



Afghanistan: New U.S. sanctions threaten mass hunger

By Sara Flounders

Aug. 23 — U.S. politicians and journalists are all feigning deep concern about leaving behind tens of thousands of Afghans who worked for them. Meanwhile, U.S. financial institutions are busy planning a horrendous crisis for all Afghans, including their loyal collaborators.

The cynical decision to seize all of Afghanistan’s assets is reported in the back pages of the business and financial news. The media calculates the effects of these plans as “catastrophic.” Plunging currency, hyperinflation and soaring food prices are the immediate predicted effects. An orchestrated famine on a devastating level is in the planning stages.

According to the Aug. 14 Voice of America: “Afghan people are facing both an artificial and natural disaster, rendering them unable to feed their families. The situation has all the hallmarks of a humanitarian catastrophe.”

U.S. imperialism has tried many ruthless tactics to sustain a position of military dominance in Central Asia. Afghanistan has borders with China, Iran and the former Soviet Republics bordering Russia. Imperialist strategists have considered Afghanistan a key piece in the “Great Game” among competing powers for over 150 years.

At the height of the most recent imperialist intervention, in 2010 the U.S. and dozens of NATO and “partner” compliant countries deployed more than 130,000 troops on 400 military bases, forward operating bases and combat outposts around Afghanistan and built 300 bases for Afghan puppet troops. (CBS News, Feb. 10, 2010)

Over the last 20 years, U.S. involvement in Afghanistan has generated images of brutalized captives, secret prisons, sexual violence, enforced disappearances and random killings. There have been hundreds of drone strikes on homes, weddings and village gatherings.

But none of these ruthless tactics, amid the

all-pervasive rot of corruption, succeeded in maintaining U.S. domination. Each tactic, however, created greater misery, poverty and resistance.

The disarray is on display at Kabul Airport for the whole world to view. But U.S. corporate and banking powers still have formidable power in their hands.

The next U.S. weapon is intentional starvation.

90% live below poverty level

Even Afghan President Mohammed Ashraf Ghani, a totally corrupt politician who fled Afghanistan in a plane so stuffed with cash that skids of cash were left sitting on the tarmac, warned last year that 90% of Afghans already live below the government-determined poverty level of \$2 a day. (TOLOnews, July 20, 2020)

New York Times reporter Alan Rappeport, in one of several articles in the business section on the coming U.S. squeeze, wrote: “The United States and the international community are already shutting the flow of money, leaving Afghanistan in the stranglehold of sanctions that were designed to cut the Taliban off from the global financial system. Analysts say the looming shock threatens to amplify a humanitarian crisis in a country that has already endured years of war.”

Rappeport quotes Justin Sandefur, a senior fellow at the Center for Global Development, who said of cutting access to all funds, “In the short term, it’s potentially catastrophic ... could inflict real pain on normal

people.” (New York Times, July 21)

Treasury Department officials confidently assert that the Biden administration is working to prevent the Taliban from getting any of Afghanistan’s money.

The squeeze

The U.S. has blocked access to Afghanistan’s nearly \$9.5 billion in the Afghan’s Central Bank’s assets. The money is held in the New York Federal Reserve and other U.S.-based financial institutions. (Al-Jazeera, Aug. 18)

The International Monetary Fund suspended plans to distribute more than \$460 million in emergency reserves to the country. The IMF is funded with contributions by its 190 member nations; however, the United States is the largest shareholder and has always controlled the institution since it was established in 1944.

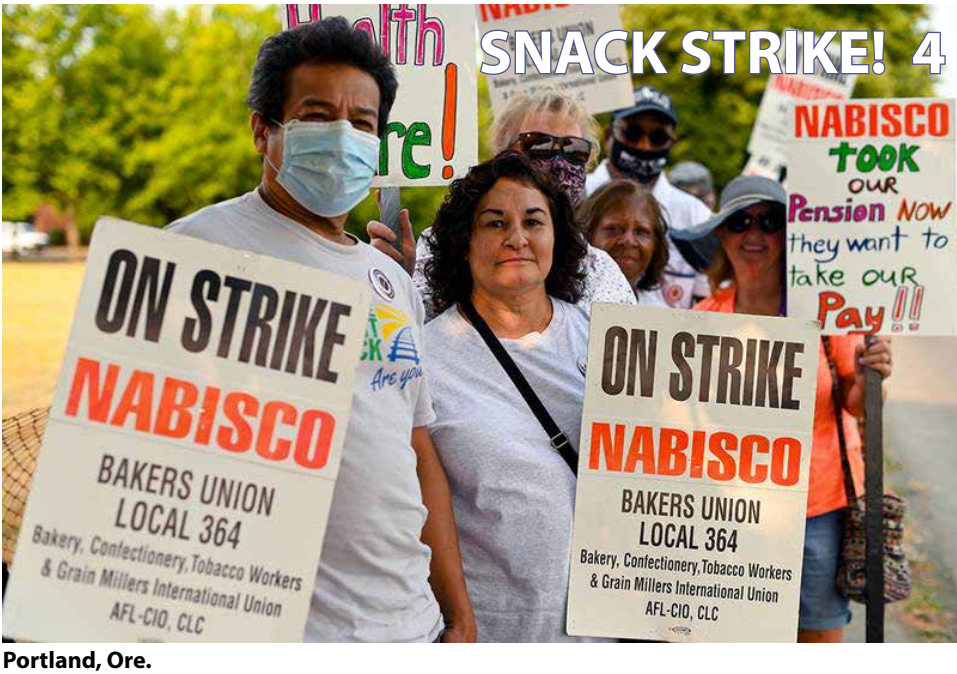
The \$1.3 billion held in funds in euros and British pounds and by the Swiss-based Bank for International Settlements are also frozen. Funds from the agreement in November 2020 among six countries to send \$12 billion over four years for emergency relief to Afghanistan are frozen. Germany has frozen its funds. All the imperialist countries are participating in the financial squeeze.

Even Afghanistan’s share of a \$650 billion allocation of currency reserves known as Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), to help developing countries cope with the coronavirus pandemic, is frozen.

The U.S. government doesn’t need any fresh authority

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Community demands Highway Patrol out of Oakland, Justice for Erik Salgado

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

Community organizations and family members of Erik Salgado, killed by the California Highway Patrol in East Oakland in June 2020, held a press conference here Aug. 16 to oppose plans to use the CHP to enforce traffic laws in Oakland. Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf and California Governor Gavin Newsom have proposed those plans.

Held on the street corner where Salgado was killed, the press conference became a speak-out by family members and groups opposed to police murder and terror in this community. Their rallying call: “CHP out of Oakland.”

Cat Brooks opened by calling out Mayor Schaaf for bringing the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the FBI; and now the CHP into the city in the last three weeks. “As Black, Brown and Indigenous people,” she said, “we know that these law enforcement agencies do not mean safety for our community. In fact, they mean increased levels of violence and increased danger for our bodies.” Brooks is co-founder of the Anti Police-Terror Project and executive director of Justice Teams Network.

Brooks described the police attack on Salgado and his pregnant partner: “On this street corner, Erik and his girlfriend were in their car, when they were profiled, targeted and assaulted by the California Highway Patrol, resulting in the death of Erik Salgado and his unborn child. Libby Schaaf has done nothing to support that family and their quest for justice.”

Ben Wang, co-director of the Asian Prisoner Support Committee, explained why his organization is calling for “CHP Out of Chinatown; CHP Out of Oakland.” Wang described the education and advocacy his group has been doing for the past 20 years on behalf of Asian prisoners in California. “We do not want the mayor and other elected officials to divide us further. We know that more policing, more law enforcement, more mass incarceration does not solve any roots of the real issues,” Wang concluded.



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Cat Brooks, co-founder of the Anti Police-Terror Project, calls out Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf and demands California Highway Patrol out of Oakland.

Salgado’s sister Amanda Blanco said, “I am here, a year later, still fighting for answers for my brother’s case. ... I am confused about why the request for more CHP, with blood already on their hands. ... From Oakland to Hayward ... there is already too much police presence.”

A broad coalition of Oakland community organizations including APTP, Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, Oakland Rising, East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, AAPI Women Lead, Urban Peace Movement and APSC supported the press conference.

The coalition issued a press release which emphasized that removing the CHP from Oakland’s streets was a key demand of last year’s uprising, which was a reaction to the police murders of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Ky. □

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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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Alex Saab’s letter: No retreat, no surrender!

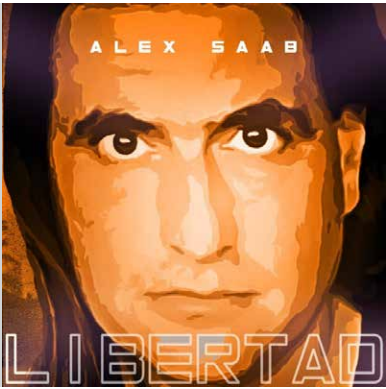
The Venezuelan Special Envoy to Iran, Alex Saab, reiterated his call for justice, through a letter received through his lawyers, one day before the case was to be heard again in the Constitutional Court of Cape Verde on August 13.

Alex Saab was pulled off a plane on June 12, 2020, during a refueling stop in the Republic of Cape Verde, an island nation off Africa’s West Coast.

U.S. authorities, in violation of international law, had ordered his arrest.

At the time of his seizure, Saab, a Venezuelan diplomat, was on a humanitarian mission to Iran to arrange emergency shipments of food, medicine and essential supplies for Venezuela. Detained and imprisoned in total isolation and darkness in Cape Verde for the past year, Saab has also been tortured. Saab is battling cancer and urgently needs to be cared for by his doctors in Venezuela.

To support the release of Alex Saab, please sign the petition at tinyurl.com/2atpxu4n.



A call for liberty for illegally arrested Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab.

its political will and extra-territorially impose its laws on us, Venezuela has been able to count on the many years of trust and friendship with the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Cuba and the Republic of Turkey, among many, many other allies, to ensure that we have not only survived the illegal sanctions, but that we are seeing the beginning of economic recovery.

What happened to me today can happen to anyone else tomorrow. The Russian Federation has today issued a clear and forceful reminder to the United States and Cape Verde that international law exists to protect us.

There are rules that have existed for centuries governing the movements of diplomats and political actors that are there to protect all diplomats and political actors, not just those who bend the knee to a foreign flag.

'We have survived because of our unity'

As the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation says today: “Extraditing a diplomat from a third country has a negative impact on international relations and can have a ‘boomerang effect’ for any country, including the United States itself, as well as for other states involved in dangerous games with international law.”

Our country is beginning to see the fruits of the economic policies of President Nicolás Maduro and his team; and it is important to remember this, as we prepare for the November 21 elections. Our strength is our unity. Our unity will show the world the transparency of our government. That is why we must sweep these elections.

As much as some U.S. officials have tried, either with words or with weapons, using “paid pseudo-patriots,” who jump and dance like monkeys on a chain in a village market and then seek refuge in Spain, Colombia and, of course, in the United States, they have never been able to and will never be able to break us.

Most of them have sold their dignity in exchange for U.S. passports and money.

They are only interested in telling the world infamies against Venezuela and never the evil they have caused us.

We have not invaded other countries; we have not

tried to impose our philosophy on others. Our leaders have demonstrated time and again that we believe in peaceful coexistence and respect the sovereignty of other nations, as required by the United Nations Charter. But are we recognized for this in the media? No, because peace does not sell newsprint; peace does not sell advertising space, and peace does not give subjective talk show hosts anything to talk about.

We have survived because of our unity and because we know that surrender is not an option.

We are not like some nations that have no resources and are therefore pushed to bend their knees and reach out like beggars. We are a nation blessed with all natural resources in abundance.

Unfortunately, the “patriots for hire” sang and danced to the orders of others and not their homeland and continue to denounce any initiative taken to improve the lives of the people of Venezuela as if it were something irregular.

Let me end by saying that I am a man of my word, who does not change his values and principles because of the circumstances I am in today or tomorrow.

No matter how loud the pseudo-journalists shout, no matter the pressures from other states, I will never turn my back on the people of Venezuela or our President Nicolás Maduro.

Loyal always,
We will win!

Iran, Russia support political prisoner Alex Saab

Iran labels Alex Saab a prisoner of war, stating: “Mr. Alex Saab, with a diplomatic passport and as an envoy of the Venezuelan government to provide medical and food items to the people of Venezuela, had the mission of preventing the United States government from enforcing its national and extraterritorial laws only for political purposes.”

The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on the case of Alex Saab: “This practice of seizing citizens of other countries, including the Russian Federation, in third countries on fabricated charges by U.S. law enforcement agencies, has become the infamous ‘business card’ of the United States. Now Washington seems to have decided to go to a new level, setting a harmful precedent for the extradition of an authorized person with diplomatic status. ...” □



Cleveland

No More Murders!

Tierramarie Lewis, a Black trans woman, was killed June 12. A militant group of activists gathered August 12 at the site of Lewis’ murder to demand an end to the worsening wave of transphobic violence, particularly against Black trans women, in Cleveland.

Organizers included the Trans Wellness group from the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland, Equality Ohio, TransOhio, TransAlive, TransCEND Canton and Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless. Speaking left is Gio Santiago, founder of Gender Identity Veterans Experience.

— Report and demonstration photo by Susan Schnur



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.

Your donations matter!

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



Workers World honors martyrs George and Jonathan Jackson.

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.

Write checks, either monthly or once a year, to Workers World and mail them with your name and address to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at workers.org.

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

Nabisco: Quit stealing workers’ wages

By Lyn Neeley

Nearly all of the entire multinational workforce of over 200 at Portland’s Nabisco factory went on strike Aug. 10, shutting down the bakery lines. They have been without a decent contract for five years and are fighting to keep the benefits they have earned.

Portland’s striking workers, represented by Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) Local 364, have the backing of workers in four other unions at the plant, who are honoring the picket lines. They are getting tremendous support from the community, organizations, unions and other striking workers in Portland. Rallies were held in front of the plant Aug. 14 and 21.

Nabisco’s parent company, Mondelēz International, is trying to take away workers’ pensions, increase their health care deductible to \$4,000, stop paying time and a half for weekend work and outsource workers’ jobs. Workers say these cutbacks would cost them tens of thousands of dollars a year in wages.

For over a year during the pandemic snack boom, Nabisco employees continued to work as “essential workers.” They often worked 12- to 16-hour shifts, sometimes up to 60 or 70 days straight.

Profits the workers generated for Mondelēz in 2020 nearly doubled from the first to the second quarter of 2021. (marketwatch.com) Mondelēz has seen its growth rate steadily climb since the first quarter of 2020, and it made \$26.6 billion

in revenue in 2020. (statista.com)

Over 2,000 workers across the country have joined Portland in striking Mondelēz. The sales distribution center in Aurora, Colo., went out Aug. 12. Baking stopped in Nabisco factories in Richmond, Va., where 400 workers went out Aug. 16, and in Chicago Aug. 20.

Sen. Bernie Sanders tweeted support for the strikes. Actor Danny DeVito tweeted his followers, asking them to boycott Nabisco products until Mondelēz meets strikers’ demands.

Frito-Lay workers from Kansas, who recently ended their strike, sent pizza to the picket lines. Workers from Portland’s iconic Voodoo Donuts, currently on strike, sent boxes of donuts. (More on those strikes at workers.org)

With the Richmond workers on strike, a message of Southern worker solidarity came from Alabama. Haeden Wright, president of United Mine Worker Auxiliary Locals 2368 and 2245, tweeted Aug. 21: “Every U.S. #Nabisco bakery is now #onstrike! Sending love and #solidarity to each location as they strike together to demand fair compensation and working conditions. The Auxiliary at #WarriorMet stands with you!” For five months, the striking Alabama coal miners have walked the picket line against Warrior Met Coal to fight against unfair wages, unsafe conditions and inadequate medical benefits.

Gewerkschaft Nahrung-Genuss-Gaststätten [Trade Union Food, Beverages



Portland community rally draws 250 people in support of the Nabisco strikers Aug. 21.

and Catering Union] of Hamburg, Germany, sent a letter of solidarity.

An injury to one is an injury to all!

Local 364 Vice President Mike told Labor Radio on KBOO that Mondelēz International has the time, money and lawyers and has been intransigent since 2016. He said they threaten “if we don’t take what they want, they will shut down bakeries and send it to Mexico.” (tinyurl.com/pmnszc2s) Mondelēz sent 600 jobs from Chicago to Mexico in 2016 and closed New Jersey and Georgia production lines earlier this year.

Workers at Mexican Mondelēz plants make 97 cents an hour and have to be bussed in long distances to work 12-hour

shifts. Local 364 members said management tells them the benefits they receive in the U.S. are only possible because Mexican workers are paid so little. One worker at the Portland rally said workers reject that logic: “Nobody here is asking for Mexican workers to be exploited.” Mexican workers want a union too.

Burlingham said Mondelēz offered Nabisco workers a one-year contract at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. The contract was passed nationally, but the Portland union rejected it, because it allows for a constant turnover, a revolving door of workers. In reference to the rejected contract terms, he explained: “Temp workers have

no benefits and make less of a wage.” Burlingham emphasized that Mondelēz will be exploiting workers here, just like they are exploiting Mexican workers. “Not once do we say workers in Mexico don’t deserve a job; but when their work is being exploited for profit of a company like this, that’s not OK.”

The workers say they plan to strike until the company agrees to negotiate a new contract. One worker speaking at the Aug. 21 rally said, “We didn’t know there were so many union groups. Thanks for all the support. We will be there for you when your turn comes.”

Nabisco exploits workers just like Amazon, and we should show support any way we can. □

Philadelphia, homelessness and the opioid crisis

By Princess Harmony

A spirited protest took place in Philadelphia’s Kensington area Aug. 11, with a large group of neighbors, concerned people and organizations marching from McPherson Square Park to a City Council meeting at Elkins Elementary School.

What were folks rallying about?

The city of Philadelphia had announced that it would once again attempt to clear homeless encampments in its Kensington section Aug. 18. For some time, residents there have asked the city to assist with problems raised by the encampments, and they resent that their pleas for help have been ignored.

A diverse array of groups participated in the protest, including Angels In Motion (an organization that assists addicted people), Harrowgate Civic Association, Kensington Neighborhood Association, Somerset Neighbors for Better Living, Impact Services, Operation Save Our City and the Philadelphia Overdose Prevention Network.

Residents fear that — as in previous attempts — what will happen is that people in the camps will be pushed around and end up back where they were. This is a legitimate fear; several attempts to move the addicts out of the neighborhood have failed.

Addicted and homeless people in Kensington deserve treatment options and housing — because housing and health care are human rights. The residents of Kensington who are not houseless or addicted deserve a clean and safe neighborhood — something denied them in the past, because of the city’s failure to provide assistance to

the unhoused and those with addictions or mental illnesses.

Building a solution

Historically, the relationship between harm reductionists, addicts in the Kensington neighborhood and neighbor residents has been fraught with argument. Now the failures of Mayor Jim Kenney and the City Council to address the issues actively and adequately in Kensington

have brought together two sides whom nobody thought would come together.

At the Aug. 11 rally and march, protesters chanted, “Where is Jim Kenney?” and made it known that hiding wouldn’t save the mayor from the cries of people, demanding that he act on the conditions in Kensington.

Community activist Chelsea Love, a harm reductionist who works on these issues throughout Philadelphia, told Workers World that this was the first time Kensington residents and resident associations had unified over the situation with harm reductionists and the addicted. The

needs of the people in Kensington were recognized, and harm reductionists learned how to approach the residents to ask them to unite with the harm-reductionist cause.

As plans by the city stand, those affected by the upcoming sweep won’t get housing before the Aug. 18 deadline. The Office of Homeless Services claims they have beds and wish to offer service. But there are 900 homeless people in Philadelphia, and not that many beds. There have never been enough beds.

City Council Member María Quiñones Sánchez demanded the city act and said the money is there. She said there needs to be quality treatment and treatment beds for the addicted, as well as expanded medication-assisted treatment.

Homelessness and the opioid crisis

Philadelphia’s opioid crisis — which has been raging for years — is at the heart of the issues in Kensington.

The heroin “fix” to be found in the Kensington neighborhood is legendary on the East Coast. This fix — tainted by fentanyl and fentanyl analogues like carfentanyl, acetylfentanyl, butyrfentanyl, acrylfentanyl, ohmefentanyl — and by

a different new “cut,” xylazine — is killing people by the dozens and even the hundreds.

People come from throughout the city and from nearby areas in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to experience this fix. Kensington has the highest number of drug overdoses and the highest level of drug-related violence in the city.

This writer has been to Kensington in search of that fix and knows that nothing becomes more important to those who seek it. People begin to live on the streets and yet are still aware they need housing and mental health care.

But there is no concrete plan by the city to give the people what they need. Without a plan, nobody is helped, and nothing changes.

Philadelphia’s activists have been struggling to get the city to deal with these problems. The people of Kensington should not have to see drug addiction and mental illness on their doorsteps, but they do. They know that people on the street are people who need help, people who have fallen on dark times — but this shouldn’t be the neighbors’ job to deal with.

The sweep planned by the city will not treat the problem and will not be a permanent sweep. The people pushed out will come back again — that’s what happened before. The money spent by the city would be better used to provide housing and treatment for mental and physical ills to all those in need.

The problems in Kensington have increased as the opioid epidemic worsens. Nothing so far has helped the situation. But we have the power to end this cycle. The neighbors must be listened to; the community must be listened to; and addicts must be treated and helped. Revolutionaries with a harm reductionist view can aid both activists and residents and help solve these problems. □

WORKERS WORLD
commentary



Philadelphia cops enforce a houseless encampment eviction May 30, 2018. PHOTO: K. PAYNTER

WW interviews Attica survivor Che Nieves – Part 2

‘I carried the legacy of struggle in prison’



The following 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, was conducted July 20 by Monica Moorehead, a Workers World managing editor. Segments of the interview are posted at workers.org and have appeared in WW issues or will appear in future issues.

Che Nieves: I learned about George Jackson when I was in Attica. I also learned that my island, Puerto Rico, was a colony of the United States and became a colony as a result of the invasion that occurred in 1898, and the people were considered second-class citizens.

Pedro Albizu Campos: people's hero

I also learned about Pedro Albizu Campos. He was an extraordinary Puerto Rican from the island who went to Harvard and also went into the army. When he came out of the army, he went to Puerto Rico. He was an attorney. He had all the credentials of an attorney, but he was a people's attorney. In Puerto Rico, he began organizing Puerto Ricans for independence. As a result of his struggles, there were attempts on his life.

He was able to [re]organize the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, which prior to that was sort of centralized, it was centralized in the sense that their whole perception of Puerto Rico was different ... They didn't believe in independence. And Albizu Campos came and changed those policies, changed those concepts, and the whole Nationalist Party became geared towards the independence of Puerto Rico.

But the U.S. government was constantly harassing Albizu Campos and put him in jail. He wound up doing many years in jail, as a result of opposing the U.S. He died in jail. Before he died, they used numerous tactics to destroy this brother. They burned his legs and tortured him in so many ways they killed him.

Before that there were rebellions on the island. [The Ponce Massacre took place in 1937 on Palm Sunday.] Nationalist adults and children were marching on behalf of Pedro Albizu Campos. The U.S. forces in Puerto Rico then shot and killed people at this demonstration.



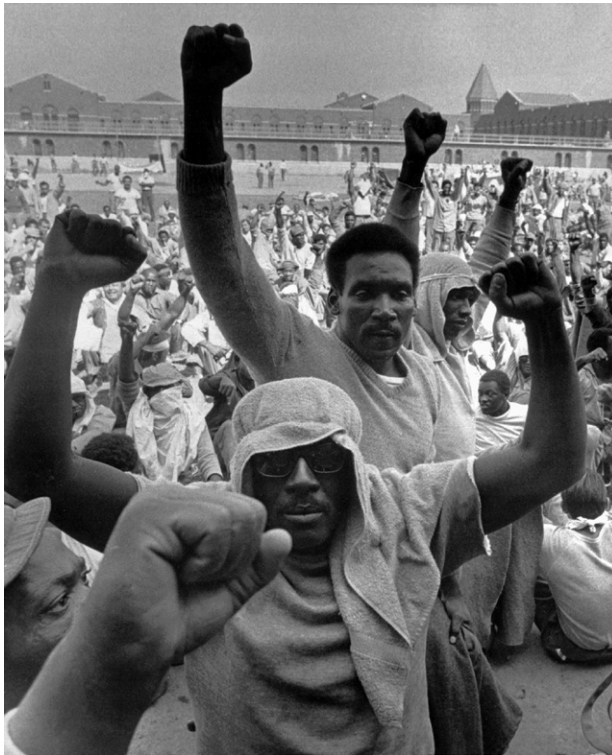
Che Nieves

‘Independence for Puerto Rico!’

[On March 1, 1954, four Puerto Rican Nationalists] went to Congress with the intention of raising the issue of independence of Puerto Rico and to let the world know that Puerto Rico was a colony of the U.S. When they got to Congress, they started shooting, and some politicians got injured. The nationalists got arrested and served close to 25 years in prison. They got out [in 1979]. Most of them went back to Puerto Rico and continued struggling for the independence of Puerto Rico.

When we talk about the Young Lords, we are talking about the legacy of Albizu Campos. We are talking about the legacy of the Nationalist Party in Puerto Rico and about the independence of Puerto Rico and what that entails. The Young Lords carried the legacy of struggle for many years. I carried the legacy of struggle in prison as well.

A lot of things happened to me in the process of struggling. Guards put me in cells and constantly beat me up. There was a time I got sick. They put holes into my cell and opened up [water]. The whole cell was filled with cold water. It's like trying to put out a fire. But they were aiming at me in my cell. In the process, I got sick. I almost died on one occasion. But I'm here, and I'm still struggling.



The revolution can't be stopped. [Prison authorities] kept moving me from place to place. From Auburn I was transferred to Attica in 1970, and that's where we began to listen and talk to the brothers. [I would say] Listen, man, "I need to form a party here in Attica that would address the issues of the Latinos." What could I do? They gave me some ideas, and I just went on and did it. I began talking and asked people to come and listen.

So many people came over. I talked about Puerto Rico and colonialism to Latinos. I talked about Martin Luther King, because I always combine the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Movement in the United States with every struggle. So I began forming a little group, and it started growing. At that time, I was working in the metal shop. I said, "We need to organize a union."

My Latino brothers said: "That's what we worked for." So I spoke with the parties, and I said, "We tried to organize a union. But I know that in order to do that, we need to strike. We need to have a metal shop strike." My brothers said, "Let's do it." So we did it. But when we had that metal shop strike, the administration started transferring many of us out, and so I was transferred from Attica to Greenhaven.

Building Young Lords Party

WW: And this is 1970, right?

CN: Yes. I was transferred from Attica to Greenhaven Prison. I met a brother named Jose Parrish, who was a close associate of our beloved brother, Tom Soto. Tom was part of Youth Against War and Fascism. He used to tell me about his communications with Tom in the street. I asked, "Are you in communication with this brother?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Okay, cool."

So we started talking, and we organized the second Young Lords Party in Greenhaven, and it became huge. We were really aggressive when we dealt with the administration. Of course, we were in concentration camps. They tried to force some of us out. We were going back to Attica. I would ask myself: Are these people crazy to send me back to Attica? I was terrified of Attica, because they wanted [to send] me. But Jose and I went back to Attica.

WW: And how old were you at the time?

CN: That was 1970. I was in my early 20s. I'm 74 now. But the Young Lords was started by people who were 16, 17, 18 and 19. Most were youth and students. A lot of folks in the neighborhood asked, "What kind of change could these young people bring? These young people don't know anything."

I was back in Attica, and so they put us back in a metal shop, and we started once again to plan a strike. Because we couldn't form the union, we had to plan a strike.

Remember George Jackson!

Over time, we heard that a brother named George Jackson was murdered. [Black freedom fighter and writer George Jackson was killed by guards at San Quentin State Prison on Aug. 21, 1971.]

I said, "Brother George was murdered." Again, authorities claimed, and lied as always, that he had a gun in his afro. I said, "No, this is ridiculous. Anybody with common sense would know that's impossible."

But nevertheless, that's what they said. And so at Attica, we started discussing what we could do to commemorate the brother. Some of us said, "Let's organize a hunger strike." I said, "That sounds good. Let's do it."

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 food at Attica was lousy. The conditions were lousy. You only got one roll of toilet paper a month! You got a shower once a week! Visitations were lousy. It was inadequate.

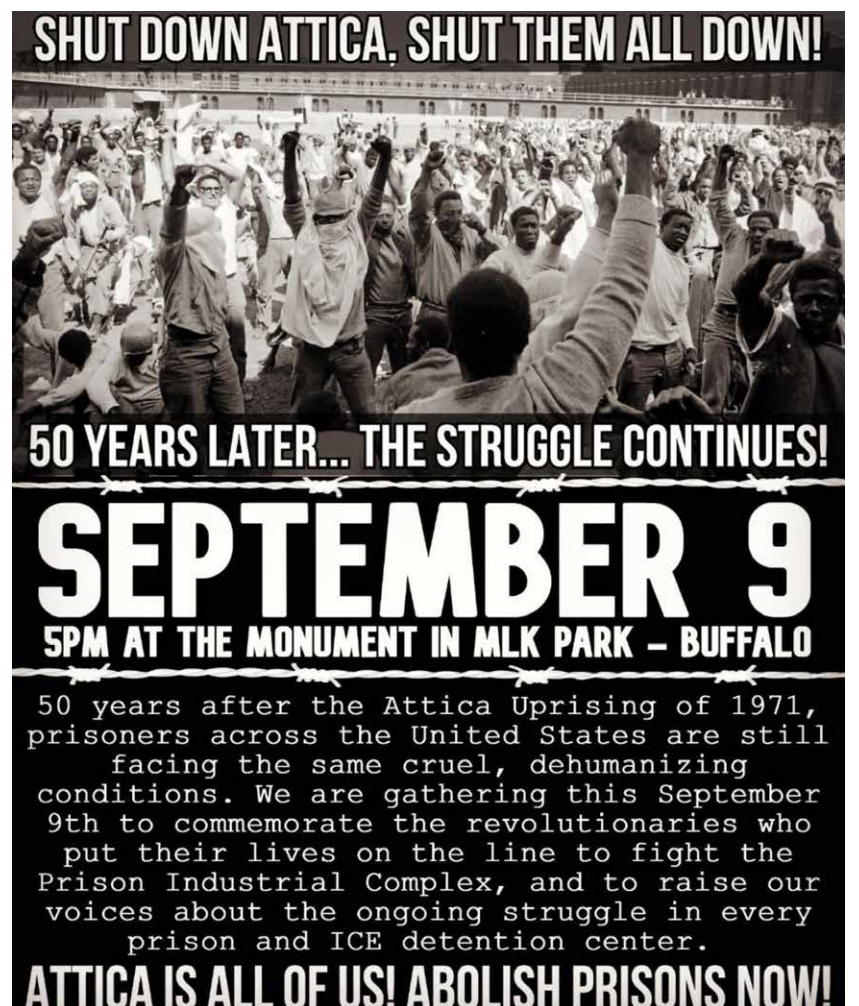
Rampant racism at Attica

Many Latinos could not get visitors from the street. Why? Because most of the guards there didn't speak Spanish. They were all white and didn't understand the Hispanic population. So a lot of loved ones who came in from the streets weren't able to see their loved ones, because they spoke Spanish. They said, "You don't speak English. You can't get in here." So that was that. A lot of letters written in Spanish to the brothers inside were ripped up by the administration, because they didn't understand what was written.

So a lot of people didn't get the letters. It was white supremacy at its best. Racism was rampant in Attica. After we did this hunger strike, somebody started getting together some partnerships of Young Lords, and they solicited letters from an organization [inside the prison] called the Attica Liberation Faction. So we could begin addressing some of the issues with the administration and with [New York Commissioner of Corrections] Russell Oswald.

A few brothers came together and formed the leadership of the Liberation Faction. These people were going to start struggles around the issues that affected all of us at Attica. Our Manifesto of Demands was sent to the commissioner so he could look at it and reply. He came to the prison to meet with some of the brothers in the radical Liberation Faction.

Note: The next part on the Attica Rebellion appeared in the Aug. 19 WW print issue and is posted at workers.org □



Disability rights and justice – for the people, against incarceration

The following was excerpted from a July 29 webinar held by the Disability Justice and Rights Caucus of Workers World Party that emphasized the interconnections between the struggles of disabled people and incarcerated people. Caucus members participating below were Brian Shea and mYia X. The entire webinar can be viewed on YouTube at Workers World Party. (youtube.com/user/wwpvideo)

mYia: The Black Panthers made it a priority that every single chapter had to have a medical clinic. Members of the Panthers really took a look at why health care had to be at the top of the list, because they saw the level of racism and neglect — and also the profit the medical industrial complex was making. The Panthers initiated the free health clinics to combat health problems which existed amongst the poor and the oppressed. And to this day, we still see that. The drug companies, the insurance companies, the equipment suppliers, the private hospitals are still taking huge profits — and that includes profits from the prisons and jails.

To this day, members of the Black Panther Party, who have spent decades behind the wall, are dealing with multiple illnesses and disabilities. These are our warriors that we’re fighting for on this side for justice, for their rights and ours, for all of our people. The work that the Black Panther Party and their clinics were able to do — that really stands out to me. And that Party was definitely influenced by what was happening in countries working toward socialism — Cuba, North Korea, China.

Cuba’s socialist vision

Brian: I was in Cuba during some of the most severe parts of the Special Period, when the Soviet Union was killed, and Cuba lost it as a trading partner. The U.S. had tightened the illegal blockade through the Torricelli Act in 1992 to try to squeeze Cuba.

I was down there at that time, when there were disabled folks organizing each other through the social organizations, through schools, all kinds of ways. To bring forward into society what the specific needs were of all disabled folks. They were everywhere from the neighborhood CDRs [Committees for the Defense of the Revolution] to the women’s organization, to any other organization in Cuban society.

Even though the material resources were thin, and Cuba was still being punished by the illegal blockade, there was, and is, a political priority that sets the first needs to get addressed as the needs of the people — and

not the needs of shareholders or corporate donors or anything else.

mYia: Comandante Fidel and the Cuban people created ELAM [Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina]. That’s the Latin American School of Medicine, the medical school in Cuba. It opened on November 15, 1999. To take a quote from Fidel Castro, its spirit in solidarity will be so deep that it will never be erased.

We know that Cuba every single year does so much for its people. Even when hurricanes happen, few lives are lost because from the elders to the youngest and even the animals, there is a plan that takes care of people.

In the U.S., people displaced in Hurricane Katrina in 2005 to this day are still displaced, and parts of Louisiana are still decimated. That rips the bandages off to show you this country that some say is the richest country in the world. But that depends on what is your measure of rich? Is your measure of rich only about what you gain from capital? Or is your measure of wealth the quality of life for your people, the quality of life for the inhabitants of the country, its humanity? And that’s what we see in Cuba.

Even myself — going to Cuba and having to engage the health care system because I had an allergic reaction — I didn’t have to sit in an emergency room for four to five hours, be asked questions about my insurance and what’s covered, not covered, or Medicaid, or what is the medical necessity. Within 5 to 10 minutes, I was being seen by Cuban medical staff; the problem was assessed; I was given care. I was told what to do and that I was able to leave. I wasn’t given a bill. I wasn’t asked any questions about money or any of that.

People cared to make sure that I was feeling better. And they do that every single day since the revolution. And Cuba sends care where there are disasters in other parts of the world, even while they are taking care of the citizens in Cuba. Cuba prioritizes the lives of people. It’s not about profit.

U.S. profits from incarceration

mYia: The U.S. prison-industrial complex is built on profit. And when it becomes privatized, all the problems are exacerbated. Just last week we heard that prison systems that released people from incarceration because



Black Panther Party-run free medical clinic in Boston, 1970.

of the COVID-19 crisis at the height of pandemic, the prison authorities are telling prisoners they must return back to prison!

This system is a vicious beast that we are living under. I think about Mumia Abu-Jamal in prison [since 1982], again on the brink of losing his life [from health problems], because the system is trying to kill him by any means necessary. And if not for the movement, which includes the disability rights and justice movement here and around the world, Mumia and so many other political prisoners would already be dead.

And to quote George Jackson, if you are incarcerated, the mere fact that the system is so corrupt makes them all political prisoners. So we’re not differentiating one prisoner over the other.

We call for the abolishment of prisons. We don’t stand with “reform” for a “kinder, gentler” incarceration system that would still keep our people in the system of incarceration. We call for releasing people now and give them the resources now — especially when we think about this pandemic.

How many billionaires have continued to increase their coffers during the pandemic — the amount of money that Jeff Bezos has made — a man that superexploits prison labor, especially since he acquired Whole Foods. Even within the pandemic, the people are given a minuscule amount of resources, while so many others are stacking and packing their accounts.

Right in our faces, we see what is happening around the world, where countries can’t get access to what they need, aren’t allowed, because of sanctions, to be able to send or receive resources to be able to take care of their people. It’s the same thing we see happening here in the United States, the same thing we see happening behind the walls of mass incarceration.

We have to continue the struggle. We have to continue the fight because this is injustice. □



PHOTO: CUBA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Medical students wave their countries’ flags in front of Cuba’s international medical school, whose mission is to “contribute to the training of Primary Health Care physicians in diverse regions of the World.” Tuition, accommodation and board are free; students receive a small stipend.

People’s power sets Minister King X free

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

Aug. 19 — In what can only be described as a real victory for the people, the Solano County District Attorney has dropped all charges against Minister King X this morning. King was released to the community.

A formerly incarcerated person, King has been one of the primary organizers of a series of events taking place in California commemorating both Black August prisoner resistance and the hunger strike of security housing unit prisoners for justice. King, an educator and artist, is a leader of California Prison Focus and KAGE Universal.

The California Department of Corrections police had grabbed King the morning of Aug. 9 and eventually imprisoned him in the Solano County Jail. Police charged him with violating the little-known and rarely used Penal Code Statute 3571, which prohibits anyone convicted of a felony in the state to be on prison property without permission from the warden. They

also charged him with a parole violation. (San Francisco Bay View, Aug. 17)

But the real reason behind this felony case was that King dared to organize and educate the movement outside prisons, on behalf of elderly political prisoners and veterans of the early prisoners’ rights movement inside prisons. On July 15, King attended a small gathering near the California Medical Facility at Vacaville, where Ruchell Magee, the longest held U.S. political prisoner, is incarcerated.

Magee, who has been in prison 58 years, is the only incarcerated survivor of Jonathan Jackson’s bold attempt to free his brother George Jackson on Aug. 7, 1970, by seizing a Marin County courtroom. Now 82, Magee had just been turned down again for parole last month. (Workers World, July 27)

The CDC and the state of California have spent the last five decades attempting to criminalize the vibrant, freedom-loving movements of incarcerated people. In language dating to the U.S. conspiracy against liberation and progressive

movements known as COINTELPRO, the police report stemming from King’s arrest labeled King a “Black Identity Extremist” and a “Black Supremacist.” The FBI and other police organizations use similar language to attempt to criminalize the current Black Lives Matter movement.

A quick response by organizations including No Justice Under Capitalism, the National Lawyers Guild of San Francisco, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, EMPACT, Poor Magazine and California Prison Focus brought rapid attention to King’s retaliatory arrest and put pressure on the state to drop the charges. King’s release today is truly a people’s victory.

Richard Tan, one of King’s attorneys and an activist in the prisoners’ rights movement, told the San Francisco Bay View, “Minister King is a peaceful man. He advocates for the Agreement to End Hostilities, an agreement to end violence across racial divides in California prisons. We’re very pleased that the Solano District Attorney elected to dismiss all the charges.” □

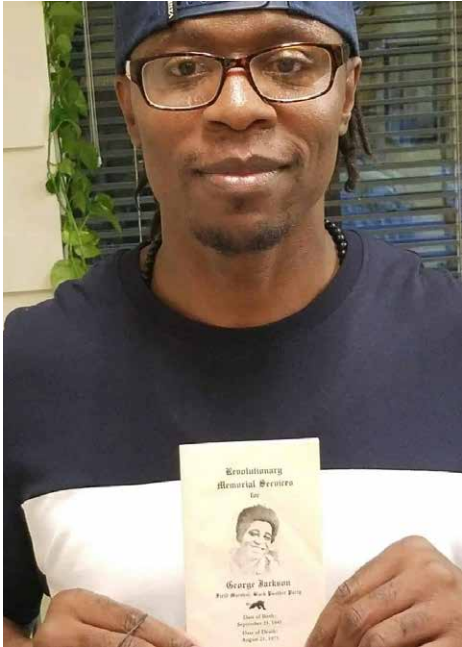


PHOTO: SAN FRANCISCO BAY VIEW NATIONAL BLACK NEWSPAPER

Minister King X holds the program for the “Revolutionary Memorial Service for George Jackson” conducted after Jackson’s assassination.

Black August commemorated at the gates of San Quentin Prison

By Judy Greenspan
San Rafael, Calif.

August 21—Overcoming both dangerous air quality from California's cataclysmic fires and the state's desperate attempts at intimidation, veterans and activists of the prisoners' rights movement marched to the West Gate of San Quentin Prison today to commemorate Black August and the spirit of George Jackson.

Fifty years ago on this date, George Jackson, a Black Panther Party Field Marshal, was assassinated by San Quentin guards behind the prison walls, an action that led to the historic Attica Rebellion in New York State. Organizing and actions by Black and Indigenous people imprisoned in San Quentin have been integral to the prisoners' rights movement.

In an act of state intimidation prior to the memorial event, one of its key organizers, Minister King X, was kidnapped off the streets of Oakland by California Department of Corrections police. Minister King X, a formerly incarcerated Black activist, educator and activist, was charged with violating a little-known California statute prohibiting formerly incarcerated people from being on prison property without state permission. The charges were dropped two days before the protest, but the state's repressive tactics placed a chill on the event's organizing. (San Francisco Bay View, Aug. 19)

The Black August commemoration was a mixture of speeches, music, spoken word, poetry and phone calls from people on the inside. Initiated

by California Prison Focus and KAGE Universal, the event was endorsed by a broad range of organizations including the Taz Foundation, EMPACT, Blunt Funk, Dope Era, So Black So Beautiful, Poor Magazine, the San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper, Black Riders/New Afrikans, Jailhouse Lawyers Speak, Cell Block to City Block and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party.

At the rally, speeches and music were projected from a mock prison cell mounted on the bed of a pickup truck, alternating with taped messages from KAGE Universal. Oakland Abolition and Solidarity proudly held their banner with a picture of George Jackson and his quote: "They have learned that resistance is possible. The holds are beginning to slip away."

Several incarcerated people called out from inside the walls to the rally with greetings of "Free them all!" Speakers reflected on how the inhumane and racist conditions inside the prisons sparked a large and militant movement both inside and outside the walls in the late 1960s and '70s. Kim Pollak of California Prison Focus read letters from people still inside, who were veterans of early prisoners' rights struggles.

Leia Schenk of EMPACT spoke of Ruchell Magee, the longest-held political

prisoner in the U.S. Magee is the sole prisoner survivor of the takeover of the Marin County Courthouse by Jonathan Jackson and others on Aug. 7, 1970. That bold action by the younger brother of

of the population contracted COVID-19, and 29 prisoners died.

Mistah F.A.B., a well-known Bay Area artist and musician, ended his talk with a call to free the elders and all political

prisoners: "Free Mumia; free Sundiata; free Mutulu; free all of the political prisoners who have been locked down for what they stand for. Let our voices ring loud. Let our voices be heard in the shadows where they have been ignored."

Allegra Taylor, daughter of Hugo Pinell, was one of the strongest voices for the elders and veterans of Black August. Pinell was a comrade of George Jackson and part of the San Quentin Six, a group of prisoners charged

with participating in an August 21, 1971, uprising. Pinell spent 46 years locked in solitary confinement. On August 12, 2015, he was released intentionally into a hostile exercise yard, where he was assassinated by a group of white racist prisoners.

The Black August commemoration was a display of the power of inside-and-outside unity for justice. Taylor answered the attempt to intimidate outside supporters of the people inside. She said, "They are fighting for human rights for prisoners. It is a crime to make people feel like they should be ashamed to speak up for their loved ones. I will speak up for Ruchell Magee just like I would have spoken up for my daddy. I am going to speak up for him until you set him free, CDC!" □



Protesters block traffic in march to San Quentin Prison.

PHOTO: NEMO RODRIGUEZ

George Jackson was met by a hail of bullets by San Quentin guards, killing all the incarcerated activists who were resisting, except Magee, who has now spent over 58 years in California prisons.

'Free Mumia — free all the political prisoners!'

Family members of prisoners spoke about a recent COVID outbreak on death row and other areas of San Quentin. Parts of the prison were on lockdown due to the spread of the Delta variant. Speakers called for mass releases of elderly and immunocompromised incarcerated people. In 2020, due to an unsafe transfer of hundreds of incarcerated people into San Quentin, over 70%

Honoring Nat Turner's rebellion: A blow against slavery

By Kathy Durkin

August 21 marks the 190th anniversary of the bold, courageous insurrection against the genocidal system of enslavement led by Nat Turner in 1831. Although the capitalist ruling class and media have vilified Turner, he has been viewed as a hero by millions of Black and other oppressed people in the U.S. and worldwide.

Turner, who had been kept in bondage since his birth in 1800, recruited 75 of his comrades, who were enslaved in one of the most heinous forms of state-sponsored repression and oppression in U.S. history. They marched through the countryside for 48 hours in Southampton



Famous depiction of Nat Turner planning rebellion

County, Va., in one of the major armed struggles against this heinous exploitative system. Their goal was to reach

Jerusalem, Va. to obtain arms to expand the fight for freedom.

During this militant rebellion, some whites were killed. The number is minuscule compared to the tens of thousands of Black people who were tortured and killed during the 244 years of enslavement.

In the South there were constant acts of resistance by enslaved people, with at least 250 revolts. The most well-known uprisings were led by Denmark Vesey, Gabriel Prosser and

Turner, who paid with their lives, as did most of their compatriots. But there were many other heroes in the long, arduous struggle for emancipation.

Denmark Vesey, Gabriel Prosser, John Brown and Nat Turner are revered here and everywhere by those who support the view that oppressed people have the right to resist by any means necessary. Their brave acts are memorialized as historic, monumental actions.

These heroes were fighting for the liberation of their people, just as colonized, exploited and oppressed peoples around the world have fought for their freedom. □

Labor Day for Amazon and all unorganized workers

Workers Assembly Against Racism issued this call to action Aug. 22.

What has traditionally been the time of year for New York's Labor Day Parade will this year be **Labor Day for Amazon and All Unorganized Workers**.

On Saturday, Sept. 4, join WAAR, Chris Smalls and workers fighting to organize Staten Island's [Amazon] facility, as well as other workers from other crucial struggles, to demand unions, labor rights and implementation of the PRO Act.

Seemingly all-powerful Amazon, the world's biggest retail store outside China, has been handed a National Labor Relations Board defeat, thanks to the struggle of the majority African-American workforce in Bessemer, Ala.

Amazon's bosses claimed the union in Alabama lost that fight because the workers didn't want a union. But the NLRB officer who reviewed that vote said that no, the workers were flat-out denied their right to vote by Amazon.

Will a second election at the Alabama warehouse mean victory for the union? Getting out on the streets now with the NLRB statement at our back is the way to make that answer YES — and at the same time support the workers fighting Amazon in Staten Island, Seattle, Wichita, Iowa, Chicago, Minneapolis and dozens of other locations.

If the traditional Labor Day parade isn't happening, why not take it over as the day to move the workers' struggle to a new level? For Amazon workers, for the PRO Act, for all workers who need protection as the Delta variant reignites a dangerous situation for workers, all of whom are essential for society to function.

And by workers we mean anyone not in the 1% — employed, unemployed, migrants, gig workers, sex workers, unhoused, students, people with disabilities, fighters in the Black Lives Matter movement and those incarcerated, detained and framed-up. □



You’ve heard it all before

We’ve heard it all before. The U.S. government claims a plot, an aggression or a humanitarian crisis in another country. Washington then uses the claim to justify military invasion, occupation with “boots on the ground” and/or war by sanctions — wars that go on for years, for decades.

And always — surprise! — against countries that dare assert their right to national independence, economic or political, from U.S. “interests.”

Flash back to 1898: Expanding U.S. imperialism needed a pretext to invade Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines — all under Spanish colonial control at that time. When the U.S. battleship Maine blew up in Havana Harbor — with no proof that Spain had touched the ship — U.S. newspaper headlines screamed, “Remember the Maine! To hell with Spain!”

And then Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Rider cavalry began thundering and killing throughout Cuba.

Fast forward to 2003: U.S. Gen. Colin Powell, in front of the U.N. Security Council, swore that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction to justify the almost total destruction of the country by the U.S., through bombing, invasion, sanctions. He held up some props — a few aluminum tubes — and said, “My colleagues, every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources. These are not assertions. What we’re giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence.” (“What Colin Powell Knew,” The Intercept, Feb. 6, 2018)

Powell’s “factual” statement was exposed as the Big Lie in 2004 through information gathered by thousands of U.N. and U.S. inspectors on the ground in Iraq. They found no “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq, no concrete plans to create WMD, no capacity to build WMD and no verbal encouragement from Iraqi officials to build WMD.

In 2001, the U.S. government waved the flag of “human rights” — women’s oppression in Afghanistan by the Taliban — to justify a war to control that country’s land, labor and wealth, its pathway to oil and gas.

In 2021, the U.S. is withdrawing from Afghanistan. Women and girls there will be under reactionary Taliban rule. There is rightful concern about that.

No progressive revolution is occurring. That happened in 1978, when Afghan socialists and communists took power and began to overturn centuries of patriarchal rule in the country. But U.S. intervention and CIA plotting ended that positive development — and set in motion events that put the Taliban in power. (“Beware the Siren Song: Women and Afghanistan,” workers.org)

We can’t be deceived by the capitalist crocodile tears

WORKERS WORLD editorial

now being shed about the fate of women in Afghanistan. How did Madison Avenue women respond to the plight of Afghan women and girls when the U.S. began bombing them in 2001? Anna Wintour, editor of Vogue magazine, organized a shipment of free lipstick to that country, allegedly to raise women’s “morale” — really to test a new market for the cosmetics industry.

(London Telegraph, Nov. 17, 2002)

We are for women’s liberation, and we are against imperialism at the same time. We know that women and gender-oppressed people will never find a path to liberation through the morass of capitalism and imperialism.

There is an endless list of wars in which imperialists performed their sleight of hand to mask the fact that they are the oppressors and capitalism the oppressive system.

The U.S. government, whether headed by Democrats or Republicans, fabricates evidence, deceives by omission, undermines progressive movements and pits us against each other — to try to fool workers and oppressed



PHOTO: VIC REINHART/OHIOAKTREE

Marchers in Washington, D.C., protest the Iraq War March 21, 2009, with the banner, “Fight the rich, not their wars.”

people and force us to toil and kill for the capitalism that exploits us.

To work for the liberation of women and gender-oppressed people — for the liberation of workers and all oppressed people — we must stay steadfast on the road to socialism, organizing in every creative way possible against capitalism. □

The tears of empire

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

The following lightly edited commentary aired on Prison Radio August 17.

With the dramatic fall of Kabul, through the forces of the Taliban, the alligator tears of the political class are falling, decrying the costs of U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

What has been thoroughly forgotten, however, is the unprecedented mass protests of February 2003, before the war began. When the Earth shook with antiwar fervor in countries across the globe.

Then President George W. Bush would ignore these protests as a mere focus group; his words, focus.

In the 2004 book, “The Citizens of the Empire,” author and critic Robert Jensen recounted “the worldwide actions on February 15, 2003, were the single largest political demonstration in history.”

Millions of people all over the globe poured into the streets to try to derail the Bush Administration’s



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Free Mumia protest, Philadelphia, July 3.

mad rush to war.

How in an alleged democracy can the government so easily ignore the views of millions? It happened, and chaos came to Afghanistan to wreak havoc for over 20 years.

What if the protests had won? We will never know.

Audio for this commentary, made available by Noelle Hanrahan, is at prisonradio.org.

Afghanistan: New U.S. sanctions threaten mass hunger

Continued from page 1

to freeze Afghan monetary reserves. Financial sanctions have been in place since the aftermath of the 9/11 attack.

A ‘Crime Against Humanity’

The U.S. is now leveraging its last measure of control to inflict maximum damage. This is not a by-product of the confusion of war. This is an enforced and calculated crime against humanity. Depriving civilians of access to food or targeting civilians in a systematic policy that causes suffering and death is defined in international law as a Crime Against Humanity.

Rappeport described the impact of other unilateral economic sanctions. “There is precedent for the IMF to block countries from their currency reserves. Earlier this year, the fund said that Venezuela would not have access to the \$5 billion of SDRs that it would have received, because of a dispute over the Maduro government’s legitimacy.” (NY Times, Aug. 21)

Venezuela was a country that, before the U.S.-imposed economic sanctions, provided for its population with generous food subsidies, free medical care, free education for the whole population and millions of subsidized housing units. Now U.S. sanctions are strangling Venezuela.

Afghanistan is totally dependent on shipments of U.S. dollars every few weeks. Its imports are about five times greater than its exports. Now all the money is blocked. Ajmal Ahmad, former acting governor of the Afghan National Bank, fled the country and tweeted safely from afar: “We can say the accessible funds to the Taliban are perhaps 0.1-0.2% of Afghanistan’s total international

reserves. Not much.”

Banker Ahmad has tweeted: “If the Taliban can’t gain access to the central bank’s reserves, this would help start a cycle in which the national currency will depreciate, and inflation will rise rapidly and worsen poverty. That’s going to hurt people’s living standards. Now Afghanistan can only get access to its own money by negotiating with the U.S.”

Seizing the central bank’s money and cutting all international aid, in a poor country where three-quarters of public spending is financed by grants, gives Washington powerful leverage. U.S. strategists understand the impact of freezing funds and can calibrate this tactic to inflict maximum pain.

The immediate food insecurity was made much worse by both drought and floods in the past three years. Climate crisis had already led to big price spikes for staples like wheat flour, rice and cooking oil.

U.N. officials now warn of dire food shortages. The World Food Program is warning of a dramatic rise in the number of hungry people in Afghanistan.

This is the very real threat that stands behind President Joe Biden’s sudden announcement on Aug. 22, a week after the government collapse, that Washington was considering extending evacuation efforts beyond his Aug. 31 deadline to leave Afghanistan.

Biden said that about 28,000 U.S. citizens, allies and Afghans have been transported out since the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul Aug. 15. As many as 80,000 Americans and Afghans who worked for the U.S. are still scheduled to be evacuated. This is the excuse for an extended stay while new, even more onerous concessions are demanded.

This is an urgent moment to demand: U.S. out of Afghanistan — totally out, and end the U.S.-imposed sanctions. Let Afghanistan Live! □

New Jersey says no to U.S. blockade of Cuba

A “New Jersey in Solidarity with Cuba and Against U.S. Imperialism” demonstration was held Aug. 11 at One Gateway Center in Newark, N.J. The action was sponsored by a broad coalition of organizations led by N.J. Anti-War Agenda and joined by People’s Organization For Progress, International Action Center, Green Party, Cuba Sí, IFCO Pastors for Peace, Workers World Party and Veterans For Peace-Chapter 21.

— Report by Sara Flounders; Photo: Bob Witaneck



The United States intensifies Haiti’s suffering

By G. Dunkel

What Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas said and did in a brief trip to Miami Aug. 19 reflects and exemplifies 200 years of U.S. assaults on Haiti.

In 1805, a year after its hard-won independence, President Thomas Jefferson imposed an embargo on Haiti that lasted until 1862. The U.S. invaded Haiti in 1915, after stealing its gold reserves, and stayed until 1934. From 1957-86 the U.S. supported the hated Duvalier dynasty. It then came back in 2004 to remove President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and is still there under the guise of various U.N. programs.

Mayorkas met with representatives of the Cuban community in Miami to announce new sanctions against three Cuban officials. And he met with representatives of the Haitian community to announce that the Biden administration would not be extending Temporary Protected Status for Haitians, even after the devastating 7.2 earthquake Aug. 14 — made even more devastating when Tropical Storm Grace drenched Haiti Aug. 16.

Holders of TPS can work in the U.S. legally. Members of the Haitian diaspora in the U.S. sent over \$3.8 billion to Haiti in 2020, so this decision on TPS is going to have a major financial impact on Haiti, where remittances make up about one-third of its economy.

The Department of Homeland Security

sent two planes filled with deportees to Haiti — after the August earthquake. Because TPS has been limited, more deportations are expected. It’s not clear how this decision on TPS will affect the 10-15,000 Haitians seeking asylum, who are waiting on the Mexican border to enter the U.S.

Relief efforts and conditions in Haiti

Even though the Aug. 14 earthquake was stronger and shallower than the one in 2010, it occurred in a less populated area. The Haitian government is reporting 2,200 deaths with over 300 people still missing, but this may be an undercount. At least 12,000 people suffered serious injuries. Many small villages are cut off by mudslides and collapsed bridges, so this is a very preliminary figure. The government is estimating 500,000 people lost their homes, with residences destroyed or so damaged as to be unusable.

A road between Jérémie and Les Cayes, the two largest towns on the Triburon peninsula, was only passable by motorcycle for days after the earthquake. In some spots, the motorcyclists had to take their bags off, push their bikes by hand through the mudslide, then go back for their bags. (tinyurl.com/3vdyn88t)

There are reports that subsistence farmers have lost fields and crops due to mudslides.

The U.N. World Food Program was already planning on initiating a food

supplement program in the three departments — Grand’Anse, Sud and Nippes — that were most affected by the earthquake and Tropical Storm Grace, before these two disasters occurred. According to U.N. survey data, 25% of the people living in these departments suffered from “acute food insecurity,” that is, they frequently did not get the food they needed for their normal activities, even before the earthquake.

Food is getting through to the main towns, but isolated communities have only themselves to rely on. Some towns have so much devastation that helicopters can’t safely land.

Cuba, Mexico, Chile and the Dominican Republic have all sent teams of doctors or rescue workers to the earthquake-stricken areas. Cuban medical workers were already on the scene as part of Cuba’s aid to Haiti.

What has distinguished the U.S. response is that in place of sending the two hospital ships which it has on the East Coast, the U.S. sent the USS Arlington, an amphibious transport dock with 400 sailors and 220 Marines.

Some Haitians on Twitter, along with



Injured people outside the Immaculate Conception hospital in Les Cayes, Haiti.

commenters on some conservative websites, have expressed support for the presence of U.S. troops. Others have expressed opposition, seeing the U.S. “humanitarian mission” as a military pretext. Haïti-Liberté says that “the Haitian people must now confront the arrogance and repressive desires of the army of the imperialist power dominating the region.” (tinyurl.com/tcr47jw7)

Beyond the pain, suffering and deaths caused by the earthquake and tropical storm lies the threat of COVID-19. Less than 0.1% of Haitians have been vaccinated as of Aug. 1; inoculations only began the last week of July. Buying masks and soap for hand washing is financially out of reach for most Haitians, who live on less than \$2 a day. □

Rain in Greenland?

By Paddy Colligan

A story that made its way into numerous media toward the end of August concerned rain falling at Summit, the Greenland Environmental Observatory located at the highest point on the Greenland ice sheet. From Aug. 14 to 16, rain fell for several hours — an extraordinary event at this station, 400 miles above the Arctic Circle and at an elevation of more than 10,000 feet.



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL/P. COLLIGAN

The ice fjord of Ilulissat, which drains calving ice into Baffin Bay, on the west coast of Greenland in 2014.

Ice cores from the Greenland ice sheet give a deep record showing that air temperatures had previously been above freezing only six times over the last 2,000 years. (New York Times, Aug. 20)

The unseasonably warm weather experienced in Greenland, as elsewhere in the Arctic, is partly related to major changes in the high-altitude jet stream. The extremes of weather experienced in the U.S. in recent years have been partly attributed to similar changes.

Conditions on the Greenland ice sheet greatly contribute to the progression of global climate change. In recent years, significant melting events have taken place on the ice sheet, adding to sea level rise. But more than just a measure of sea level rise is involved.

The massive amounts of meltwater from the ice sheet are fresh, not salt, water. When fresh water flows into the oceans, the water density, temperature and overall salinity are changed. This affects weather, sea life and the amount of carbon dioxide the water absorbs.

The white surface of the ice sheet is affected by melting events, which results in lakes of blue meltwater (glacial water appearing blue due to sediment), rivers of runoff (also appearing dark blue), the formation of darker ice when melted snow refreezes and newly exposed land. The decrease in reflective white surface area, or albedo, results in a feedback loop, so that additional solar heat is absorbed by

darker surfaces, which in turn further raises temperatures.

Particularly ominous has been the measurable effect of the additional fresh water on the massive ocean currents flowing around the island of Greenland. These currents greatly influence the weather of the entire Northern Hemisphere. The circulation is called the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), often pictured as a conveyor belt where warm and cold waters are seasonally rotated from the surface to deep parts of the ocean, as the currents move from tropical to high latitudes. This fundamental component of the earth’s climate is being measurably altered by the addition of huge amounts of fresh water.

Weather isn’t the same as climate. Climate scientists agree that the AMOC has measurably slowed, but are unsure on how quickly this will impact weather. Europe has been experiencing colder winters, searing summers and drought, which some scientists attribute to these changes.

The Arctic is experiencing global warming at twice the rate of other latitudes. The effects of such events as extreme warming and rain on the Greenland ice sheet are felt by the country’s Indigenous people, many of whom still depend on harvesting the country’s rich maritime and land resources and live in vulnerable coastal areas. □

Communist Party of Kenya Inaugural Women’s League Convention held

By Devin Cole

Despite attacks and repression of their Party by the government, the Communist Party of Kenya held its first-ever Women’s League Convention July 31. The convention began with a hoisting of the Party’s flag, the singing of The Internationale and other revolutionary songs being performed.

The Party’s women cadre spent the day debating and discussing the conditions of women in Kenya. They rededicated themselves to the struggle for socialism and maintained that the full liberation of women would never come under capitalism. They resolved to condemn bourgeois feminism as an indicator that the experience of all women in Kenya is not monolithic.

The keynote speaker for the convention was Comrade Sefu Sani, an organizer and Kenyan Communist who spoke of the necessity of class analysis when handling the women’s equation in class struggle. She spoke of and condemned the bourgeois

women of Kenya, who consistently collaborate with the corrupt regime to throw working-class women under the bus. She ended her speech by emphasizing that the central role of the women’s cadre must be to immediately begin building the Party.

Comrade Sani said: “We have to understand that as revolutionaries, we must always struggle for the liberation of our society from the exploitation and oppression of women by men. This must start from our own homes: in our relationships with our mothers, our sisters, our girlfriends, our wives and our daughters, we must struggle to liberate ourselves from abusing, using and exploiting women. We must struggle to cure the disease of male chauvinism within ourselves that we have inherited from our negative traditional cultures that today blossom with the blessing of capitalism and imperialism.” (bit.ly/3yq4XqK)

Congratulations to the women comrades of the Communist Party of Kenya for this historic advance! □



Over 340 women marched after the inaugural Women’s League Convention of the Communist Party of Kenya, Aug. 1.



FOTO : ESCUELA NACIONAL SINDICAL

Colombia, Escuela Nacional Sindical: ‘El Comité Nacional de Paro convocó para este 26 de agosto nuevas y masivas movilizaciones en todo el país. Se pretende continuar con las protestas que se iniciaron desde el 28 de abril y que han traído frutos para la ciudadanía.’

A diferencia de Gates, China comparte vacunas y tecnología con el mundo

Por Sara Flounders

En un sorprendente anuncio realizado el 5 de agosto, el Presidente de China, Xi Jinping, informó al Primer Foro Internacional de Cooperación en Materia de Vacunas COVID-19 de la donación por parte del país de 2.000 millones de dosis de vacunas COVID-19 a países en desarrollo y pobres en los próximos cuatro meses. Esta medida urgente fomenta la solidaridad y hace accesibles las vacunas en el mundo en desarrollo.

Lo más significativo fue el mensaje de China de que, a través de la cooperación y el intercambio de recursos, habilidades y tecnología, muchos países podrían desarrollar la producción en el extranjero de las vacunas desarrolladas por China. El aumento de la capacidad de producción local ahorrará tiempo, vidas y costes de transporte internacional.

La decisión de compartir tecnología y ayudar a los países a producir sus propias vacunas sitúa a China en una trayectoria de colisión con la Organización Mundial de la Salud. La OMS está dominada y financiada significativamente por una de las personas más ricas del mundo a través de la Fundación Bill y Melinda Gates. Gates está comprometido con la protección de las patentes, incluso en los medicamentos esenciales que salvan vidas. El desarrollo de la capacidad de producción mundial es una profunda amenaza para las empresas estadounidenses.

Enseñando a pescar

CGTN, un medio de comunicación chino, explicó la importancia de que el Foro transfiera tecnología a los países en desarrollo y ayude a estos países a establecer líneas de producción nacionales. Es la diferencia entre dar un suministro de pescado y enseñar a los países a pescar. Esta es la mejor protección ahora y en el futuro, cuando se desarrollen otras posibles pandemias.

Afrontar el reto es mucho más complicado que entregar paletas de vacunas en el asfalto. Hay que resolver rápidamente los complejos problemas logísticos de almacenamiento, transporte y necesidad de técnicos médicos y personal administrativo cualificado. Las materias primas y la tecnología industrial son esenciales. Comenzar una planificación concreta fue el objetivo del foro internacional del 5 de agosto, presentado por el Consejero de Estado y Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores de China, Wang Yi, y al que asistieron por videoconferencia 30 países.

Los medios de comunicación corporativos de Estados Unidos, que sólo son capaces de ver el mundo desde una perspectiva capitalista de competencia, apuntaron inmediatamente al anuncio de China de 2.000 millones de dosis de vacunas y cuestionaron sus motivos. Sin embargo, no cuestionaron la capacidad de China para lograr estos objetivos.

Los medios de comunicación estadounidenses afirmaron que el anuncio de China sobre la cooperación mundial en



FOTO: XINHUA

Las vacunas donadas por China llegan al aeropuerto internacional Abeid Amani Karume de Tanzania.

el foro internacional estaba eclipsando el anuncio del presidente Biden sobre las donaciones de Estados Unidos. El presidente Biden había anunciado el 3 de agosto que Estados Unidos había entregado 110 millones de dosis de vacuna COVID-19 en todo el mundo.

Esto supone apenas un 5% de los 2.000 millones de dosis procedentes de China. Sin embargo, el comunicado de prensa de la Casa Blanca del 3 de agosto se jactaba de que la donación “consolida a Estados Unidos como líder mundial en donaciones de vacunas COVID-19” y que esta cantidad es “más que las donaciones de todos los demás países juntos y refleja la generosidad del espíritu estadounidense”.

El anuncio de Biden fue recogido acríticamente por los medios de comunicación corporativos estadounidenses, sin molestarse en comprobar los hechos de esta declaración salvajemente exagerada sobre la importancia de 110 millones de dosis a 65 países. China ya ha distribuido 750 millones de dosis a 104 países y lo ha publicitado ampliamente. Los 2.000 millones de dosis anunciados el 5 de agosto se suman a la enorme cantidad ya entregada. (Global Times, 5 de agosto)

La declaración de la Casa Blanca, engañosa y fraudulenta, refleja la decidida negativa de la clase dirigente estadounidense a reconocer los logros de China en la lucha contra el COVID dentro del país y en la ayuda al mundo para hacer frente a la pandemia.

Rara vez se menciona en los medios de comunicación estadounidenses que Estados Unidos sigue teniendo el mayor número de muertes por COVID que cualquier otro país: 631.000 en el momento de escribir este artículo. No se incluye una comparación con las 4.638 muertes de China. Ahora se está jugando el mismo juego de números en torno a compartir las vacunas con el mundo.

Proteger las patentes a toda costa

Los medios de comunicación corporativos distorsionan y ocultan los hechos y las cifras, porque están en juego los enormes beneficios farmacéuticos.

Washington está sintiendo la presión mundial para compartir recursos y vacunas y suspender los derechos de “propiedad intelectual” (PI siglas en inglés) sobre las patentes de vacunas COVID. Pero las empresas farmacéuticas siguen decididas a proteger las patentes privadas, una fabulosa fuente de beneficios garantizados en el

futuro. Se ven amenazadas incluso por una interrupción temporal de las protecciones de PI.

Un gobierno capitalista existe para proteger los “derechos” de las empresas a obtener los máximos beneficios. Esto se considera más sagrado que el derecho humano a la vida. Pfizer y Moderna aumentaron el costo de sus vacunas — Pfizer en más de un 25%.

Con la compra de decenas de millones de dosis por parte del gobierno de Estados Unidos, se pueden obtener grandes beneficios. Pfizer ha gastado \$3.000 millones de dólares en la investigación de vacunas, pero tiene previsto obtener \$26.000 millones de dólares en ventas de vacunas en 2021. La inversión en investigación de Pfizer fue cubierta con creces por \$12.000 millones de dólares en subvenciones del gobierno. (Reuters, 4 de mayo)

Las grandes farmacéuticas han utilizado su enorme poder para impedir que los países del Sur Global desarrollen vacunas alternativas. En octubre de 2020, cuando se estaba sintiendo todo el impacto de la pandemia mundial, India y Sudáfrica presentaron una propuesta radical a la Organización Mundial del Comercio: Que se permitiera a todo el mundo fabricar la vacuna sin penalización.

La propuesta de exención de patentes fue rechazada en la OMC por Bill Gates y todos los países capitalistas más ricos, incluidos Estados Unidos, la Unión Europea, Gran Bretaña y Suiza, países que albergan importantes empresas farmacéuticas. Todos estos países disfrutaron de un acceso temprano a la vacuna.

Apartheid de las vacunas

Las empresas farmacéuticas de Estados Unidos y de otros países imperialistas han obtenido miles de millones de beneficios durante el azote del SIDA, que se cobra un precio especialmente alto en África. Las fundaciones Gates y otras creadas por multimillonarios son utilizadas para defender la medicina monopolista mientras se hacen pasar por salvadoras.

Dado que la propia fortuna de Gates se basa en la propiedad intelectual, concretamente en los derechos de autor y las patentes asociadas a los productos de Microsoft, Gates ha utilizado una parte de su enorme riqueza empresarial para garantizar la

protección de todas las patentes.

La Fundación Gates es el segundo mayor donante, después de Estados Unidos, a la Organización Mundial de la Salud. Los puntos de vista de Gates tienen una influencia desmesurada. Por supuesto, Estados Unidos, Gran Bretaña, Alemania y los otros mayores financiastas están comprometidos a mantener la tecnología médica en manos de empresas privadas.

Dan prioridad a la propiedad capitalista en primer lugar y a la atención sanitaria en el mundo anteriormente colonizado en un lejano segundo lugar. Menos del 2% de los 1.300 millones de africanos están totalmente vacunados.

Este es el doble papel de todas las fundaciones empresariales. Fundaciones como la Fundación Bill y Melinda Gates mantienen los precios altos comprando medicamentos y donándolos, al tiempo que protegen las patentes o la propiedad intelectual, junto con su reputación. Con mucha publicidad y bombo y platillo, la Fundación Gates dice combatir la polio, la malaria y el sida en África, pero sus donaciones no desarrollan la infraestructura sanitaria esencial.

Los defensores de la salud se centran cada vez más en el papel de Bill Gates y de las grandes farmacéuticas en el afianzamiento del mortal apartheid de las vacunas.

“Gates impulsó un plan que permitiría a las empresas tener derechos exclusivos sobre medicamentos que salvan vidas. ... Dada la enorme influencia que tiene Gates en el mundo de la salud pública mundial, su visión acabó imponiéndose en el programa COVAX, que consagra los derechos de patente de los monopolios y depende de los caprichos caritativos de los países ricos y de los gigantes farmacéuticos para proporcionar vacunas a la mayor parte del mundo.” COVAX describe engañosamente

su objetivo como “trabajar por un acceso global equitativo a las vacunas COVID-19”. (Wired, 19 de mayo)

Las primeras esperanzas de una colaboración cooperativa y de compartir información en un esfuerzo conjunto contra el virus se estrellaron contra las rocas capitalistas de los derechos de propiedad intelectual y la ciencia patentada.

La determinación de China de compartir la tecnología de las vacunas es un desafío fundamental al dominio corporativo de la tecnología.

Las diferencias entre dos opciones globales se agudizan. La cooperación y el intercambio de la información científica y la tecnología son el único camino a seguir. □

La declaración de la Casa Blanca, engañosa y fraudulenta, refleja la decidida negativa de la clase dirigente estadounidense a reconocer los logros de China en la lucha contra el COVID dentro del país y en la ayuda al mundo para hacer frente a la pandemia.