

Striking Alabama miners

Take fight to Wall Street

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Five hundred striking Alabama coal miners—joined by hundreds of other union members and supporters—rallied July 28 in New York City on Wall Street. They protested in front of BlackRock investment firm, the biggest shareholder in the miners’ employer, Warrior Met Coal.

The Brookwood, Ala., miners have been on strike since April 1 for better working conditions, pay and benefits. These members of United Mine Workers (UMWA) Locals 2245, 2368 and 2397 say the big hedge funds that provide financial backing to Warrior Met are blocking progress toward a fair contract. The coal company is “the leading dedicated U.S.-based producer and exporter of high quality metallurgical (‘met’) coal for the global steel industry.” (Business Wire, Feb. 24)

The Alabama miners brought their

struggle to New York City and were welcomed with tumultuous solidarity by other workers and union leaders at the rally, including some present from South Dakota, Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, as well as the New York metro area.

The ralliers ultimately took over the entire street in front of BlackRock.

Kooper Caraway, president of the South Dakota Federation of Labor, emphasized: “I’ll tell you this — young workers ... South Dakotans, Californians, workers all over the world are going to stand with you and support you; and there’s nothing BlackRock or any other rich asshole can do about it.” Caraway, who at 27 became the youngest Central Labor Council president in the U.S., began organizing as a teenager in Texas against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids.

Stuart Appelbaum, president of the



Alabama coal miners and supporters rally on Wall Street, July 28.

Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, shouted from the stage: “From Alabama to New York, from retail workers to miners, this is everybody’s fight!”

Earlier in 2021, RWDSU waged a fierce struggle to organize almost 6,000 predominantly Black workers at a Bessemer, Ala., Amazon warehouse.

Academy Award-winning actor and activist Susan Sarandon, punching her fist in the air from the rally podium, affirmed the miners’ strike slogan: “One

day longer, one day stronger”; and she was immediately joined by hundreds of voices repeating the pledge.

Many union locals were present at the rally, with members waving signs and tweeting pledges of support. RWDSU Local 338 messaged: “Local 338 stands in unyielding support of UMWA @MineWorkers in their fight for a fair contract! No contract, no coal!”

Unions in support were CWA Administrative Employees Local 1180,

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Protest against ending the federal eviction moratorium, July 21, Miami.

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Housing is a right!

Bulletin, Aug. 3: Tonight the CDC announced that the eviction moratorium would be extended another 60 days in parts of the country with “substantial and high levels of community transmission”—about 90% of the U.S. This face-saving concession from President Joe Biden and the Democrats was only granted after there were protests around the country, including on the steps of the Capitol.

Having a roof over one’s head is a fundamental human right.

The 1948 U.N. Universal Declaration on Human Rights, supplemented by subsequent international conventions, recognizes the right to “adequate food, clothing and housing.” Member countries are supposed to uphold the charter. Yet even in developed capitalist countries like the U.S., millions are houseless.

The ranks of the houseless are about to swell due to the end of the federal eviction moratorium July 31. Put into effect by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in September and extended several times, the moratorium kept millions of households sheltered.

Now some 3.6 million think it likely they will be put out of their living quarters in the next two months, according to the Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey, which tracks the pandemic’s impact. Over twice that number reported falling behind in their rent. Evictions would create a public health emergency, with people forced to live in crowded shelters — especially with COVID cases rising again as the Delta variant spreads.

“The moratorium has shielded struggling renters from eviction whether

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TEAR DOWN
THE WALLS

Stop shackling!

6, 7

Rodney Reed is innocent

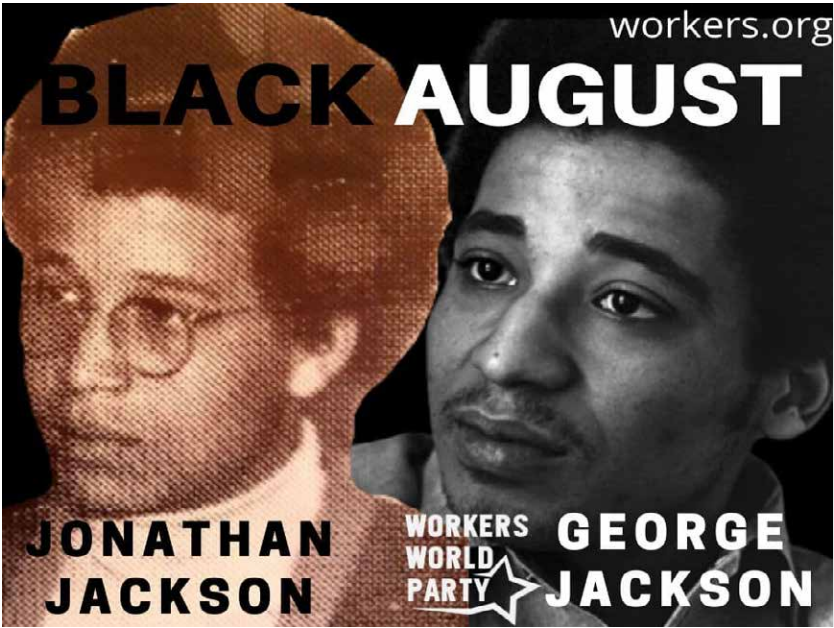
Free Dr. Mutulu Shakur

Daniel Hale: antiwar prisoner

Honor Black August! Support Workers World!

Did you know the month of August holds special meaning for the Black Liberation struggle? This August marks the 402nd anniversary of the arrival of the first ship of Africans brought in chains to the shores of the British colony of Virginia in 1619. That means 244 years of slavery — with its countless injustices, brutality and institutionalized crimes against humanity. These atrocities continue, in this white-supremacist, capitalist society, to this day.

But August is also a time to commemorate the Black Resistance Struggle from the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 to the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831, from the Underground Railroad of 1800-1865 to the Fugitive Slave Law Convention in 1850, from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925 to the March on Washington in 1963, the Watts Uprising in 1965 and the National Prison Strike from Aug. 21-Sept. 9 in 2018.



WW honors Black August martyrs, Jonathan and George Jackson.



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

A number of freedom fighters were born in August, including Marcus Garvey, Fred Hampton and Russell Maroon Shoatz, while a number died: W.E.B du Bois, Huey P. Newton and Jonathan Jackson. Jackson was killed Aug. 7, 1970, while attempting to free the imprisoned Soledad Brothers, who included his brother, Black Panther leader George Jackson. One year and two weeks later, on Aug. 21, 1971, George was executed by prison guards. His assassination was an important spark leading to the heroic Attica Prison Rebellion in September 1971.

Your donations matter!

Workers World depends on your help. The WW Supporter Program was founded 44 years ago to help build this revolutionary socialist paper. Since the early 1990s, the fund has supported the website workers.org., where articles from the newspaper are posted daily and where the PDF file of the weekly paper is posted. The paper is now being printed and mailed out once a month.

For a donation of \$75 to \$100 to \$300 a year, members receive a year's subscription, letters about timely issues and one, two or three free subscriptions, respectively, to give to friends. Supporters can receive a copy of the book, "What road to socialism?" (Notify us.) Or read it for free at workers.org/books.

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We're grateful for your help in building Workers World!

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

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Honoring mental health

Athletes like Simone Biles deserve support

By Monica Moorehead

The biggest news coming out of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics is not about the pandemic excluding large numbers of crowds at venues and not about unfulfilled expectation of gold medals won by U.S. athletes compared to other countries.

By far, the biggest news during the first Olympic week was that 24-year-old Simone Biles, recognized as the greatest gymnast of all time regardless of gender, withdrew from the gymnastics women's team final on the first day of the competition July 27.

The four-time gold-medal-winning African American gymnast was expected to win even more gold medals for team all-around, individual all-around and various apparatus competitions over the two-week span of the Olympics. Biles became legendary when she outshined her competition during the 2016 Rio Olympics in Brazil. Since 2013 she has won seven U.S. all-around national titles and 19 world championships leading up to Tokyo.

Biles is known for her almost unbelievable power in all gymnastic forms, especially vault and floor exercises. Mainstream media had already crowned her a multiple gold medal winner before the games even began.

That changed dramatically during the finals of the gymnastics women's team event. Biles attempted an Amanar vault — a roundoff back handspring onto the vaulting table, followed by 2 1/2 twists in the air. Biles only did a 1 1/2 twist, looking lost in the air and eventually landing awkwardly with her knees deeply bent. It first appeared that she was physically injured.

Following the vault, she walked out of the arena with her coach. Minutes later, she reappeared to announce that she was bowing out for the rest of the team competition and then hugged her teammates. The U.S. team eventually came in second, taking the silver medal.

During her press conference, Biles explained that her mental health had to take precedence over her competing. "I was second-guessing myself and thought, 'Best to let the girls do it.' And they stepped up to the plate. I didn't want to go out there and do something dumb and get hurt. It's not worth it. We're not just athletes; we're people."

She went on to say, "It sucks when you're fighting with your own head. When you think, what is everybody going to think; the internet ... You just feel that weight of the world. I pushed through that. At the end of the day, we want to walk out of here. I wasn't in the right mental space." (Wall Street Journal, July 27)



Simone Biles

Two days later, Biles withdrew from the women's individual all-around final. Suni Lee, her teammate, took the gold medal. As of Aug. 1, Biles has withdrawn from the finals competition in the vault, uneven bars and floor exercise. She won the bronze medal in the balance beam competition on Aug. 3.

Solidarity from other gymnasts

All athletes feel pressure to perform to the best of their ability, especially in competitive sports. But the pressure that gymnasts, especially young women, feel is very unique and highly specialized to their sport. Gymnasts are expected to perform incredible twists and multiple flips in the air. That requires them to be constantly mentally aware of their orientation in space in order to land on their feet, safely in control. Any mental distraction can cause disorientation in their spatial memory. This can result in serious injury, including neck injuries that could cause temporary or permanent paralysis. This kind of disorientation for gymnasts is known as the "twisties."

Christina Myers, a former gymnast and now a gymnastics coach in Birmingham, Ala., told BBC News: "Imagine skydiving, and your parachute won't open. Your body starts adding extra twists and flips to the skill you're supposed to be doing. That can affect even skills that feel as routine as walking to an elite gymnast. Your brain wants nothing more than to perform the intended skill correctly, but your body feels like it suddenly has a mind of its own. Because the twisties are mainly psychological, the harder you try to push through, the harder the twisties push back." (July 28)

Many other gymnasts, current and retired, have expressed support for Biles'

decision to withdraw, citing the pressures they felt to win at all costs. These include members of the "Magnificent Seven," U.S. gymnasts who won the gold medal as a team at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

One of them, Kerri Shrug, felt immense pressure from her coach, the now-disgraced abuser Béla Károlyi, to perform injured — when he forced her to vault on a broken ankle!

Another member of the Seven, Dominique Moceanu, tweeted, "I was 14 [years old with a] tibial stress fracture, left alone with no cervical spine exam after a fall. I competed in the Olympic floor final, minutes later. Simone Biles's decision demonstrates that we have a say in our own health — a 'say' I NEVER felt I had as an Olympian."

Dominique Dawes, the first Black woman to win a gold medal in the individual all-around gymnastics competition, commented on CNBC in response to Biles: "I felt that [pressure] leading into the 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta, Ga. We were expected to win gold, to make history, to be the first-ever women's team to do that; and I knew, as one of the leaders of that team, that my scores really did matter, so I feel what she's feeling. But I hope she knows that we're behind her every step of the way; and no matter what the outcome is, we love her, and she's a positive force for the sport of gymnastics." (July 28)

A survivor of sexual abuse

Biles has said she felt a weight on her shoulders to win gold medals especially over the past year. She is the only woman still in Olympic competition who lived through and survived the sexual abuse of Dr. Larry Nassar, former team doctor

for the U.S. women's national gymnastics team. Nassar assaulted hundreds of young girls and women under the pretext of medical treatment.

In an NBC interview before the Olympics, Biles disclosed she felt compelled to represent all the gymnasts who were molested for many years by Nassar. Biles said, "I feel like, with everything that happened, I had to come back to the sport to be a voice, to have change happen. Because I feel like if there weren't a remaining survivor in the sport, they would've just brushed [the abuse] to the side.

"But since I'm still here, and I have quite a social media presence and platform, they have to do something. So I feel like, coming back, gymnastics wasn't the only purpose I was supposed to do." (April 14)

Even though Nassar will be spending the rest of his life in prison after being convicted in 2018, to this day U.S.A. Gymnastics and the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee have not been held accountable for covering up Nassar's abuse.

Biles stated in the April 4, 2019, tweet: "The more I learn, the more I hurt. USAG failed us. USOC failed us. Many failed us. And they continue to fail us. Real and actual change isn't easy, but it's clear there's a lot more work that needs to be done."

Aly Raisman, Biles' teammate at the 2016 Olympics, echoed the widespread support for her action saying, "I think sometimes people forget that Olympic athletes are human, and the mental health of athletes really matters. When I was training, there really weren't resources for us to talk about our mental health or even ways to understand it. So I'm not even sure if there are resources out there in Tokyo for Simone. ...

"We need to be asking the organizations like USA Gymnastics and the United States Olympic Committee: What are you doing to support your athletes, and how can we prevent athletes feeling like they are struggling so much that they can't finish the competition? What can we learn from this?" (ESPN, July 27)

Bringing global attention to mental health

Recently four-time Grand Slam tennis champion Naomi Osaka withdrew from both the French Open and Wimbledon, citing mental health issues. She also decided not to participate in post-match press conferences — an action which can result in thousands of dollars in fines.

Though Osaka was criticized for taking this stance, she was also praised. Biles credited Osaka for inspiring her to speak about her own mental health issues.

The pandemic since February 2020 has impacted millions of lives on a global scale. Recent reports show that life expectancy inside the U.S. dropped by more than a year since COVID-19 hit. Within that year, millions of people were out in the streets protesting police brutality — a massive outpouring ignited by the murder of George Floyd in May 2020.

Both Biles and Osaka — prominent women of color athletes, unprecedented in their skills and popularity — have been steadfastly outspoken against racism.

Given all the societal issues that Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka face — such as racism, gender inequality, pressure to perform on the highest level and a global pandemic — their decision to put their mental health first is truly heroic and inspiring to others going through similar trauma. □

U.S. Out of the Caribbean

Hands Off Haiti! Hands Off Cuba!

By Devin Cole
Occupied Mvskoke Creek
Land (Pensacola, Fla.)

The Central Gulf Coast branch of Workers World Party hosted a gathering and discussion July 25 on the role of U.S. colonialism and imperialism in the Caribbean, focused on Cuba, Haiti and Puerto Rico.

The branch was joined by members of Democratic Socialists of America and

Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative) to hear speeches from Cuban and Haitian activists, as well as a report on the privatization of Puerto Rico from a WWP candidate.

Afterwards, WWP hosted a roundtable discussion on U.S. imperialism in the Caribbean with Workers World Party national and New York City branch leaders. Monica Moorehead, Makasi Motema and Sara Flounders discussed various topics, from the Party's long history of solidarity with Cuba, to the role of U.S.

imperialism in Haiti, to the worldwide effects of sanctions that the U.S. has imposed on at least 40 countries.

Attendees connected the Biden administration's new sanctions on Cuba to the sanctions placed on the North Korea, Yemen, Syria and other countries constantly under the microscope of U.S. imperialism.

Everyone left the event committed to better understanding the role of U.S. imperialism and colonialism — and with rededication to ending both! □

On the picket line

WHEN WE FIGHT WE WIN!

By Marie Kelly

Nurses are once again on the front line of the pandemic, due to the upsurge caused by COVID-19 Delta variant. Simultaneously, all across the U.S. nurses are organizing to fight for patient and staff safety — as hospital corporations rake in profits, and their executives command million-dollar salaries.

In Massachusetts, the **800 nurses at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Mass.**, continue their strike, now in its fifth month. The nurses are demanding safer patient-to-nurse staffing ratios that improve recovery time from illness, prevent serious injuries during hospitalization and reduce hospital-acquired infection rates.

In a show of solidarity, the striking nurses joined the picket line of health care workers at the **Massachusetts Visiting Nurse Association in Dorchester, Mass.**

These workers are holding a one-week strike to protest increased patient caseloads, which hinder proper delivery of care.

In Illinois, the **200 nurses at Chicago's Community First Medical Center** are on strike after 14 months of negotiation. They are still without a first contract, after voting to join National Nurses United in 2019. Staffing issues are at the core of the dispute, while hospital administration continues to spend money on public relations campaigns that tout nurses as heroes. "More like suckers" is one Community First nurse's interpretation of this failure to treat nurses with the respect they deserve. (The Guardian, July 30)

The **1,400 nurses at University of Southern California's Keck Hospital and Norris Cancer Hospital** held a strike July 14-15 to protest long shifts and understaffing and to demand hospital administrators stop hiring outside agency contract nurses, who lack the skills needed to care for special types of patients. (LA Times, July 14) For example, nurses must have additional training to administer chemotherapy drugs to cancer patients.

In Michigan, the threat of a strike by **500 nurses at McLaren Macomb Hospital outside Detroit** forced concessions at the bargaining table. (Detroit Free Press, July 24) The nurses, members of Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 40, will vote soon on

the tentative three-year contract. OPEIU and the Michigan Nurses Association (MNA) are part of a 10-union coalition accusing McLaren Health Care Corporation, which owns 14 hospitals, of unfair labor practices.

The hospital corporation refuses to disclose the amount of pandemic federal relief funds it received. The unions called on the corporation to cap executives' salaries at \$1 million and put relief funds into hazard pay and PPE. MNA is also pushing Michigan lawmakers to pass the Safe Patient Care Act to legislate safe patient-nurse staffing ratios and to protect whistleblowers from retaliation when they speak out about unsafe hospital conditions.

In Pennsylvania, the **Service Employees International Union Healthcare Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, representing thousands of nurses** across the state, are pressuring state legislators to pass safe patient-nurse staffing through the Patient Safety Act. Pennsylvania nurses' unions have launched the Enough is Enough campaign to force the state Department of Health to increase the minimum hours of care necessary to adequately care for nursing home residents.

Pennsylvania's nursing home residents account for over 13,000 deaths from COVID-19, out of a total of nearly 28,000 statewide. The nurses want the minimum hours of care increased from the current 2.7 hours to the industry standard of 4.1 hours. □

Philadelphia Cops assault housing protesters outside mayor's condominium

By Joe Piette

Cops assaulted a peaceful protest and barbecue on July 27 outside Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney's condominium. The fifth "Tuesdays at Kenney's" protest since May 25 had been organized to demand more action to reduce homelessness in the city.

Organizers were grilling hamburgers and setting food and drinks on tables at curbside, when Civil Affairs Sergeant Eric Reiser walked past them onto condominium property and announced people had to move. The four or five participants on private property, including this Workers World reporter, immediately began moving to the public sidewalk.

One of the participants didn't walk fast enough in the eyes of the cop, and he violently pushed her. She would have fallen to the ground, if I hadn't prevented her fall with my right arm.

The cop, a Civil Affairs sergeant, further escalated the confrontation by threatening to arrest the victim of his assault. He announced organizers had 10

minutes to remove tables and leave; but minutes later he ordered cops from the Civil Affairs, Traffic and Narcotics Strike Force units to rush in, causing a melee.

ACT UP spokesperson Max Ray-Riek later told public radio/television WHYY: "The Philadelphia Police Department forcibly removed us and refused us our First Amendment right to protest. Officers shoved people and stepped on or kicked people, grabbed people by their throats and dragged them." (July 28)

Stop evictions, end houselessness

ACT UP Philadelphia stated on Facebook: "Two members were forcibly removed by law enforcement; a total of four members are now getting medical attention as a result of police violence, and we are standing by to support.

"Our BBQ was going to be a peaceful speakout against Mayor Kenney's policies that keep people homeless. We had spent several days talking to folks who are unhoused and directly impacted by these policies and inviting them to enjoy a BBQ with us and speak out for their rights.

Instead, Mayor Kenney had his police use violence against protestors once again." (facebook.com/actupphilly, July 27)

A spokesperson for Kenney told WHYY, the mayor "learned of the incident after it was over and was not on-site during the protest activity." That statement doesn't deny that he ordered the police to remove the demonstrators. The two people arrested were charged with assaulting an officer and other offenses. They were then released on their own recognizance.

ACT UP has been demanding that "the city place a moratorium on all evictions; establish an oversight board comprised of unhoused individuals and those using OHS services to review OHS policies, practices and personnel; reopen COVID hotels until everyone has access to housing; institute housing-first, trauma-informed programs that swiftly place people in permanent housing; remove Office of Homeless Services Director Liz Hersh and all OHS upper management from office; and



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Police attack protesters, July 27.

evaluate every contractor to confirm they are providing true, shelter-informed, housing-first care." (June 29)

ACT UP Organizer Jamaal Henderson said they will continue to hold protests. "We're not going to let Philadelphia PD bully us into not exercising our constitutional right to protest," he said. (Philadelphia Inquirer, July 28) □

Portland protesters say 'Donut cross our picket line'

By Lyn Neeley
Portland, Ore.

Over 100 workers protested in front of Portland's Voodoo Doughnuts July 30 for the illegal firing of 11 workers. Joining the picket line were workers representing over half a dozen unions and coming from as far away as Seattle.

Early this month, when Portland's record-breaking temperatures hit 116°F, many businesses closed due to unsafe working conditions. But Voodoo Doughnut workers were expected to keep working inside the kitchen with weak air-conditioning, large southwest-facing windows and deep fryers boiling.

The workers said on their Facebook page that the temperature at the shop was so high that customers stepped inside and immediately departed. "The doughnuts themselves melt in the heat, as the frosting never fully dries."

When some of the workers started to

pass out and show signs of heat exhaustion, the manager told them, "If you're too hot, you can go home." (tinyurl.com/9rt5jvk2)

Thirteen workers left for two days until temperatures lowered towards 100°F. But when they returned, 11 of them were

fired, some of whom the manager knew were union organizers.

The workers formed Doughnut Workers United in March of last year, but have not been formally recognized by Voodoo's corporate office. The union is affiliated with the Portland chapter of Industrial Workers of the World and gets support from Teamsters Local 225. They have filed complaints with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Oregon State Bureau of Labor and Industries and the National Labor Relations Board, for unlawful retaliation for an unsafe work refusal.

Voodoo doughnut has locations in 11 cities including Orlando, Fla., Houston, Hollywood, Calif., and Denver. Mark Medina with IWW told WW: "There were demonstrations in support of the Portland Voodoo Doughnut workers in Los Angeles, Houston and Austin, Texas and Eugene, Oregon." □



July 30 protest

WW PHOTO: JIM WALLACE

Solidarity rally for striking Alabama miners

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Alabama

Preparations are under way in Brookwood, Ala., for an Aug. 4 solidarity rally for striking United Mine Workers (UMWA) members who have maintained a picket line 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at the entrances to Warrior Met Coal facilities since April 1.

Miners, other union members and community supporters are expected to travel from near and far to let the Wall Street hedge fund investors backing Warrior Met know that this is a battle the working class is determined to win.

This writer will be traveling to Brookwood on a bus caravan leaving from Atlanta organized by the Georgia State AFL-CIO. Retired United Auto Workers members have already filled one bus as of this writing.

Brookwood is just 30 miles from Bessemer, Ala., where the recent historic attempt by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union to organize workers at an Amazon warehouse inspired class solidarity across the U.S. and around the world. Despite its racist Jim Crow power structure, Alabama has a long legacy of unionization in mining and steel production, uniting Black and white workers.



In Alabama, coal miners on the picket line at Warrior Met Coal watch the rally on Wall Street held by their United Mine Worker siblings and other union supporters July 28 in New York City. Actor Susan Sarandon is seen chanting with the crowd: “One day longer, one day stronger!”

According to Larry Spencer — International Vice President of District 20, UMWA, and a coal miner himself for 10 years — the strong bonds among miners are rooted in their absolute reliance on each other to stay alive, as they work hundreds and hundreds of feet underground under extremely dangerous conditions.

In 2016, Warrior Met bought out the

Jim Walters coal company when it went through bankruptcy. In order to save their jobs, the workers agreed to sharp concessions with the promise that, when profitability was restored, the cutbacks in wages and other benefits would be eliminated in the 2021 contract.

Now the highly paid bosses of Warrior Met Coal have stonewalled negotiations

to raise pay — even to the level of five years ago — or to end the exceedingly excessive work hours of 12 hours a day, six and seven days a week.

Warrior Met has brought in scabs from other states, who, Spencer reported, have in several instances deliberately tried to run over picketers with cars or trucks.

Delegations of miners have traveled to New York City twice to picket on Wall Street, including July 28 at the offices of BlackRock, the hedge fund with the largest investments in Warrior Met Coal. BlackRock is a major shareholder in some 18,000 companies, banks and financial services firms in the U.S., EU, Britain, Asia and Latin America. (Workers World, “BlackRock capital finance works with Republicans and Democrats,” January 26)

The courageous coal miners of Brookwood, Ala., are facing off against the monied interests of the capitalist class.

It is the task of all workers, organized and unorganized, to join in solidarity to secure a victory in this fight!

Larry Spencer’s remarks are from an interview with “The Labor Forum,” a program of WRFG 89.3 FM in Atlanta. The interview aired Aug. 2. For a schedule of the weekly audio programs, check wrfglaborforum.org.

Striking Alabama miners take fight to Wall Street

Continued from page 1

International Union of Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers Local 463, United Auto Workers Local 2110, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, PSC-CUNY Professional Staff Congress and others.

Mine workers, families fighting ‘no matter the cost’

Alabama miner Braxton W tweeted from the rally: “We Are One is the message we sent to BlackRock today in New York. As #unions, as workers, we will stand and fight for ourselves and all of our brothers and sisters no matter the distance, no matter the industry, no matter the cost. We will be here #onedaylonger

#1u #Solidarity.”

In a rally video, Left Voice asked Alabama miner Josh Krim what he was fighting for. He replied: “To get to spend time with our families. From the time I hired in, I’ve had, literally, two days off. That’s it. We’re on an 800-hour probationary period. Being new, like me, you’re lucky to get a day off. I literally didn’t see my kid for two months. And that — that’s rough. While we’re here trying to get a contract, those COOs and CEOs, those big people who run Warrior Met, they’re at the beach, kicking back. They don’t care. We’re fighting to survive so we can get back to work. We’re here till it’s over. We’re not giving up.” (Twitter, July 28)

The Alabama miners labor in one of the world’s most life-threatening workplaces.

The Brookwood mines are sunk 1,400 to 2,100 feet underground — some of the deepest vertical-shaft coal mines in North America. In 2001 methane gas explosions and a cave-in at one of the mines killed 13 workers, including a former high school classmate of this writer.

Krim said of working conditions: “Dusty, really dusty. Most days we’re there at least a minimum of 12 hours. No light other than what’s on your hard hat. In the dark pretty much all day.”

Alabama miners, still on the picket line 24 hours a day, seven days a week, watched the rally on a big screen as they defended the line. One of the women of the local UMWA auxiliary recently survived a vehicular attack on the line. The auxiliary has worked overtime to keep

their union families fed, clothed and cared for.

On July 31 labor reporter Kim Kelly tweeted she was “getting reports of yet another vehicular attack on the #WarriorMetStrike picket line ... just days after hundreds of strikers traveled to NYC to protest in front of Warrior Met investor BlackRock.”

An Aug. 4 support rally has been called in Alabama. Plans are for labor leaders and members to come from across the country.

To support the strike materially, see Twitter @UMWAStrikePantry. For support rallies and protests, go to @LaborReporters, Valley Labor Report, Alabama’s only union radio show.

Glen Ford ¡presente!

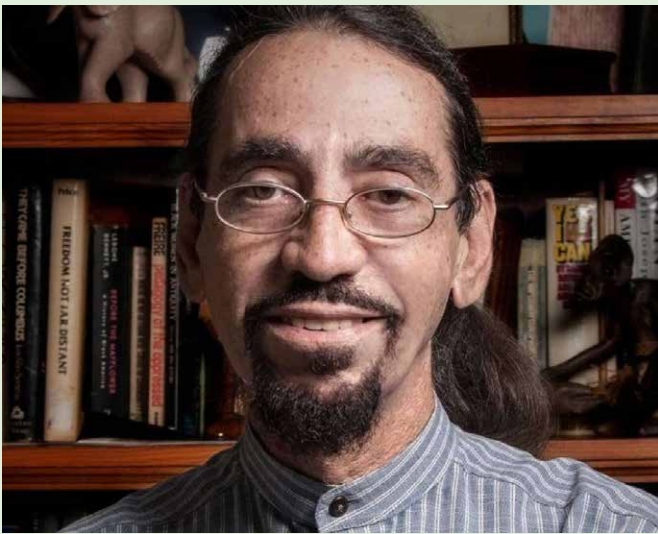
The death of groundbreaking and history-making Black journalist Glen Ford was announced July 28 by his co-editor at Black Agenda Report, Margaret Kimberley. Ford was 71. In a Truthout tribute, Kimberley said: “He was the consummate journalist, a man who demanded rigorous analysis of himself and others, and he lived by the dictum of afflicting the comfortable and comforting the afflicted.”

Glen Ford was a socialist, a Vietnam-era military veteran, a member of the Black Panther Party in 1969-70, and a union activist during the 1980s. Raised in Columbus, Ga., in the days of segregationist apartheid, he began his journalistic career reading newswire copy on the radio at age 11. In 1977, Ford launched “America’s

Black Forum,” the first nationally syndicated Black news interview program on commercial television. Ford co-founded the Black Commentator in 2002, a weekly journal that became the most influential Black political site on the internet. In 2006 Ford, along with Kimberley, Bruce Dixon and Leutisha Still, launched “Black Agenda Report,” which quickly became, as Kimberley commented, “the go-to site for all leftists.”

For more on Ford’s life and political impact, see Kimberley’s tribute at tinyurl.com/3498kt8s.

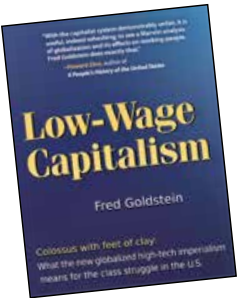
— Report by Minnie Bruce Pratt



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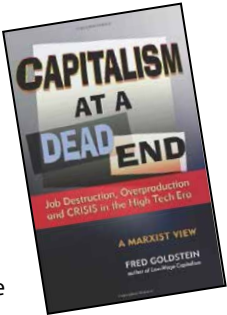
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Shackling harms hospitalized incarcerated workers

By Marie Kelly and Phebe Eckfeldt

An incarcerated person must be very sick before the prison administration will allow them to go to an outside hospital. Such was the case for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who contracted COVID-19 as a result of his incarceration in a Pennsylvania prison. Mumia also suffers from congestive heart failure, a debilitating disease in which the heart muscle has weakened and cannot pump well, so fluid surrounds it, making it difficult to breathe, and therefore to walk or run.

In addition, Mumia suffers from the effects of hepatitis C, cirrhosis of the liver, hypertension and a severe skin condition. Despite this, Mumia lay shackled to a hospital bed for four days in February and again in April. There is no way he could have attempted to escape. A restraining cuff was placed on his ankle, worsening the skin condition. It became raw, sore and painful.



Pam Africa points to a photo showing bleeding on Abu-Jamal's leg, as the result of shackling during late February hospitalization.

These are clearly deliberate acts of torture, meant to harm and dehumanize Mumia. Also, an armed guard is stationed with an incarcerated person 24 hours a day, and another guard can be located outside on the grounds of the facility.

At a virtual press conference April 15, Dr. Johanna Fernandez of the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home said, "Mumia is shackled to a hospital bed right now. Loud and clear are the echoes of chattel slavery in the

Americas, that developed handcuffs, shackles and fetters to control the enslaved population. This practice is now common in prisons throughout the U.S. Pennsylvania Department of Corrections administrator John Wetzel publicly denounced white supremacy, but his prisons are practicing a system of racist barbarity." (Workers World, April 22)

A team of U.N. human rights experts issued a statement April 20 saying: "The use of shackles during his hospital stays is deplorable and causes Mr. Abu-Jamal additional and unnecessary suffering. International standards on the treatment of prisoners clearly stipulate that instruments of restraint are to be imposed only when no lesser form of control would be effective to address the risks posed by unrestricted movement." (tinyurl.com/8we77djp)

Shackling of elderly or chronically ill prisoners has many negative impacts: risk of falls and deep venous thrombosis, damage to skin integrity, increased pain

from poor mobility and positioning, and difficulty by health care workers to properly assess a patient's condition. "The number of inmates over the age of 55 has increased 400% from 1993 to 2013, stated the U.S. Department of Justice. As of October 2018, more than 18% of prison inmates are over 50 years of age. In general, seniors need more medication and medical attention." (tinyurl.com/2h65czr9)

When an incarcerated person is shackled, this usually means one wrist and one ankle are clamped with a metal cuff and secured by a chain to the bed. The excuse is the individual may try to escape. After being taken to a hospital from a prison in Cook County, Ill., after testing positive for COVID-19, Jeffrey Pendleton, 59, died a week later, chained to the hospital

Part 1

bed. Pendleton was fighting for his life. His brothers filed a lawsuit stating that the shackling violated his constitutional rights. The prison had a 24-hour armed guard watch him.

Stop shackling incarcerated people during childbirth

The United Nations, Amnesty International and other prisoner-advocate groups condemn the practice of shackling during childbirth. The American Nurses Association and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists oppose the practice, citing the risk of harm to both the pregnant woman and fetus.

The American Psychological Association emphasizes that shackling during childbirth is disproportionately used against women of color. The APA opposes the practice because of the emotional trauma it causes, especially since many incarcerated women are survivors of sexual abuse and/or physical violence and trauma. Many of them have mental health and substance abuse problems.

Being shackled during medical appointments and labor and delivery increases depression, mental distress, anguish and PTSD. Instead of providing comprehensive health care for people with mental health problems, the capitalist system throws thousands of people into prisons where they are neglected, beaten and tortured.

Generally, shackling makes a person physically unstable, increasing the likelihood of falls and an inability to break the falls. For pregnant prisoners, this means the fetus is put at risk, and the possibility of miscarriage increases. Shackles used during labor and delivery can cause excruciating pain and complications, because the pregnant person cannot freely change positions to help alleviate it. Also, shackles can cause severe cuts when a person struggles to change position. The APA says the practice can cause life-threatening complications. (tinyurl.com/2y7ub356)

The APA says doctors have reported the inability to administer epidurals because of restraints. "In one documented case, a person restrained during labor experienced a hip dislocation that caused permanent deformities and pain, stomach



muscle tears and an umbilical hernia."

An ACLU briefing paper on the shackling of imprisoned women and girls states: "During the final stages of labor, it is important for the physician to act quickly in order to avoid potentially life-threatening emergencies for both the mother and the unborn child. Shackles severely limit this and as such pose a threat to the survival of the fetus. ... In instances necessitating an emergency C-section, a delay of as little as five minutes is enough to cause permanent brain damage to the child."

Exploding the myth that women in labor are a threat, thereby giving prison administrations an excuse to abuse them, the ACLU says, "Among the states that have restricted shackling of pregnant prisoners, none have documented instances of women in labor escaping or causing harm to themselves, the public, security guards or medical staff." (tinyurl.com/2fv9baea)

After delivery, shackles interfere with the bonding process between mother and child. The mother has a hard time safely handling her baby and breastfeeding. The ultimate cruelty is that after the hospital stay, the baby and mother are separated until the prison sentence is over.

In 2018, the First Step Act was enacted. One provision banned shackling of imprisoned individuals during labor and childbirth in federal prisons. However, the law allows for exceptions for flight risk or risk of harm to oneself or others. The law does not apply to state or county prisons, in which 85% of incarcerated women are held throughout the country. As of 2020, 23 states still did not ban shackling of pregnant prisoners. Only in Rhode Island is there legal recourse and the possibility of monetary compensation for people who were shackled during childbirth.

Shackling patients during childbirth should be banned unconditionally at all levels of the carceral system. Anything less than a total ban will allow this dehumanizing practice to continue.

Marie Kelly is a registered nurse, and Phebe Eckfeldt is a licensed practical nurse.

Rodney Reed Evidence of innocence finally heard

By Gloria Rubac

"Rodney [Reed] had a Jim Crow trial in a kangaroo court. There's not a system of justice. This was a conspiracy between the sheriffs, the police, the Texas Rangers and the District Attorney. The District Attorney knew Rodney was innocent, and she orchestrated all the lies for the all-white jury," Sandra Reed, the mother of Rodney Reed, told Workers World.

"The state never had any evidence on my son, and now everything is out for the whole world to see. I am more optimistic than ever," she continued.

Rodney Reed has been on death row almost half his life, convicted of the rape and murder of Stacey Stites in 1998. Reed is African American, and Stites was white. They were having a casual, consensual relationship when she was killed in 1996. However, Stites was engaged to a white cop.

Reed was given an indefinite stay of execution in November 2019 by Texas' highest

criminal court and granted an evidentiary hearing. After several COVID delays, the hearing finally began July 19.

Over 50 of Reed's supporters and extended family rallied outside of the courthouse July 17, wearing T-shirts and carrying picket signs reading "I Stand with Rodney Reed" and calling for his freedom. "We're not going to stop, because we know the truth. And we're going to stand on the truth, because it remains the same," Reed's brother Rodrick told the crowd. "And we will stand today to see justice done in this case." (tinyurl.com/29nz4mjr)

Gathering at the Kerr Community Center in a nearby park, they received a phone call from Reed, just blocks away in the Bastrop County Jail. He thanked everyone for their support and asked them to continue the struggle and continue to fight.

The facts come out

Beginning July 19 and over the next four days, the defense called almost 20 witnesses. They testified that Reed and

Stites were having an affair, but that it was scientifically impossible for Reed to have killed Stites, who was with her fiancé at the time she was killed. Witnesses described how others in law enforcement lied to protect Stites' fiancé Jimmy Fennell, who was a police officer at the time of the murder.

All evidence points to Fennell as the likely killer. There was testimony that he was controlling and jealous. Fennell did 10 years in a state prison beginning in 2008, for raping and kidnapping a woman who had called the police for help.

Fennell failed two polygraph tests on the question of whether he had strangled Stites. And police had evidence connecting Fennell's truck to the murder; however, the truck was promptly sold after Stites was killed, prohibiting any DNA testing on its contents. (tinyurl.com/hb8mpm)

An audible gasp could be heard in the courtroom when Arthur Snow testified. Snow met Fennell in prison, when Fennell sought protection from a

white-supremacist gang. Snow said that Fennell told him, "You wouldn't believe how easily a belt would break, strangling a (n-word)-loving wh--e."

The belt used to strangle Stites was found in two pieces nearby where her body was discovered.

After nine days, the evidentiary hearing closed. Presiding State District Judge J.D. Langley will hold closing arguments mid-August. He will submit his findings to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, which will then review the new evidence and Langley's opinion. The Criminal Appeals Court will then determine whether Reed should go free, get a new trial or be executed.

Why is Reed's case so important?

What has happened to Reed, a Black man, is typical of what happens in the criminal injustice system, whether it is in small-town Bastrop, Texas, or in metropolitan New York City.

Continued on page 7

Free Dr. Mutulu Shakur!

By Mirinda Crissman

Despite being imprisoned for 35 years, the revolutionary and aging Dr. Mutulu Shakur remains a steadfast beacon in resistance to the oppressive capitalist system. Born in Baltimore in 1950 to a Black woman who was blind, he learned early that the existing social system was not set up to benefit Black and other oppressed peoples.

After moving to Jamaica, Queens, New York City, with his mother and sister, Dr. Shakur worked with the Revolutionary Action Movement, a Black nationalist group fighting for Black self-determination and socialist change in the U.S. He worked closely with the Black Panther Party and the Puerto Rican Young Lords, among others.

Dr. Shakur was especially known for his critical work at Lincoln Hospital, built in 1839 to receive formerly enslaved people migrating from the South. “By 1970, it was the only medical facility in the South Bronx. It was a dilapidated brick structure from the previous century that had never been upgraded. It was known as the ‘butcher shop of the South Bronx.’ ... The Young Lords, with the participation of some Black Panthers, took over Lincoln Hospital and demanded better health care delivery for people in that community.” (The Abolitionist, March 15, 2013)

Life- saving community medical work

Mutulu Shakur became a political education instructor for the Lincoln Detox Community Program, which he eventually managed, introducing acupuncture to treat withdrawal symptoms from substance abuse. Interested in news accounts of success by Hong Kong doctors applying that treatment, he was stirred by the work of so-called barefoot doctors providing basic, low-cost, grassroots medical care in revolutionary China. (tinyurl.com/5atfnp8s)

The Lincoln Detox Community Program was recognized as the largest and most effective of its kind by the National Institute of Drug Abuse, the National Acupuncture Research Society and the World Academic Society of Acupuncture.

“From 1978 to 1982, Dr. Shakur was the co-founder and co-director of the Black Acupuncture Advisory Association of North America and the Harlem Institute of Acupuncture ... [and cared for] thousands of poor and elderly patients, who would otherwise have no access to treatment of this type.” (mutulushakur.com/about)

In a 2008 interview Dr. Shakur explained, “[then President Richard Nixon and New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller] implemented what they called a Methadone Maintenance Intervention Program ... theoretically, to get a person off of heroin but onto methadone monitored by methadone clinics, and allegedly ... to detoxify a person addicted to chemical warfare off the methadone. ...

“But Methadone Maintenance came into the community as a requirement for aid to dependent children, a requirement if you wanted to get on welfare, a requirement for parole and requirement for probation. ... [The government] brought methadone into the community. In New York City, 60% of the illegal drugs on the street during the early 1970s were methadone ... coming in through Eli Lilly [pharmaceutical corporation] and the Brinks trucks delivering the drugs to the various methadone clinics. And instead of people being detoxified off of methadone, they were being increased in dosage.

“So acupuncture, in the hands of revolutionary-thinking Puerto Rican, Black, progressive white people, was an intervention that the government was not willing to accept, because that attacked and exposed the intention of the government to impose chemical warfare on a certain segment of the community. ... It wasn’t only that we

were providing medical care, we were providing medical care and exposing chemical warfare.” (Sundiataacoli.org, July 2008)

Politically motivated arrest

Dr. Shakur was arrested in 1986 and charged with eight counts under the U.S. conspiracy law known as the “Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization” or RICO Act. His alleged crime was that he was part of a Brinks armored truck robbery in 1981 when a guard and two police officers were killed — the same Brinks implicated in bringing drugs into oppressed communities. The facts are “[a]t no time did the evidence show that Dr. Shakur killed anyone. At two trials the evidence indicated others were responsible for the deaths. (One witness [alleging his guilt] became a government witness in return for a sentencing deal).” (mutulushakur.com/case-facts/)

In the year 2021, incarcerated for 35 years, Dr. Shakur faces what many imprisoned people face — life-threatening medical neglect. This was already severe when Family and Friends of Dr. Mutulu Shakur released a 2019 legal and medical report on his case: “We know that Mutulu is suffering from extensive painful bone lesions, caused by a rapidly growing bone marrow cancer. ... In 2014, he suffered a stroke. ... He has high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and vision problems from glaucoma.

“We fear for his survival and his life. Dr. Shakur’s legal team has filed a compassionate release petition because now his very survival depends on his release. He meets the conditions for compassionate release under federal law. He is a recognized



advocate for human and civil rights, who poses no danger of committing any crimes against anyone. As evidenced by widespread support for his parole, he will be welcomed back into a community that will also provide for his financial and medical support.” (mutulushakur.com, December 14, 2019)

Dr. Shakur began receiving stem-cell irrigation treatment in October 2020, the same month he was up for mandatory parole. He was given notice in January 2021 that he was denied parole and will not have another hearing until 2022. This was his ninth parole denial. (mutulushakur.com, February 24)

Demand immediate release

Workers World understands that the only treatment for Dr. Shakur’s life-threatening illnesses — as in the case of other prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal — is immediate release. As with many political prisoners who aim to build a better world, Dr. Shakur has dared to expose the U.S. capitalist system’s harm to oppressed communities and dared to oppose that. After having stolen several decades of Dr. Shakur’s life from him and his loved ones, the death-making apparatus of the prison industrial complex would rather kill him than release him to continue his work.

The Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party calls for the immediate release of Mutulu Shakur and all political prisoners, particularly those who are aging rapidly. Please sign and spread the petition for clemency/compassionate release for Dr. Shakur at tinyurl.com/2t4tm86a.

Free Mutulu Shakur! Free Sundiata Acoli! Free Ruchell Magee! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all political prisoners! □

Rodney Reed

Continued from page 6

Prison Policy Initiative reveals that “Black people make up 40% of the incarcerated population, but only 13% of the general United States population; and Black families, regardless of individual involvement with the criminal-legal system, lose their loved ones to prisons and jails at higher rates than their white counterparts.” According to PPI, 62.9% of Black people in the U.S. have an immediate family member incarcerated.

Reed’s father Walter died unexpectedly about a decade after Reed was put on death row. And PPI has reported new data that shows that people with incarcerated loved ones have shorter life expectancies and poorer health. (tinyurl.com/s6mdayb)

In Texas, Black people constitute 13% of state residents, but 27% of people in jail and 33% of people in prison. Of those on Texas death row, 44.7% are Black.

The Bastrop County District Attorney Bryan Goertz, Assistant Attorney Generals Lisa Tanner and Matt Ottoway, who prosecuted Reed, hid exculpatory evidence. This is called a Brady violation.

In courtrooms across the U.S., prosecutors regularly withhold evidence from the defense that could blow holes in their cases. That’s a violation of a 1993 Supreme

Court decision that says the prosecutors must turn over any information favorable to the defense.

The murder weapon in Reed’s case, the belt used to strangle Stites, has never been tested for DNA evidence, despite repeated requests from Reed’s attorneys. As of January 2020, the Innocence Project has documented over 365 DNA exonerations in the U.S. Twenty-one of these exonerees had previously been sentenced to death.

The Reed family and the thousands of supporters across the country want Rodney to finally be free. We await the judge’s ruling, hoping it will be fair. Many thousands of eyes are watching. If a favorable recommendation to the Texas high court is accepted, we hope Rodney will be freed or at least have a new trial.

Dr. Martin Luther King’s words in his “Letter from Birmingham Jail” that he smuggled out of jail in 1963 certainly ring true for Rodney Reed. “Justice too long delayed is justice denied.” □



March in February 2015 in Austin, Texas. WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Daniel Hale: Biden’s latest political prisoner

By Ted Kelly

Former U.S. Air Force intelligence analyst and whistleblower Daniel Hale was sentenced to 45 months in prison on July 27 in the U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va.

Hale pleaded guilty in March for charges related to leaking classified information about U.S. drone assassinations to reporters. The documents revealed that 90% of all casualties of U.S. drone attacks are civilians.

In a 10-page, handwritten letter submitted to the judge on motives for his action, Hale said, “My conscience, once held at bay, came roaring back to life,” as he became “increasingly aware that the war had very little to do with preventing terror from coming into the United States and a lot more to do with protecting the profits of weapons manufacturers and so-called defense contractors.”

A post on the Daniel Hale Support Team Twitter account noted the irony that on July 31 — National Whistleblower Day — Hale was transferred to Northern Neck Regional Jail in Warsaw, Va., and housed in a single room with 100 other incarcerated people. None were provided with either mattress or blanket. Hale, in his early 30s, spent his Aug. 1 birthday in the holding cell.

Hale is a military whistleblower who refused to compromise his principles. The U.S. Department of Justice initiated an investigation during former President Donald Trump’s term of office and

prosecuted Hale under the 1917 Espionage Act. For over a century the U.S. has prosecuted anti-war activists as spies, including Eugene V. Debs, Emma Goldman, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and Daniel Ellsberg.

Hale’s sentencing marks the first major espionage conviction by the administration of President Joe Biden.

Jeremy Scahill, the Intercept reporter to whom Hale leaked the classified drone program documents, said in a July 30 Intercept article that prosecutors’ use of the Espionage Act was “an effort to break Hale’s spirit and to frighten other prospective whistleblowers. That President Joe Biden’s Justice Department continued this prosecution, instead of dropping the Trump administration’s case, serves as an ominous reminder that the war on whistleblowers is a permanent fixture of the U.S. system.”

Hale is just the latest of a new generation of U.S. political prisoners, including whistleblowers Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning and Reality Winner — all charged with espionage for leaking information about illegal U.S. intelligence activities and war crimes. Philadelphia teacher and organizer Ant Smith faces years of federal imprisonment, after being charged, like Hale, by a right-wing prosecutor working for the Trump administration. Free Daniel Hale! Free all U.S. political prisoners! □



A sea change on the Pacific

Castillo assumes presidency in Peru

By Marco Teruggi
Lima, Peru

This article is from the Argentine magazine Crisis, revistacrisis.com.ar; translation by John Catalinotto. Read the entire article on workers.org

July 27 — "Enjoy your risotto, it will be the last one you eat for a long time," says one man to another in a restaurant in Miraflores, facing the Pacific Ocean. They're surrounded by pedigree dogs, runners, surfers, modern buildings, manicured gardens, brand name businesses and expensive cars. It's a modern, chic, and at times pretentious style. It has just been confirmed that Pedro Castillo won the elections — but in this area of Lima, 85 percent voted against him.

Castillo is an outsider here. His white hat, his manner of speaking, how he dresses, his dreams, his realities, the message he carries, the country he describes, make him an alien here. He is disdained, feared and despised. Men like Castillo neither walk around Miraflores and San Isidro, sit at their tables, jog or play tennis on Sundays in clubs — nor take planes to get vaccinated in the United States.

Now Castillo, a man from the north of the Andes, a peasant, will become president of Peru, contrary to all the polls at the beginning of the campaign and despite the hyping of fear during the voting. Rarely has it come to this point. Television channels openly called for a coup d'état, instilled terror about communism and Marxism-Leninism, predicted

Rarely has it come to this point: Television channels openly called for a coup d'état, instilled terror about communism and Marxism-Leninism, predicted economic catastrophes with his victory, invented fraud or links with terrorism.

economic catastrophes with his victory, invented fraud or links with terrorism.

They even pardoned Keiko Fujimori [daughter of former president Alberto Fujimori], with all her personal and family history. It was a violent discharge that brought into play the unresolved memories, silences and traumas of Peru.

Nor did Castillo imagine, when he registered for the presidency, that he would make it to the runoff and win. His sudden rise was the product of a series of contingencies: the Peru Libre party did not have a presidential candidate because its leader, Vladimir Cerrón, was legally barred from running.

Peru Libre offered Castillo an alliance for taking on the presidential candidacy. He accepted, with a pencil as a symbol and few resources. Behind these

contingencies was the situation of the country, the crisis, and the need for a proposal and a language like his.

A fractured country

Lima is a city in the desert facing the sea. Humid, without rain, with a sky like a donkey's belly and a few days of blue haze during the long winter months. La Molina, Barranco, the nostalgia of Chabuca Granda, are a part of the city, illusory and real.

There is also the Cercado, a reminder of the viceregal pretension with which the capital was founded, now an area of demonstrations, a political center in San Martín Square, containing the institutions, wooden balconies, decadence and majesty of the colonial center.

And there are the neighborhoods, the hills to the south and north — Villa

Maria del Triunfo or San Juan de Lurigancho — where the houses are stacked up one after another, first brick, then wood, whatever you can get to create a wall and a roof. A dark ochre-colored landscape, earth with a layer of dust on plants and roofs, three-wheeled moto-taxis that climb to the rhythm of chicha/cumbia through the streets of mud, humidity and poverty.

In these cones of desert and exclusion is the untold Peruvian history: the soup kitchens, state abandonment, four uninterrupted decades of internal migration from the provinces, the jungle, the Andes, the Indigenous, the cholo, the discriminated. Peru is doubly fractured: both inside Lima and between areas such as Miraflores and the immense countryside. Pedro Castillo is from that immense countryside, where he won 85 percent of the vote in some regions.

The pandemic, with more than 187,000 deaths in a population of 32 million people, along with the recession, aggravated inequality in a country that had been maintaining a sustained growth of its Gross Domestic Product. The GDP grew by an average of 6.1 percent per year between 2002 and 2013, and 3 percent between 2014 and 2019. In 2020, however, it contracted by 12.9 percent, with three million more people in poverty and 70 percent of employment informal. A stable neoliberalism in macroeconomics accompanied marked social, geographic and racial exclusion, along with environmental conflicts — such as in Cajamarca, Castillo's region.

Castillo speaks

Castillo explained in a meeting with presidents and leaders of the continent: "All the rights of the Peruvian people have been uprooted. ... (M)ore than eight million students have been deprived of



Former peasant and teacher elected president of Peru.

access to education in the last two years; six out of ten children are living on the brink of poverty, anemia, abandonment; almost three million Peruvians are illiterate. We find that for every ten schools, seven are on the verge of collapse; we find that in Peru's populated centers, in the internal part of our country, there is no government presence.

"The farmer is totally abandoned; you go to a medical center and find a piece of band-aid and a pill, there is nothing else to be found. Those of us who have gone to see and report on what is happening in the country have found that the people have answers. They know what needs to be done, and what needs to be done is a structural change, a change in the Constitution."

In that picture we can find some of the reasons the candidate of Peru Libre won the election, coupled with the great political crisis that began in 2016 with the victory of Pedro Pablo Kuczynski over Keiko Fujimori, and the systematic process of siege of the executive by the parliament, led by Fujimorism. The result: four presidents in five years, and a dissolved Congress.

Francisco Sagasti, current president with eight months in office, had as his main political objective to lead the country to an orderly transition on July 28. He was on the verge of failing to achieve it. □

China reforms take on Big Tech

By Joshua Hanks

Over the past several months, the Western media have grown increasingly alarmed over reforms in China that significantly rein in private capital and strengthen the public sector. These reforms primarily target the tech industry, which has grown tremendously in size and power over recent decades. Western capitalist countries also grapple with the rising power of Big Tech, yet they cannot regulate the industry the same way China does.

The reforms may represent the biggest policy shift since 1978, when former leader Deng Xiaoping instituted "reform and opening up," allowing private capital, free trade zones and foreign direct investment in China. "Reform and opening up" led to rapid economic expansion. At the same time, it also created many severe contradictions and challenges, including environmental pollution, corruption and inequality.

Since becoming president in 2013, Xi Jinping has overseen many changes. An anti-corruption campaign begun in 2012 was intensified under President Xi and took down 120 high-ranking officials. Some 100,000 lower-level officials were charged with corruption. Since the government initiated a war on pollution in

2014, air pollution in China's cities has dropped by more than a third. Smoggy skies are now a rare occurrence in Beijing as China leads the world in reforestation efforts and renewable energy production.

The first rumblings of a crackdown on Big Tech and capital more generally came last year with the botched initial public offering (IPO) of Ant Group, a financial technology firm started by billionaire Jack Ma. Ma also started Alibaba, sometimes referred to as China's Amazon.

Before it was set to go public, the government launched an anti-trust investigation of Ant Group, effectively scuttling its IPO. Ma, who criticized China's regulatory approach, went conspicuously silent in the aftermath and has since emerged in public only a few times. The investigation sent a clear message that all firms in China must ultimately be subservient to the state and the Party, not the other way around.

The anti-trust campaign quickly widened its scope to other sectors, including real estate developers, commodity speculators and cryptocurrency miners. Recently, the government announced measures targeting for-profit private tutoring companies and food delivery companies. Private tutoring companies are now banned from making profits and cannot teach foreign curricula or import

foreign textbooks. Nor can they raise capital or accept foreign investments.

The private tutoring sector was regarded by many as a net negative that saddled students with more school work, burdened parents with expensive fees and exacerbated inequality. The Ministry of Education posted on its website that the industry, valued at \$100 billion, had been "severely hijacked by capital." The state will now offer free online tutoring to help fill the gap.

Yuan Yuwei, a fund manager at Olympus Hedge Fund Investments, commented that it "is the most forceful reform I've seen over many years, and the most populist one. It benefits the masses at the cost of the richest and the elite groups." Zhaopeng Xing, senior China strategist at ANZ, said the new policies "send a message that China is not a capitalist country, but embraces socialism." (asiafinancial.com)

The food delivery industry, another growing arm of Big Tech, has similarly fallen under increased regulation. Workers must now earn above the minimum wage and be provided with insurance. Delivery times have been relaxed as well. Food delivery companies have garnered searing



Monument of the hammer and sickle in Nanniwan, some 60 kms from Yan'an, the headquarters of the Chinese Communist Party from 1936 to 1947, in Shaanxi province.

criticisms online over their treatment of workers. The government has listened to the complaints, moving swiftly to regulate the industry. (Reuters, July 26)

These policies underscore China's revolutionary roots. The Communist Party is striving to build a fully developed socialist society by 2049, a century after the founding of the People's Republic, but the current era of "reform and opening up" has led to greater inequality and the rise of a capitalist class. Now this is officially to come to an end, with economic growth no longer being the main priority.

The elimination of poverty and inequality, along with environmental sustainability, now feature prominently in the Party's aims. To achieve these goals will take a class struggle within China to rein in the bourgeoisie, once again. □

The COVID challenge—cooperation or competition

By Sara Flounders

Read the entire article at workers.org

President Joe Biden’s May 25 announcement, calling on U.S. intelligence agencies to launch an inquiry into the charge of a lab leak in Wuhan, China, is an aggressive act that disrupts cooperative work to contain the virus.

Once again, in confronting the greatest immediate challenge facing humanity, U.S. imperialism has played only a disruptive role. The drive to maximize profits and assert global dominance has pushed Washington to recklessly exacerbate the deadly COVID-19 health crisis.

What does U.S. imperialism hope to gain by blocking the World Health Organization’s inquiry into COVID with the demand that the WHO Inquiry focus on blaming China? This intentionally blocks an international initiative which needs full cooperation.

Regarding the 18 intelligence agencies, nine report directly to the U.S. military. The rest cooperate. They provide means to instigate and fight U.S. wars not to provide neutral, unbiased scientific information.

Washington’s handling of the COVID-19 epidemic has obviously been a failure, with more than 625,000 deaths, still the highest official death toll for any single country. This failure begs the question:

Is the U.S. refusal to cooperate on a global strategy for COVID based only on the desire to create a diversion from their own failure? Or is the struggle at the World Health Organization part of the many faceted U.S. strategy using military, economic, diplomatic and cultural weapons to isolate China? Or both?

Bidens blocks global coordination

Whatever its pretext, Biden’s call for a report from U.S. intelligence agencies focused only on China is comparable to throwing a grenade of anti-China hostility into the urgent effort to build future global cooperation—cooperation needed to control the pandemic and mitigate the climate crisis.

China is the one country that has cooperated and shared information with the World Health Organization from the first day.

It is the U.S. who refused cooperation and determinedly ignored the advice, guidelines and WHO tests from the onset of the crisis.

Competition is in the DNA of capitalism. In a country built on serving capitalist profit, the U.S. ruling class and its government function based on ruthless competition. For

them it’s the only way forward. Cooperation is life-threatening.

Cooperation is a direct threat to the U.S. strategy of maintaining its global dominance. This is only possible by stifling the development of underdeveloped countries. Economic sanctions, military escalation and political threats are all of use. Blocking trade, scientific exchanges, high tech industries, cutting-edge technology confirm this direction.

While the U.S. government often makes arrogant threats and demands, it is infrequent that they arouse the kind of sharp blowback that they got from China.

What is suspicious is that the media assault on China began with articles written by two different journalists, each with his own dubious background and neither with any credentials in viruses or public health. Yet these articles were praised in the corporate media and used to build pressure for the anti-China campaign.

One journalist was former New York Times science writer Nicholas Wade, author of a book on genetic theory that many geneticists consider a misuse of their work. Wade’s book has been seized upon by pro-Nazi organizations to support racist and anti-Semitic arguments. His opinion piece published May 5 in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists on the Wuhan lab was completely speculative.

The other was Michael Gordon, who with Judith Miller had co-authored for the New York Times the totally unsubstantiated claims in 2002 that President Saddam Hussein of Iraq was secretly building weapons of mass destruction, a false argument used to justify the 2003 U.S. attack on Iraq. Gordon’s article appeared in the May 23 Wall Street Journal quoting an undisclosed intelligence organization report implicating China.

Other media repeated or referred to the two articles without underlining the history of the writers. Thus they manipulated highly suspicious articles to mobilize official action against China, which Biden announced May 25.

China’s response

Chinese officials and Chinese media are now publicly asking the following: If Biden is really for transparency, shouldn’t some examinations of U.S. labs be in order? For instance, shouldn’t an examination of the notorious biological lab at the Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases in Fort Detrick, Md., be part of a global study? Chinese media has linked to U.S. news



Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases in Fort Detrick, Md. is being investigated for dangerous conditions.

articles on the July 2019 sudden shutdown of research at the Fort Detrick Army lab, where the most deadly and infectious viruses in the world, including Ebola, smallpox, SARS, MERS and the novel coronavirus are worked on.

The CDC ordered Fort Detrick closed for dangerous conditions. As the New York Times headlined Aug. 5, 2019, “Deadly Germ Research Is Shut Down at Army Lab Over Safety Concerns.” The Times explained, “Problems with disposal of dangerous materials led the government to suspend research at the military’s leading biodefense center.”

Opposition to Fort Detrick

For decades there has been opposition to the nefarious role of the biological weapons lab at Fort Detrick.

One of the early opponents, Dr. Gregory Dunkel, told Workers World: “I was a Ph.D. student in mathematics at the University of Maryland from 1962 to 1967 and a campus militant against the university’s complicity with the U.S. war effort in Southeast Asia. We researched, published material and held protests on the connection of University of Maryland—its computer facilities and biology department—and the biological weapons program at Fort Detrick. There were continuing campaigns on the dangers posed by Fort Detrick.”

Now China is asking several sharp questions that deserve attention. For example, rather than focus on only one lab in China, why not examine conditions at more than 200 labs the U.S. runs around the world engaged in virus research?

By the end of July 2019, two retirement communities near the Fort Detrick base witnessed outbreaks of pneumonia of unknown cause. In September 2019, vaping-related, lung-illness cases with symptoms highly similar to COVID-19 doubled in Maryland where Fort Detrick is located.

Pre-December 2019 results

Why not announce DNA results of samples gathered due to the sharp rise in pneumonia in the U.S. many months before the COVID virus was identified in China?

To date the U.S. has refused to check or announce any domestic results of blood samples before the December 2019 announcement of the virus in Wuhan. In contrast, scientists in Italy, Spain and France have announced that by retesting old blood samples and wastewater samples, they found that COVID was widely circulating as long as nine months before China announced they were suddenly dealing with an unknown virus.

Despite this evidence of the virus’s early spread before COVID was identified as a new virus and its DNA sequenced in China, Washington demands a focus of a World Health inquiry only on China.

Corporate media have tried to ignore the pointed and detailed questions raised by China, even though the questions are major coverage in China and many other parts of the world.

24 million in China demand investigation of U.S. lab

Millions of Chinese people have jumped into the discussion by initiating a global petition calling on the WHO to investigate Fort Detrick.

By Aug. 2, more than 24 million people had signed the online petition. While the U.S. media has censored news of this petition, the server hosting the online petition is under constant attack by IP addresses in the U.S.

Governments in more than 60 countries have sent letters to the World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, emphasizing that the virus is the common enemy humanity currently faces, and it can only be conquered by the joint effort of the global community.

They urge the World Health Organization to act according to the resolution made by the World Health Assembly (WHA) and push forward the global probe on the traceability of the virus.

A study of the present pandemic, its early spread in several countries, its global impact and what future measures are needed must be addressed.

Organizations, political parties and scientific bodies around the world are gathering signers and releasing statements urging cooperation and criticizing the U.S. for distorting and weaponizing the inquiry into an attack on China, in an effort to smear and contain China.

All those who oppose U.S. wars and militarism need to step forward and oppose this new U.S. demand on China. Everyone who fights for health care for all needs to speak out and oppose this sabotage of world health cooperation. □

MALAYA organizes for the people’s struggle in the Philippines

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

MALAYA Movement-Texas held “People’s State of the Nation” events in four Texas cities July 25 to honor people in the Philippines martyred by the reactionary government of



Houston
WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte.

The goal of the events in Austin, Dallas, Lubbock and Houston was to build solidarity with the struggles in the Philippines. The date was chosen to coincide with the last State of the Nation Address by Duterte, whose five-year term as president is ending. Progressive Filipino groups protested in different places around the U.S., and events were held by Filipinos internationally.

In Houston, a militant event was held by the youth of MALAYA, with speakers sharing their condemnation of Duterte as well as U.S. imperialism. The center of the event was an altar honoring those killed in the Philippines, with their photos beautifully displayed. A musical tribute was made by a member of the Filipinx Artists of Houston.

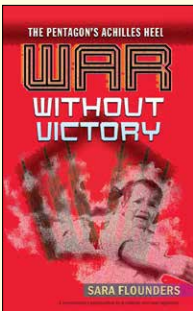
Several speakers referred to the failures of Duterte’s tenure. Twelve million Filipinos are unemployed, and nine out of ten farmers are landless. Less than 4% of people in the country are vaccinated, and over 30,000 have been killed in the supposed “war on drugs.” There are over 700 political prisoners, many elderly and ill. Over 50 trade unionists have been murdered.

The Houston event was organized by MALAYA Movement and Anakbayan at Rice University and supported by the Filipinx Artists of Houston, Palestinian Youth Movement and Workers World Party. □

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.

Read at workers.org/books.
Available at major online booksellers.
PentagonAchillesHeel.com

Housing is a right!

Continued from page 1

they lived in public or private housing, as long as they could prove they had lost income during the pandemic, attempted to obtain rental assistance and made an effort to pay as much rent as possible,” the July 31 New York Times explained. “For many renters and advocates, the expiration has a particularly painful sting because only a small fraction of the rent assistance approved by Congress has been distributed.”

Of the \$47 billion in rental assistance approved by Congress, only \$3 billion has been distributed. Many who qualified for rental assistance due to pandemic-related economic distress, but were not able to access the aid, now owe back rent they cannot pay. Yet President Joe Biden declined on July 29 to extend the moratorium.

While mass evictions loom, Democrats go on recess

As the moratorium expired, Congressional Reps. Cori Bush, Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley slept outside on the steps of the Capitol overnight to draw attention to the problem. They condemned Congress members, including Democrats, who went on summer recess rather than stick around long enough to extend the stay on evictions.

Not everyone wants to see the moratorium on evictions continued. Powerful big landlords and organizations such as the National Association of Realtors filed lawsuits and lobbied to try to end the moratorium before July 31. Republican Senators Pat Toomey and Mike Crapo took \$183,000 and \$281,000, respectively, from

real estate groups; both spoke in Congress against the moratorium last December.

Billionaires like Jeff Bezos are raking in obscene record profits; the stock market is booming, and the gross domestic product is approaching pre-pandemic levels. But 9.5 million people, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, are still officially unemployed. Many more are underemployed, underpaid, forced by the COVID crisis to stay at home or have given up looking for work.

Getting the COVID pandemic under control will not by itself resolve the housing crisis. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, full-time workers being paid the federal minimum wage cannot afford a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the U.S. and can only afford a one-bedroom in 7% of U.S. counties.

Low wage workers have to work more than one job just to afford shelter.

This is criminal. But it’s par for the course under capitalism, because human needs and human rights take a back seat to corporate profit-taking.

There must be a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures — one with no limiting conditions and no expiration date. The temporary supplements to regular unemployment benefits must be reinstated immediately. Minimum wage must be a living wage—even \$15 an hour is not enough! Rent is too high and must come down!

These are righteous demands, but the capitalist class will not grant them without a fight.

Friedrich Engels wrote a series of articles from 1872-73 on “The Housing Question.” His words are relevant



Protesters taped this notice outside the California home of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi July 31.

today: “Only by the solution of the social question, that is, by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, is the solution of the housing question made possible.” □

Cuba is not alone: love and solidarity prevail

The following lightly edited article first appeared in Resumen English July 29, 2021, one day before U.S. President Joe Biden took measures adding additional sanctions on Cubans, while openly assisting Cuban dissidents living in Miami. Many of the countries providing aid to Cuba must do so using military ships and planes in order to circumvent the U.S. embargo. A red salute to all those who continue to find ways to support revolutionary Cuba.

By **Alejandra García**
Havana



PHOTO: CUBA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN DUBLIN
Cuba solidarity activists in Belfast, Ireland.

Those who encouraged the riots in Cuba on July 11 were left empty-handed. The violent events that took place that day have been forgotten, and now Cuba is trending for more moving reasons. In just two weeks, the island has received thousands of expressions of solidarity and tons of real humanitarian aid destined to help us face the economic and health crisis in the country.

On July 25, two planes carrying 89 tons of medicines and supplies needed to treat COVID-19 patients arrived in Havana from Moscow. On the flights, the government of President Vladimir Putin sent wheat, 1 million disposable face masks, meat, refined sunflower oil and other food items.

Russian Ambassador to the island Andrei Guskov assured that the shipment “is a token of the respect and affection my country feels for Cuba, that land of freedom suffocated by the U.S. blockade.”

The Bolivian government confirmed the shipment of 2.5 tons of syringes, 16.5 tons of food and 1 ton of medical and biosecurity material. “From the Plurinational State of Bolivia, we raise our voices of dignity, sovereignty, resistance and solidarity with the Cuban revolution,” President Luis Arce said upon releasing the news.

“Solidarity is not giving our leftovers, but sharing the little we have,” Arce added and assured that he is discussing with Bolivian social and trade union organizations other forms of support to the Caribbean island.

From Mexico, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) sent two Navy ships loaded with more food, medicines, syringes, oxygen tanks, masks and 100,000 barrels of diesel, destined to supply energy to the island’s hospitals.

In his latest morning conference, AMLO recalled that almost all the countries worldwide oppose the blockade, “that medieval and inhumane policy” that the U.S. insists on maintaining.

“Those nations that vote each year in

the United Nations General Assembly against this interference policy should turn their support for Cuba into action. The island needs it today more than ever,” he warned; and [he] recalled that in the last voting held in June, 184 nations were in favor of eliminating the blockade, three abstained and two (the U.S. and Israel) voted in favor of maintaining it.

The diaspora has also mobilized to support its people. Cubans in Japan are collecting medical supplies for Cuban families.

The Cuban Embassy in that Asian country has already received 60 isolation gowns, 1,000 surgical masks and 120 face masks, which will arrive in Cuba in the coming weeks with the Olympic delegation taking part in the Tokyo 2020 games.

And in the U.S. itself, solidarity activists and caring people of good will have mobilized funds to buy 6 million syringes for the island; 1.7 million of them have already arrived prompting President Díaz Canel to comment on his twitter, “we will not tire of saying thanks to the noble American people.”

One might think that this gesture of human kindness would break into the mainstream media, but news from there on Cuba is pretty much reserved for those who put forth lies and hate or call for

intervention and the destruction of the gains of the Revolution.

Something interesting has also happened inside the island since the July 11 riots. Social networks, youth, student and union movements have created campaigns to collect supplies for Matanzas, which experienced an upsurge in the number of COVID-19 cases in the last few weeks.

Local companies even made cars, bicycles and motorcycles available to transport and pick up the products. Cuba has moved forward together.

Where were the people who demanded “humanitarian aid” when the U.S. banned the entrance of a Chinese ship carrying supplies for COVID-19 for Cuba? Where were they when Trump prevented U.S. citizens from sending remittances to their families on the island?

Today they are not present either. Before these demonstrations of love and solidarity, silence prevails from the promoters of the SOS CUBA campaign — which circulated in the networks days before the riots seeking a social uprising in Cuba. They expected bombs to hit the island, instead of food and medicines. They expected hatred among Cubans would grow. Instead, they were left emptyhanded. □

Reissued as an e-book!

Market Elections: How Democracy Serves the Rich

When you couple “democracy” with a “free market” in the presence of multimillionaires and billionaires — think Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates — you get a system where “government” is as much a commodity as anything you can buy in a supermarket.

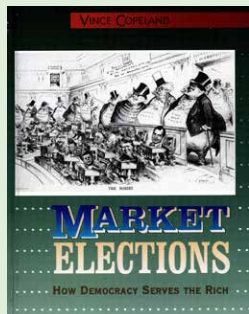
How the wealthy capture the votes of the many is not simple. While the candidates with the most money behind them usually win, Vince Copeland shows that there are exceptions to that rule. Mass struggles impact elections.

Copeland’s “Market Elections: How Democracy Serves the Rich” never loses sight of broad historical trends and yet also

gives space to the quirks and oddities — some comic, some puzzling — of politicians, their entourages and enablers. He presents the class struggle in presidential elections in a clear and witty way that reflects the decades he spent as a class warrior confronting the bosses.

This book has recently been reissued as an e-book and is available in a choice of PDF or ePub formats at workers.org/books.

There is no charge to download this book. But the book is not “free.” Copeland



and the editors of Workers World newspaper devoted hundreds of unpaid hours to produce the original print edition of “Market Elections.” Now editors have spent hundreds of additional hours scanning, proofreading, formatting and verifying that the electronic version is an accurate reflection of the original version.

We hope your donation will help us promote this book and produce e-book versions of others in our archives. To donate, go to workers.org/donate. □

'Peace in Korea'

A crowd of around 50 people, mostly Korean, gathered in front of the U.N. July 27 to demand the U.S. finally sign a peace treaty with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). For 68 years the U.S. has refused — there is only an armistice/ceasefire and the constant threat of U.S. war.

Demonstrators also called for an end to the ominous, annual U.S. “war games” on the Korean peninsula, described by the DPRK as a “rehearsal for war.”

Since the 1950-1953 Korean War, the U.S. military has retained the authority to control both South Korean and U.S. forces in the case of another war breaking out on the Korean Peninsula. There are still about 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea, along with tens of thousands of U.S. military contractors.

Harsh U.S. economic sanctions on the DPRK have continued for 68 years, even during floods, droughts and the global pandemic. Tens of thousands of homes and vast swaths of farmland were damaged during floods last summer.

— Report and photo by G. Dunkel



Hunger strikers, Medhat Mahmoud and Bahgat Saber, NYC

Hunger strike opposes Egyptian repression

The international campaign to oppose President Abdul Fatah el Sisi's repression in Egypt has come to New York City. Medhat Mahmoud and Bahgat Saber, two Egyptians living in the New York metropolitan area, are in the third week of a hunger strike in Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, kitty-corner from the New York headquarters of the United Nations.

They are protesting the death sentence just confirmed against 12 activists, a number of whom are leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, members of the elected Egyptian government.

They were convicted at a mass trial of 739

defendants, where no individualized evidence was presented at any point, and the defense was not given the opportunity to defend individual clients, according to the International Commission of Jurists.

President el Sisi has adopted a policy of harsh repression, given that the Egyptian economy has turned sour. Inflation has jumped, with some economists disputing the official figures. And unemployment — especially for people under 35, even for those with a college degree — is also high.

— Report and photo by G. Dunkel

Cómo defender el derecho al voto

La lucha por el derecho democrático burgués de una persona, un voto aún continúa en Estados Unidos, el país imperialista más poderoso. Esa lucha comenzó una vez que la última persona esclavizada fue liberada en Galveston, Texas, el 19 de junio de 1865, conocido como Juneteenth.

Durante los siguientes 10 años que definieron la Reconstrucción Negra, miles de hombres negros obtuvieron el derecho al voto, lo que dio lugar a su representación política por primera vez en las legislaturas de los estados del Sur, especialmente en Luisiana, Carolina del Sur y Misisipi, bajo la tutela de las tropas federales armadas.

Este derecho y otros importantes logros de este periodo radical fueron trágicamente efímeros cuando las tropas federales se retiraron bajo la presidencia de Rutherford B. Hayes. Esto permitió que la antigua Confederación se reagrupara en forma del Ku Klux Klan y los Consejos de Ciudadanos Blancos, acompañados de la aprobación de leyes opresivas de semiesclavitud utilizadas para aterrorizar a la población negra.

Las mujeres, excluyendo a muchas mujeres de color, obtuvieron el derecho oficial al voto en 1920, gracias a los esfuerzos del movimiento sufragista.

Desde finales de la década de 1880 hasta mediados de la década de 1960, el apartheid Jim Crow gobernó el Sur profundo, hasta que el masivo Movimiento por los Derechos Civiles, con sangre, sudor y lágrimas, obligó a la administración de Lyndon B. Johnson a aprobar la Ley del Derecho al Voto en 1965, 150 años después de que se iniciara la lucha por el voto.

Hoy, en 2021, esta ley se está debilitando en 43 estados con más de 250 proyectos de ley introducidos por los republicanos en las cámaras estatales para limitar el voto por correo, el voto temprano en persona y el día

MUNDO OBRERO editorial

de las elecciones. Otras restricciones incluyen requisitos de identificación más estrictos, horarios limitados y una menor elegibilidad para votar en ausencia. Georgia ya ha aprobado un proyecto de ley que prohíbe totalmente el voto por correo. Estos proyectos de ley apuntan de forma vengativa y racista principalmente a los negros, cuyos votos fueron decisivos en la derrota de Trump durante las elecciones de 2020.

Asalto masivo a los logros del movimiento por los derechos civiles

Ha habido una lucha interna en la Legislatura de Texas entre los republicanos de derecha y los demócratas principalmente afroamericanos y latinos por estas medidas represivas. De hecho, una delegación de estos demócratas abandonó Texas en un esfuerzo por paralizar la votación.

Planean celebrar una conferencia de prensa virtual de una semana de duración a partir del 19 de julio con el apoyo del Sindicato Internacional de Empleados de Servicios y de Mi Familia Vota, que promueve el derecho al voto de los latinos.

Los republicanos han amenazado con hacer arrestar a sus homólogos demócratas a su regreso al estado.

Estos proyectos de ley represivos se están debatiendo ahora en 43 de los 50 estados de Estados Unidos: ¿Por qué los demócratas no han convocado una manifestación nacional para defender el derecho al voto, ya que su principal base social son los negros, los latinos y otros sectores de la sociedad privados de derechos?

Incluso con la pandemia como factor, los sindicatos — de los que dependen los demócratas para obtener votos — podrían movilizar a miles de trabajadores para que acudan a Washington, D.C., para ocupar la capital si fuera necesario. Esto podría hacer retroceder cada uno de los proyectos



Concentración en el Museo World Of Coca-Cola, Atlanta, 15 de marzo de 2021.

de ley represivos, que son una amenaza real para la anulación de la ley federal de 1965.

¿Qué trabajador organizado, e incluso muchos de los no organizados, no querrían actuar para defender o luchar por este derecho? El Consejo Laboral de Rochester aprobó una resolución el 8 de octubre de 2020, apoyando una huelga general si Trump se hubiera negado a dejar el cargo; otros consejos laborales siguieron su ejemplo. ¿Por qué no volver a plantear la necesidad de que los trabajadores organicen huelgas generales para defender el derecho al voto, no solo para los negros sino para los migrantes, los encarcelados, los discapacitados y los jóvenes?

El hecho de que aún no se hayan convocado estas acciones que fomentan la intervención directa de los trabajadores, especialmente de los más oprimidos, expone una vez más el carácter antiobrero y proburgués del Partido Demócrata, que busca mantener a las masas bajo su control y sin poder.

Este es otro ejemplo de por qué las asambleas de trabajadores pueden ser una importante herramienta de organización — para ayudar a empoderar a los trabajadores a independizarse del Partido Demócrata y ayudar a allanar el camino para la liberación completa del sistema capitalista impulsado por las ganancias y sus partidos. □

Perú: ya va venir el día, ponte el alma

Continúa de la página 12

el gobierno. El nuevo presidente cuenta con varias fortalezas, una de ellas es el respaldo social expresado en su victoria, las vigiliyas y movilizaciones. Otra es el apoyo de organizaciones como el gremio del magisterio y las rondas campesinas, donde Castillo se formó, con desarrollo principalmente en las provincias. La geografía más difícil será Lima, sin movimientos populares, y una parte de

la sociedad convencida que el presidente no es legítimo, que ya realizó ejercicios de movilización durante varias semanas hasta intentar, incluso, llegar hasta la Casa de Gobierno.

Se trata de una situación inédita, cargada de simbolismo y potencia. Castillo es el primer mandatario que no proviene de las élites económicas o políticas, en un país marcado por la corrupción, el saqueo, la memoria y el silencio de la violencia política, con realidades de

semi-esclavitud en el campo hasta la reforma agraria de Velasco Alvarado en 1969. Su victoria es producto de una crisis de raíz profunda, que ya tuvo en el 2011 la oportunidad de realizar un giro progresista con el gobierno Ollanta Humala, pero fue traicionada.

Perú inicia en su año bicentenario una etapa política marcada por numerosos enfrentamientos y posibilidades. Varios factores se definirán en las próximas semanas: qué estrategia adoptará

Estados Unidos, si la derecha va a actuar con inteligencia o con su habitual brutalidad; el alcance del camino constituyente, de las movilizaciones; la capacidad de Castillo para convocar mayorías sociales que le permitan avanzar en los diferentes objetivos. Lima, entre vigiliyas y defensa de la democracia, vivió jornadas históricas bajo la música de flor de retama. Ahora puede venir el día, como escribió César Vallejo, tiempo de ponerse el alma, el sol y el cuerpo. □



Ex campesino y maestro es nuevo presidente del Perú.

Perú: ya va venir el día, ponte el alma

Por Marco Teruggi
Lima, Peru, 27 de Julio

“Disfruta tu risotto que va a ser el último que comas en mucho tiempo”, le dice un hombre a otro en un restaurante de Miraflores, frente al océano Pacífico. Alrededor hay perros de raza, runners, surfistas, edificios modernos, jardines cuidados, negocios de marca, autos caros, un estilo moderno, chic, y por momentos pretensioso. Se acaba de confirmar que Pedro Castillo ganó las elecciones y en esta zona de Lima el 85% votó contra él.

Castillo es un extraño acá. Nadie entiende su sombrero blanco, su manera de hablar, de vestir, sus imaginarios, realidades, el mensaje que carga, el país que cuenta. Lo subestiman, le temen y desprecian. Los hombres como él no pasean por Miraflores o San Isidro, no se sientan en sus mesas, no salen a correr o a jugar al tenis los domingos en clubes, no toman aviones para vacunarse en Estados Unidos.

Ahora un hombre del norte de los Andes, campesino, asumirá como presidente del Perú, contra todas las encuestas de principio de campaña y pese al despliegue de miedo durante el ballottage. Pocas veces se llegó hasta ese punto: los canales de televisión pidieron abiertamente un golpe de Estado, se infundió terror sobre el comunismo y el marxismo-leninismo, las catástrofes económicas que sucederían con su victoria, se instaló el invento de un fraude o de vínculos con el terrorismo, se perdonó a Keiko Fujimori y con ella a toda su historia personal y familiar. Una descarga violenta que puso en juego las memorias irresueltas, silencios y traumas del Perú.

Tampoco Castillo imaginó, al inscribirse a la presidencia, que llegaría al ballottage y ganaría. Su repentino ascenso fue producto de una serie de contingencias: el partido Perú Libre no tenía candidato presidencial por estar su dirigente, Vladimir Cerrón, impedido judicialmente. Le ofrecieron una alianza, asumir la candidatura presidencial y aceptó, con un lápiz como símbolo y pocos recursos. Detrás de esas contingencias estaba la situación del país, la crisis, y la necesidad de una propuesta y un idioma como el suyo.

El país fracturado

Lima es una ciudad sobre el desierto frente al mar. Húmeda, sin lluvia, con un cielo panza de burro y contados días de azul calima durante los largos meses de invierno. La Molina, Barranco, la nostalgia de Chabuca Granda, son una parte de la ciudad, ilusoria y real. Está también el cercado, recuerdo de la pretensión virreinal con la que fue fundada la capital, ahora zona de movilizaciones, centro político en la plaza San Martín, las instituciones, balcones de madera, la decadencia y majestuosidad del centro colonial.

Y están los barrios, los cerros al sur y al norte, Villa María del Triunfo o San Juan de Lurigancho, donde se apilan las casas una tras otra hacia arriba, primero ladrillo, luego madera, hasta lo que se consigue para crear una pared y un techo. Un paisaje color ocre oscuro, tierra, con una capa de polvo sobre plantas, techos, mototaxis de tres ruedas que suben a ritmo de cumbia, mundo chicha, por las calles de barro-humedad y pobreza.

En esos conos de desierto y exclusión está la historia peruana que no se cuenta: las ollas populares, el abandono estatal, cuatro décadas ininterrumpidas de migración interna de provincias, de la selva, los andes, lo indígena, cholo, discriminado. Perú está doblemente fracturado: al interior de Lima, y entre las zonas como Miraflores y el inmenso país. Castillo es ese inmenso país donde ganó en algunas regiones con 85% de los votos.

La pandemia –con más de 187 mil muertos en una población de 32 millones de personas– acompañada de la recesión agravó un cuadro de desigualdad en un país que venía de mantener un crecimiento sostenido del Producto Bruto Interno, con un promedio de 6.1% anual entre el 2002 y el 2013, y 3% entre el 2014 y el 2019. En 2020 la contracción fue de 12.9%, con tres millones más de personas en la pobreza, y un 70% de empleo informal. Un neoliberalismo estable en la macroeconomía,

con una marcada exclusión social, geográfica y racial, y conflictos ambientales como en Cajamarca, la región de Castillo.

“Se ha arrancado todos los derechos del pueblo peruano (...) tenemos más de ocho millones de estudiantes estos dos años desconectados; de cada diez niños, seis en el umbral de la pobreza, de la anemia, del abandono; casi tres millones de peruanos analfabetos; encontramos que la infraestructura educativa de cada diez escuelas, siete a punto de desplomarse; encontramos que los centros poblados en el Perú, en la parte interna de nuestra patria, no hay presencia del Estado, el agricultor está totalmente abandonado; va usted a ver una posta médica y encuentra un pedazo de esparadrapo y una pastilla, no encuentra otra cosa. Los que hemos ido a ver y decir cómo está el país, el pueblo ha respondido qué cosa hay que hacer, y lo que hay que hacer es un cambio estructural, un cambio de la Constitución”, explicó Castillo en una reunión con presidentes y dirigentes del continente.

En esa fotografía están algunas de las razones de la victoria del candidato de Perú Libre, unidas a la gran crisis política iniciada en el 2016, con la victoria de Pedro Pablo Kuczynski sobre Keiko Fujimori, y el proceso sistemático de asedio al ejecutivo por parte del parlamento, conducido por el fujimorismo. El resultado: cuatro presidentes en cinco años, un Congreso disuelto. Francisco Sagasti, actual mandatario con ocho meses en la presidencia de la república, tenía por objetivo político central conducir al país a una transición ordenada este 28 de julio. Estuvo a punto de no lograrlo.

La crisis, la mafia y el intento de golpe

El estallido social ocurrió cuando Martin Vizcarra fue destituido por el Congreso el 10 de noviembre del 2020. La moción de vacancia fue por “permanente incapacidad moral”, acusado de corrupción en su antigua gestión como gobernador. El mandatario se convirtió así en el quinto presidente consecutivo señalado por actos de corrupción. En su lugar asumió el titular del Congreso, Manuel Merino.

Ninguna fuerza política anticipó lo que sucedería en las calles. Comenzó el mismo 10 en la noche hasta forzar la renuncia de Merino el día 15, con dos jóvenes asesinados en Lima: Inti Sotelo y Bryan Pintado. La salida de Merino, la asunción de Sagasti en el ejecutivo, y una titularidad del Congreso más progresista, dieron por finalizadas las movilizaciones, las más grandes desde la marcha de los cuatro suyos contra Alberto Fujimori, en julio del año 2000.

Las protestas en Perú hasta ese entonces habían sido centralmente por conflictos ambientales, contra explotaciones mineras; o sindicales, como la huelga del magisterio encabezada por Castillo en 2017. Esta vez ocurrió en el centro del poder, contra la descomposición política, una institucionalidad permeada por mafias, como la denominada cuellos blancos, con presencia en el poder Judicial, ramificación en el Legislativo, y desembocadura en el fujimorismo.

El país está marcado a fuego por ese apellido. Alberto Fujimori ganó en 1990 con un discurso de outsider, aplicó un ajuste neoliberal, creó grupos paramilitares bajo la conducción de Vladimiro Montesinos con el argumento de combatir a Sendero Luminoso y el Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru, cerró el Congreso, el poder Judicial, estableció la Constitución de 1993, una política de esterilizaciones forzadas, se involucró en narcotráfico y contrabando de armas, huyó a Japón desde donde renunció, y, finalmente fue condenado a 25 años

Se trata de una situación inédita, cargada de simbolismo y potencia. Castillo es el primer mandatario que no proviene de las élites económicas o políticas, en un país marcado por la corrupción, el saqueo, la memoria y el silencio de la violencia política, con realidades de semi-esclavitud en el campo hasta la reforma agraria de Velazco Alvarado en 1969.

por crímenes de lesa humanidad. Kuczynski lo indultó en diciembre del 2017, decisión revertida luego por la Corte Suprema.

Su hija, Keiko, reivindica a su padre, que aún tiene popularidad en varias partes del país, bajo dos argumentos: el fin de la hiperinflación y del terrorismo, que, en el caso del centro de Lima, implicaba coches bombas y cortes de luz. Se presentó tres veces a las presidenciales, en el 2011, 2016 y 2021, y, en cada caso llegó a ballottage. En ese recorrido aparecieron las investigaciones por corrupción, hasta llegar a la actual, por lavado de activos, el pedido de 30 años de prisión por parte de la Fiscalía, y la acusación de ser “una organización criminal enquistada en la personaría jurídica Partido Político Fuerza Popular”.

Parecía claro que no aceptaría una derrota ante Castillo, por su causa penal, la de muchos de sus aliados políticos, y la defensa del orden neoliberal y corrupto fundado por su padre. Keiko invocó la lucha contra el comunismo, aglutinó a gran parte de la derecha, incluida la familia Vargas Llosa, quien pasó de afirmar que Keiko era una amenaza para la democracia a sostener que era su salvación.

El asalto al Jurado Nacional de Elecciones para robarle la elección a Castillo significó una presión simultánea sobre todos los poderes del Estado, mediática, internacional, la reaparición de Montesinos, grupos de violencia callejera, cartas de ex militares, acoso a funcionarios. Un mes y medio de dilación que puso el país al borde de la detonación permanente, pero que nunca contó con el volumen de fuerza suficiente para lograr el golpe. ¿Qué faltó? El apoyo internacional, entre otras cosas. Castillo fue finalmente proclamado presidente el 19 de julio.

El nuevo gobierno

“Hoy es el momento de unir los esfuerzos, y hago la convocatoria al pueblo peruano, a toda la clase política sin distinción, a los gremios, a los consejos profesionales, a los economistas, a los universitarios, a la clase obrera, al magisterio, a todo el pueblo, a que hagamos el esfuerzo en el marco de la unidad para terminar con estas brechas que tiene el pueblo peruano”, afirmó desde la plaza San Martín el nuevo presidente luego de recibir las credenciales.

La proclamación marcó el final de una coyuntura crítica y el inicio de otra, también bajo fuego. La agenda de Castillo se abocó entonces a conformar su gabinete, con centralidad de Perú Libre, a la vez que con inclusión de fuerzas aliadas, como Nuevo Perú, conducido por Verónica Mendoza, en un escenario donde la izquierda y el anti-fujimorismo lo respaldaron, y diferentes sectores tradicionales se acercaron en busca de cargos, alianzas, ofreciendo estabilidad política y económica.

El nuevo gobierno debe resolver las urgencias nacionales, como la pandemia, las necesidades sociales y avanzar, según repitió Castillo, en el planteo vertebral de la Asamblea Constituyente. Los grandes medios y la derecha se plantearon dos objetivos: separar a Castillo de Cerrón, el secretario general de Perú Libre; e impedir que suceda el cambio constitucional que se presenta complejo, por la situación del poder Legislativo, bajo mesa directiva de la derecha y el fujimorismo. El Congreso será un espacio de disputa medular, desde donde la oposición podrá no aprobar gabinetes, intentar impedir el proceso constituyente o impulsar una vacancia presidencial.

La derecha ya anticipó que llevará una ofensiva contra

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