters will be required to submit driver’s license numbers or other documentation as a new regulation for checking identity, replacing the signature matching processes. This will impact over 200,000 Georgia voters who lack a driver’s license or state identification card, forcing them to submit additional proof of their identities.

The bill will cut the time for early voting from four weeks to one week. Drop boxes for ballots won’t be available to voters at various early voting locations during the last four days of an election, when it can be too late to mail ballots for timely arrival.

And people will be prohibited from distributing food and water to voters standing in line for long hours, which happened in polling places mainly within Black and Brown communities during the 2020 election.

The bill was pushed through by state Republicans in revenge for Trump losing Georgia during the presidential election, thanks to mass pro-Biden absentee ballots from the Black community. Republicans in 43 other U.S. states are attempting to get similar laws passed.

“This act is Jim Crow 2.0. It will disenfranchise thousands of Georgians and is completely unnecessary,” stated Christopher Bruce, Political Director for American Civil Liberties Union-Georgia. (msn.com, March 26)

Georgia State Representative Park Cannon, a Black woman, was arrested on March 26 by three large white state troopers when she tried to confront Kemp in his office as he was signing the reactionary law. Cannon’s arrest for fighting voter suppression was reminiscent of the terrifying days when Black people were physically assaulted, arrested and killed by white police officers



Georgia, 2020. PHOTO: ANNE MEADOR

during voting rights campaigns in the South, before the Voting Rights Act was signed in 1965.

Impact of politics on sports

The MLB stance on this bill is a significant political development, considering that less than 8% of the league’s players are Black players. With the COVID pandemic fueling layoffs and closing businesses, the loss of the All-Star Game will mean millions more dollars in lost revenue for Atlanta and the state of Georgia.

MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred stated that he had consulted with baseball teams, current and former players, the MLB Players Association, the Players Alliance and others about moving the game.

A number of corporations based in Atlanta — such as Coca-Cola and Delta Airlines — agreed with the decision not to have Atlanta host the game. Black Voters Matter, a national community-organizing advocacy group for Black voters, criticized these same corporations for not doing more to stop the bill before it became law.

The Atlanta “Braves” team opposed the decision stating, “This was neither our decision, nor our recommendation, and we are saddened that fans will not be able to see this event in our city.” (Atlanta Journal Constitution, April 2) The Atlanta baseball team has been criticized for its decades-long racist mascot name and for encouraging

fans to use the “tomahawk chop” gesture during games, an insult to Indigenous peoples.

Nate McMillan, the Black interim head coach of the NBA Atlanta Hawks, responded to the MLB decision in the Atlanta Journal Constitution: “I really think it’s great that they’re bringing attention to what is happening in Georgia ... trying to find ways to keep people from having their right to vote ... passing laws that will limit basically their right to vote. The fact that you can’t pass out water at the polls — what is that?” (April 2) And the AJC editorial board supported the MLB position.

Legacy of Dr. King and Hank Aaron

The MLB decision was announced two days before the 53rd anniversary of the assassination of Civil Rights Movement leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. King would surely have supported this boycott if he had lived. King was pastor at Atlanta’s Ebenezer Baptist Church and is buried near the church.

This year’s All-Star Game was to honor the legendary Hall of Famer Hank Aaron, who died in January. Aaron started his career in the Negro Leagues and joined the Atlanta (originally Milwaukee) baseball team in the early 1950s. It was in Atlanta that Aaron broke Babe Ruth’s all-time home run record in 1974, almost 25 years ago. Aaron was also a Civil Rights activist.

Those who opposed the MLB decision have tried to co-opt Aaron’s name, claiming he would want the All-Star Game to remain in Atlanta. But Dusty Baker, the Black general manager of the Houston Astros and a good friend of Aaron, believes otherwise, stating: “This is what Hank would have liked, even though it’s in his town. He always had the rights of the people in the forefront of his mind and in his heart.” (AJC, April 3)

Baker went on to say, “I think it’s great that the league’s going to properly honor Hank Aaron, no matter where the game is played. I’ve even thought possibly it might be Milwaukee, since that was Hank’s first and last stop, but nobody [from MLB] has said anything about it yet.” Milwaukee is now home to the Brewers baseball team.

Whether the MLB decision will have a domino effect — with other sports teams or mass gatherings taking a similar political stance of not investing in Georgia’s economy — remains to be seen. □

Philadelphia: Protect Squirrel Hill

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

Protect Squirrel Hill, a coalition of neighbors in the Squirrel Hill area of West Philadelphia, rallied April 3 against a proposed luxury apartment building. About 75 people took part in the event, held four days before a critical vote at a Zoning Board of Adjustments hearing.

“I see myself and others in my building being displaced if this gets built,” said Cindy Lou, a resident at 4725 Chester Ave., a 40-unit apartment building constructed in 1925, which is across the street from the site of the proposed development. “Most people I’ve spoken with in my building pay around \$750 per month for a one-bedroom. The monstrosity they’re proposing across the street will charge twice that.

“Once they start leasing for those prices, other landlords will follow,” she explained. “Older, long-term residents like myself will get pushed out. I’ve been in this neighborhood for 35 years. I’m organizing with my neighbors because none of us can afford this.”

In the group’s press release Yinka Read shared: “I have repeatedly found myself asking, both aloud and internally, ‘Where are the poor Black and Brown people?!’ I am often one of two or three Black people in the community meetings. This last year has been incredibly traumatizing for communities of color and following the status quo no longer feels like an option. Race and class are inextricably linked in this country. Supporting the project as it currently stands feels like complicity with white supremacy, with gentrification, with systemic racism and with



Janine Africa speaking against gentrification. WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



Protesters dressed as squirrels gather after rally against gentrification of Squirrel Hill neighborhood. WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

the continued marginalization of poor people of color.”

Protect Squirrel Hill supports the principles of community care, non-displacement and protecting the vibrant, diverse neighborhood of Squirrel Hill from the atrocities of gentrification. They can be contacted at ProtectSquirrelHill@gmail.com. □

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination • Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery • Black Youth: Repression & Resistance • The Struggle for Socialism Is Key • Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights • Black & Brown Unity • Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior • Racism & Poverty in the Delta • Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions • Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation • Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion

Free PDF at workers.org/books

For trans people 'There should not be for-profit detention centers'

By Jupiter Peraza

Jupiter Peraza made these slightly edited remarks at an April 1 webinar, "Trans Day of Visibility," organized by the LGBTQ+ caucus of Workers World Party. Peraza is an undocumented trans woman activist, DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipient, program associate for the Transgender District in San Francisco and coordinator of the District's Housing Opportunities for Trans Tenants. Her work focuses on immigrant rights and voter mobilization. Peraza's remarks responded to questions of treatment for transgender people inside prisons and detention centers and



Jupiter Peraza

whether our incarcerated transgender siblings have rights to specialized medical care or hormone treatment. Go to youtu.be/iBNkGU9NO4M to view the entire webinar.

Our trans siblings do not have adequate care in detention facilities. A case that I want to talk about is connected to how the U.S. government had responsibility in overthrowing the progressive government in Honduras.

Roxsana Hernández was a 33-year-old transgender woman from Honduras, who was fleeing her home country and coming to the United States to seek asylum after being displaced and after being raped by gangs in her country.

She fled her country to be able to seek protection and safety in the United States in 2019. This was during the Trump administration which limited and made it hard for trans people to seek and receive asylum productions. A little over two weeks after she arrived in the U.S. seeking safety, she died in ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] custody after she was transferred from one facility to the next within a timespan of as little as six hours.

To ICE's standards, individuals who are HIV positive must receive a 30-day supply of medication before being transferred. And there is no evidence that Roxana

received that medication, which led to her death. And there was absolutely no record of this, and ICE still has not faced any repercussions. So this answers your question as to how trans people are not being taken care of in detention facilities.

For-profit detention centers

When you think of detention centers, you think of cisgender immigrants, and that is something that comes up front. And transgender people very often go ignored when it comes to these facilities. Roxsana was held at a facility that was run by CoreCivic.

It's a for-profit, private prison [corporation] that runs several detention centers along the border, very similar to GEO Group. I had the pleasure and the honor to speak outside of 111 Taylor in San Francisco, where the Compton Cafeteria Riots happened in the summer of 1966.

GEO Group runs a private prison in that same building. We were there to denounce GEO Group being in that district, which is historically a trans and gender-nonconforming neighborhood that holds so much history that dates way back to the late 1800s and early 1900s.

I was very glad to be there because getting GEO Group out is as much of an immigrant issue as it is a trans issue as it is a Black issue. And this comes after the



state of California passed Assembly Bill 32, which bans private prisons from operating in the state of California.

Even with the Biden administration, there should not be for-profit detention centers. And this also goes along the similar lines of we need to defund ICE. People are under this perception that ICE takes care of our national security, which is absolutely not true. ICE was created after 9/11, after this whole scare of who is a threat to national security.

Just to briefly touch on how trans people are barred from receiving medical care and hormone treatment. Even though I am a DACA recipient, I still fear that I might get deported one day, that I might get detained by ICE and sent to a detention center where I will not have access to health care and where I will be put in a facility with cisgender men, where I do not belong.

And these are just the realities that transgender people face, even transgender people who are U.S. citizens. And as to the realities and the fears that undocumented transgender people face like myself, where we fear not only not having access to medical care or hormones, were we to be detained in detention centers, but also the fact that if we do get deported, having access to hormones and medical care in a strange country is also incredibly scary. □

A voice from the inside: Philly DA's Office past and present

By Cindy Miller

Jerome Coffey has been wrongly incarcerated for 28 years. He is an exceptional Pro-Se litigator, that is, representing himself in legal actions. He filed and won a lawsuit against the Department of Corrections and a civil suit. In both these cases, he successfully defended himself. His next Post-Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) hearing is April 9. Miller conducted the following interview with him in February.

Cindy Miller: On April 9, 2021, attorney Martha Conley is submitting your initial PCRA application to Judge Bronson. Why is this your first challenge in 27 years?

Jerome Coffey: Many of the records and transcripts from my original 1994 trial were lost or altered. We have agreed to go on without them. Keep in mind that this was the administration of District Attorney Lynne Abraham, who was notorious for wrongful convictions and disrespect toward Black defendants.

My case parallels those of Charles Diggs, Edward Sistrunk, Robert Mims and Mumia Abu-Jamal among others, who all had a disproportionate number of Black jurors struck from their juries. My trial prosecutor Hugh Colihan used the same dirty tactics — striking Black jurors from the jury — that prosecutor Barbara Christie did to Diggs and Sistrunk, and prosecutor Joseph McGill did to Mumia Abu-Jamal. Because of this, my case will also cite the Batson Decision [that prosecutors cannot disqualify a juror based on race].

CM: Could you explain the important developments of your PCRA court

proceedings?

JC: In August 2019, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office finally released discovery material to my attorney. This material had been lost or held back for years. There were four problematic issues: 1) jailhouse informants; 2) prosecutorial misconduct; 3) police misconduct; and 4) judicial misconduct. These are the standard troublesome issues of many exoneration cases from the 1980s and 1990s.

The Philadelphia Police Department inserted my name into the death investigation of Johnny Moss using jailhouse informants. Years ago, I read an article in Rolling Stone magazine (March 12, 2015) about the injustices done to Anthony Wright by the PPD using former Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo's methods. Wright had assaulted a Philadelphia police officer years prior to his arrest and conviction, and so was vindictively retaliated on — the PPD pinned an unsolved murder on him.

When I was 16 years old, I assaulted a police officer and received probation. Nine years later this murder was pinned on me by the same detectives who had arrested me as a 16-year-old! The detectives were under pressure from their bosses to "solve" this case by any means.

Back in 1968, a lawsuit challenging Frank Rizzo's police brutality was filed by Mary Rouse, Mattie Humphrey and others from the Council of Organizations on Philadelphia Police Accountability and Responsibility. They sued the department to expose Frank Rizzo's police brutality and the practices being used. Rizzo's saying was: "Get the confession by any and all means, and I'll back you if you go

over the line." Under Rizzo's leadership police brutality was out of control, and it has carried through to today, as we see in my case.

On Dec. 20, 1985, Officers Warren Larkins and Peter Scallatino from the 23rd District arrested me as a juvenile. They are also the ones who nine years later put my name in as a suspect in the Johnny Moss slaying.

McMahon's racist jury training tape

CM: How did the infamous Jack McMahon training tape influence your trial? After all, it was seven years old by then.

JC: In 1997 District Attorney Lynne Abraham was running for reelection against former prosecutor Jack McMahon. She found and released a decade-old video training tape showing McMahon teaching prosecutors how to violate defendants' constitutional rights during jury selection — namely, how to choose white jurors over Black ones.

Much of this scandal was documented in a Philadelphia Magazine article in 1998 called "I, the Jury." As far back as 1935, the Scottsboro Brothers' case had ruled that "The systematic exclusion of all African American citizens from jury rolls violates the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment."

Even though the McMahon tape was seven years old, the practices in it continued in the Philadelphia "Justice" system, and I was found guilty by a jury trial on June 17, 1994.

Many Black defendants' cases are given less attention to details or careful record keeping. Often trial records are lost or unaccounted for. My entire voir



Jerome Coffey

dire (jury selection) transcripts are missing from stenography records from early June. Even though the records are "lost," I can recall that only 4 of the 12 jurors at my trial were Black. Prosecutor Colihan routinely used preemptive strikes to eliminate Black jurors.

In the case of Commonwealth v. Scarfo, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court stated: "We are especially concerned that prosecutorial misconduct seems to arise in Philadelphia County more so than in any other County in this Commonwealth. We merely state this in order to alert the District Attorney that a more thoughtful approach to the prosecutor's role in our society may be in order."

CM: What do you think about Krasner's administration and his exoneration?

JC: The exoneration under District Attorney Larry Krasner's administration are a beautiful thing, but we still need to look back at the legacy of his predecessors: F. Emmet Fitzpatrick, Edward G. Rendell, Ronald D. Castille, Lynne Abraham and Seth Williams. Castille was the main instigator behind the former prosecutor Jack McMahon's video training tape.

In the Terrance Williams case, we saw how Castille gained an unconscionable advantage by deceptive means. Castille was the original judge in the case and then refused to recuse himself as a PA

Continued on page 7

Talking to co-author, with Mumia Abu-Jamal

‘Murder, Incorporated’

By Ted Kelly

Stephen Vittoria co-authored “Murder Incorporated — Perfecting Tyranny: Book Three (Empire, Genocide, and Manifest Destiny),” with Mumia Abu-Jamal. He also is the director of the 2012 documentary, “Mumia: Long Distance Revolutionary.” Workers World conducted this interview in November 2020 prior to the book’s release.

Workers World: When did you first hear about the frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal?

Stephen Vittoria: In 1981, I was living and working in Los Angeles and was completely unaware of Mumia’s case. In many ways I feel like I was there and actually lived it, because of all the unofficial research I did in the mid-1990s, and then because of all the heavy duty “official” research I did when making the documentary “Mumia: Long Distance Revolutionary.” Your mind plays games with you, like “I remember watching the TV reports,” or “I remember reading stories in the paper.” In reality, I was a blank slate.

Unsurprisingly, the Philadelphia press and media lived up to — or should I say, stooped down to — levels that would make [the Nazi filmmaker] Leni Riefenstahl blush. When you read the gibberish that was passed off as “reporting” or “journalism,” it’s glaringly inept, blatantly racist and overtly one-sided. Clearly, the press were willing lapdogs for the state and operated as Xerox machines for Ed Rendell, Joseph McGill and the rest of the pathetic and dangerous minions manufacturing Mumia’s guilt, including the hanging judge, Albert Sabo, who must have prayed at the feet of [Chicago 8 judge] Julius Hoffman.

When you read the coverage in historic context now, you can only categorize the Philadelphia press, and later the national press, as nothing more than stenographers and an echo chamber for the state. Like Bob Dylan wrote in the song Hurricane, “Couldn’t help but make me feel ashamed to live in a land where justice is a game.” And not just a game, but an utter and complete fabrication of the so-called facts and events that transpired on Dec. 9, 1981.

WW: How did you get to know Mumia?

SV: My first interaction with Mumia’s work was with the release of his first book, “Live From Death Row.” I remember there was a buzz around the book, because this treatise arrived from the bowels of America’s prison complex and was offering firsthand and personal insight from a prisoner on death row.

His journalism offered powerful dispatches from inside America’s prison nation — one existing within the confines of a country that espoused liberty and freedom for all but instead delivered oppressive chains, not only to an exploding prison population but also to the massive poor and disenfranchised population throughout America.

And all you had to do was read one page, and you instinctively knew that Mumia and the book would not disappoint. I was mesmerized by his ability to take epic themes and historic moments and make them personal, not only for himself and fellow prisoners but more importantly for his reader.

And that’s an important point: Mumia rarely focuses on himself and his case in his books and commentaries. He expands the vision and fights for all people oppressed and in need — whether in prison, on the streets or even

in this country. Like Thomas Paine, Mumia is a citizen of the planet.

With everything stacked against our success writing and launching this book, most of all the practical issues inherent when one author is incarcerated on death row and the other is roaming around free, it was our camaraderie and singular vision and voice that drove us to the finish line.

WW: “Murder Incorporated Vol. 1” begins with the arrival of colonial forces in North America. What was it like going through U.S. history with Mumia and analyzing how the U.S. became the global imperialist terror that it is today?

SV: Analyzing the myth and reality of U.S. history is like dissecting a master’s magic trick. The sleight of hand or lies are so deep and so entrenched — and so embraced by the American public — that we both felt like we needed to go deep beneath the surface of spin and unearth the ugly reality of murder and mayhem, not to mention plunder and savagery that exist in service to predatory capitalism.



Mumia Abu-Jamal, left, with Stephen Vittoria

The books operate as a truth serum or lie detector machine unmasking genocide and land-theft, the enslavement of Africans to build the country, the laughable embrace of Providence as the guiding hand of Manifest Destiny — that shining city on a hill, and of course American Exceptionalism at any and all costs.

It was imperative to both of us to break down the walls of lies and reveal the march of empire for what it really is: grotesque behavior supporting the 1%, to use a more modern characterization. Ultimately, our goal was to offer a diagnosis of a corrupt national pathology.

Ultimately, Mumia and I learned a great deal from each other and our combined and individual research. From the outset, “Murder Incorporated” wasn’t only an exercise in historical writing and critique on our part, it was also a massive learning experience for us as well. It was a classroom of two, and it was the best class I ever attended.

WW: What were some of the limitations you faced collaborating with Mumia while he is in prison?

SV: No doubt the prison walls offered practical obstacles along the way. Two authors collaborating on a major undertaking never having the chance to work in a room together. Never having the opportunity to celebrate a milestone or creative success together. But we knew the limitations on us from the outset; we knew the ridiculous and nonsensical rules put in place by the Department of Corrections.

During truncated phone calls, letters and occasional

face-to-face visits without paperwork, we were able to generalize. But the key player here is Mumia, because manufactured guilt, concrete walls, barbed wire, loaded guns and the corrupt heavy hand of the Commonwealth can’t stop his spirit from rising, can’t stop his keen intellect from critiquing the mendacity of a murderous and racist government.

I don’t have to worry about my cell getting tossed or my writing and research getting stolen or destroyed. I don’t have to worry about the life or health of my family on the outside, not being there when my mother passed away or my daughter or many others, or assisting my legal team in a harder than difficult legal struggle, so that one day I might walk free after being incarcerated for forty goddamn years for a crime I did not commit. I don’t have any of that.

For Mumia it’s hard as hell, and yet he does it with grace, passion, poetry and always with great intelligence. Even after all these years, I stand in awe of my partner.

WW: What are the most important lessons you’d like your readers to take with them after reading “Murder Incorporated”?

SV: Lesson number one: Don’t believe a goddamn thing you read or hear about American history from guild historians, the mainstream press or your uncle at Thanksgiving. It’s all a fairytale wrapped inside a Twinkie — including Thanksgiving. It’s a colossal marketing campaign that doesn’t adhere whatsoever to “truth in advertising.”

Lesson number two: The myth is that America’s prized possessions and greatest exports are democracy and the dream of freedom. The reality, we contend, is that the American Dream is illusory and that America’s greatest export is, in fact, murder — and along the way to the kill, it thieves, suppresses and tyrannizes.

Lesson number three: America’s favorite pastime is not baseball but murder — and let’s start calling war what it really is: murder. Not collateral damage or defense or “we got to fight ’em there before we fight ’em here.” War is murder, like the old adage: Kill one person, call it murder. Kill a million, call it foreign policy.

Lesson number four: “Don’t follow leaders; watch the parkin’ meters.”

WW: Tell us a bit about the next volume, Vol. 3, and what readers can expect from this next installment. Will it be the final section? Do you plan on collaborating again?

SV: This volume kicks off with a foreword by Angela Davis, and we’re honored to include her contribution. And in book three, “Perfecting Tyranny,” we continue an epic recounting of the history — and the present reality — of America. Like the purported post-racial America, a myth busted six ways from Sunday as evidenced by a Dodge Challenger flying a Confederate flag and plowing into a crowd of peaceful protesters.

Or America’s fictitious “war on drugs,” which in its ruthless reality fueled the FBI and CIA’s true-life war on the Black freedom movement, a war that produced the Prison Industrial Complex. Or the Empire’s mass surveillance security state, one in which the citizens are now anesthetized to the entire illegal and depraved out-of-control operation. Or the central myth of America’s founding that the villagers are protected by a free press actively questioning authority rather than manufacturing consent.

So book three, this final invective by your two authors, begs the question: Where do we go from here? Hopefully as a people and a nation, we don’t go from here to eternity. □

A voice from the inside: Philly DA’s Office past and present

Continued from page 6

Supreme Court judge during Williams’ PCRA hearing.

District attorneys are often chief prosecutors. The evidence my attorney Martha Conley unraveled found at trial Colihan’s accusations to be overreaching and untrue, especially during jury selection, when he struck Black jurors and bullied witnesses. Who holds these prosecutors accountable when they destroy innocent

peoples’ lives through their misconduct?

CM: Did Krasner bring transparency to the district attorney’s office?

JC: Two of Krasner’s reforms were releasing discovery to defense attorneys and not overcharging defendants. For years, the Philadelphia DA’s Office routinely overcharged and exploited African American defendants specifically. Krasner also decriminalized weed possession and some prostitution offenses.

But how can Krasner publicly preach

against the death penalty when he lets these death-by-incarceration (life without parole) cases stand? And what about Mumia?

Eighteen exonerations are great, but there are hundreds of us buried alive in here.

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



U.S. and Afghanistan: The cynical abuse of ‘women’s rights’

By Leslie Feinberg

This article, originally published in 2007 in Workers World’s “Lavender & Red” series, exposes an Islamophobic argument hidden under the cloak of “human rights” and “women’s rights” as propaganda used by imperialists to justify military aggression. Under a deal signed with the Taliban by the Trump administration last year, the U.S. promised to pull all its troops out of Afghanistan by May 1. President Biden now implies the U.S. may not meet that deadline, and the false argument of “women’s rights” is again being revived to justify U.S. occupation. See Feinberg’s entire historic series on the deep interconnections between socialism and LGBTQ liberation at workers.org/lavender-red/.

The U.S. did not unleash war on Afghanistan in 2001 to “liberate” women. But pro-war spin doctors — embedded with the corporate media — went into overdrive to create that impression after 9/11. Public relations campaigns “sold” as liberation a high-tech imperialist war against an impoverished country with no air force.

This was designed to obscure the fact that imperialism had no right to violate Afghanistan’s self-determination and sovereignty.

The New York Times offered a more candid geopolitical view as early as Jan. 18, 1996, in an article entitled “The New Great Game in Asia” — referring to the 19th-century struggle among capitalist powers to control the Eurasian landmass and the warm-water ports of the Persian Gulf.

The Times explained, “While few have noticed, Central Asia has again emerged as a murky battleground among big powers engaged in an old and rough geopolitical game. Western experts believe that the largely untapped oil and natural gas riches of the Caspian Sea countries could make that region the Persian Gulf of the next century. The object of the revived game is to befriend leaders of the former Soviet republics controlling the oil, while neutralizing Russian suspicions and devising secure alternative pipeline routes to world markets.”

After overturning the bloc of workers’ states in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, U.S. finance capital schemed to secure ownership of trillions of dollars worth of buried oil and gas treasure in the Caspian Sea region, which had for decades been collectively owned by the workers and peoples of the region.

Transnational energy giants like Unocal and Enron saw Afghanistan as the best path to pipe oil and gas from Central

Asia to the world market.

The Bush neo-cons, Pentagon brass and the military-industrial complex worked overtime to frame this as a campaign for women’s rights.

Laura Bush delivered the presidential radio address on Nov. 16, 2001 — a month after the Pentagon assault on Afghanistan began. Her speech focused on women’s rights in that country: “The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women.” It was a total lie.

Afghan Revolution advanced women’s rights

An article in Workers World on Oct. 10, 1996, by Deirdre Griswold showed how a progressive revolution in Afghanistan in 1978 had taken measures to liberate women and challenge centuries of landlordism. In response, the U.S. pulled together an army of pro-feudal elements to crush that revolutionary government, forcing it to call on the USSR for support.

The WW article quoted from a 1986 Department of Defense publication titled “Afghanistan — a Country Study.” Even this Pentagon book had to admit that the 1978 revolution brought many gains to Afghan women and girls.

Women were organized in the Democratic Women’s Organization of Afghanistan. The national group was founded in 1965 by Dr. Anahita Ratebzada. Her companion Babrak Karmal, who founded the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan the same year, later became the country’s president.

One of the first actions of the revolution was to end “bride-price” and allow women to make marriage choices. Punishment of women who had sex outside of marriage was prohibited. Women could choose to wear or not to wear the veil, travel in public, get an education and work at a job. Women of all classes — not just the well-to-do — were trained as doctors, teachers and lawyers.

Brigades of women and other young Afghans brought medical care to rural peasants.

The revolution impacted the life of one-third of the rural population — landless peasants, sharecroppers and tenants held in virtual bondage to landlords and moneylenders.

Before the revolution, 5 percent of the

landlords claimed ownership of more than 45 percent of the country’s arable land. “When the PDPA took power,” the Pentagon report noted, “it quickly moved to remove both landownership inequalities and usury.” One of the revolutionary land reforms was the cancellation of mortgage debt for agricultural laborers, tenants and small landowners.

On the eve of the revolution, 96.3 percent of the women of Afghanistan were illiterate; rural illiteracy for all the sexes was 90.5 percent. The progressive government created massive literacy programs and printed textbooks in Dari, Pashtu, Uzbek, Turkic and Baluchi.

The 1986 Pentagon report stated, “The government trained many more teachers, built additional schools and kindergartens, and instituted nurseries for orphans.”

The Washington Post admitted that Afghan women were the strongest supporters of the 1978 revolution.

But this revolution was crushed by a well-funded, well-armed counterrevolution in which U.S. imperialism made common cause with feudal patriarchs. Women were then bought and sold as property once again.

National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and former CIA Director Robert M. Gates later publicly bragged that, beginning in early 1979, the CIA had funneled money and arms to counterrevolutionary groups, many of them members of militias loyal to local landowners.

Democrats and Republicans had approved at least \$8 billion for this counterrevolutionary effort that hired, armed and trained the Taliban, Osama bin Laden and other forces.

CIA historian John Ranelagh recalls that then President Jimmy Carter OK’d “more secret operations than Reagan later did.” Carter later admitted in his memoirs that his administration actually considered the use of tactical nuclear weapons against the progressive developments in Afghanistan.

CIA historian John Ranelagh recalls that then President Jimmy Carter OK’d “more secret operations than Reagan later did.” Carter later admitted in his memoirs that his administration actually considered the use of tactical nuclear weapons against the progressive developments in Afghanistan.

U.S. set women’s rights back centuries

By 1992 the Soviet Union was overturned and the progressive government in Afghanistan was defeated by imperialism. After four years of internecine struggle among different Afghan factions, the Taliban came to power.



Michael Meacher, a senior Labor Party member of Parliament who had been a member of British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s cabinet, observed in a Sept. 6, 2003, article in the Guardian of London: “Until July 2001 the U.S. government saw the Taliban regime as a source of stability in Central Asia that would enable the construction of hydrocarbon pipelines from the oil and gas fields in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, through Afghanistan and Pakistan, to the Indian Ocean.

“But confronted with the Taliban’s refusal to accept U.S. conditions, the U.S. representatives told them ‘either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we bury you under a carpet of bombs.’”

Washington then took advantage of the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, to launch an invasion of Afghanistan.

U.S. occupiers appointed former Unocal advisors to be both the titular president of Afghanistan and the U.S. ambassador to the country.

The continuing imperialist blitzkrieg has destroyed the land’s infrastructure — including potable water, sewage and electricity — worsening hunger and disease. Soviet-built public urban housing complexes and schools lie in ruins.

These conditions create suffering for all sexes, genders and sexualities in Afghanistan, particularly for women. [According to the World Health Organization,] in 2004, some provinces reported 1,120 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births. (tinyurl.com/yus8cdm9)

Pentagon Special Forces commandos can kick in the door of a home at any hour of the day or night, body search Afghan women and their loved ones, and drag them all off in hoods to torture chambers. That’s imperialist-style “liberation.”

Research by Minnie Bruce Pratt contributed to the original article.

The late Leslie Feinberg was a managing editor of Workers World newspaper and the first theorist to advance a Marxist concept of trans liberation in the groundbreaking “Transgender Warriors: Making History.” (Beacon Press, 1996) Feinberg also authored the now-classic novel, “Stone Butch Blues” (1993), available as free digital download at www.lesliefeinberg.net.

Erie County Holding Center: Guilty!

By Juniper Carpenter

Workers World Party members and people from the community gathered outside the Erie County Holding Center, N.Y., on March 31 in response to the March 13 death of Mikey Frears. Frears was the 36th person to die in the Holding Center since Sheriff Tim Howard took office in 2005.

Demonstrators demanded that Sheriff Tim Howard resign, that addiction be treated through treatment and not through incarceration, and for abolition of the unjust prison system.

The U.S. prison system continues to prey on the working class. For decades, the system has been

profiting from the labor of prisoners while paying them a minuscule amount in wages and isolating them from their community. Specifically in locations like the Holding Center, individuals are held before going to trial. And any death in these holding centers or jails happens because the administration refuses to care for the people inside and dehumanizes them to the point where they deny them basic care.

Speakers at the event included Workers World members Ezra Echo and Arjae Red and community members Monica Lynch and Chuck Culhane. Lynch spoke of her experience dealing with the death of her brother, Connell Burrell, who died in the Holding Center Aug. 2, 2019. □



Buffalo, N.Y., March 31.

WW PHOTO: TOM ANSWEENEY

NO STALLING

The only solution — U.S. out of Afghanistan

Continued from page 1

different nationalities and languages of Afghanistan.

Warlords and corrupt military commanders seize property and land at will.

Promises to withdraw

Every president for 20 years has committed to withdrawing U.S. forces from Afghanistan and from the endless wars and troop rotations of the so-called “War on Terror.”

Washington’s decision to invade and occupy Afghanistan began Oct. 7, 2001, under President George W. Bush. The decision had British support, based on the claim that the Taliban was responsible for harboring terrorists. Afghanistan was blamed for the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center, even though the act was carried out by teams from Saudi Arabia.

The Taliban, still fighting a civil war and lacking any kind of air force, were easily defeated within two months and driven back into rural areas by overwhelming U.S. bombing. The U.S. built a series of military bases around every city, thousands of checkpoints and set up an Afghan government. They appointed Hamid Karzi, a U.S. citizen, as president. Most of the government cabinet appointments and ministers were Afghans with U.S. or British citizenship.

President Barack Obama was reelected in 2012 with promises to withdraw all U.S. troops from Afghanistan within 16 months. Instead, he vastly increased



troops to over 100,000, with far more mercenary contractors. But this surge failed.

The Trump administration had little choice but to agree to talks and schedule a withdrawal. The U.S. was forced into the talks by the complete deterioration of the U.S. military position. A lengthy Feb. 2 New York Times article confirms how dire the situation is and what led to negotiations. (tinyurl.com/4dxjvy9y)

It is worth reviewing a few points of the NY Times evaluation which cites the Taliban’s capture of military bases and police outposts and their installing high-way checkpoints near capital cities in provinces such as Helmand and Uruzgan in the south and Kunduz and Baghlan in the north.

By December 2020, almost 200 checkpoints were abandoned by the Afghan army providing additional military

equipment and ammunition to Taliban forces. Their efforts to surround and push into districts in key cities including Kunduz, Kandahar in the south and even the capital Kabul have been met with little resistance by Afghan police.

“The deteriorating situation in Kandahar is a broader reflection of security around the country. ... The populace have more faith in the Taliban than in the government.”

The article ends with a dire prediction: “These

sentiments are common in more rural areas of Afghanistan. But the Afghan government’s incompetence and widespread corruption have brought that attitude to the doorstep of one of the country’s most populated cities. The government ... has failed.”

The admission is stunning.

Improvised weaponized drones

Part of the Taliban’s success rests on their new use of low-cost, improvised bomblets made out of plastic bottles filled with explosives and attached to over-the-counter drones to further demoralize Afghan government forces.

The Taliban’s use of small weaponized drones and night vision scopes to target commanders, groups of soldiers, vehicles and ammunition depots is a threat, because Afghan security forces are spread out across the country with more than

10,000 small checkpoints, many of which are in rural areas. “The mere sound of a commercial drone caused fighters to flee and abandon their position out of fear to be targeted by dropped ammunition — so the sound of the drone itself could be used as a weapon.” (tinyurl.com/37xmvk6y)

Of course, an over-the-counter \$700 drone dropping a grenade on an outpost is no match for the U.S. military’s large remotely piloted Predator and Reaper drones armed with powerful Hellfire missiles. U.S. drones each cost more than \$4 million, can fly up to 740 kilometers and linger overhead for up to 14 hours.

But the Pentagon’s controversial drone program has been blamed for killing civilians — firing on wedding parties, religious gatherings, farmers working in their fields, civilian buses and cars. The rage following each attack on civilians recruits more fighters than were killed in the attack.

In an effort to prevent a total U.S. withdrawal, the Biden administration is promoting “inclusive, international conferences,” and a larger U.N. Conference to decide Afghanistan’s fate, a political transition and a power-sharing agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

These are all desperate efforts to preserve U.S. presence. The only solution is U.S. out!

The Black Alliance for Peace has developed a packet of information including a petition, social media graphics, a fact sheet and a press release to help to focus attention on the May 1 demand for U.S. Out! (tinyurl.com/ttknewm2) □

U.S. Army unleashes ‘Defender-Europe 21’

By Manlio Dinucci

Published in Il Manifesto March 30. Translation: John Catalinotto.

Not everything in Europe is paralyzed by the anti-COVID lockdown: In fact, the mammoth annual exercise of the U.S. Army, Defender-Europe, which until June mobilized on European territory, and beyond this, tens of thousands of soldiers with thousands of tanks and other transport have been set in motion. The Defender-Europe 21 not only resumes the 2020 program, cut down in size due to COVID, but amplifies it.

Why is this “Europe Defender” coming, and all the way from the other side of the Atlantic? The 30 NATO foreign ministers (Luigi Di Maio for Italy), who physically gathered in Brussels March 23-24 explained: “With its aggressive behavior, Russia undermines and destabilizes its neighbors and tries to interfere in the Balkan region.” The ministers constructed a scenario using the technique of standing reality on its head: for example, by accusing Russia of trying to interfere in the Balkan region, where NATO “interfered” in 1999 by unleashing, with 1,100 aircraft, 23,000 bombs and missiles on Yugoslavia.

Faced with the allies’ cry for help, the U.S. Army is coming to “defend Europe.” Defender-Europe 21, under the command of the U.S. Army Europe and Africa, is mobilizing 28,000 troops from the United States and 25 NATO allies and partners. In over 30 training areas in 12 countries, these troops will conduct operations including live fire and missile

exercises. The U.S. Air Force and Navy will also participate.

In March, the U.S. began to transfer thousands of soldiers and 1,200 armored vehicles and other heavy equipment from the United States to Europe. They are landing in 13 airports and four European seaports, including some in Italy. In April, over 1,000 heavy equipment pieces will be transferred from three pre-positioned U.S. Army depots in Italy (probably Camp Darby), Germany and the Netherlands—to various training areas in Europe; they will be transported by trucks, trains and ships.

In May, four major exercises will take place in 12 countries including Italy. In one of the war games, more than 5,000 soldiers from 11 countries will spread across Europe for live fire exercises.

‘COVID passport’

While Italian and European citizens will still be prohibited from moving freely for “security” reasons, this prohibition does not apply to the thousands of soldiers who will move from one European country to another freely. They will have the “COVID passport,” provided not by the EU but by the U.S. Army, which guarantees that they are subjected to “strict COVID prevention and mitigation measures.”

The United States is coming not only to “defend Europe.” The large exercise — explained the U.S. Army in Europe and Africa in its statement — “demonstrates our ability to serve as a strategic security partner in the western Balkans and the Black Sea regions while sustaining our abilities in northern Europe, the Caucasus, Ukraine and Africa.” For this

reason, Defender-Europe 21 “utilizes key ground and maritime routes bridging Europe, Asia and Africa.”

The generous “Defender” does not forget Africa. In June, again within the framework of Defender-Europe 21, it will “defend” Tunisia, Morocco and Senegal with a vast military operation from North Africa to West Africa, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. It will be directed by the U.S. Army through the Southern Europe Task Force with its headquarters in Vicenza (North Italy).

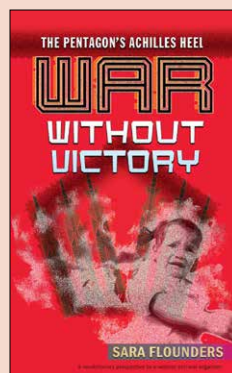
The official statement explains: “African Lion exercise is designed to counter malign activity in North Africa and Southern Europe and to defend the theater from adversary military aggression.” It does not specify who the “bad actors” are, but the reference to Russia and China is evident.

The “Defender of Europe” is not simply passing through here. The U.S. Army V Corps participates in Defender-Europe 21. The V Corps, after being reactivated at Fort

Knox, Ky., has established its advanced headquarters in Poznan (Poland), from where it will command operations along NATO’s Eastern flank. The new Security Forces assistance brigades — U.S. Army special units that train and lead NATO partner countries’ forces (such as Ukraine and Georgia) in military operations — participate in the exercise.

Even if it is not known how much Defender-Europe 21 will cost, we citizens of the participating countries know we will pay the cost with our public money, while our resources to face the pandemic crisis are scarce. Italian military spending rose this year to the equivalent of \$32.5 billion, that is, \$89 million a day.

However, Italy has the satisfaction of participating in Defender-Europe 21, not only with its own armed forces but as a host country. It will therefore have the honor of hosting the final exercise of the U.S. Command in June, with the participation of the U.S. Army V Corps from Fort Knox. □



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

“By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”

– Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009; Foreign Minister, Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

Available at www.workers.org/books and major online booksellers.

Wanna pay no taxes? Be a corporation!

Most workers have little choice when it comes to paying income taxes. The money is deducted from our paychecks before we even get a chance to listen to the rustle of the bills and the clink of the coins.

Not so with big corporations. They can afford tax “advisors” who specialize in finding loopholes to reduce what they pay.

Reduce by how much, you ask? How about to — zero?

That’s what a new study finds — that “at least 55 of America’s largest [corporations] paid no taxes last year on billions of dollars in profits.” (New York Times Business Section, April 3)

The article explains: “The sweeping

tax bill passed in 2017 by a Republican Congress and signed into law by President Donald J. Trump reduced the corporate tax rate to 21% from 35%. But dozens of Fortune 500 companies were able to further shrink their tax bill — sometimes to zero — because of a range of legal deductions and exemptions.”

And the Times states, “Twenty-six of the companies listed, including FedEx, Duke Energy and Nike, were able to avoid paying any federal income tax for the last three years even though they reported a combined income of \$77 billion. Many also received millions of dollars in tax rebates.” To add insult to

injury, Amazon avoided paying \$2.3 billion in federal taxes in 2020, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. (Feb. 3)

It’s a bit suspicious that this shocking information turned up in the financial pages of the Times, not the general news section. Most people would get pretty damn mad at these corporations if they saw the article. But, if the readers instead are the financial officers of big corporations, they’d see it as a juicy profit opportunity.

What if the article had instead been on the front page of the newspaper, with a blaring headline about the richest

corporations paying no taxes? That would be seen as a real challenge to the class of multimillionaires and billionaires who run this country. But the editors of the Times don’t want to do that.

So the next time your heart sinks when you see how much is taken out of your pay, think of how the workers at FedEx, Duke Energy and Nike would feel if they found out that their bosses were paying no taxes on their own hefty profits, while faithfully deducting income taxes from their employees’ paychecks every week.

What’s that Tracy Chapman song — “Talkin’ ’bout a revolution”? □

As April 11 Ecuador election nears

Moreno uses pandemic to deepen political crisis

By Alejandra Garcia

Published in English on the site of resumen-english.org April 4.

Ecuador will go to the polls April 11 amid new restrictive measures imposed by outgoing President Lenín Moreno to contain the pandemic. Although the country has been mired in a health crisis for months due to the government’s mishandling of COVID-19, the ultraright-wing leader has decreed a 30-day state of emergency in the country’s eight main provinces one week before elections.

“Ecuador’s democracy is once again in danger,” warned leftist Union for Hope Alliance (UNES) candidate Andrés Arauz, who is favored to win the second round of presidential elections, according to national polls.

In a dialogue with the newspaper Página 12, Arauz assured that “Moreno’s decision generates a clear conflict. The state of exception prohibits the realization of mass events and implies the deployment of the National Police and the Armed Forces in the streets to ‘guarantee citizens’ calmness.’ How is it possible for us to hold elections without the measures affecting the electoral process?”

The state of emergency also restricts freedom of transit and mobility in the eight main provinces, including the capital Quito. This measure applies to the entire population, except for health workers, waste collectors, food providers and members of the emergency services sector.

Arauz, who could receive up to 37% of voting intentions ahead of his rival, banker Guillermo Lasso, alerted the world about this new attempt by Moreno to hinder Ecuador’s democratic path. “We believe the electoral process and the result can be manipulated.”



Progressive candidate Andrés Arauz leads Ecuador's first round of presidential elections.

The candidate supported by former progressive president Rafael Correa (2007-2017) fears that the state of emergency will significantly reduce voter turnout at polling stations or prevent citizen mobilization in defense of their democratic rights given an electoral fraud:

“My concern is well-founded: The electoral process has been full of threats and lawfare against our candidacy. The Moreno administration has hindered the process since our candidacy registration, as it decreed the nonexistence of our party, and we were forced to ally with another political movement.”

Arauz recalled that, at the beginning of the race in June 2020, the National Electoral Council (CNE) also prevented Correa from formalizing his pre-candidacy for the vice-presidency. The political persecution against the former president, who is accused of alleged corruption crimes, “also forced us to change our electoral proposal. One year later, Moreno’s hostilities against the Arauz-Carlos Rabascall ticket continues to intensify,” he said.

When Arauz’s triumph seemed imminent according to national polls before Feb. 7, Moreno bragged about postponing the date of that first round of elections. “He could repeat the threat now amid the state of exception. I hope the CNE will act rationally and respect democracy. The Ecuadorian people will not tolerate a prolongation of Lenín Moreno’s presidential term,” Arauz said.

In the last weeks, the leftist candidate has taken his electoral campaign to the most remote places of Ecuadorian geography: the coast, the highlands and the Amazon. “I have seen with my very own eyes the desperation, anguish and pain of the Ecuadorians. There is a generalized feeling of abandonment and indignation at the government’s negligence in dealing with the pandemic and the economic crisis.”

Ecuador kicked off its vaccination campaign Jan. 21. On that day Moreno promised to place at least 4.5 million doses before the end of his administration May 24. However, only about 140,000 doses have been administered nationwide so far. Meanwhile, the country has registered over 300,000 COVID-19 cases.

Moreno could not contain the health crisis even in the first months of the pandemic. In August, images of dead bodies in the streets of Guayaquil, Ecuador’s second-largest city, portrayed how his administration was being overwhelmed by COVID-19. Health authorities were only reporting about 80,000 cases

“Knowing firsthand the people’s anguish has made me even more committed to giving everything to restore Ecuadorian families’ dignity,” Arauz said and added that if he wins the presidency, his government will attend to the crisis, boost the vaccination process, restore the public health system and reactivate the local economy.

“We will rebuild national unity by putting Ecuador, truth, justice and reparation first,” he concluded. □

Is Workers World essential to you? Then support it now!

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 40 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.

Please consider putting your money where it will really help achieve that goal.

We established the Workers World Supporter Program 44 years ago, so readers could promote the working-class truth needed for revolutionary change. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a regular letter about timely issues and one, two or three (respectively) free subscriptions



WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

for friends for a donation of \$75, \$100, \$300 — or more. Members can receive a copy of the book: “What Road to Socialism?” upon request. (Or read it at workers.org/books/.)

During the pandemic, articles are posted daily at workers.org. Printed copies are mailed out once a month. We will print more frequently 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! □

Haiti Masses in the streets ‘Don’t change our constitution’

By G. Dunkel

March 29 marked 34 years since the Haitian Constitution of 1987 — marking the end of the Duvalierist dictatorship — was adopted. Two massive demonstrations on March 28 and 29 — not just in Port-au-Prince, but in Saint-Marc, Cap-Haïtien and Port-de-Paix — were held to defend this constitution.

These were the first major demonstrations in Haiti since March 12, when a group of people ambushed a cop patrol, killing four cops and injuring eight.

Jovenel Moïse was elected president six years ago with less than 10% of the vote but the firm support of the United States. By law he should have left office

one year ago, but is instead promoting a referendum on a new constitution that would allow him to run for another consecutive term and permit a foreign citizen to be president of Haiti.

Under Moïse’s leadership, the country has seen a massive increase in violence, with rapes and kidnappings becoming more frequent. The economy has collapsed. Hunger is a serious and growing problem for the working class, a majority of whom — as much as 80% — live on less than \$2 per day. That is not enough to feed one person, let alone a family.

While the masses in Haiti are desperately poor, a handful of big bourgeoisie, the lackeys of the big imperialists who control Haiti, manage to siphon off bits

and pieces of the vast wealth that has been and is being extracted. They live in splendiferous luxury.

The first day of demonstrations was under the inspiration of the Protestant churches and “civil society” — nurses, teachers, people with steady jobs — and drew an immense crowd to say “No” to Jovenel Moïse. Two progressive political parties, Fanmi Lavalas, founded by former President Jean Bertrand Aristide and currently led by Maryse Narcisse, and Petit Desalin, also known as Ti Desalin (Dessalines’ Kids), were prominent in this march.

Moïse Jean-Charles, the political leader of Ti Desalin, gave the wrap-up speech at the Champ-de-Mars in Port-au-Prince. He said: “We are in the streets because there is a dictator in the National Palace who is planning to change our constitution for the benefit of the system, for the benefit of the bourgeoisie and the embassies of imperialist countries. We are not going to give up; we will continue the mobilization until Jovenel Moïse leaves power.” (tinyurl.com/yzpvvfkw)

‘Down with the United States’

The second day of protests had much the same spirit as the first, but the signs and banners were more political. Slogans included “Jovenel Moïse terrorist,” “Down with the United States, Long



Live Russia,” “The U.N. + PHTK + OAS = misery” and “Long live a socialist Haiti!” PHTK is the Party of Tet Kale, which currently runs the government.

People in both marches made a point of tearing down the government’s signs promoting the referendum on the proposed new constitution.

The only explanation for Moïse remaining in power is the firm, unwavering support of the United States.

The Biden administration has rejected Trump’s crude approach toward Haiti and other poor countries. But its determination to keep Black Haitian people out of the U.S. is just as strong. On March 25, the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince tweeted “Mwen ka di sa byen klè: pa vini” over a picture of Biden; in essence, the embassy quoted President Biden: “I can say very clearly: don’t come.” Using Creole makes the position of the United States abundantly clear — stay away.

While Washington disdainfully wants Haitians to stay out of the U.S., it has no intention of releasing its claws from Haiti. □



Solidarity with the Haitian struggle

By G. Dunkel

The month of March saw a number of demonstrations throughout North America in solidarity with the struggles of the working people of Haiti for justice, democracy and an end to U.S. interference in its internal affairs.

Members of the Haitian diaspora along with their international allies held rallies in cities including New York; Boston; Washington, D.C.; Atlanta; Miami; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Montreal and Ottawa, Canada in solidarity with the ongoing uprising in Haiti.

Black Alliance for Peace (BAP) held protests across the U.S. March 28 and 29 in coordination with huge protests that took place in Port-au-Prince and throughout Haiti on those days. (See Twitter video linked to @Blacks4Peace.)

The Washington, D.C., rally was at the State Department, which was called out by BAP as “instrumental in spreading

misinformation and manipulating Haitian elections in order to keep right-wing regimes in office in Haiti.”

The Chicago rally was held in front of the Haitian Consulate. In a statement of support, BAP emphasized that it was acting in solidarity with the Haitian masses. Haiti is “the first Black republic that has fought for decades against the white-supremacist dominance of the United States.”

In New York City, Komokoda (Committee to Mobilize Against Dictatorship in Haiti) joined with BAP to hold a militant and lively demonstration at the U.N., directly across the street from the U.S. Mission. Speakers — in both Creole and English — denounced Jovenel Moïse as a U.S.-imposed president who is maneuvering to become a dictator. One speaker condemned the U.S., the U.N., the Organization of American States, the European Union and the Core Group for interfering in Haiti’s internal affairs. The Core Group is composed of the

ambassadors of France, Germany, Spain, Brazil, Canada, the U.S., the European Union and special representatives of the OAS and the U.N.

Some speakers at the New York rally called for a revolution; others condemned the attacks on women and the U.S. abuse of refugees.

In Puerto Rico, Comuna Caribe and other progressive Puerto Rican groups demonstrated in front of the U.S. Federal Building in San Juan in solidarity with the Haitian people and to demand that “the U.N. and OAS get their hands off Haiti.” (Twitter @AgencyINS)

A few days earlier, a coalition of progressive groups in San Francisco joined the Haiti Action Committee to hold a Day of Solidarity With Haiti March 18. (tinyurl.com/vnm9vd6c)

Solidarité Québec-Haïti celebrated the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination March 20 by organizing a demonstration at an office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to denounce Canada’s support for the dictatorship of Jovenel Moïse. (tinyurl.com/kcnwxxza) □



At the U.N. in New York City, March 29. WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Lxs trabajadorxs de Bessemer luchan por justicia

Continúa de la página 12

criminal e imperialista de Estados Unidos en Vietnam.

En su poderoso discurso “Más allá de Vietnam”, pronunciado el 3 de abril de 1967 en la iglesia Riverside de Nueva York, el Dr. King afirmó: “Las bombas de Vietnam explotan en casa” en relación con la creciente pobreza en Estados Unidos.

Si el Dr. King estuviera vivo hoy y físicamente capaz, estaría en las calles con Black Lives Matter luchando contra la brutalidad policial y la supremacía blanca.

A partir de 1955, el Dr. King comenzó su activismo político siendo el portavoz

más visible de miles de personas negras, que participaron colectivamente en el Boicot de los Autobuses de Montgomery para acabar con la segregación racista en los autobuses, donde los pasajeros negros eran relegados a la parte trasera del autobús a instancias de los pasajeros blancos. Cuando los negros demostraron su poder caminando al trabajo todos los días durante un año y organizando sus propios viajes compartidos, no sólo derrotaron este edicto de segregación local, sino que encendieron el moderno Movimiento por los Derechos Civiles.

El siguiente gran paso se dio 10 años después con la marcha de Selma a

Montgomery, en marzo de 1965, para exigir el derecho al voto para los negros. Tras las crueles palizas y asesinatos de mártires como Jimmy Lee Jackson, Viola Liuzzo y el reverendo James Reeb, el presidente racista Lyndon Baines Johnson se vio obligado a firmar la Ley de Derecho al Voto tres meses después de la marcha y otras protestas masivas.

Este derecho democrático burgués al voto está ahora siendo desafiado una vez más por las fuerzas republicanas, principalmente de derecha, que buscan más y más la supresión de los votantes entre los negros y otras personas de color en Georgia y en otros lugares.

Hoy, la voz del Dr. King sería una de las más fuertes para mostrar su solidaridad con el derecho de los trabajadores de Bessemer Amazon a organizarse. Elevaría el papel de liderazgo de los trabajadores negros contra el racismo al que se enfrentan por parte de los gerentes y propietarios blancos de Amazon, y hablaría en favor del derecho de sindicación de todos los trabajadores, que siempre ha sido un reto en el sur de Estados Unidos.

Los trabajadores de Bessemer Amazon habrían tenido un importante amigo y aliado en el Dr. King, basado en su heroico legado de lucha por los trabajadores más oprimidos. □



Huelga de los trabajadores de la sanidad, Memphis, Tennessee, 1968.

En el espíritu del Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr

Lxs trabajadorxs de Bessemer luchan por justicia

Por Monica Moorehead

El 29 de marzo concluyeron unas históricas elecciones sindicales después de que 5.800 trabajadores de los almacenes de Amazon, más del 80% de ellos afroamericanos, votaran para ser representados por el Sindicato de Minoristas, Almacenes y de tiendas por departamentos en Bessemer, Alabama, cerca de Birmingham. Podrían pasar semanas o incluso meses antes de que el resultado de la votación sea oficial.

Pero tanto si los trabajadores de Bessemer ganan como si pierden las elecciones, su intento de sindicarse en una de las mayores empresas privadas del mundo provocará inevitablemente un efecto dominó en la organización de los trabajadores, no sólo para que un millón de trabajadores de Amazon se organicen en Estados Unidos, sino también para que lo hagan los trabajadores de otros sectores, ya sea a tiempo completo o parcial. (tinyurl.com/z436k92j)

Lo que está ocurriendo en Bessemer tiene enormes implicaciones internacionales. El 22 de marzo, los trabajadores de Amazon en toda Italia, organizados por tres sindicatos, convocaron una huelga de un día que galvanizó a 30-40.000 trabajadores y afectó a toda la cadena logística de Amazon en el país. Y los trabajadores de Alemania han convocado una huelga de cuatro días antes del 4 de abril en seis centros de Amazon para obligar al conglomerado a reconocer los convenios colectivos.

Un importante impulso para los trabajadores de Bessemer Amazon, además

de exigir mejores condiciones laborales y salariales, ha sido la pandemia de COVID-19. Se ha informado de que más de 20.000 trabajadores de Amazon han contraído el virus debido a las inseguras condiciones de trabajo en los almacenes y centros de distribución de la empresa.

Cuando una corporación como Amazon obtiene unas ganancias de más de \$386.000 millones de dólares en 2020 -un aumento del 38% respecto al año anterior- y su director general y fundador Jeff Bezos vale \$186.000 millones de dólares, no hay excusa para que ningún trabajador esté expuesto al



MO FOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

Manifestación en Staten Island, Nueva York, a favor de los trabajadores de Bessemer, organizada por el Congreso de Trabajadores Esenciales y el trabajador despedido de Amazon Chris Smalls, el 30 de marzo.

COVID en ninguna planta de Amazon, salvo la avaricia capitalista de la empresa y el desprecio insensible por el bienestar de los trabajadores.

El Dr. King y la huelga de 1968

El 4 de abril se cumplirá el 53º aniversario del asesinato del reverendo Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. en 1968. Pocos días antes de ser asesinado en el balcón de su habitación del Motel Lorraine de Memphis (Tennessee), King había apoyado la huelga de 1.300 trabajadores de raza negra del Departamento de Obras Públicas de Memphis, que exigían condiciones de trabajo seguras y mejores salarios. Estos trabajadores ganaban un salario de esclavo de \$0,65 centavos la hora.

Lo que precipitó la huelga del 12 de febrero de 1968 fue que dos trabajadores de saneamiento, Robert Walker y Echol Cole, murieron aplastados el 1 de febrero por un camión que funcionaba mal. La ciudad se negó a indemnizar a las familias por sus muertes evitables.

La huelga podría haberse evitado si el alcalde racista de Memphis, Henry Loeb, hubiera apoyado la resolución aprobada por el consejo municipal local que reconocía el derecho de los trabajadores a ser organizados por la AFSCME. En cambio, Loeb anuló la votación, lo que condujo a la huelga. La policía de Memphis atacó brutalmente a los huelguistas ese 23 de febrero.

El Dr. King esperaba anunciar un paro laboral en toda la ciudad en marzo para incluir a los trabajadores y estudiantes en solidaridad con los trabajadores de la sanidad, pero una tormenta de nieve

frustró ese esfuerzo, junto con factores políticos.

Ante una reunión masiva de 25.000 líderes de los derechos civiles y líderes sindicales en Memphis aquel 18 de marzo, King les dijo: “Ustedes están demostrando que podemos permanecer juntos. Estáis demostrando que todos estamos atados en una sola prenda de destino, y que si una persona negra sufre, si una persona negra está abajo, todos estamos abajo”. (tinyurl.com/66wjj45w)

La noche anterior a su asesinato, el 3 de abril, King pronunció su famoso discurso “He estado en la cima de la montaña”. El 16 de abril, después de su muerte, la huelga terminó con un acuerdo provisional entre la AFSCME y la ciudad.

King esperaba que el éxito de la huelga de Memphis sirviera de trampolín para su campaña nacional de la Marcha de los Pobres, con el fin de vincular la lucha por los derechos civiles con la lucha contra la pobreza y por la justicia económica. Pero su asesinato hizo que este esfuerzo se detuviera abruptamente.

De Memphis a Bessemer: la misma lucha, el mismo combate

A pesar de sus opiniones burguesas, pacifistas y no violentas, el Dr. King estaba dispuesto a entregar su vida a todos los aspectos de la justicia social, desde los derechos civiles hasta los derechos de los trabajadores. Comprendió que no se puede tener una libertad sin la otra. El Dr. King estaba ampliando su perspectiva política más allá de Estados Unidos cuando criticó la guerra

Continúa en la página 11

Destrozar la ley contra el voto en Georgia

El gobierno estatal, dominado por el Partido Republicano, ha impulsado un proyecto de ley que convierte a Georgia en el primer estado en aprobar una amplia ley contra el voto. Esta ley hace retroceder la protección del voto de los afroamericanos a las normas racistas anteriores a la Ley de Derecho al Voto de 1965.

La pérdida del voto presidencial nacional y de dos escaños en el Senado aterrizó a los republicanos de Georgia para que suprimieran a los votantes negros. Otros estados tienen leyes similares en proyecto.

La resistencia ha comenzado. Ya se habla de trasladar el Partido de las Estrellas del béisbol fuera de Atlanta este verano. Un movimiento de masas como el que ganó la ley de 1965 todavía puede revertir esta ofensiva racista y ampliar el voto y otros derechos civiles.

Aunque sus promotores niegan el contenido racista de la ley de Georgia, es fácil demostrarlo repasando la ley punto por punto. Preferimos dar las gracias primero a una valiente mujer afroamericana, Park Cannon, la representante del estado de Georgia, por arrancar la tapa de esta ley

y exponer su podredumbre.

La representante Cannon trató de enfrentarse al gobernador de Georgia, Brian Kemp, mientras firmaba la ley, en su despacho privado. Su objetivo era presentar este acto históricamente reaccionario.

La diputada Cannon llamó a la pesada puerta de madera del despacho de Kemp. La policía del estado de Georgia en el Capitolio, visiblemente blanca, la detuvo, la esposó y la arrestó. La acusaron de dos delitos inventados, ya que no existe ninguna ley que niegue a los representantes electos el derecho a llamar a la puerta del gobernador. El vídeo de la detención se hizo viral.

Dicho vídeo perturbó la “óptica” del gobernador Kemp, que ya tenía problemas. Las fotografías muestran a seis hombres blancos con traje que flanquean al gobernador mientras firma la ley Jim Crow. Un gran cuadro colgado en la pared detrás de ellos muestra una plantación sacada directamente de la esclavitud. Cabe imaginar que la única moderación que mostraron los hombres blancos fue esperar a que el fotógrafo se fuera antes de ponerse las capuchas del KKK.

La nueva ley incluye los siguientes puntos:

- Se crean nuevos requisitos de identificación del votante para el voto por correo;
- Los funcionarios estatales pueden supervisar las juntas electorales locales;
- Habrá un número limitado de buzones para depositar las papeletas;
- Dar comida y agua a los votantes que esperan en la cola será un delito.

Los puntos primero y tercero inhiben el voto. Obstaculizan especialmente a los votantes de las ciudades de mayoría afroamericana y de las zonas rurales pobres. El segundo punto aleja el desarrollo y la supervisión de los procedimientos de votación de las ciudades y pueblos de mayoría afroamericana.

El cuarto, relativo a los alimentos y el agua, ya ha indignado a grandes mayorías, según las encuestas. En su evidente crueldad inhumana, imita las leyes que impiden a la gente dar agua a sus compañeros resacos que migran por los desiertos del suroeste de Estados Unidos.

Estas nuevas restricciones también recuerdan a las que se imponían a los

negros indigentes que querían registrarse para votar antes de la ley federal de 1965, como el ilegal impuesto electoral o la tasa de voto.

Esas leyes provocaron resistencia. Y la ley de Georgia pide a gritos una resistencia masiva.

Tras su salida de la cárcel del condado de Fulton, la diputada Cannon escribió en las redes sociales “No vamos a vivir con miedo, y no vamos a ser controlados. ... Tenemos derecho a nuestro futuro y derecho a nuestra libertad”.

Aplaudimos la valentía de la diputada demócrata Cannon. Sin embargo, desconfirmamos del liderazgo nacional del Partido Demócrata en esta lucha. A pesar de la retórica del presidente atacando esta ley, y a pesar del interés propio de su partido en ampliar la participación electoral, anticipamos que este otro partido imperialista evite una confrontación seria con los republicanos en esta cuestión.

Al igual que el movimiento Black Lives Matter del verano pasado, una nueva lucha por el derecho al voto debe ser independiente de los dos grandes partidos capitalistas.

¡Retirar todos los cargos contra la diputado Cannon de Georgia! ¡Destruyan las leyes de supresión del voto en Georgia! □

MUNDO OBRERO

editorial