

AFGHANISTAN COLLAPSE

Behind corporate media debate

By John Catalinotto

WW COMMENTARY

Aug. 16 — Insurgent Afghan forces, under Taliban leadership, have taken the capital city Kabul. After its initial withdrawal, Washington has sent back 4,000 troops to defend its diplomatic retreat. U.S. imperialism's 43-year war against the poorest of Central Asian countries and the Pentagon's 20-year occupation is crashing to an end, as the puppet regime collapses like a house of cards in a hurricane.

Right now U.S. politicians from both big capitalist parties are debating in the corporate media over who deserves the blame for the U.S. defeat and its precipitous withdrawal. Both these parties ordered and endorsed the U.S. intervention, as did the Pentagon and the intelligence services, starting in 1978. Both Trump and Biden agreed to leave.

No working person, no oppressed people in the United States, no person sympathetic with colonized people or with women should be fooled into thinking that this ruling-class debate has any relation with guaranteeing the rights or livelihood of any Afghans, including women.

The debate is over what strategy and tactics protect the pillage and profits of the U.S.-based banks, industrial and mining monopolies. These businesses grab the natural resources and exploit the labor of the entire Central and Western Asian region near Afghanistan. Led by the U.S. military-industrial complex, these capitalist exploiters have milked the federal treasury of trillions of U.S. dollars.

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An epic failure of U.S. aggression

By Sara Flounders

Aug. 17 — Wrenching images at the Kabul airport grip the world as U.S. officials had soldiers cast off those who had cooperated with US occupation like excess baggage. The painful corporate media coverage diverts attention from Washington's strategists who launched the criminal war for conquest and the politicians who authorized 20 years of looting of Afghanistan.

The U.S. war in Afghanistan was never a war for democracy or for the liberation of women. Hidden behind empty rhetoric was a war that generated fabulous, un-scrutinized profits for military, oil and contracting corporations. Corruption at every level was an essential ingredient of the war.

The epic failure of U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan raises the

immediate question of what this means for U.S. global corporate power. Especially, what will this howling defeat mean for the entire vast region where U.S. wars have created a vast wreckage?

From Afghanistan through Iran, across Iraq, and into Syria and Lebanon, U.S. domination is being confronted with new confidence. The U.S. grip, from Central to Western Asia, is increasingly challenged.

The collapse of the government in Afghanistan has overwhelmed the news coverage of rockets fired and drone attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, as well as Iran's increasingly hard line on any revival of talks involving the international nuclear accord the U.S. had walked away from.

Iraqi officials have demanded an end to all U.S. troops and bases in their country. Syria is reasserting

its sovereignty, despite continued U.S. bombing. Hezbollah stands undefeated in Lebanon. Gaza still remains steadfast and determined.

The one U.S. ally in the area, Israel, faces growing isolation.

A vast swath of peoples, cultures and diverse political movements have all reached a similar conclusion: U.S. power brings only corruption and enslavement. Resistance is the only way forward.

Collapse on the morning news

The complete collapse of Afghanistan's puppet government in Kabul coincided with the Sunday morning news. The speed of this deterioration took U.S. strategists completely by surprise. It exceeded the chaotic disarray seen in 1975 with the fall of the U.S. puppet regime in Saigon, Vietnam.

Sunday news program reporters

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UPCOMING EVENTS

FOR BLACK AUGUST & ATTICA

- **August 18: From Black August to Black Liberation** Livestream, Black Alliance for Peace bit.ly/blackaugust819
- **September 2: 50 Years of Struggle**, Prisoners Solidarity Committee of WWP www.pub/attica
- **September 4: Protest at Briscoe Unit**, Dilley, TX
- **September 8: Forum** @ Southern Methodist University
- **September 9: Attica is All of Us** Livestream, NYC www.atticaisalofus.org/register
- **September 9: Shut Down Attica! Shut Them All Down!** MLK Park @ 5PM, Buffalo New York

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The right to revolt

◀ Che Nieves, participant

Paris Commune of Black Liberation



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50 YEARS OF RESISTANCE

BLACK AUGUST & ATTICA

hosted by the prisoners solidarity committee of workers world party
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a livestream event featuring
che nieves
surviving rebel of the Attica uprising
and
mumia abu-jamal



SEPTEMBER 2 @ 8PM ET 5PM PT

Upcoming live broadcast/webinar. Details to follow at www.pub/attica

Buffett’s Business Wire censors China book

By Tony Murphy

Billionaire Warren Buffett’s public relations company, Business Wire, has refused to distribute a press release announcing the publication in China of a U.S. book that compares the responses to COVID by capitalist and socialist governments.

The headline of the press release referred to the fact that the book, “Capitalism on a Ventilator” — originally published in the U.S. in July 2020 and now being translated and published in China — was banned by Amazon last fall.

Now Business Wire is censoring the press release. “Business Wire is a commercial service that advertises expensive media access — to what is supposed to be the ‘free press’ of the United States,” said one of the book’s authors and editors, Lee Siu Hin. “I am their paid customer and have the right to understand which policy our press release has violated — I’ve used their service before with no problem — but they never offered any explanation and just terminated our account.

“If the United States is anti-authoritarian and a bastion of liberties like free speech,” Lee continued, “then why has ‘liberal’ Warren Buffett’s PR service Business Wire censored a press release simply announcing the news that ‘Capitalism on a Ventilator’ will be published in China?”

As the Delta variant of COVID spreads like wildfire, the U.S. death toll has soared past 600,000 in this country of 330 million — the highest in the world. By contrast, the number of deaths in China, a country of 1.4 billion, has remained below 5,000.

“The standout response to COVID, which should be studied and emulated,” said Lee, “remains that of the Chinese government, which in a matter of months mobilized its entire society to arrest the virus — and continues to do so whenever new outbreaks arise.

“And the standard U.S. media explanation of how China’s Communist Party was able to mobilize so quickly is always summed up in one word — authoritarian. Yet a leading light of the U.S. billionaire class is showing the true face of capitalism’s authoritarian nature, trying to block news from coming out about the publication of a timely and important book.”

Billionaires are clearly not open to the message of “Capitalism on a Ventilator.” As the press release title mentions, Bezos’ union-busting Amazon tried to ban the book from the company’s all-powerful platform, claiming the book did not “comply with [Amazon’s] guidelines” and falsely listing it as “out-of-print.”

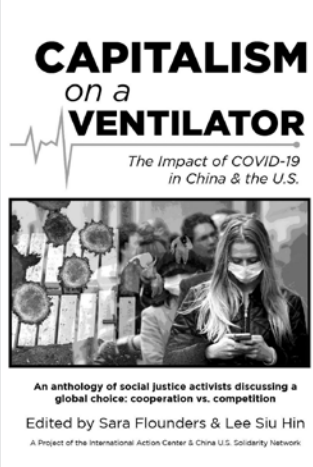
While an outcry eventually forced Amazon to carry the title on its megasite, even now it cannot be found on Kindle, the publishing giant’s e-book format. □

Capitalism on a Ventilator The impact of COVID-19 in China & the U.S.

“What one learns from Capitalism on a Ventilator is that the economic and human cost of the pandemic was far from inevitable. An entire section of the book is devoted to China’s solidarity with the rest of the world in the fight against COVID-19. After four months of difficult struggle, China successfully contained the pandemic and immediately diverted masks, testing kits, medical personnel, ventilators and other forms of assistance to countries across Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. The U.S. received generous donations of medical equipment from China during the first wave of the pandemic. China was also the first country to declare that its COVID-19 vaccine would be a public good.”

— Danny Haiphong in a review for *Black Agenda Report*

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

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

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

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

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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U.N. issues another dire report

Time’s up on climate change

By Teresa Gutierrez

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a scientific body assembled by the United Nations, released yet another major report on climate change on Aug. 9.

No thinking person needs a U.N. report to know that the climate has changed, and for the worse. The dire consequences are happening in real time. The continued burning of coal, oil and other fossil fuels by the multinational capitalist corporations as well as the military, with the complicity of their governments, is here for the world to see.

The day after the report, the New York Times summed up five takeaways from the IPCC report: “human influence has unequivocally warmed the planet; climate science is getting better and more precise; climate changes are happening rapidly; we are locked into 30 years of worsening climate impacts no matter what the world does; there is still a window in which humans can alter the climate path.”

The U.N. report concluded that “the world cannot avoid some devastating impacts of climate change, but that there is still a narrow window to keep the devastation from getting even worse.”

Who is to blame?

The report and the news that followed made a big deal about the fact that it is indeed “human influence [that] unequivocally warmed the planet.” Well, what a relief it wasn’t Martians.

But this is wrong. It is not humans but the capitalist economic system that has warmed the planet. It is the refusal to

stop burning fossil fuels. It is the refusal to stop the oil corporations and the Pentagon from ruining the planet.

The well-known environmental activist Greta Thunberg, who as a teenager helped call for global demonstrations on climate change, responded to the IPCC report on Democracy Now: “We have not once been treating this crisis like an actual crisis. We are not talking about the root cause itself.... We are not holding people in power accountable. We are not talking about the current, best-available science, what it says, and how the situation looks like now. And we are especially not talking about the gap between what politicians are saying and what they are doing. ...This report doesn’t tell us what to do.”

Tomorrow is too late

For decades, the masses who first experienced the consequences of climate change have been demanding change. Demonstrations, conferences and many other events have been carried out throughout the Americas, Africa and Asia to do something on the changing climate. No one has heeded their call.

Almost 30 years ago, Fidel Castro, the beloved leader of Cuba and architect of the Cuban Revolution, warned the world about the looming climate change crisis at the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil: “An important biological species — humankind — is at risk of disappearing due to the rapid and progressive elimination of its natural habitat. We are becoming aware of this problem when it is almost too late to prevent it. Tomorrow will be too late to do what we should have done a long time ago.”

Cuba is the most sustainable nation in the world, according to the U.N. itself. It would be wise to heed not only these words but their practices.

Where is the political will?

The New York Times article stated: “Many hope that the report, which covers the latest advances in climate science, will galvanize action at the U.N. climate summit in Glasgow this November.”

Yet this Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26, is the 26th conference the UN has held. Twenty-six conferences, yet the climate crisis only gets worse, and no major government is doing anything to rectify the situation.

Except China. This nation is doing everything in its power to meet the needs of its people, as well as move to a more sustainable economy. And it is succeeding.

It is no wonder that young people like Thunberg don’t have much faith in these entities. Or in their governments.

Where is the political will in the major imperialist countries to address this crisis? It is ominously quiet in the ExxonMobile boardrooms.

According to the World Health Organization, climatic change is already estimated to cause over 150,000 deaths annually. Bloomberg News on July 7 wrote that “Climate Change is Linked to 5 Million Deaths a Year” globally, according to a new study. CNN two years ago wrote that “250,000 deaths a year from climate change is a ‘conservative estimate.’” (Jan. 16, 2019)

But it is not the children, families or friends of ExxonMobile or the Pentagon

generals who are dying from climate change.

The IPCC report says that “we are locked into 30 years of worsening climate impacts no matter what the world does.” Thirty more years of wildfires, scorching heat, floods, food insecurity and death and destruction.

The 26th U.N. Climate Change conference will be held in Glasgow, Scotland, from Oct. 31 to Nov. 12, under the authority of Britain. Does this meeting hold any hope for those in Indonesia whose cities will soon be under water? No, it does not. Twenty-six years of conferencing has proven to be only dangerous rhetoric.

Yet this gathering must be challenged. The noise must be made that shakes them to their boots. They need to know that the only political will that can seriously address the climate crisis is coming from activists and entities who want the economic system of capitalism abolished.

China and Cuba are two socialist systems that prove that capitalism must be abolished in order to save the planet and its people.

The next global report should come from those who are really addressing climate change, who have created revolutionary change to abolish the Pentagon and shut down the pipelines of every single oil corporation.

Time is up on climate change. But it is not too late for society to obtain the political will to adapt to and at least partly reverse climate change, with the needs of the masses of people, not the corporate flunkies, in mind. □

Protest demands ICE free all detainees

Philadelphia — Despite temperatures in the mid-90s, more than 50 community activists rallied here on Aug. 12 to demand Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) cease transferring migrant workers and refugees from a detention center in York, Pa., to other prisons. Recorded voices from people impacted by transfers were heard by the crowd before participants marched to the nearby Asian community's Vine Street Park, where an ending rally took place.

Organized by JUNTOS, Asian Americans United, VietLead, New Sanctuary Movement and MILPA (Movement of Immigrant Leaders in Pennsylvania), the demonstration took place on the last day of the York County Prison contract with ICE.

Juntos, a community-led Latinx immigration rights organization in

Philadelphia, released a report in 2019 detailing the inhumane conditions there. (bit.ly/3CEAms6)

The decision to end the much-criticized contract follows years of mass pressure that included petitions, phone zaps, twitter storms, sit-ins, countless meetings, and many in-person protests outside the York prison as well as at the Philadelphia ICE office.

Erika Guadalupe Nuñez, executive director of JUNTOS, said that “ICE is pulling out of York because it couldn’t reach an agreement, but that doesn’t mean that the people who are there will be released.”

Activists are concerned that people will lose access to their support networks, including lawyers and volunteers, if they’re transferred.

Community activists, attorneys and

organizations have won the release of nearly 100 loved ones from ICE detention at York County Prison, but 200 others formerly detained at York have been transferred to other detention centers out of state, away from their families, community members and legal representation. These transfers are inhumane. Even though York County’s contract with ICE is over, the hated institution has already taken steps to open a new detention center, reportedly at



the Moshannon Valley Correctional Facility in Decatur Township near Philipsburg, Pa. (theprogressnews.com, Aug. 6)

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

Where are people supposed to go?

Berkeley marches to stop homeless sweeps

By Dave Welsh
Berkeley, Calif.

A crowd of 90 people marched through downtown here on Aug. 12 chanting “Housing is a human right.” They demanded that the city call a halt to police sweeps of unhoused people and the tearing down of homeless encampments.

“With the unhoused community reeling from an eviction at SeaBreeze Encampment, and far too many ‘sweeps’ on the horizon, we need to mobilize for the human rights of our unhoused and

housed neighbors at risk of eviction,” said a statement from a coalition that includes Berkeley Copwatch, Homeless Action Center and other groups.

“Families live in fear of losing their homes at any moment as both the eviction moratorium and unemployment funds come to an end. The city is already moving to displace.

“We are not trash, stop sweeping us!”

Former City Council member Cheryl Davila said the University of California “wants to kick out people from the university-owned building at 1921 Walnut

who are living in rent-controlled units.” She said real estate speculators “want to see nothing but ‘market-rate’ units,” with the result that many poor and working people won’t be able to live in the city any more.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. One speaker, citing Rent Board figures, said the city of Berkeley had 3,700 known vacant units. “That’s housing for 10,000 people!”

Osha Neumann, an attorney with the East Bay Community Law Center as well as a painter and muralist, said: “Many of the people living on the streets value their

autonomy, their ability to make their own lives and community. But the authorities can’t understand that because they don’t know how to stop and talk to people.” He said the newly rebuilt downtown plaza “is designed to be uncomfortable for the homeless,” adding, “What happened to the benches that people used to sit on?”

A speaker from Poor Magazine exclaimed: “No matter how many times you sweep me, incarcerate me, study me ... our fight will go on, till housing is an established human right for everyone.” □

Workers organize a historic battle with Amazon

This article is based on a press release issued by Chris Smalls and the Amazon Labor Union.

Since June, workers at the Amazon warehouse at Staten Island JFK8 and surrounding facilities have been organizing to form the independent worker-led Amazon Labor Union. Other Staten Island facilities currently organizing include Amazon sorting center LDJ5 and delivery stations DYY6 and DYY2.

The ALU was founded by former Amazon worker Chris Smalls, fired for organizing a March 30, 2020, walkout at the JFK8 facility protesting unsafe working conditions. A leaked memo from Amazon executives revealed the billion-dollar company’s attempt to launch a racist smear campaign against Smalls. (workers.org/2020/04/47554/)

ALU goals are to fight for higher wages, job security and safer working conditions. ALU has successfully built a huge workers’ committee and signed up over 1,000 workers. This puts the campaign on target to file for recognition with the National Labor Relations Board in the coming months.

On Aug 11 at JFK8 Staten Island, ALU held its first press conference to announce the historic campaign. Members of the

committee voiced their experiences and told why they decided to join ALU. Workers were joined by U.S. Congress members Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Mondaire Jones, there to support the ALU and demand Amazon stop its union busting so workers can use their rights to organize towards collective bargaining without interference.

After the launch of the drive, Amazon

wasted no time in starting its union busting. Organizers and workers endured the same anti-union tactics used during the unionization campaign at the Bessemer, Ala., warehouse earlier in the year.

The NLRB ruled in May that Amazon illegally interfered with worker organizing at the Staten Island warehouse. Ploys have ranged from disinformation signs in the bathrooms to the hiring of operatives

from The Burke Group to walk through the buildings and spread doubt among the workers. (tinyurl.com/3sc9pesw)

Despite Amazon anti-union attempts, ALU has earned the trust of the workers, hosting a number of barbecues, handing out food and cold water along with masks and T-shirts daily.

Amazon refuses to acknowledge ALU as a current worker-led entity. Instead, the company sends out false messaging that workers will lose their voices and that ALU will take in millions of dollars in union dues and cause unspecified financial problems.

To combat these scurrilous charges, ALU members have filed several charges against Amazon with the NLRB.

This is a remarkable historical moment for Amazon workers all over the U.S. ALU has already broken barriers and will continue to do so. As the workers get closer to filing for their election vote to become an established union, they will need the support of their communities more than ever.

To find out how to support this crucial union drive, follow the Amazon Labor Union at amazonlaborunion.org and @Shut_downAmazon.



Amazon Labor Union founder Chris Smalls (in glasses) and organizer Connor Spence (on mic) at Amazon facilities on Staten Island, Aug. 11.

PHOTO: PAUL LIOTTA

Needle exchange programs save lives

By Princess Harmony

The most severe medical problem that injection-drug users face — other than overdose — is infection. Whether a person contracts hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), or the standard wound infection due to dirty and used needles, the prevention of these illnesses requires syringe exchanges. Many states and cities oppose them, however. That policy puts public health in danger.

The most recent move to criminalize or end syringe exchanges has taken place in Atlantic City, N.J. As the largest syringe exchange in New Jersey, and the only one in southeast New Jersey, gets eliminated, the odds increase for more outbreaks of infections. Oasis, the needle exchange program being shut down, provided harm reduction materials. That policy serves the public good.

Sadly, New Jersey gave towns and cities the power to determine whether or not syringe exchanges should be put in “their” neighborhoods. The Atlantic City Council

used this power to shut down Oasis. Other cities may follow suit, as some states have chosen not to set up harm reduction services, including and especially needle exchanges.

Syringe exchange programs are just one of the tools in the harm reduction tool kit, but it’s potentially the most important one. They not only prevent the spread of disease, but they are able to point people to treatment programs.

Legalize harm reduction policies!

Legalization of syringe exchanges can lead to the next necessary steps: fentanyl testing, safe consumption sites and provision of safe drug supplies. Syringe exchange programs are one small step in changing U.S. drug policies and prohibition.

The National Harm Reduction Coalition’s fourth principle argues for the nonjudgmental distribution of services and resources to both addicts and neighborhoods. These resources can include access to methadone and buprenorphine (Suboxone, Subutex, Sublocade, Zubsolv) and access to both inpatient and outpatient

drug treatment programs. Syringe exchange programs across the country help their communities remain clean and free of dirty needles. (harmreduction.org)

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the opioid crisis is leading to increasing infections of HIV, HBV and HCV. Nothing so far has been able to prevent the growing number of these diseases other than harm reduction organizations like Prevention Point Philadelphia.

All towns and cities need programs like the one in Philadelphia, because of the spread of the opioid epidemic. The CDC states that people using syringe exchange programs are five times more likely to enter drug treatment and three times more likely to stop using drugs.

Another key benefit of having a functional syringe exchange program is that it prevents opioid overdoses. Both clients and workers at syringe exchange programs can be taught how to treat opioid overdoses by using Narcan (naloxone). And people who aren’t addicts or workers can be taught how to save lives with

Narcan.

Opponents of syringe exchange programs — and all forms of harm reduction — say that they increase crime and drug activity in their neighborhoods. This belief is wrong and stigmatizing. Researchers find that syringe exchange programs do not increase crime in neighborhoods. These false narratives need to be challenged. If they arise, community members should immediately seek the unique voices of addicted people who are also part of their communities — in order to improve relations between residents and addicts.

Without syringe exchange programs, many more people would contract HIV, HBV, HCV and other serious illnesses. They would be unable to seek the help that they desperately need. Worst of all, they could overdose, because they haven’t tested their drugs.

It’s essential to pressure neighborhoods, cities and states to legalize and support syringe exchange programs as well as other harm reduction tools. They save lives! □

On the picket line

WHEN WE FIGHT WE WIN!

By Marie Kelly

After two baristas were fired by Starbucks for organizing co-workers against unfair management, they took their grievances to the National Labor Relations Board and won. The NLRB ruled Starbucks had engaged in union-busting tactics and should reinstate the two employees with back-pay compensation. Starbucks filed an appeal and doesn’t need to take any action until the appeal process, which could take months, is complete. This is a move to

Successful organizing tips from Philly Starbucks baristas

frustrate organizing attempts and delay justice for the fired workers.

However, T.J. Bussiere and Echo Nowakowska are not defeated, and the way they won a favorable NLRB ruling can teach organizers how to fight corporate giants like Starbucks. In the Aug. 12 Philadelphia Inquirer, Bussiere and Nowakowska were interviewed by Juliana Feliciano Reyes. The two organizers suggest tactics they hope will aid other grassroots union activists. (tinyurl.com/md3h6js)

Go public: Protests at the store, handing out leaflets describing illegal practices by Starbucks and posting on social media created a case, pushing NLRB lawyers to argue that the workers had engaged in a concerted, protected activity to improve working conditions. This is perfectly legal and within workers’ rights. Firing workers for union organizing is a violation of the National Labor

Relations Act.

Posting to social media doesn’t have to go viral; posting is a public record of your efforts and therefore is evidence, according to the NLRB. In the case of the Starbucks baristas, the posts showed that management was monitoring the workers’ accounts.

Know your legal rights: You are allowed to complain about unfair management and even call for a supervisor to be terminated. You are allowed to demonstrate against poor working conditions at your place of employment without fear of retaliation.

Bussiere says the success really came from organizing their co-workers. It is about engaging in conversations, listening to workers’ experiences and uniting against corporate exploitation. Organized workers have the power to defeat the capitalist ruling class. □

SPECIAL WW SUPPLEMENT



Resistance continues vs. solitary and banning

By Joe Piette and
Bryant Arroyo

Part 2

Incarcerated people depend on their voices being heard outside the walls for their grievances against prison officials to be effective inside. Without public pressure from family, friends and other supporters, the prison guards, supervisors and administrators can literally get away with murder.

Bryant Arroyo has been a voice from inside Pennsylvania prisons for years. Arroyo is serving a life sentence for a crime he did not commit and is still contesting in court. He has dedicated himself to organizing from the inside and mobilizing prisoners to fight back against the horrendous conditions which authorities impose on incarcerated workers.

In Part 1, Arroyo described fighting the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections for punishing him for suggesting supporters post recordings of video conference calls with him on social media to expose PA DOC mistreatment of incarcerated people. (workers.org/2021/07/57838/) In Part 2, Arroyo focuses on the PA DOC's failures regarding COVID.



Bryant Arroyo and Joe Piette

Bryant Arroyo was in restrictive Administrative Custody at S.C.I. Frackville from April 6 to 15, when he was subjected to a rapid COVID-19 test and told it was negative. Afterward, Insp. Lt. Dennis Newberry stated: "This is the result of your advocacy and particular status as a jailhouse lawyer and environmental activist — we are finally getting rid of you and won't have to deal with you exposing Frackville staff members anymore in Workers World newspaper. ...

You are being transferred to a new facility [S.C.I. Coal Township], to be monitored and scrutinized closer."

Arroyo replied, "Just because I'm being transferred to S.C.I. Coal Township doesn't mean I still can't expose Frackville from wherever they send me." Upon his arrival on April 15, Arroyo was greeted with a peculiar greeting by staff there: "Welcome to COVID country."

He was immediately COVID tested again by a nurse and sent to a COVID quarantine block for 14 days. On April 19, an officer arrived at his door with the unexpected news that his COVID test was positive. Arroyo reports: "For the record, I've tested positive for COVID twice. It's not a coincidence. Frackville staff made another attempt on my life.

"Insp. Newberry further retaliated against me by transferring me from Frackville to Coal Township, despite being COVID positive. What proof do I have? In response to my grievance No. 926607, Supt. Thomas S. McGinley stated, 'A review of the record indicates that you were received from Frackville to Coal Township as a COVID-positive inmate.'

"McGinley incontrovertibly proved Lt. Newberry compounded my retaliatory claim under the First Amendment with an additional 8th Amendment violation of 'cruel and unusual treatment,' by defying both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and strict PA Dept. of Health Care rules that prohibit the entire PA DOC staff from negligently transferring any prisoners who are COVID positive to another facility.

"Both DOC Secretary John E. Wetzel and Pennsylvania Attorney General Robert Shapiro must investigate Newberry's reprehensible, incompetent, derelict and negligent acts abusing his fiduciary duties and authority, outside the scope and purview of the PA DOC's policies and procedures. This is not his fiefdom — it is the taxpayers' kingdom."

During his 18-day quarantine, Arroyo filed his grievance 926607 for subjecting him "to a cruel and unusual, severely constrained and limited amount of time to shower, cell-clean, use both kiosk and

telephone, and deposit U.S. mail within a 30-minute interval. We are then locked in the cell for the rest of the day. Death row prisoners are allotted more time to conduct these same chores, and they aren't sick with COVID." The grievance stated that people who test positive for COVID should be given the same amount of time outside cells that the general population has access to, as in S.C.I. Frackville.

Arbitrary and unfair COVID restrictions

The number of incarcerated workers subjected to severe restrictions was increased Aug. 5, when S.C.I. Coal Township and PA DOC officials announced that all incarcerated people who refuse to be vaccinated would be removed from their cells and be taken to J/A Block, where out-of-cell time is limited to 30 minutes daily; contact visits are forbidden; law library access is unconstitutionally denied, and meals and commissary items are delivered to their cells.

Their press release claimed: "Incarcerated individuals will be assigned to housing units based on their vaccination status. The goal of these mitigation efforts is to protect the unvaccinated group by reducing contact with others." Fifty-two prisoners at Coal Township were moved to this isolation status. (Pennlive.com, Aug. 5)

On Aug. 10, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported: "COVID-19 has taken a high toll inside prisons. The Marshall Project and the Associated Press have found nearly 400,000 COVID-19 cases in U.S. prisons and more than 2,700 inmate deaths. Among staff members, 114,211 cases and more than 200 deaths have been reported nationwide." (tinyurl.com/w4x2tda7)

Despite the number of cases and fatalities, more than half of all prison staff across the U.S. refuse to be vaccinated. (Prisonpolicy.org, Apr. 22)

Seventy-eight percent of Pennsylvania prisoners have agreed to take the vaccine, a higher rate than that of civilians outside prisons. Yet, the new policies basically punish the minority of incarcerated people who choose to not be vaccinated, while guards and staff — 77.6% are

not vaccinated — are allowed to do their appointed rounds without any limits or discipline. (bit.ly/2VKOf71)

Pennsylvania state officials refuse to make vaccinations mandatory for prison guards and staff, even though they are the ones bringing the COVID virus into prisons, guilty of putting lives of incarcerated people at risk.

Free speech grievance denied

Arroyo's grievance against the PA DOC for denying him videoconferencing visits for 60 days (April 1 to June 1) was denied June 30 by Chief Hearing Examiner Zachary J. Moslak who ruled: "Pursuant to DC-ADM 801 § 5 (C.4), appeals shall include a brief statement of the facts relevant to the claim. Your 29-page appeal clearly fails to meet this criterion and will not be accepted for Final Review." The unresolved grievance seeks to remove the undeserved infraction from his records.

On July 6, Arroyo filed an appeal "formally objecting to Mr. Moslak's misinterpreted, arbitrary dismissal, due to the fact that my two-page appeal for 'Final Review,' attached with 27 pages of documents totaling 29 pages, are relevant and categorically meets the criterion, under the proviso, pursuant to DC ADM 801 § 5 (C.4), and DC-ADM 801, Inmate Handbook Pg.41-Sec. Final Appeal (Office of Hearing Examiner), No.4-5, clearly states I'm responsible for providing a 'brief statement (two pages) relative to issues and any available paperwork or documentation relevant to the appeal, etc.'"

Arroyo compared the PA DOC's attack on his right to free speech to the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision for Brandy Levy, in which Justice Stephen Breyer wrote the free exchange of ideas "facilitates an informed public opinion, which, when transmitted to lawmakers, helps produce laws that reflect the people's will." (New York Times, June 23)

Just as this high school student has a right to free expression, incarcerated people like Arroyo have the right to expose conditions in prisons that can be harmful to their lives. □



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. This August marks 244 years of enslavement — until Emancipation in 1863 — with its countless injustices, brutality and institutionalized crimes against humanity. Those 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 Fugitive Slave Law Convention of 1850 to the Underground Railroad that ran late 18th century to 1865, 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.

A number of freedom fighters were born in August, including Marcus Garvey, Fred Hampton and Russell Maroon Shoatz, while a number died in that month: 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 Jackson was executed by prison guards. His assassination was an important spark leading to the heroic Attica Prison Rebellion in September 1971.

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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 also provide subscriptions to hundreds of incarcerated subscribers for free. Your donations help us to send news behind the walls.

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

LEGACY OF ATTICA: 7

Attica revolutionaries ‘chose to revolt and even die’

In September 1971, prisoners at Attica Correctional Facility in New York state staged a rebellion that drew international attention to the struggle of incarcerated workers. Prisoners requested that the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party intervene on their behalf during negotiations, and comrade Tom Soto was sent from the PSC. New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller eventually ordered a massacre that led to the deaths of over 40 people. The following is an excerpt of Soto’s on-the-ground account published on workers.org June 29, 2020. The excerpt is being reprinted in memory of Tom Soto, who died June 2020 at the age of 77.

By Tom Soto
Attica, 1971



Tom Soto

There is one scene I’ll never forget. I was leaving the prison for the last time, late Sunday night. As I entered corridor A leading into the liberated area, there was a brother who I happened to know personally standing on security. His arms were folded as he faced 40 machine guns on the administration side. On his shirt he was wearing a [Prisoners Solidarity Committee] button. Today, I don’t know

if he is alive.

Another thing I’ll never forget — a brother whom I rapped with a long time noted the ring on my finger and asked about it. I told him it had been made from an American fighter bomber shot down by Laotian women over Laos. I gave it to him, and he considered it to be a very dear show of solidarity between the PSC and the

prisoners and the Indochinese people.

As I left, I knew that I might never see these men again. The atmosphere was filled with tension. There were many hugs and kisses, many goodbyes, many messages to families on the outside. Yet there was also an incredible strength and determination among all the prisoners to fight for their just demands or die in the attempt.

Finally, I’d like to add that the prisoners don’t view themselves as criminals. They know that they — the Black people, the Puerto Rican people, the poor white people — are not “criminals” but oppressed people, driven by poverty. They know that they have been denied jobs; they have families to support; and they know that the only way for poor people to survive, for those with no hope of getting jobs, is through stealing \$20 or \$100 or \$200, in other words, crimes of survival.

They see themselves as victims of a racist society which oppresses and exploits their people. They see the Rockefellers, the Mellons, the big corporations, the banks, those who rob and steal their labor for profit, as the real criminals.

The inmates always told me that they had no intention of killing any of the hostages. They took them because there was no other way to redress their grievances.

The guard-hostages were the only thing that stood between the prisoners and sudden death. As it turned out, Rockefeller decided to sacrifice even the guards rather than to give in to the just demands of the prisoners. The blood of all the dead is on his hands.

But one thing the rulers of this country never seem to learn — they think repression, repression and more repression will end the oppressed peoples’ uprisings. In fact, just the opposite is true. The men at Attica were so oppressed, so tortured, so brutally treated that finally they chose to revolt and even die rather than endure life behind those walls any longer. They knew that many would die, yet they chose the dignity of struggle rather than the misery of submission.

The Attica uprising was an historic event. It will live forever in the hearts and minds of the oppressed around the world. If the class solidarity shown there is any indication of the future, the cause of the oppressed and poor cannot fail. No prison rebellion in U.S. history has ever been so politically conscious and so determined. The Prisoners Solidarity Committee felt honored to have been invited by the prisoners to support them and is pledged to continue our work on their behalf. □

Paris Commune of the Black Liberation struggle

By Larry Holmes

The following are excerpts from an article first published by Workers World on Sept. 14, 2016, to mark the 45th anniversary of this historic uprising of incarcerated workers and revolutionaries. It was updated to reference the 2018 prison strike in the U.S. and has been lightly edited with subheadings added.

The story of Attica, Sept. 9, 1971, is the story of how prisons can be incubators of revolutionaries — like George Jackson, assassinated two and a half weeks earlier at San Quentin State Prison.

Attica has been described as the biggest deployment of state violence since the crushing of the Native uprising at Wounded Knee — 81 years before.

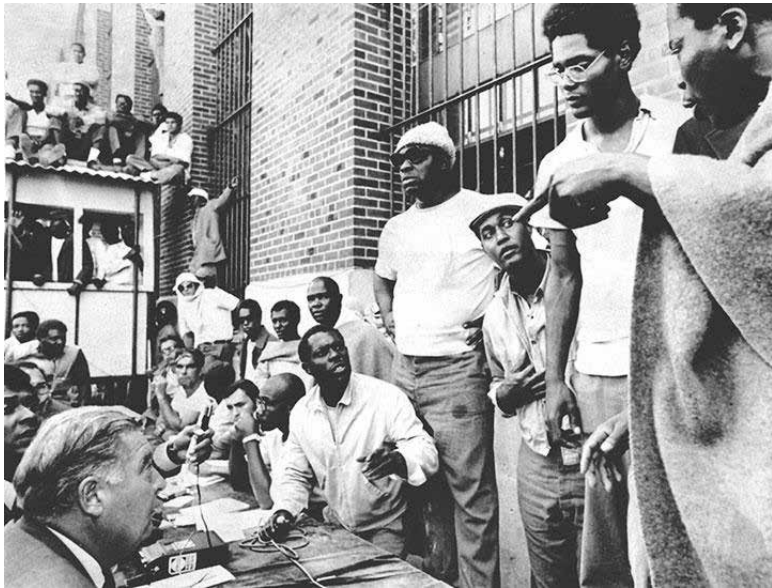
The significance of the Attica uprising as a prison rebellion transcends prison. Attica was a high-water mark in the Black Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It was almost the Black Liberation Movement’s Paris Commune, of 100 years before in France in 1871.

Attica was spontaneous, but to the extent that it was led, it was organized by revolutionaries — highly political individuals who considered themselves Marxists, Maoists, Black liberationists. They organized committees for food, for negotiations. They put together 28 demands in a few hours! Their demands addressed every aspect of survival in prison: health, food, an end to solitary confinement, legal rights, the

right to family visitation, the right to get political material in the mail. Particularly noteworthy, in relation to the recent national prison strike, is that almost one-third of their demands addressed prisoner labor rights.

Attica prisoners as workers

This is from their statement: “We demand an end to prison labor exploitation. ... Prisoners who refuse to work are punished and segregated. This is a class issue.”



L.D. Barkley, martyred Attica prisoner, second from the right, stated, “We are men! We are not beasts and we do not intend to be beaten or driven as such. The entire prison populace — that means each and every one of us here — has set forth to change forever the ruthless brutalization and disregard for the lives of the prisoners here and throughout the United States. What has happened here is but the sound before the fury of those who are oppressed.”

Their demands included: Prisoners should be considered workers. The work day should be eight hours. Prisoners should have the right to form a union. Prisons should be made to conform to New York state labor laws, including wages and workers’ compensation for

accidents. Prisoners should have access to vocational training, union pay scales, union membership.

Workers World Party played an important role at Attica. The Party had a tremendous reputation with prisoners, through both Youth Against War and Fascism and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, and was known in all state prisons. We did work ranging from solidarity with political prisoners and legal help to providing buses to take prisoners’ families for visits to upstate prisons. We were also known for our political program: “Prisons are concentration camps for the poor! Tear them down!”

Our reputation was such that the Attica negotiating committee asked that a leading comrade, Tom Soto, be an observer during negotiations with the state.

Ultimately the repression came. Nelson Rockefeller, the oil billionaire and then governor, gave the orders to crush the uprising. He had a reputation as an Eastern liberal, but he was actually a ruling-class monster with presidential aspirations, so he ordered in more than 1,000 troops, guards and state troopers from four to five states around, to shoot indiscriminately.

The state killed more than 30 prisoners and 10 hostages. The bourgeois propaganda was that the prisoners had killed the hostages, with the media giving all sorts of lying details. But it later came out that all who died, died of bullet wounds — and the prisoners had no guns. Surviving prisoners were tortured, without their wounds being treated.

The ruling class made their point: “There is a price to pay” if there is rebellion.

But the uprising opened up the question of prisoners’ rights and liberation. From then on, isolated prisoners became a much bigger issue in our movement, as well as the issue of prisoners as workers.

The ultimate goal of revolutionaries

However, revolutionaries never forget that our ultimate goal is not merely improving the conditions under which workers’ labor is exploited but rather the abolition of exploitation, the abolition of all wage slavery and capitalism.

The strike raises larger issues. For instance, in 1977 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled, in a case brought by a North Carolina prisoners’ union, that the prisoners do not have rights as workers.

But when has the claim of “no rights” ever stopped us from organizing workers?

Fighting for legal rights is part of organizing! We fight for workers organizing in the right-to-work states in the South, for undocumented workers who don’t have bourgeois rights as workers.

One problem for some unions is that they have cops and prison guards in these unions. That makes it harder for the union to take anti-racist and solidarity positions. They should get rid of the prison guards and organize the prisoners!

The working class is changing. Now a big section is temporary and unorganized. The Black Lives Matter movement is part of the working class in motion and is demanding a stop to killing Black and Brown workers and demanding jobs and employment.

Our Party has to take the lead in acknowledging who is at the forefront of working-class organizing. If you have a Marxist view of the working class, our class is far from disappearing — it is expanding! End prison slave labor! □

THE RIGHT TO REBEL!

WW interviews Attica survivor Che Nieves – Part three:

‘50 years later, Attica hasn’t changed’

The following is an edited interview with Che Nieves, a survivor of the 1971 Attica Prison Rebellion and a founding member of the Young Lords Party in Greenhaven and Attica Prisons, conducted July 20 by Monica Moorehead, a Workers World managing editor. More segments of the interview have appeared in WW, and more will appear in future issues. (See workers.org.)

A hunger strike was held at Attica to commemorate Black Freedom Fighter George Jackson, gunned down by San Quentin Prison guards on Aug. 21, 1971. A few days later, the leadership was formed of the Attica Liberation Faction, which sent a Manifesto of Demands to New York Commissioner of Prisons Russell Oswald.

From Sept. 9-13, 1,281 prisoners, mostly Black and Latinx, rose up against the oppression, brutality and racism at Attica.

Che Nieves: People were fed up and at a boiling point.

Over time, we heard that a brother named George Jackson was murdered. And so at Attica, we started discussing what we could do to commemorate the brother. So we planned a hunger strike, where everybody would go into the mess hall. I said, “Don’t say anything.” There was total silence. Many of us had black armbands. You sat down and waited for us to be called, so that we could leave. That was it. We didn’t eat.

The administration was very apprehensive. They said, “What? They ain’t eatin’?”

The goon squad came and picked two brothers out of their cells and beat them up. The goon squad comes in like the Ku Klux Klan, in groups because they’re scared to come alone. The guards beat us up and took some people to segregation, where I’m sure they got beat up there, too. Everybody was yelling. The next day the brothers’ cells were open for them to go to the mess hall, and they went.

When there is too much tension, too much anger, too many issues, it comes to a boiling point and explodes.

I heard the siren go off. I was in a metal shop working, and I looked to the door that led to the outside. I saw Sam Melville come in, and he said, “Everybody is free now.” I said, “I’m not totally free yet, but I understand what you’re sayin’.”

We talked about two things to do quickly: Establish a committee to represent all inmates; and organize a

security organization to secure everything happening, so there will be no harm.

We chose Frank Smith, known as “Big Black,” to run the security.

Youth Against War and Fascism, an ally

We talked about who we wanted to come in. We wanted the Young Lords, [then Congress member] Herman Badillo and William Kunstler. The Black Panthers came in. Bobby Seale came in. We wanted people from the New York Times. We wanted brother Tom Soto from Youth Against War and Fascism.

When he came in, I hugged him and said, “I love you.” He said, “I love you too, and I’m going to stay here and die here with you.” The brother was a warrior, a soldier, a dedicated revolutionary. I will always carry him in my heart, as will all the Attica brothers.

WW: Were you part of the negotiating team?

CN: Yes. I was part of everything happening there. I was sort of on the outskirts doing security and maintaining order, because I was Minister of Education of the Young Lords Party. Dalou Asahi (Mariano Gonzalez) was Minister of Defense. He was part of the committee. Francisco Soto was also part of the committee. He was a Young Lord; there were a lot of Young Lords in the committee.

We wanted to first get the warden out. We wanted to establish new visitation rights and put a stop to the ripping up of letters from our loved ones. We also wanted newspapers like the Amsterdam News, Workers World Party’s newspaper and The Call, the Black Muslims’ newspaper, to come in because we had a right to have access to these things.

We wanted representatives at parole board hearings, so that when the parole board attempts to throw a monkey wrench into these hearings, the attorneys will be there to resolve the issues. I went to the parole board twice, and I was denied and told to come back in two years. The reason was because of my political involvement in prison. I was at a point that I didn’t care. My main concern was continuing the struggle in the prison. Those were some of the issues. The toilet paper and showers were minor concerns, but they were serious ones.

WW: You were also demanding a union, right?

CN: Yeah! We demanded unions, better working conditions and an end to exploiting the workers. We talked about all that.

The demands raised included amnesty. Why did we include amnesty? Because we felt that if we gave the prison back, we didn’t want to see any retaliation. Would you want to be beaten up, like they were beaten up in Riker’s Island and prisons in the Bronx, Queens and the Tombs in Manhattan? Uprisings occurred in various places in the city.

The observers attempted to communicate with Governor Nelson Rockefeller. He said, “no.” He meant, “I don’t care about these prisoners. My main concern is being the president of the United States. I have political ambitions. The prisoners don’t mean anything to me and have no value to me. Politically they are slaves.” That’s the bottom line.

So on Sept. 13, early in the morning, about 8 a.m. or 9 a.m., I was looking up in the sky for some reason, and I saw a helicopter come in. I thought it was a helicopter that had come to take us to another country. But the helicopter spread pepper gas throughout the yard.

Outside the prison, all the guards and state troopers were on duty. They were ready. They had more guns than people. They were ready to come in and kill. Why would they have all these guns if they’re not going to kill? They came in

shooting. All the brothers on the catwalk were killed.

They took me to the wall; they put an X on my back. The X was a sign of automatic death. So when I got to the wall, I saw other brothers, but I couldn’t see who they were. They told me to put my head on a wall and put my arms against a wall. And so that’s what I did.

A few moments later, a sergeant who came by and stopped, asked me, “Who do you want us to contact?” So I looked at them, and I said, “You gonna kill me?” And he asked again, “Who do you want us to contact?” I said you can contact my sister in Puerto Rico.

Meanwhile, a state trooper was sitting behind us with a rifle, ready to shoot us. In the yard, a lot of people got killed.

After everything was done and the shooting stopped, some people were singled out to be killed. Tom Hicks, another brother, was singled out to be killed. Melville was singled out to be killed. So the bullets had names on them.

Those of us who survived, they did nothing for us. We were locked up. It only took about four or five days before doctors from the streets were demanding to get into the prison. But the administration would always kick them out, because they didn’t want the outsiders to know what was happening. But there were some others who were so severely injured that they had to go to outside hospitals; there was no other choice.

In that instant, doctors in those hospitals became aware of what was happening in the prison ... because of these brothers who went to these hospitals.



Che Nieves



The rebellion, the radicals unified all the people. Prior to that, you had whites on one side, Blacks on another side, gay people in the middle. They were all separated from each other. It took a lot of work by the Young Lords, by the Panthers, by the Black Muslims to bring white people to their senses. We came together as a family.

L.D. Barkley talked about the unification of all the people in the South, and that was a wonderful thing. But it took a lot of years of struggling and education for white people in Attica to begin looking at their situation. You know, “How come the guards come and kick your ass, too? You gotta wake up, white boy.”

All of the guards and state troopers involved in the yard were white. What happened there on Sept. 13, 1971, was savagery at best. Prisoners will continue to rebel as long as the prison’s oppression is like Attica’s. We all need to abolish prisons as they are and all the institutions that repress.

The legacy of Attica is resistance. As long as there’s oppression, there is always going to be resistance, because just like slavery, as long as slavery exists, people will always rebel.

That’s the lesson Attica left us. We need to fight.

Power to the people! Free all political prisoners! □



ART: KEVIN RASHID JOHNSON

“When the prison gates open the real dragon comes out”

— Ho Chi Minh

Texas ‘doesn’t give a damn’ about prisoners’ lives

By Gloria Rubac

“I think it’s very stupid, even suicidal on their part, but at the same time, that’s how Texas prison industries operate. They need their employees to keep the prison businesses up and operating. Profits are first, and the health of prisoners and employees are secondary,” Freo Lampkin told Workers World.

After 29 years in Texas Department of Criminal Justice prisons, Lampkin knows firsthand that “prisoners are worked until they can’t work no more.”

Lampkin was responding to an email he saw that was sent to supervisors of TDCJ businesses, as well as the Texas Correctional Industries supervisors directing employees to come to work even if they have COVID.

This email was first sent by Bill Lewis, Deputy Director of TDCJ Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics Division, to supervisors of prison industries and at TCI. The email memo stated: “If an employee is fully vaccinated and tests positive on a COVID test, they will be required to wear a mask for 14 days, have their temperature taken twice a day and be non-symptomatic. They will be allowed to work while following the previous guidelines.”

In other words, employees with the COVID virus should go to work, so business can continue. TDCJ is deliberately allowing COVID-positive workers to expose other workers, including the incarcerated workers who work under them.

Prisoner activist Nanon Williams told Workers World, “TDCJ just doesn’t give a damn about us. This email means my life has no value. Texas prisons already have a high rate of COVID, and they just don’t care if we die.

“This email speaks for itself, and it impacts every prison in Texas. It is ignorant. How many prisoners will get sick because of this email, sent as cases of COVID are skyrocketing? How many of us will die? They don’t pay us for our labor. Paroles are continuously denied. Work time or good time is not credited. We are still first-class slaves.”

Health care workers and medical professionals know that people with COVID should quarantine for 10-14



Protest at Texas State Capitol in Austin, May 2020.

days to not spread the disease, even if they are asymptomatic. The CDC states, “If you are fully vaccinated and become infected with the Delta variant, you can spread the virus to others. (tinyurl.com/yfhew4sm)

Profiting from unpaid labor

TCI manufactures a wide selection of goods that range from furniture and garments to refurbished computers. TCI operates soap and detergent factories, metal fabrication facilities, sign shops, boot and shoe manufacturing plants, and produces bedding, janitorial supplies, Texas state flags and license plates. Industry programs include tire repair and retreading, renovating school buses, printing services and Braille transcription. All of this is done without paying the workers a penny.

While the 13th Amendment outlawed slavery in 1865, it included one exception: people who are “duly convicted” of a crime. Because of that exception, incarcerated workers can be paid nothing for their labor. Texas is one of only five states — all in the South — where workers in correctional facilities are not paid.

The State Auditor of Texas issued a report in March 2021 about the sale and production of food and fiber by

the Agribusiness, Land and Minerals Division of the TDCJ. The auditors found that TDCJ was producing many items at a cost that exceeded the cost of procuring them from outside suppliers.

According to Prison Legal News, “Of special interest to prisoners is the fact that they are forced to labor in the fields without pay on crops of cotton that are unprofitable. So, they ask, what justifies the slavery? Surely not self-sufficiency as prison officials claim. Prison slavery remains an ideological imperative for politicians who yearn for the days of chattel slavery. How do you lose money in a business that employs slaves who are paid nothing for their labor?”

Wrong then, wrong now

Late last year, the City of Houston was ready to approve a contract for the retreading of tires on city vehicles to the lowest bidder — TDCJ. But after objections and discussion, the city selected a different vendor, even though it was a bit more costly.

A Houston Chronicle editorial Dec. 3, 2020, correctly stated, “The move should send a message to Texas officials and to anyone who profits off the work of unpaid incarcerated workers: It’s time to end this practice that carries the shameful tinge of slavery and the remnants of our state’s ugly history of convict leasing.

“The state is profiting from forced, free labor — just as it did during the racist Jim Crow-era system of convict leasing, in which Black people were locked up, often for violating unjust laws, then leased by the state to companies and made to work without pay in sugarcane fields and on railroads.

“It was wrong then — and it is wrong now. Loss of freedom is already punishment for crime; we should not strip human beings of the dignity that comes from being compensated for work.”

Today, as COVID cases are rapidly spiking and hospital beds are scarce for workers, not only are incarcerated workers treated as enslaved workers, but they face working conditions that could be a death sentence. □

Shackling harms hospitalized incarcerated workers

Part 2

By Marie Kelly and Phebe Eckfeldt

This is Part two of an article on the horrific practice of shackling incarcerated people while hospitalized. The full article can be read at workers.org.

The Nursing Home Reform Act of 1987 set federal guidelines for safe physical and mental care of the elderly on issues such as pressure ulcers, urinary catheters and physical restraints. As a result, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services led an effort to adopt specific regulations around the safe use of physical restraints. The Joint Commission of Accreditation of Hospitals surveys institutions about following industry and governmental standards.

The use of physical restraints on a patient must be determined by a medical professional after evaluating the patient. Other methods of gaining the patient’s cooperation must have been tried. A nursing professional must evaluate the patient frequently to determine that the patient is safe and the restraints are not impairing skin integrity or causing discomfort. The physician must reevaluate the patient and the need for physical restraint every 24 hours.

Ethical practice

Physical restraint of the elderly is a traumatic experience and thus poses an ethical question for any health care professional. When does the use of physical restraint in caring for a patient supersede the negative outcome of such a practice? Patients describe feeling a loss of dignity and self-respect, anxiety, aggression and social isolation with depression. Health care professionals must carefully weigh the effect of restraining on the overall well-being of the patient.

It is important for caregivers to reflect on personal biases and how those biases may be influencing practice decisions. This is particularly true for caregivers of the incarcerated patient. Attitudes regarding race, homelessness, poverty, drug addiction and gender oppression

should be considered when health care institutions educate their staff on the proper care and treatment of incarcerated hospital patients.

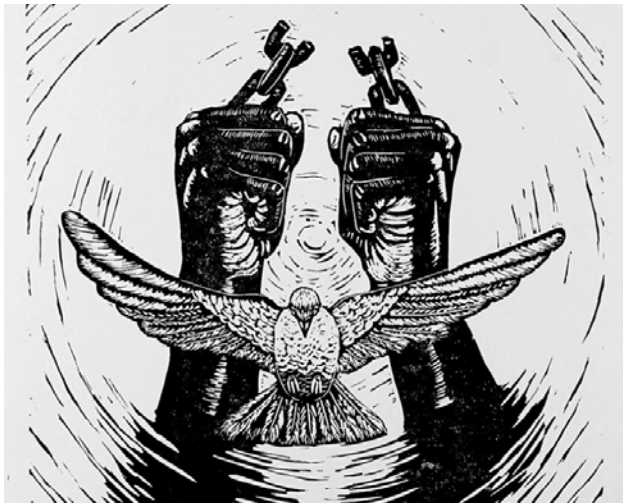
The Journal of Medical Ethics published the work of C. Gastmans and K. Milisen, faculty members at The Center for Biomedical Ethics and Law at Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium, in March 2006. The authors describe four values health care professionals must espouse when caring for the elderly. These values listed below can be expanded to include guidance for the ethical treatment of incarcerated hospital patients:

1) Human Dignity cannot be relinquished so caregivers must make this a priority: “As a first value, we could state that every senior citizen should be treated as a person. Human dignity cannot be relinquished, not even through illness, handicap or approaching death. This value gives rise to the ethical norm that caregivers must give priority to respect for the dignity of older persons.” This first value must encompass the human dignity of the incarcerated. Given the history of the carceral state, caregivers should consider the incarcerated patient may indeed be a victim of state violence and injustice.

2) Freedom of choice and consent: “The ability of human beings to make choices must always be respected in the context of physical restraint. From this derives the ethical norm that caregivers, when physical restraint is being considered, should inform competent older persons and their relatives as fully as possible about the various options. They should provide information — as objectively as possible and in a way that is understandable.”

The loss of the ability to move freely in society imposed by the judicial system does not preclude that freedom of choice and informed consent can be withheld from the incarcerated patient. On the contrary, caregivers must respect the incarcerated patient’s ability to make choices regarding their physical well-being.

3) Social and psychological well-being should be taken into account: “Respect for overall well-being is the third value that must be protected. From the choice of overall



well-being as a priority value, we can derive the norm that, when making decisions about physical restraint, not only older persons’ physical well-being should be taken into account, but also the social (possibility for contact), psychological (experience of themselves and their relatives) and moral (respect for autonomy, informed consent) dimensions of their well-being.”

The incarcerated patient is coming from a toxic, punitive prison environment. This patient should be considered traumatized, both emotionally and physically. It is essential that caregivers respect and foster the incarcerated patient’s social and psychological well-being to insure the best possible outcome for their hospital stay.

4) Respect for autonomy: “The fourth ethical value gives priority to optimal support for older persons’ ability to do things independently (self-reliance).” The caregiver must be unbiased and recognize the autonomy of the incarcerated patient.

Shackling in the hospital setting should be considered detrimental to recovery. The health care team should have significant input in any decision to physically restrain a hospitalized prisoner. A plan that is individualized will include measures to monitor physical health status and personal needs, along with protection of privacy and psychosocial comfort. (tinyurl.com/2w3bdab2)

Stop shackling hospitalized incarcerated people!

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

Tokyo Olympics: athletes resist, forge solidarity

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Black-gloved fists raised in a Black power salute, heads bowed on the podium, U.S. sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos honored the Black freedom struggle at the 1968 Olympics after they received their gold and bronze medals. Suffering a storm of vicious, racist condemnation after that principled act, banned and shunned by the IOC until 2016, they kept their pride. Fifty years later, Carlos firmly said, “I’m proud of what we did.” (tinyurl.com/33hkbaw6)

The International Olympic Committee website states that the “Olympic Movement” is for “building a better world by educating youth, through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind, and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play. (olympics.org)

That’s the old, discredited “equal playing field” argument. In sports as well as in politics, bigotry, imperialism and capitalism always place people in profoundly unequal circumstances every day.

Political protests have taken place at the Olympics almost from their 1894 beginning, including in 1906, when Irish track-and-field athlete Peter O’Connor, angered at having to run under the British flag, scaled a flagpole to wave the Irish independence flag.

In 1975 the unwritten Olympic ban on protest was formalized with an addition in its charter of what is now Rule 50: “Every kind of demonstration or propaganda, whether political, religious or racial, in the Olympic areas is forbidden.”

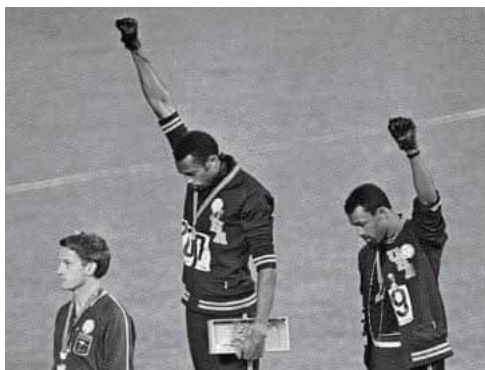
After the past year of billions of people globally protesting issues from racism to climate change, the IOC under pressure changed Rule 50 to allow limited political expression. (tinyurl.com/yzt9xtwx)

But Olympic athletes kept pushing the limits to express their outrage at injustices.

Women’s soccer teams from the U.S., Sweden, Chile, Britain and New Zealand took a knee before their games to protest racism. They were following the lead of

former National Football League star quarterback Colin Kaepernick — whom the NFL bosses put on their “never hire again” list, because of his steadfast protests against racism.

The first Costa Rican gymnast to make the Olympics, Luciana Alvarado, choreographed her routine, so she ended on one knee with her fist thrust in the air to dramatize support for the Black Lives Matter movement. (tinyurl.com/4cxa8wum)



Runners Tommie Smith (center) and John Carlos, 1968 Olympics.



Costa Rican gymnast, Luciana Alvarado.

Algerian judo practitioner Fethi Nourine refused to compete against an Israeli judoka and was suspended and expelled from the Olympics. He said, “The Palestinian cause is bigger than all of this.” (tinyurl.com/emwh4cs7)

Venezuelan weightlifter Julio Mayora won a silver medal — and promptly dedicated it to former President Hugo Chávez, who set the country on the road to socialism with the Bolivarian Revolution.

Two Chinese cyclists, Bao Shanjue and Zhong Tianshi, wore Mao Zedong pins after winning gold medals in the women’s sprint. They ended up escaping serious censure for displaying “political propaganda” for the small red-and-gold pins commonplace during the Cultural Revolution. China will host the 2022 Winter Olympics, and right-wingers used the cyclists’ solidarity with their country to warn of an upcoming “triumphal Chinese communist spectacle in the snow.” (The Guardian, Aug. 7)

Three-time U.S. hammer-throw champion Gwen Berry turned her back on the U.S. flag as the national anthem

played at the Olympic trials in June. Berry, who describes herself as an athlete-activist, was raised in Ferguson, Mo., epicenter of protests against the police murder of Michael Brown.

Berry said of her participation in the Olympics, “My purpose and my mission is bigger than sports. I’m here to represent those ... who died due to systemic racism.” Berry was previously sanctioned by the U.S. Olympic Committee after raising her fist during the U.S. anthem at the 2019 Pan-Am Games, a suspension causing her to lose \$50,000 in sponsorships. (nbc.news, June 28)



PHOTO: FRANCISCO SECO

Shot put thrower Raven Saunders from South Carolina.

According to Marie Claire magazine, Berry stated: “I’ll fight for people here [in the U.S.], because we’ve endured here. People are still capitalizing off of our unpaid labor force, more than 400 years now ... so how can they be mad at me for standing up for my people?” (July 30)

Perhaps the most dramatic Olympic statement was made by Raven Saunders, African

American silver medalist in the shot put. After the awards ceremony, Saunders stepped off the podium, lifted her arms above her head and formed an “X” with her wrists.

Asked the meaning, she explained, “It’s the intersection of where all people who are oppressed meet.” Her gesture of solidarity with the overwhelming majority of the people in the world was placed under investigation by the IOC committee and paused, only because Saunders’ mother died two days after her victory. Saunders identifies out and proud as an LGBTQ+ person, telling Outsports that she came out to her mother as gay in the third grade. (July 19)

During the Games, sibling athletes gave unreserved support to legendary gymnast Simon Biles, when she had to withdraw from most events to guard her mental and physical health.

In a parallel to U.S. athletes who have revved up organizing against exploitation of their skills and labor, these acts of resistance by Olympic athletes show a powerful determination to resist exploitation, build solidarity in oppression and connect across borders imposed by colonialism and imperialism. □

Haiti

Earthquake intensifies imperialist-fueled turmoil

By G. Dunkel

A new earthquake, whose epicenter was in southwest Haiti, hit the country Aug. 14, as reported by the U.S. Geological Survey. The quake was significantly stronger and shallower than one that devastated Port-au-Prince in 2010. Although the area around its epicenter is less densely populated than Port-au-Prince, the USGS is predicting hundreds of millions of dollars in damages and thousands of deaths.

Hospitals close to the epicenter in Les Cayes, a city of 30,000, and Jérémie report they have insufficient supplies to handle all the injured and insufficient first responders or equipment to pull people out of the rubble. Social media videos show rescuers using sledgehammers and chainsaws to rescue trapped survivors.

Tropical Storm Grace is set to hit Haiti Aug. 16, adding torrential rainfall to the earthquake’s devastation.

Acting Prime Minister and interim President Ariel Henry declared a state of emergency. Since international organizations like the Red Cross misused the 2010 earthquake to raise and keep billions of dollars, Henry wants all aid to flow through the Haitian government.

Political turmoil

Following President Jovenel Moïse’s July 8 assassination, the political turmoil in the country has intensified. Ariel Henry was to replace then-Prime Minister Claude Joseph on July 9. But the 10 and only members of Haiti’s parliament still in office selected Joseph Lambert, president of the Haitian senate, to become interim president after Moïse’s death.

Moïse had allowed the terms of all other elected officials in Haiti to expire by the simple expedient of not holding elections. Washington backed Moïse in this decision.

Ultimately, with the backing of the Core

Group — ambassadors representing the U.S., France and other imperialist countries — Ariel Henry became acting prime minister. Since no parliament exists to confirm Henry’s selection, he will remain acting prime minister until elections are held. As prime minister, Henry declared himself interim president.

The Haitian National Police investigating the assassination arrested 18 Colombian mercenaries and two Haitian “translators.” The PNH has named no primary instigator or forces responsible for the plot. Most arrested mercenaries were trained by the U.S. Army in Colombia for the “anti-terrorist” special forces. The Haitian translators had been paid informants for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Authority.

Different versions of the assassination

The PNH’s favored narration has the mercenaries and translators hired by a Haitian doctor who wanted to pull off a coup d’état and raised his funding from a “development group” looking for profits in Haiti. Another version suggests the mercenaries were “fall guys,” who arrived at Moïse’s house after he was killed and were set up to take the blame.

That a broad conspiracy was involved is suggested because the extensive security in the wealthy Pétion-Ville neighborhood where Moïse lived failed to stop the attack, and because the presidential security detail vanished before the mercenary commandos arrived.

Investigating Judge Mathieu Chanlatte — presiding in Haiti’s legal system over the equivalent of a U.S. grand jury — resigned July 13 on the grounds that the government provided him insufficient security. One of his assistants died July 12 under “unclear” circumstances.

Whether or not the U.S. had a direct role in the killing, it is more than likely the U.S. government was aware of plotting against Moïse. The U.S. Embassy in

Port-au-Prince is very large for such a small, poor country — and has extensive surveillance capabilities.

Can the Haitian government hold elections?

There is wide speculation that Moïse’s death was related to a feud inside the Haitian Party of Tet Kale (PHTK), to which he and former President Michel Martelly belonged. Moïse had sharp differences with some of the very wealthy members of the Haitian bourgeoisie.

During 2020-21, there were frequent and massive demonstrations challenging Moïse. The protests were over the failing electrical system, lack of jobs, wages that did not provide a survival level of life, financial corruption in the Moïse regime and its failure to adhere to the Haitian Constitution, and the interference of U.S. and imperialist nongovernmental forces in Haitian affairs.

The assassination has removed Moïse as a target of the outrage of the people. Some opposition forces, like the Lavalas Party of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, are putting their emphasis on winning a fair and free election.

Moïse and previously Martelly were installed as president with the direct intervention of the U.S. Now it appears that the Core Group wants to allow the PHTK to organize elections in fall 2021 and then “count” the vote to determine an outcome favorable to imperialist and capitalist interests.

That scenario would remove the need for the U.S. to be blatantly involved in determining Haiti’s fate.

How the current earthquake will affect the PHTK’s ability to hold the vote remains to be seen.

Haiti has not completely recovered from the 2010 earthquake. Haiti is now facing another vast human disaster and desperately needs real, material solidarity, not imperialist maneuvers. □

Cuomo out
#TimesUp for all you misogynist ruling class creeps!

Finally, after months of denials, dismissals and weak excuses for multiple incidents of sexual harassment, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has resigned from office. This action came only after New York State Attorney General Letitia James, an African American woman, published a scathing, 168-page report on her four-month investigation on Aug. 3.

Civil rights attorney and investigator Anne Clark reported that 11 women who gave testimony — many of whom have identified themselves publicly — found the governor’s behavior “deeply humiliating and offensive.” Each of them gave graphic, detailed accounts of uninvited groping, fondling, kissing and suggestive comments. Most experienced the abuse in a workplace setting, but the daughter of Sherry Vill photographed Gov. Cuomo appearing to force a kiss on Vill at her home during a tour of flood damage to the home in 2017. (ABC News, Aug. 10)

We believe the survivors.

We unequivocally reject Cuomo’s pathetic explanations that his actions were “mistakes” or that he had not “intentionally disrespected women.” Even more so, we reject his denials of unwanted touching, which attempt to make liars of the courageous women who came forward, many at risk of losing their careers and income.

The events leading to the resignation are hardly unusual. Millions of women and gender-oppressed workers are sexually abused by their bosses, as well as co-workers. Workers of color are particularly vulnerable,



because of the multiple forms of discrimination they face. As much as the facts of this case, political conflicts within the ruling class contributed to the downfall of the vengeful, abrasive and abusive governor.

Cuomo, one among millions

Public exposure usually only happens with high-profile abusers — and they include not just Gov. Cuomo, but President Joe Biden and ex-President Donald Trump, not to mention racist enslaver Thomas Jefferson and the notorious philanderers John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton. Sexual abusers include Supreme Court Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Clarence Thomas — the latter taken on by Anita Hill 30 years ago.

Others among the most famous include film producer Harvey Weinstein, whose harassing behavior and assaults led 300 women in the entertainment industry to launch #TimesUp in 2018.

The Me Too movement, begun by Tarana Burke in 2006, became a household name after a hashtag posted by Alyssa Milano drew millions of responses. Workers from all walks of life pointed the finger at their misogynist employers, including higher-ups in sports, television, film, finance, manufacturing, agriculture, restaurants and hotels — not to mention elected “public servants” like the aforementioned. McDonald’s and Google were hit with walkouts over sexual harassment

Let’s say it again: We believe survivors!

They not only survived abuse by the perpetrator, but by the whole capitalist system, which perpetuates misogyny, racism, ableism, anti-LGBTQ2S+ oppression and class exploitation, all of which create power imbalances in the workplace that violators use to their advantage.

Thank you Letitia James, for doggedly pursuing the truth that drove Gov. Cuomo to resign. But we say it’s “time’s up” for all the sexist creep oppressors in positions of power — every one of them must go!

In fact, it’s time to get rid of the structure that fosters and protects their kind of behavior: the rotten capitalist mode of production, based on exploitation of the many by a small, filthy rich, elite owning class.

Time’s up! Talking about a revolution! □

Afghanistan
Behind corporate media debate

Continued from page 1

The debate within the U.S. ruling class is for its interests and its interests alone.

U.S. war began in 1978

The massive U.S. intervention in Afghanistan began in the late 1970s, following a progressive revolution that deposed the Afghan king and tried to bring land reform to the countryside and socialism to the cities of their country.

That Afghan revolution, led by communists, immediately lifted the position of Afghan women, who served in its forefront as leaders, teachers and soldiers to defend their newly won rights.

The U.S. government reacted by providing arms and funds to Afghanistan’s landlord class and weapons to the Afghan local rulers known as warlords — they were a feudal version of the Pentagon’s warlords. The warlords and the reactionary mujahedeen used these U.S. weapons to murder the women teachers and their students.

When the Afghan revolutionary government asked the Soviet Union for aid against the reactionaries, Washington tripled down on sending its arms to the worst elements in Afghanistan.

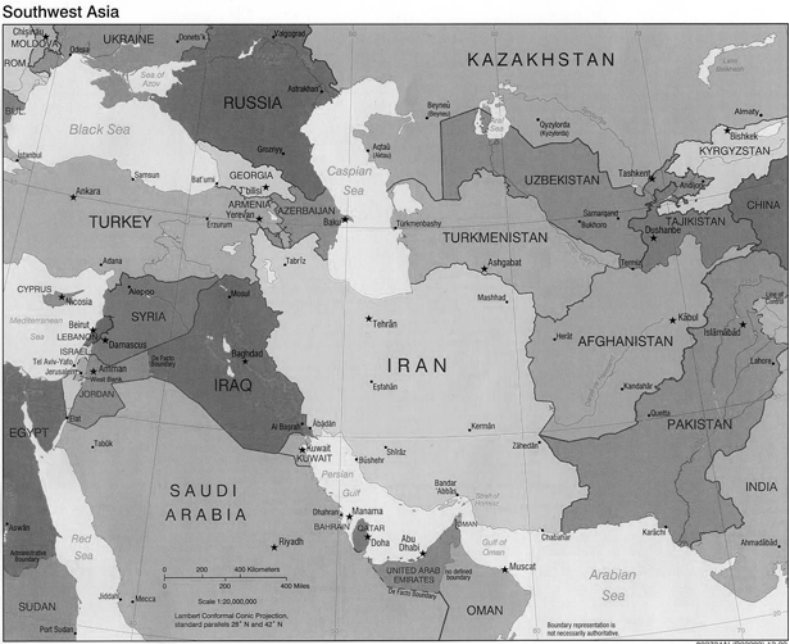
No one in Washington complained in those days that the Afghan reactionaries they armed squashed women’s rights.

Starting in 1978 and continuing for a decade, U.S. diplomats mobilized the Saudi kingdom to pay for the arms and Pakistani militarists to deliver them. Cold War strategists saw the conflict in Afghanistan as an opportunity to drain the USSR.

President Jimmy Carter’s national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski pushed for aiding the Afghan reactionaries. Brzezinski defended this position even after the September 11, 2001 attacks were blamed on al-Qaeda. He wrote that it was worth the result — because the aid to al-Qaeda helped defeat the Soviet Union.

Contrast with today

It is remarkable, and a telling contrast with what is happening today, that after the Red Army withdrew from Afghanistan in 1988-89, what remained of the revolutionary government was able to hold out in some of the major cities until 1992. This resistance proved that, for over a decade, the Afghan revolution had a solid, heroic and self-sacrificing base, even if it only had control over a small part of the territory. (See workers.org/2021/07/57380/, originally published 1996.)



U.S. aggression targeted the sovereign nations of Southwest Asia.

The various warlords and other reactionary groups fought among themselves and were unable to take Kabul decisively until 1996. By that time the Taliban, a reactionary group of young people centered in Islamic schools, received enormous aid from Pakistan’s secret service and was able to seize power in the country.

The first U.S. reaction was to engage with the Taliban, despite this group’s oppressive program regarding women. In the end, Washington was unable to establish a stable alliance or tutelage.

Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda organization, one of the groups the CIA armed during the anti-Soviet war, was based in Afghanistan as a guest of the Taliban. Following the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration seized on al Qaeda’s presence there as an excuse to invade Afghanistan — and immediately began preparations to invade oil-rich Iraq.

No Afghans and no Iraqis were involved in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon — and that’s according to Washington itself. The Bush administration, with support from the Democrats, used the attacks as a pretext for the “War on Terror.”

Washington aimed at world hegemony

What this really meant — and Washington’s strategists made this clear in their papers on U.S. strategy — was that without a Soviet Union in its way, the U.S. planned to dominate the world for the coming century, using its military and economic power. The first steps were aimed

at reconquering those countries in the Central and Western Asian region that had won some sovereignty in the period after World War II.

Instead of the grandiose plans of the so-called “neocons” — Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney — the result of the “War on Terror” has been a series of setbacks for U.S. aggression. Unfortunately, even in defeat the Pentagon has inflicted misery on tens of millions of people.

The U.S. interventions brought chaos and misery to millions of Afghans, Iraqis, Syrians, Libyans and — through its clients in Saudi Arabia and Israel — to millions of Yemenis and Palestinians. Washington’s economic sanctions extended the suffering to Iran and Lebanon.

But U.S. intervention has been marked by U.S. military and diplomatic failure.

People may ask why the Afghan revolution was able to defend Kabul without Soviet troops present from 1989 to 1992, yet the U.S. puppet government today has fallen apart in weeks.

The limited support for the U.S. occupation came from only a narrow range of those who could take advantage of the wealth and arms poured into the country. Of course the most corrupt elements come from the U.S. and West European criminal monopolies, especially the arms industry. The current rapid collapse mirrors the disastrous impact of the Pentagon in the entire region.

Progressive people in the U.S. must fight to make sure the U.S. leaves Afghanistan quickly and to oppose any new military intervention — and fight to end all sanctions, in Afghanistan and in the region.

Many in the corporate media erroneously compare the events in Kabul with the rapid victory of the liberation forces in Saigon, Vietnam, in 1975. Those events, however, besides driving out the U.S., brought a progressive government to power. That contrasts with the current events in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, getting the U.S. out is a step forward. Any progressive steps in Afghanistan can only be accomplished by the people who inhabit the region. There is no way U.S. imperialist intervention can defend the rights of Afghans.

More Workers World coverage of the background on women and the war on Afghanistan is found at: Minnie Bruce Pratt “Beware the siren song: Women’s liberation & Afghanistan,” *Workers World*, Dec. 6, 2001; and Leslie Feinberg, “U.S. and Afghanistan: The cynical abuse of ‘women’s rights.’” (workers.org/2021/04/55649/, originally published 2007)

Bolivia Evo Morales warns of right-wing maneuvers

Translated by Walter Lippmann for CubaNews and edited by Workers World.

Former president Evo Morales, leader of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) party, denounced, this Aug. 4, the Bolivian political right for promoting destabilizing maneuvers disguised as political activism.

“Once again, the coup plotters announce anti-democratic mobilizations against the legitimate, legal and constitutional government of our brother President Luis Arce (@LuchoXBolivia). They defend paramilitaries and call them ‘activists.’ The people will not fall for provocations and will defend democracy,” Morales wrote on Twitter.

The Indigenous leader referred to the demonstrations promoted by right-wing parties and other organizations in the coming days as steps to exert pressure on the government to force it to reopen the judicial investigation known as the Electoral Fraud case.

The aforementioned case investigated alleged fraud in the vote-counting of the 2019 general elections, in which Morales was reelected in the first round.

The observer mission of the Organization of American States had issued a report based on incomplete data on irregularities in the automated counting system and suggested that the objective was to benefit Morales. The document served as an excuse for the right to start the coup that ended with the resignation of Morales and the establishment of an unconstitutional government headed by



Luis Arce, currently Bolivia's president, left, with former President Evo Morales in 2020 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Jeanine Áñez.

Later studies concluded that although there were irregularities in the process, they did not carry enough weight to change the voting trend, which at all times favored Morales. Thus the conclusion rejected the fraud narrative and validated the thesis that a coup deposed Morales in 2019.

The most recent analysis on the subject, officially commissioned by the government of Bolivia to a group of investigations of the University of Salamanca, Spain, reached the same conclusion; as a result, the Prosecutor's Office closed the case.

However, the right-wing and related organizations insist on continuing with the investigation. To achieve this goal,

they announced demonstrations and roadblocks in different parts of the country for the next few days.

This Aug. 4, when speaking at the MAS congress, where the directions of the ruling party are defined for the next few years, Morales insisted on the unity of the militants in the face of threats that come both from the right and the U.S. regime, which “does not want to let the MAS continue.”

“Our congress is, fundamentally, about how to strengthen that fight. The best way to strengthen this fight is precisely by uniting ourselves,” he stressed.

The congress takes place in Lauca Ñ, a town in the tropical region of the department of Cochabamba, the main political bastion of the organization in which President Arce is also a member.

Morales highlighted the importance for Bolivia of the MAS, which he considered the largest political party in the country's history. The MAS returned to government after 11 months of an interim administration that emerged from a coup.

“Brothers and sisters, united we are invincible. Again the right is threatening; now we are better prepared, and here we are going to prepare better, with discipline to continue defeating the right,” he said.

“The strategy of the right in 2019 was to kill the Movement to Socialism ... but we are alive,” said Bolivian President Luis Arce, who preceded Morales before an audience of hundreds of representatives of social organizations from workers, peasants and Indigenous people. □

Afghanistan An epic failure of U.S. aggression

Continued from page 1

on the scene described the Taliban's arrival in Kabul as the police and military evaporated before them. Images of welcoming crowds in the streets couldn't be hidden; they were carried on television screens worldwide. Trucks of Taliban fighters rolled down the streets. Coils of black smoke rose from the U.S. Embassy as documents were burned.

By nightfall in Kabul — prime news time in Washington, D.C. — Afghan President Ashraf Ghani had fled the country with four cars and a chopper stuffed with cash. According to Reuters, Aug. 16, some money was left lying on the tarmac. Ghani was denied entry by Tajikistan, then by Oman and is expected in the U.S.

The Taliban took control of the presidential palace. News footage of Taliban leaders surrounded by dozens of armed fighters, addressing the media from the country's seat of power, was broadcast around the world.

The U.S. ambassador had his country's flag lowered at the vast U.S. Embassy and then headed to the airport for evacuation, the flag tucked under his arm.

Elaborate plans for a transitional government evaporated. The U.S. military presence, protection of the U.S. Embassy, and the evacuation of tens of thousands of Washington's collaborators, translators and their family members evaporated faster than the soldiers and police could shed their uniforms.

This came after a week during which the insurgents occupied all the major cities in Afghanistan. It took only nine days from the fall of the first provincial capital until the collapse of the whole government.

Social problems unsolved

The end of the destructive U.S. military presence does not solve the problems of Afghanistan's underdevelopment or the enormous cost of rebuilding from the wreckage of war. U.S. economic sanctions continue to strangle. However, new possibilities and alliances with China, Russia and Iran are opening, much to the

frustration of Washington's loyal strategists. An end to decades of U.S. war and corruption can pry open changes in culture and social relations.

The utter defeat of the puppet government in Kabul does not mean social liberation or a solution to the problems of Afghanistan. After 20 years of U.S. military occupation, Afghanistan still ranks as one of the poorest countries in the world. U.S. occupation never brought democracy, workers' rights, women's rights or industrial development.

The Taliban's reactionary views on the position of women get endless coverage. But the social position of the vast majority of women chained to patriarchal feudal relations did not change under the 20 years of U.S. occupation of Afghanistan.

Several thousand women of elevated social position and educational level may have benefited from the U.S. occupation. Unfortunately, they were mere window dressing. Such essential indices as educational levels, infant mortality, life expectancy, maternal mortality, and the freedom to choose marriage or divorce remain unchanged across overwhelmingly rural Afghanistan.

Who lost Afghanistan? The blame game

The rapid deterioration in Afghanistan has meant that all long-term plans and predictions are abandoned. Now the blame game begins in the corporate media, in Congress, and among Democrats and Republicans.

In the previous week the prevailing prediction was for a soft, negotiated collapse taking three to five months. Debates were on the future size of a U.S. presence, how many thousands in residual force would remain to “protect” the U.S. Embassy, how to house thousands of staff people, contractors and collaborators.

On July 8, when President Joseph Biden was asked by a reporter whether a Taliban takeover of Afghanistan was



Women fighting on their own behalf joined pro-communist Afghan militia, defending the 1978 progressive revolution for over a decade.

inevitable, he responded, “No, it is not. Because you have the Afghan troops — 300,000 — as well-equipped as any army in the world, and an air force, against something like 75,000 Taliban. It is not inevitable.”

On the Afghan government, Biden had told reporters: “They clearly have the capacity to sustain the government in place. ... There's going to be no circumstances where you'll see people being lifted off the roof of an embassy of the United States from Afghanistan.”

Nevertheless, the Taliban — lacking massive firepower, modern sophisticated equipment, or thousands of contractors — were a stronger force based on morale and internal discipline.

On Aug. 11, a U.S. Defense Department official, citing U.S. intelligence, predicted the Taliban could possibly take over Afghanistan within 90 days.

Three days before the Aug. 15 collapse, State Department spokesperson Ned Price had confidently stated that “We expect to draw down to a core diplomatic presence in Afghanistan in the coming weeks,” adding that “the embassy is not closed.”

Nature abhors a vacuum

On Aug. 10, five days before the collapse, U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad ominously warned that the Taliban should not bet on an Afghan takeover, because the

U.S. would not recognize a Taliban government if it came to power through force. There were sudden calls for non-violence and negotiations from the U.S., while it bombed Afghanistan. The sheer hypocrisy is hard to match. The U.S. has been the source of the violence. Millions of Afghans have died, been maimed, displaced and/or traumatized.

U.S. officials confidently threatened that the Taliban would get no respect or diplomatic recognition unless a withdrawal left the corrupt Kabul government in place, as an “orderly transition.” But the Taliban's meetings in Russia, China and Iran, the very countries

Washington has sought to encircle and isolate, answered this U.S. threat, much to their great frustration.

Washington's regional agenda was the creation of an “Asian NATO” to confront China and Russia. Such plans are now in total disarray.

Wars for profit

The prosperity of U.S. capitalism is connected to U.S. military and economic domination. Now the politicians discussing this defeat are making crass calculations of how cost effective the wars were.

The Pentagon's wars are enormously profitable for the largest industry in the U.S.: the military-industrial complex. Similarly, keeping medicine for profit has led the U.S. to have the highest deaths in the world from COVID.

Spending trillions on war was always about profit. The danger emanating from profits based on military industries is that these deadly industries must have new wars.

In the coming period, the working-class movement must confront this vicious capitalist system that feeds on war. There will be an ocean of crocodile tears for U.S. collaborators who get left behind. It is essential to demand an end to all the wars currently underway and the new wars being planned behind the scenes. □

¡Defender a Cuba, defender el socialismo!

Las fuerzas anticomunistas — dirigidas por el gobierno de Estados Unidos — están montando un ataque sin cuartel contra la Cuba revolucionaria. Ese país sigue avanzando con determinación en su propio camino hacia el socialismo, iniciado el 1 de enero de 1959, cuando las fuerzas dirigidas por Fidel Castro y Ernesto “Ché” Guevara derrocaron al gobierno del dictador Fulgencio Batista, respaldado por Estados Unidos.

El actual asalto a Cuba se lanzó a gran escala en las redes sociales a principios de julio. Pero Estados Unidos le declaró por primera vez la guerra ideológica y económica a Cuba en 1960, al imponerle un brutal bloqueo económico y social que sigue vigente.

Desde entonces, Estados Unidos ha intentado todas las tácticas para acabar con la Revolución, desde el poderío militar directo en la invasión de Bahía de Cochinos (Playa Girón) en 1961 hasta la creación de un “Twitter cubano” secreto para agitar el malestar y organizar “turbas inteligentes” para una “primavera cubana” que derroque al gobierno. (The Guardian, 3 de abril de 2014)

La campaña más reciente contra Cuba incluye miles de cuentas de Twitter anti-Cuba vinculadas a un sistema automatizado que retuitea rápidamente.

El experto en desinformación Julián Macías Tovar dijo a Newsweek que el 9 de julio se enviaron 100.000 tuits con un hashtag anti-Cuba, 500.000 al día siguiente y 1,5 millones el 11 de julio. Tovar añadió: “Si hay cuentas con pocos seguidores que hacen muchos tweets o retweets, cuentas recién creadas con una foto de perfil falsa... eso siempre es sospechoso”.

Reuters ha afirmado categóricamente que las publicaciones de protestas en Cuba — compartidas por millones — fueron falsamente etiquetadas como protestas contra el gobierno cubano. ¡Algunas de las fotos eran en realidad imágenes de una protesta de 2011 en Egipto — y algunas en realidad de una gran multitud reunida en

apoyo de la marcha del Primero de Mayo de 2018 de Cuba celebrando su revolución obrera! (tinyurl.com/dbh5y7sf)

La desinformación ha incluido la intervención cultural, como la promoción de una canción de reggaetón anticomunista procedente de la comunidad cubana de Miami, que tiene su origen en los ricos terratenientes blancos que huyeron de Cuba cuando triunfó la Revolución. A lo largo de las décadas, muchas operaciones físicas y psicológicas contra Cuba se han originado en Miami.

La campaña de desinformación se puso en marcha cuando se estaban produciendo algunas protestas dentro de Cuba. El país se ha visto afectado recientemente por la escasez de alimentos y de suministros médicos relacionados con la pandemia, como las jeringuillas, a las que Estados Unidos bloquea el acceso.

La Cuba revolucionaria es celebrada por su atención médica innovadora, integral y gratuita, con equipos médicos que viajan en solidaridad a otros países, especialmente durante la pandemia. Una reciente caricatura política estadounidense se burló de este logro, mostrando falsamente a un manifestante sangrante arrastrado por una policía sombrío que se jactaba de la atención médica gratuita. Sin embargo, durante la pandemia, Cuba — que todavía está clasificada en la economía mundial como un país “subdesarrollado” — ha conseguido con su sistema socialista planificado limitar las muertes por COVID-19 a 214 por millón de habitantes. La sanidad estadounidense, orientada al lucro, ha perdido 1.882 personas por millón, ha tenido más de tres veces más casos por millón que Cuba y lidera el mundo en cuanto a muertes totales, que ya superan las 625.000. (tinyurl.com/2r279hv3)

Muchos de los logros de la Revolución Cubana son desconocidos para la gente en Estados Unidos — aunque no para el resto del mundo — debido a la campaña estadounidense en curso contra el comunismo. En marcha desde el siglo XIX,

virulenta durante la época de McCarthy en los años 50, esta campaña anticomunista de los estrategas de la clase dominante estadounidense se centró en los años 60 en tratar de romper la revolución socialista que tenía lugar a sólo 90 millas de las costas de Estados Unidos.

El cristianismo de derechos apoyó al capitalismo a través de literatura canalizada en las iglesias sobre cómo oponerse a Cuba, China, la URSS y otros países dirigidos por el Partido Comunista o de “tendencia comunista”. En 1962, la Conferencia Nacional de Gobernadores creó un comité para coordinar los planes de estudio anticomunistas en las escuelas secundarias.

Para 1963, las empresas estadounidenses gastaban unos 25 millones de dólares al año en literatura anticomunista distribuida a los clientes y a los trabajadores



FOTO WW: RADHAMES MORALES

La solidaridad con Cuba es mundial, aquí en Union Square, Nueva York, el 15 de julio.

Solidaridad con Cuba en Berlín, Alemania, 14 de julio.

en el trabajo. (Sara Diamond, “Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States”, Guilford Publications, 1995, pp. 50-52)

Ahora, la última campaña anticomunista está en marcha cuando “American Marxism” llega a la cima de la lista de bestsellers del New York Times. Escrito por Mark Levin, una estrella de la derecha de Fox News, y un guerrero de la Guerra Fría resucitado, el libro utiliza las clásicas tácticas de provocación de los rojos para atacar casi todas las iniciativas progresistas en curso en Estados Unidos.

La Gran Mentira con ganas

¡Esta es la Gran Mentira de “La Guerra es la Paz” con ganas! Como socialistas sabemos que el verdadero legado del marxismo — basado en la solidaridad en las luchas contra la injusticia y la desigualdad — brilla en el faro de la Cuba revolucionaria.

La propaganda anticubana está a la orden del día para el gobierno de Estados Unidos, porque Cuba ha tenido tanto éxito en seguir adelante con su visión revolucionaria, a pesar de los viles ataques y

bloqueos colocados en su camino.

Dirigida por su Partido Comunista a lo largo de las décadas, Cuba ha creado campañas, iniciativas y organismos gubernamentales formales para abordar de forma significativa las desigualdades materiales y las insensibilidades culturales. Los funcionarios del gobierno han admitido con franqueza errores arraigados en el pasado y, con un sistema electoral basado en la plena representación de todos los sectores del país, han abordado específicamente los problemas de las mujeres, las personas LGBTQ+, los afrocubanos, los pueblos indígenas y otros con opresiones especiales.

La actual campaña contra Cuba está vinculada inextricablemente a la guerra de Estados Unidos contra un futuro socialista. Y no es de extrañar.

En una encuesta realizada entre el 11 y el 15 de junio, Axios/Momentive encontró que el capitalismo está perdiendo rápidamente su popularidad entre los jóvenes de Estados Unidos, y que los jóvenes de 18 a 34 años están divididos casi por igual entre los que ven el capitalismo negativamente y los que lo ven positivamente. (tinyurl.com/xrpce8v4)

En una encuesta de Gallup sobre las elecciones de 2020 — una fuente nada radical — el 45% de los estadounidenses indicó que votaría a un socialista para presidente. (tinyurl.com/m36u4u2u)

Situamos la campaña contra Cuba en el contexto de la larga guerra de EE.UU. contra el comunismo — y estamos atentos a cómo este veneno todavía se extiende, virulentamente vivo, por todos los aspectos de la vida en EE.UU.

Estamos en medio de una batalla de ideas que determinará nuestro futuro — el futuro de una Cuba socialista y nuestro propio futuro construyendo un camino hacia el socialismo.

Como dijo Fidel Castro en sus históricos comentarios sobre la batalla entre el capitalismo y el socialismo: “Una revolución sólo puede nacer de la cultura y las ideas. Ningún pueblo se hace revolucionario por la fuerza.

Los que siembran las ideas no tienen necesidad de reprimir al pueblo jamás. Las armas en manos de ese mismo pueblo sirven para combatir a los que en el exterior intentan arrebatarles sus logros.”

Desde dentro de la bestia capitalista, debemos seguir luchando decididamente en la batalla de las ideas. ¡Defender a Cuba! ¡Defender el socialismo! □

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

La tesis de este libro es que la crisis económica, que se inició en agosto de 2007, marcó un punto de inflexión en la historia del capitalismo. El autor sostiene que el sistema no se recuperará, no volverá al ciclo capitalista normal de auge y caída.

Durante décadas, la clase capitalista ha utilizado la revolución tecnológica digital para aumentar la productividad del trabajo a un ritmo récord. Menos

trabajadores producen más bienes y servicios en menos tiempo con salarios más bajos. El resultado es una serie de “recuperaciones sin empleos” que hace que las cosas vayan aún peor.

Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.



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