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 posed. Are there any real plans for the withdrawal agreement with the Taliban?

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 hasty.

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, coal, 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 the 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 communities, often along religious and ethnic lines.
Solidarity with Alabama Amazon workers

Members of the ATL Amazon Workers Solidarity Network in Atlanta, Ga., on March 30 publicly thanked the B’ham 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 numerous violations of the workers’ rights by its unremitting union-busting tactics.

— Story by Dianne Mathiowitz

Texas solidarity with Mumia Abu-Jamal

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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 21 in Huntsville.

— Report by Gloria Rubac

Mundo obrero

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 never-ending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogynist, 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 and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

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

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

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

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— Report by Gloria Rubac
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 not their moment, but it’s just about Amazon. This is about everyone and the right of every worker to fair pay, safe workplaces, a voice in their workplace and the right to organize 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. Where 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—have weathered a battle of working-class underdog vs. capitalist bully. The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), with around 60,000 members, has ignited a spark of union organizing that has encouraged mass solidarity with their struggle.

Mass solidarity critical for inside organizing

Workers World Party, along with our allies in the workers movement and others in left party, initiated a campaign called Support Alabama Amazon Union (SupportAmazonWorkers.org), to build mass solidarity with the Bessemer workers. NWP turned to the many sectors of the workers movement, to the Black Lives Matter activists, to those struggling for the rights of US workers, to those fighting discrimination and for their workplace and the right to organize. We need a strategy which combines rank-and-file organizing with one of mass, working-class solidarity.

To our surprise, many local union leaders and local allies in the workers movement will need to undergo a massive transformation. No longer can each union organize purely within its own boundaries, we must answer the question: Is the working class over the needs of one organization or tendency, is the most important project we could initiate.

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 Warrior Met Coal, in the town of Warrior Met (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 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 mines.

The strike was set off by a series of events: between 2020 and 2021, the company went bankrupt and was acquired by Warrior Met. Under Warrior Met ownership, miners have worked tirelessly to lift the company out of bankruptcy. UMWUA International President Cecil T. Roberts said: “Warrior Met has capitalized on the hard work, earning tens of millions in profits for their new owners. They have even rewarded upper management with bonuses of up to $35,000 in recent weeks.” (umwa.org)

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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 in response. The full article can be read at ttp://www.fightba.com/a/72-740.

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 the trial of the Minneapolis police officer accused of killing Floyd. The trial is scheduled to last for up to three months.

“People are putting locks on the fence because 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 protestors just a month 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 the 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. We will fight to free our people. We will fight to free every oppressive institution that is over us. When we fight, we win! All power to the people!”

By Gloria Rubac

Houston

Residents here honored labor leader and United Farm Workers founder Cesar Chavez March 27 with a parade through the East End and a rally at Kingwood Park, which ended with a rally at Magnolia Park, which was once the only park that Mexicanos could use in Houston.

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.

Cesar Chavez Day

Renewal of working-class organizing

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 RISES and United Electronic 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 assemble: 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 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, will 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 discriminates against LGBT, 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 rightly 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 of their identities.

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, feeble 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 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 basically limit 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

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 repeated in soul wrenching, 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

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

Edited by Monica Moorehead

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.

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Protesters dressed as squirrels gather after rally against gentrification of Squirrel Hill neighborhood.

PHOTO: ANNE MEADOR

Philadelphia: Protect Squirrel Hill

Janie Africa speaking against gentrification.

PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Protesters dressed as squirrels gather after rally against gentrification of Squirrel Hill neighborhood.

PHOTO: ANNE MEADOR

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PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

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Protesters dressed as squirrels gather after rally against gentrification of Squirrel Hill neighborhood.

PHOTO: JOE PIETTE
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 Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming people.

Peraza focuses on immigrant rights and voter mobilization. Peraza’s remarks responded to questions of treatment for transgender people inside prisons and detention centers and whether incarcerated transgender people have rights to special medical care or hormone treatment. Go to youtube.be/BKNSGyUQND4 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.

My story is that in 2019, I 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 gang in her country.

She fled her country to be able to seek protection under 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 in building. After a little over two weeks after she arrived in the U.S. seeking safety, she died in ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] detention.

Afterwards, she was transferred out of one facility to the next within a timespan of as little as six hours.

To ICE’s standards, individuals who are HIV positive receive a 30-day supply of medication before being transferred. And there is no evidence that Roxsana received that medication, which led to her death. And I want 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 to jail and then be transported from one facility to another.

For-profits, private prison [corporation] 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 post-9/11. We were there to denounce GEO Group being in that district, which is historically a trans and gender-queer transforming and changing 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 there was a group of trans people that was getting GEO Group out is as much of an 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.

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 the 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.

And there is no evidence that 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 post-9/11.

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

Biden administration, there should not be for-profit detention centers.

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

By Cindy Miller

Jerome Coffey has been wrongly incarcerated for 27 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.

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, 2013) 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 the late 1980s, when Frank Rizzo’s police brutality was filed by Mary Rosey, Mattie Humphrey and others from the Council of Organizations on Philadelphia Police Accountability. 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 the also 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, as Roxsana 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 dire (jury selection) transcripts are missing from stenography records from early June. Even though the records are “lost,” I can recall that only 1 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 prosecutor misconduct seems to arise in Philadelphia County more so than in any other County in this Commonwealth. We hereby 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 Krauser’s administration and his exonerations?

JC: The exonerations under District Attorney Larry Krauser’s administration are a beautiful thing, but we still need to look back at the legacy of his predeces sors: F. Emmet Fitzpatrick, Edward G. Rendell, Ronald D. Castille, Lynne Abraham and, most recently, Commonwealth’s Attorney Nelson 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 remove 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 served as director of the documentary “Mumia: Long Distance Revolutionaries,” 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 London, 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 late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. I then began doing all of the “official” research I did when making the documentary “Mumia: Long Distance Revolutionaries.” 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 to—levels that would make [the Nazi film maker] 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 patriotic and dangerous minions manufacturing Mumia’s guilt, including the hanging judge, Albert Sabo, who must have prayed at the feet of [Chicago 8 judge] Albert Vanderveer.

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 was something new and different from the howls of America’s tower machine unmasking genocide and land-theft, the export is, in fact, murder— and along the way to the kill, thieves, suppressors and tyrannizers.

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 Payne, Mumia is a citizen of the planet. When everthing 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. I” 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 slight of hand or lies are so deep and so entrenched—and so desired 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.

The books operate as a true sermon or lie detector machine unmasking genocide and land-theft, the endowment 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 he manufactured guns,百姓, 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 criticizing 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, thieves, suppressors and tyrannizers.

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 parking 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—the 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 recent 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 nation, 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’ PCR hearing.

District attorneys are often chief prose- cutors. The evidence my attorney Martha Connelly uncovered found at trial Colihan’s accusations to be overreaching and untrue, especially during jury selection, when he struck Black jurors and bullied witnesses. Who would these prosecutors accountable when they destroy innocent people’s 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. With Philadelphia’s DA’s Office routinely overcharged and expelled 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 Mobilization.Mumia.
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, illuminates how the U.S. military occupation of Afghanistan was sold as a liberation for women. But pro-war spin doctors — including the corporate media — went into overtime 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 Times explained, “While few have noticed, Central Asia has again emerged as a murky battleground among big powers engaged in a new Cold War 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 overcoming 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 oil and gas and the warm-water ports in the Caspian Sea region, which had for decades been collectively owned by the workers and peasants 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 attack 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

An article in Workers World on Oct. 10, 1996, by Deirdre Griswold showed how a progressive revolution in Afghanistan in the 1970s had taken a huge step forward for women and challenged centuries of landlordism. In response, the U.S. pulled together an army of pro-fraud elements to crush that revolutionary government, forcing it to call on the USSR for support.

The WW article quoted from a 1960s 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.

Women were organized in the Democratic Women’s Organization of Afghanistan. The national group was founded in 1965 by Dr. Anahita Ratebrazah. Her companion Bahar Karmal, who founded the People’s Democratic party in 1963, joined the same year, later became the country’s president.

One of the first actions of the revolutionary government 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 areas. The revolution impacted the life of the poorest Afghans. 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 Brezinski 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 mili
tias 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 Kiriakou recalls that President Jimmy Carter OK’d “more secret operations than Reagan later did.” Carter later admitted in his memoirs that his administration actu
al
cally 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 over
turned and the progressive government in Afghanistan was crushed by imperial
is
tism. After four years of internever strug
gle among different Afghan factions, the Taliban came to power.

Erie County Holding Center: Guilty!

By Juniper Carpenter

Workers World Party members and people from the community gathered outside the Erie County Holding Center — located at 3135 Main St. — on March 31 in response to the March 23 death of Meikreys. Fears was the 356th person to die in the Holding Center since Sheriff Tim Howard took office in 2007.

Reports began to circulate that Sheriff Tim Howard, in a reaction to the ongoing crisis, had team with an executive order allowing the administration to lock up PSSC workers who are in light of the ongoing crisis, had to do so because the administration refuses to care for the people inside and dehumanizes them to the point where they deny them basic care.

Spokesperson Tim Howard told the WWP 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.
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 July 2020 was held in Europe, was prevented by the lockdown and this year was limited within national borders.

The Defender-Europe 21 not only resumes the vast annual exercise of the U.S. Army, which guarantees that they will move from one European country to another freely. They will have the “COVID security” reasons, this prohibition does not apply to the thousands of soldiers who are deployed to “defend Europe.” The large exercise—the biggest in Europe’s history—includes live fire and missile exercises. The U.S. Air Force and Navy will also participate.

In March, the U.S. began to transport 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 four 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 by the U.S. Army, which guarantees that they are subjected to “strict COVID prevention and mitigation measures.”

The 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 Vienna (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, $86 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 light on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and how to stop doing, love 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 book sellers.  

NO STALLING

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different nationalities and lan- 
guages of Afghanistan.

Warlords and corrupt military commanders seize property and land, roads and mines.

Promises to withdraw

Every president for 20 years has committed to withdrawing U.S. forces from Afghanistan and from the endless wars and troops that compose 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 appoint- 
ments and ministers were Afghans with U.S. or British citizenship.

President Barack Obama was reeled in a bit when he promised 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, 2020, New York Times article confirms how dire the situation is and what led to negotiations. (tinyurl.com/4byjyypj)

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 highway checkpoints near capital cities in provinces such as Helmand and Urugzan in the south and Kunduz and Baghlan in the north.

By December 2020, almost 200 check- points were abandoned by the Afghan army providing additional military and ammunition to Taliban forces. The U.S. effort to succeed 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 across 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 bombs made out of plastic bottles filled with explosives and attached to the over- 
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 points were abandoned by the Afghan security forces are spread out across the country more than 10,000 small checkpoints, many of which are armed and 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/7r7xvkyks)

Of course, an over-the-counter $700 drone does not match for the U.S. military’s large remotely piloted Predator and Reaper drones armed with powerful Hellfire mis-
siles that can drop for several million dollars.

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 agree-
ment between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

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

The Black Alliance for Peace has devel-
oped 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)
As April 11 Ecuador election nears

Wanna pay no taxes? Be a corporation!

By Alejandro García

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 Lenin 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 asserted 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, asserted 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 full of threats and lawfare against our candid- dacy. The Moreno administration has hindered the pro- cess 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 Lenin Moreno’s presidential term,” Arauz said.

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 admin- istered 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 sec- ond-largest city, portrayed how his administration was being overwhelmed by COVID-19. Health authorities were only reporting about 80,000 COVID-19 cases.

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

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

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COVID-19 has exposed everything wrong with capitalism in the U.S.: • No national system provides free health care for all. Inadequate access to care, including vaccines, for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, in/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 and other necessities. • No guaranteed jobs or liveable income. The pandemic downturn hurt 40 million workers and their families; over 1.6 million are still jobless. • No mandatory paid sick time or bene- fits for essential workers. • Lack of sufficient nutritious food; hunger is widespread. • Institutionalized racism, sexism, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ2+ bigotry, ableism. Police brutality con- tinues unabated. • Incarcerated people are kept in pris- on where COVID-19 is rampant. • Class system rigged in favor of the 1%. Billionaires’ wealth increased by $1.3 trillion since the pandemic began. • Consequence of $75 billion for the Pentagon, while government pro- grams providing for human needs are insufficient or nonexistent.

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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 1% and 29 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 Moise’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 and 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 splendid 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 (Father Desalin’s Kids), were prominent in this march.

Moise 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/zyvpvkw)

‘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 Moise 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 gross injustices, 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 liyen lid’; pa vin” 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.
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 restringe el derecho del pueblo a votar, suprimiendo a los votantes negros. Otros estados tienen leyes similares en este sentido.

La resistencia ha comenzado. Ya se está tomando medidas para que esta ley no se imponga. La diputada Cannon llamó a la resistencia y exhortó a sus congéneres a no acomodarse con este tipo de leyes. En cambio, la diputada anoñó la votación, lo que condujo a la huelga. La policía de Memphí leyó brutalmente a los huelguistas ese 23 de febrero.

El Dr. King esperaba 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.

A pesar de sus opiniones burguesas, pacíficas y no violentas, el Dr. King estaba dispuesto a entregar su vida a este esfuerzo. Su asesinato hizo que este esfuerzo se desvanezca. De Memphis a Bessemer: la misma lucha, el mismo combate.

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 buses para depositar las papeletas; Dar comida y agua a los votantes que esperan en la cola será un delito. Los puntos primero y tercero inhi- ben el voto. Obstaculizan especialmente a los votantes de las ciudades de mayoría afroamericana y de las zonas rurales pobres. El segundo punto aleja el desarro- llo 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 minorías, según las encuestas. En su evidente cruel- detrás de esta ley, hemos visto el declive de la ciudadanía. Imponer una sanción a un trabajador afroamericano es imponer una sanción a sus compañeros a su empleador que es saqueador de los derechos de los trabajadores.

La nueva ley es una ofensiva racista que amenaza con abrumar a los trabajadores de Georgia. La resistencia ha comenzado. Ya se está tomando medidas para que esta ley no se imponga. La diputada Cannon llamó a la resistencia y exhortó a sus congéneres a no acomodarse con este tipo de leyes. En cambio, la diputada anoñó la votación, lo que condujo a la huelga. La policía de Memphí leyó brutalmente a los huelguistas ese 23 de febrero. El Dr. King esperaba 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. A pesar de sus opiniones burguesas, pacíficas y no violentas, el Dr. King estaba dispuesto a entregar su vida a este esfuerzo. Su asesinato hizo que este esfuerzo se desvanezca. De Memphis a Bessemer: la misma lucha, el mismo combate.

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