

BAmazon Union

Which side are you on?

GM 1937, Amazon 2021

NFL union solidarity

By Martha Grevatt

Bessemer, Alabama, sitting on the outskirts of Birmingham and with a population of 26,500 — about 75% African American — has become a central focus for the entire class struggle.

There, at Amazon warehouse BHM1, thousands of workers are fighting for a union. Over Amazon’s strident objections, the National Labor Relations Board is conducting a union representation election by mail. From Feb. 8 until March 29, workers will mail in ballots indicating if they want representation by the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Workers Union, which is affiliated with United Food and Commercial Workers.

Not only is this African American majority workforce up against the world’s richest human, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, they are facing off with the second-largest

company in the U.S. — and the ninth largest in the world. Amazon, including Amazon-owned Whole Foods, has 1.37 million workers in the U.S. alone. This does not count delivery drivers. Amazon has the highest market capitalization — based on stock value and number of outstanding shares — of any corporation anywhere.

Amazon brags on its web site that its workers make \$15 an hour — a recent concession to the mass low-wage workers movement, Fight for \$15 — and have health benefits. Bessemer has a poverty rate of 25%, and 19% of residents do not have health insurance. Alabama is one of 21 states that still have a minimum wage equal to or below the federal minimum of \$7.25 an hour.



Given that, landing a job at Amazon could seem like a lucky break. But the pay is not enough to support a family in 2021. Moreover, \$15 an hour doesn’t even come close to the value Amazon workers produce for CEO Bezos, whose wealth is expanding at a current rate of \$2,537 per second!

Working conditions, described as “back-breaking,” are unbearable. Cameras and spy software developed by Amazon itself are used to monitor worker productivity, bathroom breaks and any kind of “data relating to human movement, location

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By Monica Moorehead

Following the May 25, 2020, public murder of 46-year-old George Floyd by Minneapolis police, masses of people took to the streets for almost the entire summer from one coast to another in protest of not only what happened to him, but against racist police brutality and white-supremacist violence in general.

In late August following the heinous police shooting of 29-year-old Jacob Blake — who was hit by seven bullets in his back, leaving him paralyzed — women and men players in the National Basketball Association suspended games during the playoffs in protest. This protest spread to other sports organizations, including Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, the National Hockey League and college football players.

The 2,000 member-strong National Football League Players Association (NFLPA), inspired by these actions, took a bold step on Jan. 24 when it tweeted its support for 5,800 Amazon workers’ right to organize a union in Bessemer, Ala., outside of Birmingham.

The Amazon workers voted overwhelmingly to hold a union election beginning Feb. 8, with mail-in voting to have the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers Union (RWDSU) represent them in the first historic collective-bargaining agreement in the U.S. with one of the biggest, richest corporations in the country and the world.

Jeff Bezos, Amazon’s founder and

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Seattle May Day, 2020.

CEO, is the world’s richest centi-billionaire, with an estimated worth of \$182 billion.

The voting is scheduled to be completed by late March. The workers decided to hold the election by mail, rather than in person, to maximize the greatest worker turnout to counter the company’s fierce anti-union campaign and in consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is noteworthy that the NFLPA became the first significant union to come out in support of the Bessemer Amazon workers. The reason is that the NFL is a multibillion dollar industry, and football happens to be the most popular professional sport in the U.S. The NFL has 70 % African American players, and



Union organizers outside Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Ala.



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COVID behind the walls



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Drug-induced homicide laws kill

By Princess Harmony

Almost everyone knows that the United States is home to the most destructive, most negative reaction to drugs and drug use — the so-called War on Drugs. But fewer know that fatal overdoses can carry a charge of drug-induced homicide, laws that would punish those who provide drugs that cause fatal overdoses.

Nobody who shares drugs thinks that their drugs will be the ones to kill someone. They do not intend to murder anyone. Yet they can be punished as though they were the root cause of said overdose death, rather than the drugs themselves.

In Pennsylvania and New Jersey, where the opioid epidemic has ravaged small towns as well as cities like Philadelphia and Camden, N. J., punishment under these laws hasn't stopped overdose deaths. They actually could end up forcing more overdose deaths, as people flee out of fear of being arrested and charged.

As the opioid epidemic gets worse, these laws against “drug-induced homicide” get stricter and stricter. This forces people to make hard decisions that they would ordinarily not make.

An example of this happened outside Philadelphia, in Montgomery County. Joshua Benner and Ronald Shock bought drugs from Philadelphia’s “Needle Park,” McPherson Square. They were using drugs with their friend Ramon Morales when Morales lost consciousness and could not be revived by rumored means — that a cold water shower could wake someone up from an overdose. Both Benner and Shock believed they were doing all they could to try and revive Morales, but when it became obvious they couldn't revive him, they dropped him in an area near a hospital.

Pennsylvania punishes drug delivery that results in death. Its “Good Samaritan” drug laws — that shield users from being punished for people overdosing — do not shield people who have provided drugs to those who are overdosing. Benner and Shock were afraid of what could happen had they stayed with Morales or had they called the authorities. If the War on Drugs and its strict laws were eased, then Morales might still be alive today.



Rally in support of safe injection site in Philadelphia.

our drug problem. There are numerous stories of people being charged for sharing drugs with friends and partners. There are also stories of racial bias in charging people for having delivered drugs to others.

Racist narrative targets Black people

In Maine, in response to the overdose crisis, former Gov. Paul Le Page accused “Black dealers” and “pushers” of being the main cause of the overdose crisis, and asked for even stricter laws to punish them. A politician openly called for the strict punishing of Black people, despite the fact that Black people are not responsible for the drug problem. Prosecutors, politicians, and others who push this racist narrative have not acknowledged that their idea is flat out wrong.

What does work against drugs? Strategies against fatal drug misuse, like the distribution of Narcan and fentanyl test strips, plus the opening of safe injection sites help prevent drug overdoses and deaths. Studies have shown that strict War on Drugs policies do not help. Tens of thousands of people have died, and it's unknown how many of them died due to people's fear of getting help. But we do know that it makes an impact on whether or not a drug overdose patient gets help in time.

We cannot let the ruling class imprison and torture more people in the name of the War on Drugs. We must push back against laws that say that drug delivery resulting in fatal overdoses is a crime. We need to push for more healing and more justice-oriented laws that allow for people to get help for their friends, partners, loved ones, and even for strangers when they overdose. It would make such an important dent in the scourge that is drug abuse. □

The drug warriors have sworn up and down that if the United States were to make its War on Drugs laws stricter, people would be deterred from using or buying drugs for themselves and others. But this is not the case. When dealers are arrested under these laws, all that happens is that new dealers take their place.

Despite 40 years of the War on Drugs, we are even worse off with

our drug problem. There are numerous stories of people being charged for sharing drugs with friends and partners. There are also stories of racial bias in charging people for having delivered drugs to others.

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MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

this week

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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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An appreciation of The magnificent Cicely Tyson

By Monica Moorehead

Harriet Tubman in “A Woman Called Moses,” “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman,” as Coretta Scott King in “King,” Rebecca in “Sounder” and the mother of Rosa Parks in “The Rosa Parks Story” — these are just some of the roles and movies that the great Cicely Tyson either portrayed or starred in during her illustrious 60-plus-year career. And even though she died at the age of 96 on Jan. 28, the news of her death was still a shock and a blow to the nervous system. Tyson was more than a great actor; she was a legend and a pioneer.

Whether on TV, the big screen or on Broadway, Cicely Tyson may have physically appeared as petite, but she, along with the likes of the late Ruby Dee, was a towering force to be reckoned with when it came to portraying strong African American women characters, famous or not.

Her three Emmys, Tony, Peabody Award, Kennedy Center honor and honorary Academy Award for lifetime achievement and numerous other awards merely reflected her acting genius, but Tyson did not use acting accolades to measure her true worth as the kind of actor she aspired to be when she first joined the prestigious Actor’s Studio during the 1940s.

Born in East Harlem to working-class parents who emigrated from the Caribbean, Tyson’s mother kicked her out of the home when she made the decision to make acting a career. Very much influenced by the Civil Rights Movement, during the 1960s Tyson decided to take on acting roles which portrayed Black women in an anti-racist, non-stereotypical way. She was the first Black woman to wear an Afro for the 1963 TV series: “East Side/West Side.”

Tyson and other actors of color had to make hard decisions on which roles to reject and which to accept in order to make a living in an entertainment



Cicely Tyson as Miss Jane Pittman.



As Rebecca in ‘Sounder’

industry dominated by white male studio bosses and with very few screenwriters of color. But Tyson understood more than anyone that her principled sacrifice would limit her access to roles, many of which were one-dimensional and demeaning in their depiction of Black people.

Wanting to make a real impact

In an interview with Parade magazine in 1972, Tyson remarked: “We Black actresses have played so many prostitutes and drug addicts and housemaids, always negative. I won’t play that kind of characterless role any more, even if I have to go back to starving.”

Following her brilliant Oscar-nominated role in “Sounder,” playing the spouse of a sharecropper sent to prison for “stealing” food to feed his family during the Depression, Tyson, then 48 years old, had to wait two years for her next job. That job turned out to be the groundbreaking TV movie, “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman,” which chronicled the life of a 110-year-old Black woman who began her life in slavery, saw her spouse lynched by the KKK and was active throughout the Civil Rights era.

The image of Tyson’s 110-year-old character defiantly drinking from a “whites-only” water fountain still remains one of the most stirring scenes ever

filmed. It was a tour-de-force triumph that won Tyson the first Emmy for a Black actress in a leading dramatic role. An estimated 40 million people tuned in for her performance.

Tyson told Entertainment News Service in 1997, “I wait for roles — first, to be written for a woman, then, to be written for a Black woman. And then I have the audacity to be selective about the kinds of roles I play. I’ve really got three strikes against me. So, aren’t you amazed I’m still here?”



Cicely Tyson and Rosa Parks in 1984.

The Cicely L. Tyson Community School of Performing and Fine Arts in East Orange, N.J., was named in honor of the actor in 1995. Tyson would visit the school on an annual basis to work with the majority Black students, sharing her formidable talent and support. Former student Allen Ashby told a local CBS affiliate: “What she did by giving back is what I personally want to live by. Giving back to my community.” (cbslocal.com, Jan. 29)

In 1984, Tyson presented the Eleanor Roosevelt

Woman of Courage Award to Civil Rights pioneer and her idol, Rosa Parks, in New York City.

Tyson once stated, “It amuses me when people say, ‘Oh, my God, you’ve done so much.’ But it isn’t that I’ve done so much. It’s that what I have done has made a real impact, and I’d rather have it that way.” (Washington Post, Jan. 28)

For anyone who has not experienced this brilliant artist, rent her DVDs or stream her movies to witness a true artist and legend at work. □

Revoke police license to kill disabled people!

By Edward Yudelovich

People with untreated mental illness are 16 times more likely to be killed during a police encounter than other civilians approached or stopped by law enforcement, according to a study released December 2015 by the Treatment Advocacy Center. Disability rights journalist David M. Perry, whose son has Down syndrome, documented in research for the Ruderman Family Foundation that as many as half of all people killed by police have a disability. A disproportionate number are people of color. (tinyurl.com/y7hau3fu)

Witness the case of Eric Parsa, a Louisiana teen with autism who died Jan. 19, 2020, after Jefferson Parish Sheriff’s deputies sat on him for 9 minutes.

Parsa’s parents are suing Jefferson Parish Sheriff Joe Lopinto, the deputies involved and the owners of the shopping center where the incident occurred, claiming violations of Eric’s and his parents’ constitutional rights, as well as violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Eric began to “experience a sudden

sensory outburst” related to his autism, the lawsuit says, and began slapping himself and slapping and grabbing his father. An off-duty reserve deputy handcuffed Eric and sat on his back for the next seven minutes

“Crucially, what the deputy should have done at that point, once things were calm and everything was fine, was they should have taken the weight off of Eric Parsa’s back,” said William Most, attorney for the family, during a news conference. “They should have rolled Eric Parsa onto his side to ensure that he could continue to breathe. But the deputies did not do so.”

Over the next several minutes, six more deputies arrived on the scene. One of them relieved the first deputy, getting on Eric’s back and, at one point, putting him in a choke hold, according to the lawsuit. Each of the deputies was aware Eric had special needs, the lawsuit says, but

none intervened to move Eric onto his side into a “recovery position.”

“It wasn’t until his body had gone limp and he had urinated on himself that deputies rolled him into ‘recovery position,’” the lawsuit says. “By then it was too late.” The Jefferson Parish Coroner’s Office classified the death as an accident.

Boston police killing

Brian Shea, a Boston member of the Disability Justice and Rights Caucus of Workers World Party related the story

of Terence Coleman to Workers World. Coleman, a Black man diagnosed with schizophrenia, was killed by Boston police in 2016 after his mother called for an ambulance to take him to the hospital.

Police and prosecutors say he attacked emergency medical technicians with a large knife, but his mother — Hope Coleman who is suing the city — denies her son was armed or posed any danger.

Terrence Coleman, who had gone inside the apartment by the time EMTs arrived, became upset when he saw blue flashing lights and told them he didn’t want to go to the hospital — but the EMTs insisted he come with them and tried to grab him. The officers burst through the door when they heard a scuffle and tackled and shot him.

Supporters have renamed Peter’s Park in Boston “Terence Coleman Park,” in his memory and honor.

Yudelovich is a Disability Justice and Rights Caucus activist with neurodivergent and auditory disabilities. The caucus can be contacted at djrcwup@workers.org.



Eric Parsa, right, is seen with his mother, Donna Lou, center, and father, Daren Parsa.

Bay Area movement

‘Mass releases, not mass deaths!’

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

Jan. 31 — Today as a plane pulled a banner, “Newsom: Free prisoners 2 stop Covid deaths,” through the sky over the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, protesters held signs against “State execution by COVID 19” and dropped banners from the bridge pedestrian path on the East Span. Simultaneously, a caravan of more than 200

cars — which started earlier at the Port of Oakland — drove onto the bridge. Advancing very slowly at 5 mph, lead cars fanned out to fill all five lanes of traffic, so that the caravan took at least an hour crossing the bridge.

The action challenged California Gov. Gavin Newsom to stop delaying the mass release of prisoners during the pandemic. Newsom, a Democrat, has freed only a handful of people so far. Nearly 200 prisoners in the state have already died from COVID, and there have been over 47,425 confirmed infections in state prisons.

This bold demonstration was organized



Courtney Morris of No Justice Under Capitalism speaks at Port of Oakland rally.

by a coalition led by No Justice Under Capitalism, with support from Critical Resistance, CURYJ (Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice) and several other groups.

Before the car caravan left for the bridge, Courtney Morris with NJUC emceed a rally at Oakland’s Middle Harbor Shoreline Park. Morris spoke about efforts of NJUC and other organizations to force Newsom to act.

Participants, including KAGE Universal and Minister King X of California Prison Focus, read several messages of solidarity from activists incarcerated behind

the walls of California’s prisons. KAGE Universal, while inside, helped broker an historic agreement to end hostilities between prisoner factions.

Allegra Taylor, the daughter of Hugo Pinell, spoke on the need to release aging prisoners, including several political prisoners at risk of death from COVID. Pinell, a member of the San Quentin Six, was murdered in 2015 at age 70, because guards “released” him into a yard filled with white racist prisoners after Pinell had been in solitary confinement for 45 years.

Nube Brown, managing editor of the San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper and a leader of CPF, called for immediate release of several prisoners who have been incarcerated for more than 50 years. She and others called for the end of the draconian sentence, Life Without Parole. A statewide campaign against LWOP, involving CPF, the California Coalition for Women Prisoners and others is building around the state.

After the rally, the banner displays and the dramatic car caravan, about five cars were stopped by the California Highway Patrol and cited with tickets. But, all in all, the organizers considered the action a great success. The emphatic message to Newsom received broad media



coverage before and after the event. (tinyurl.com/y6ey8azb)

According to Morris of NJUC, the coalition will continue its campaign to protest the mass incarceration of people in prisons and to save the lives of people inside who are receiving little or no adequate health care.

For more information check out the car caravan toolkit: tinyurl.com/y67958zf □



In a demand for prisoner release during COVID, a caravan of 200 cars occupies the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, Jan. 21.

Unholy trinity

Courts, governors, legislators refuse to prevent COVID-19 deaths in prisons

By Wesley Massey

The writer is an incarcerated worker in Indiana, Pa.

COVID-19 has exposed the “cancel culture” in the American prison system in relation to how prisoners are treated like chattel. Prisons and their administrations have been given carte blanche authority to govern themselves on how they treat prisoners during this pandemic. This lack of oversight has proven to be barbaric, inhumane and heartless, as thousands of prisoners have become sick and hundreds of inmates have died.

So where do inmates turn for help? It’s a longstanding fact in this country that the government was created with a separation of powers clause. Our framers knew that no one branch should possess power over all three branches, out of fear of tyrannical oppression. Nor should any one branch possess the power of any other branch beyond their own.

When a prisoner is aggrieved, his only recourse is to petition the courts for the redress of his grievances. In theory, the judicial branch is supposed to be a check on both the legislative and executive branches, and that should ensure that the Constitution is being adhered to.

I am a 38-year-old diabetic who has been diagnosed with high blood pressure. I’m also African American. All of these are considered high-risk factors for severe complications up to and including death, as determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

I am also a prisoner in SCI Pine Grove, in Indiana, Pa. I am classified as a low-risk, nonviolent offender. SCI Pine Grove’s number of positive COVID-19 cases exceeds 200 among inmates and

more than 100 among staff. The total inmate population is only 856. One inmate, Cornelius Scaine, has died in this facility from COVID-19 complications.

Prison staff violate COVID-19 protocols

In March 2020 I petitioned the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania under U.S. Code §1983, complaining about constitutional violations of my substantive due process rights, subjecting me to cruel and unusual punishment. I stated deliberate indifference claims through staff not wearing masks, cross-contamination by officers who have tested positive, the housing of inmates who tested positive with inmates who had tested negative, and allowing inmates from multiple housing units to congregate in one area. The list of their malfeasance goes on.

I requested immediate injunctive relief and a temporary restraining order — to be released to home confinement to allow for proper social distancing. I was granted a hearing in front of Judge Susan Paradise Baxter of Erie, Pa., to argue my reasons for the temporary restraining order. At the hearing, the court allowed respondents to testify about the menial preventive measures they put in place, such as handing out cloth masks and bars of soap.

I cross-examined each witness, and got them to admit the malfeasance

mentioned earlier and various other egregious conduct, such as respondents not requiring a negative test for staff to return to work. Ultimately, Judge Baxter denied the motion, stating that there was no deliberate indifference, given the preventative measures the respondents had put in place.

The judge knew there was an active outbreak, as it was presented as evidence. She further stated that she recognized that I was at high risk for serious complications given my co-morbidities, but that my claims of deliberate indifference were unavailing! That is because, she said, they had done the best they could by giving out soap.

Court shields prison officials

Is the action or inaction of a party any more or less indifferent just because the harm an individual received was unintended? So, here is a situation where one inmate who is prone to violence and another inmate who is considered vulnerable are housed in separate housing units because the violent inmate has attacked the vulnerable inmate before. Then they are allowed to eat in the same dining hall, and the violent inmate beats the vulnerable inmate to death.

So, the administration isn’t indifferent because they separated them? This is exactly the stance the court has taken

against those who have sought relief from COVID-19. The court has manifestly failed to hear my plight and my pleas for mercy!

The court’s stance of apathy and its shielding the prisons from constitutional scrutiny have created a barbaric result. Inmates have nowhere to turn, no avenue of redress, when the courts turn a blind eye and let nature take its course. Who then is responsible for the lives COVID-19 may take? It is now a game of chance every time you step out of your cell. Am I going to get infected today? If I do, I ask will I die from this? Could this have been prevented?

I was not sentenced to die in prison! Who can help me? The reality is nobody! Every branch of government has effectively shielded the other from any liability for inmate deaths and sickness related to COVID-19. They have created an unholy trinity, one protecting the other. This is “domestic terrorism,” torture by acquiescence. The courts have a duty to protect those who — by virtue of a court order — have been stripped of every means to protect themselves, those for whom society has already tolled the bell.

‘Cry out for us!’

Instead the courts have allowed inmates who are nonviolent and at low risk to languish in prison, as this deadly pandemic has spread in these tinderboxes called prisons. How will we look back and gauge what happened? I can assure you that there is no absolution for the bureaucratic indifference, barbarism and inhumane blind eye the court has taken. I’m asking the public to cry out, and to speak for those who can’t speak, by virtue of having their voices silenced behind these fences and walls. □



Wesley Massey

Lockdown fuels suicide

By Miley Selena Fletcher

The following letter is from a transgender incarcerated worker at SCI Forest.

On Jan. 6, an inmate nicknamed Brother Bernie (Bernie Shank), who was in his 60s and doing a life sentence, came out of his cell at State Correctional Institution (SCI) Forest on the second tier of the Residential Housing Unit/Special Needs Unit. Brother Bernie turned his back toward the block and began to bounce while hanging onto the railing. He then threw himself back, arms spread open to his sides, held his head back and hit the floor with a mighty thud.

Three days later he passed away. There was no guard in the block pod. The guard in the bubble came running

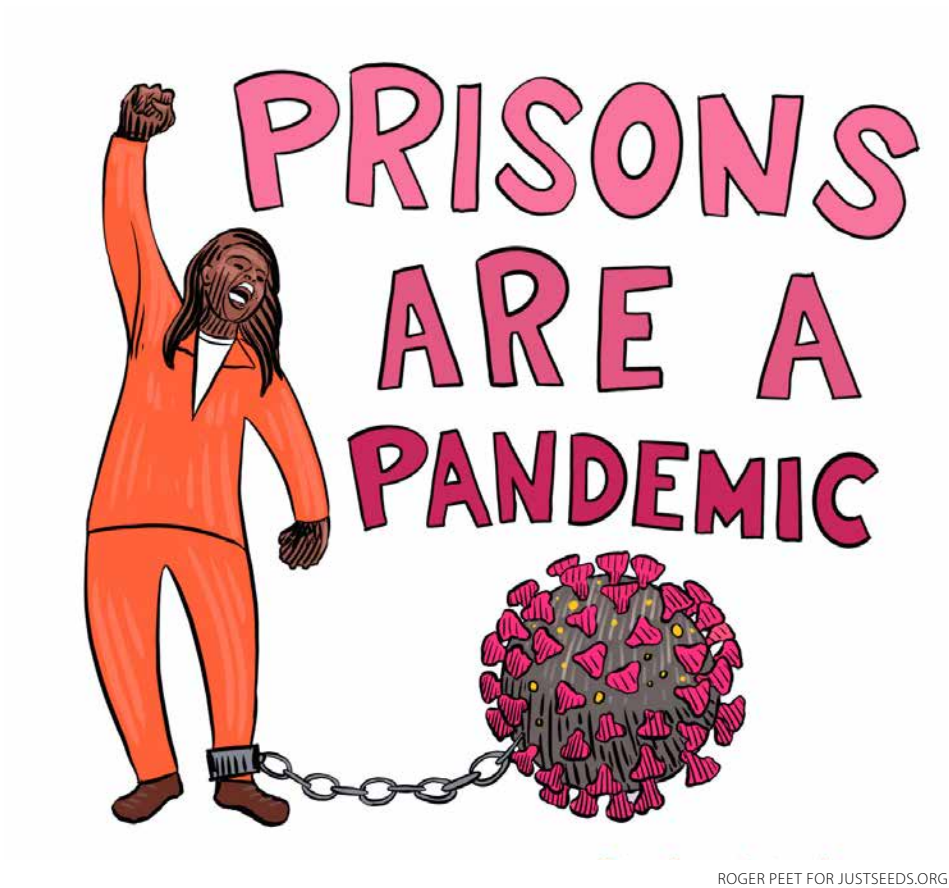
out, but too late. No one can understand why he did this.

Brother Bernie was quiet, always giving kindly from his heart to many inmates. Never asking for anything back. He was always cheerful, in great spirits. Maybe COVID-19 and this lockdown, limiting us to 20 minutes out of cells per day, had something to do with his mental instability. I guess we will never know.

The administration here at SCI Forest said he was COVID-19 positive before he died. On Jan. 14 and 15, SCI Forest did COVID tests on the entire inmate population [2,300 people]. Over 850 inmates tested positive, including me. I was asymptomatic, meaning I have COVID-19, but I have no symptoms. [As of Jan. 22, 24 employees have tested positive.]

Immediately SCI Forest COVID-positive inmates were given Vitamin D3 tablets (cholecalciferol) and zinc sulfate for the next 14 days. A new COVID test will then be given out to inmates who tested positive.

A lot of people ask: “When will we go back to normal routines?” I wonder if anything will ever be normal again.



ROGER PEET FOR JUSTSEEDS.ORG

I’m talking about both inside and outside of the prison complex.

I truly believe that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has looked at lockdowns as a way to control a lot of violence, chaos and mayhem, without taking

into consideration the mental toll on people like Brother Bernie.

The possibility of something like this happening again is on everyone’s minds, and everyone is wondering what is normal routine now? □



Pennsylvania incarcerated worker speaks Prisons during pandemic

Part 2

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

Since Nov. 1, 2020, more than 3,000 incarcerated workers and at least 1,200 guards and staff have tested positive for COVID-19 in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC). Since last March, at least 72 people behind DOC bars have died from the pandemic, the majority of those deaths since Nov. 1.

On Dec. 21, Workers World reporter Joe Piette interviewed Bryant Arroyo, imprisoned at State Correctional Institute (SCI) Frackville, on what he’s experiencing during this massive COVID-19 outbreak. This is Part Two of that interview.

Medical mistrust

Workers World: So I know with the flu shot, many people refused to take that. For the COVID vaccine, will everyone take it or will there be a lot of resistance?

Bryant Arroyo: When they initially promoted the flu vaccine, they had stated that, if the population of prisoners would take it, they would put \$5 onto your account. And you know, some guys inquired with me, and I said, the last time I checked the history of the PA DOC, they’ve really never paid anybody to take anything. That’s number one.

Number two, is that anytime that they do pay you an incentive, or a gift, if you will, from the Department of Corrections, or the government, it’s for an experiment. So a lot of people didn’t take it, regardless of the fact that there was a \$5 incentive. It sounded suspicious. It would have been better off for them to say, we’re just doing the vaccines, whoever wants them, it’s available.

And it ain’t like a lot of people don’t know about the Philadelphia Experiment. They were paying them and what have you.

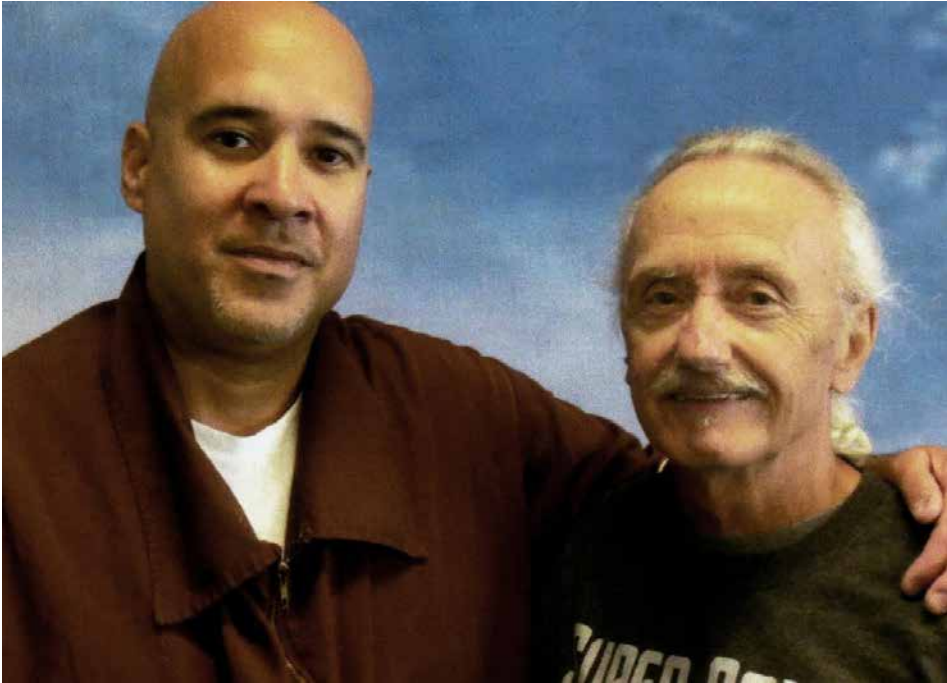
That’s exactly what came to mind when I heard about it. [tinyurl.com/y9wppcgy]

WW: So will it be different with the COVID vaccine?

BA: I’m thinking yes. And I’ll tell you why. We’ve been locked down for over eight, nine months. People are starving to get back to the day that they can say there’s some normalcy, and there’s more time allotted for activities, more movement, school programs, law library. Everybody is waiting for the vaccine. And

privilege information for them to make copies for me, which is a total breach of attorney-client privilege, privacy of that letter goes out the window, even though they say well, we’re just going to photocopy it. I don’t know that.

So this is what’s going on here. There’s a lot of cutting corners. And they’re just going through as if it was a meat processing plant. Just full-blown production, every chicken is the same. Just keep it moving.



Bryant Arroyo and Joe Piette

I’m one of them. As soon as it gets here, I’m just gonna say let’s go and put my arm out. Let’s get it in there. All right, and they should do that for the staff as well.

Right now, the law library is very limited. The only way that you get to the law library is if you show them a paper from a court that you have a deadline. If not, you only can request for certain things. I’m obligated to give them my attorney-client

WW: Yes, there was a 38-year-old man named Cornelius Staine with a five-year sentence at SCI Pine Grove who died of COVID a couple weeks ago.

BA: So he didn’t get a real five-year sentence, he got a death sentence, which is a gross miscarriage and unconscionable aspect of what is going on within these facilities. Because there is no medication.

A buddy of mine named Shawn

Saunders commented that it is our Constitutional right to question and seek justice for oneself, and for all those that are similarly situated. He stated that at SCI Frackville on a daily basis, there is an imbalance and mismanagement on COVID quarantine operations; there is insufficient COVID aftercare for the many prisoners currently on the housing units that have become sick from COVID, such as untreated respiratory problems, chest pains, digestive problems, and constant body aches. And then there’s the continuing surge of mental health deterioration among its overall prison population. So he’s saying basically, this is the new norm of pervasive injustices that must be challenged with the ultimate goal of replacing them with accountability, safety, healing, instead of punishment.

So you know, when you look at the big aspect of this, you have everybody looking at each other and saying, what do we do?

And the only thing that the medical department has stipulated is drink water and hopefully, you’ll get through the process. The quarantine is luck of the draw, because if you don’t get to the BMU — the hospital with only eight beds available — then they have the satellite hospital and I don’t know if they have used that at all.

Back in November, the prison shared a video warning us that our water was contaminated and could compromise our health, but now, just weeks later, they want us to drink more water as a treatment for COVID? It’s horrific.

On Jan. 5, a COVID test confirmed Arroyo was positive. His new cellmate Brian Muffley (QF-1534) was exposed for weeks but officials have refused to test him. Arroyo was sent to RHU, the restricted housing unit, where he is held for 23.5 hours per day in a cell without hot water, television, or electrical outlets.

Groundbreaking victory for Wash Supply workers

By Mahoma López, LWC, and Yuriana Sanchez, LWC Leader

On Jan. 29, the Laundromat Wash Supply workers scored a groundbreaking victory against their employer. For many years, the employees of Wash Supply have faced precarious working conditions at the workplace. The workers believed that the best tool they had to change the workplace was organizing and forming an independent labor association.

In New York City and other parts of the country, the retail laundromat industry is plagued by precarious working conditions. Laundromat industry employees have suffered from abuses by employers and the negligence of governmental institutions to investigate and enforce the existing laws that protect workers.

One of the typical examples of exploitation in this industry is wage theft. The report “Employers steal billions from workers’ paychecks each year,” by David Cooper and Teresa Kroeger, states that wage theft is “the failure to pay workers the full wages to which they are legally entitled.” According to Cooper and Kroeger, “wage theft can take many forms, including but not limited to minimum wage violations, overtime violations, meal break violations, pay-stub, and illegal deductions or misclassification.”

The report findings demonstrate the precarious conditions of low-wage workers in the 10 most populous states where workers are most likely to be paid less than the minimum wage — in Florida 7.3%, Ohio 5.5% and New York 5.0%. Those workers suffering minimum wage violations have been underpaid an average of \$64 per week, which means that a

year-round worker is losing \$3,300 per year and receiving only \$10,500 in annual wages, according to Cooper and Kroeger.

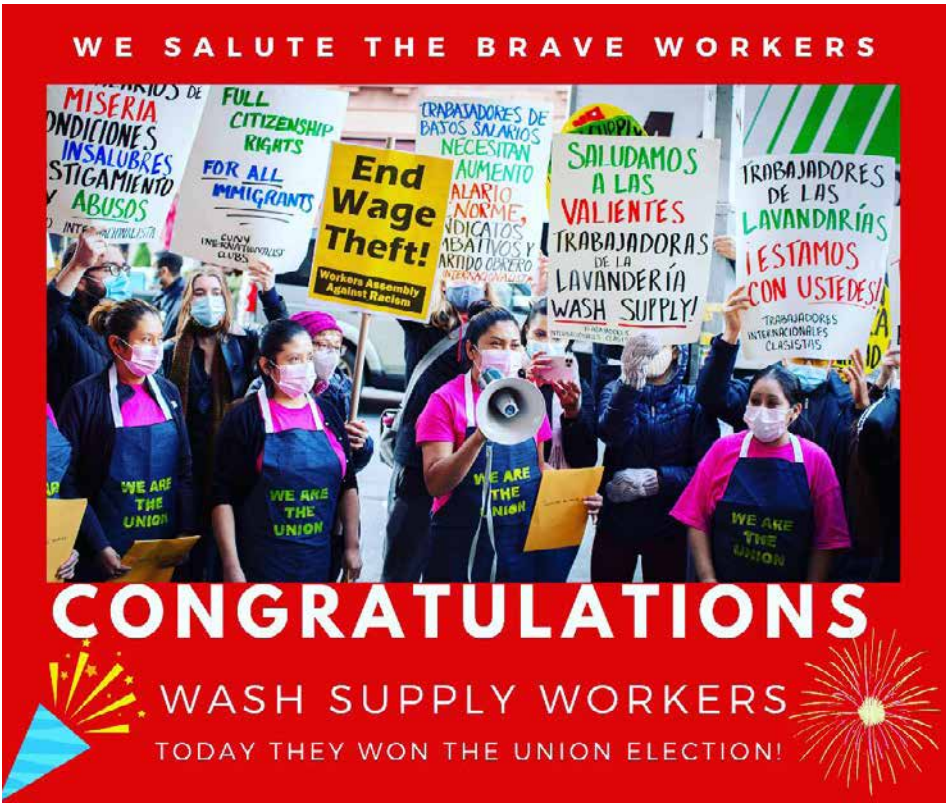
One in five workers underpaid

In 2018, the Laundry Workers Center launched a “Report on working conditions in the retail laundromat industry” that examines the working conditions of retail laundromat workers in NYC. A finding of the report was that “one in five workers were paid \$10.00 per hour or less: a likely violation of New York’s minimum wage requirements.”

Another finding was that “more than half of workers were subjected to harassing conduct in the workplace, ranging from racial slurs and insults to threats and intimidation.” In 2019, Wash Supply employees approached the Laundry Workers Center. Our goal at the beginning was to communicate that our employer was stealing our wages. LWC conducted an investigation and found indeed that our wages were stolen.

At that time, Mahoma López, the lead organizer and co-executive director, explained to us that the organization does not focus just on the violation of wage theft. As co-director and lead organizer of the Laundry Workers Center, it is critical to articulate the organization’s vision, which is to empower low-wage workers and train them to organize to make real changes in the workplace and their communities. We believe that those who suffer exploitation in their workplaces must learn how to organize and educate on issues beyond their workplace in order to change the dynamic of exploitation. Thus, Wash Supply employees enrolled in the LWC leadership

We believe that those who suffer exploitation in their workplaces must learn how to organize and educate on issues beyond their workplace in order to change the dynamic of exploitation. Through the leadership institute, the workers began to build political consciousness and imagine their power as working class. When they realized what power they had, they decided that the best way to ensure workplace changes was to organize and form a workers’ association.



institute to learn the power they have when they learn their rights.

Through the leadership institute, the workers began to build political consciousness and imagine their power as the working class. When they realized what power they had, they decided that the best way to ensure workplace changes was to organize and form a workers’ association.

Critical for workers to become organizers

As the lead organizer of the campaign and co-executive director of the Laundry Workers Center, Lopez understood that it was critical for the workers to become organizers by learning a critical set of organizing skills. My personal experience as a leader of the Hot and Crusty Campaign in 2012 helped me understand that leaders need to become the strategists, the communicators, the tacticians, the agitators and political educators of their campaigns. Thus, when Wash Supply workers participated in the leadership institute, they learned how to develop strategies, tactics and how to run a campaign in their community and workplace.

Furthermore, they learned how essential it is to develop a profound analysis of workers’ political and economic conditions in the U.S. and worldwide. Nine years ago, on Jan. 21, 2012, those

education sessions helped to liberate us from the exploitation we suffered in Hot and Crusty; and on Jan. 29, the workers of Wash Supply accomplished the same goals.

Many workers are hungry for justice and ready to learn to organize in their communities and workplace, but they are not getting the support they need from community and labor organizations. As organizers, we need to spend more time recruiting, training workers, and building power, or the option is more exploitation and inequality.

In synthesis, the workers’ victory in Wash Supply represents the workers’ will to win better working conditions and end exploitation in the workplace. It represents the necessity of building political consciousness in the working class to realize its power and move from oppression to liberation.

Finally, the workers have built a network of solidarity with different partners of the social justice movement such as the Solidarity Center, Workers Assembly Against Racism, the Internationalist Group, and other community and labor organizations that empower them to believe that winning better working conditions was, is and will be possible. The management continues retaliating against us for organizing, but we will never stop fighting for our rights. □

NFL union solidarity with Amazon workers



Michael Foster organizing outside Bessemer warehouse.

Continued from page 1

the Bessemer workers are majority Black in a state with some of the lowest wages and union representation in the country.

Black Lives Matter!

Besides fighting for better wages, better benefits and better protection for the workers during the pandemic, this vote was built around the political theme of Black Lives Matter — as the Bessemer workers are facing a heightened level of racist threats and taunts organized by their bosses during this union drive. The vote reflects the ongoing legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King’s fight to link civil rights with workers’ rights.

The @BAmazonUnion site posted videos on Twitter of NFLPA

representatives expressing solidarity with their union drive. JC Tretter, a center for the Cleveland Browns and president of the NFLPA, stated: “Everyone deserves to have a voice, and we’re proud that you’re even considering taking the step to unionize. Remember this union stands behind you and is inspired by your actions.” (Jan. 25)

Michael Thomas, a safety for the Houston Texans commented: “Our union supports y’all. I applaud y’all for trying to unionize, and I understand how important it is to try to make a decision, and it’s such during a difficult time during a pandemic. But understand we’re part of a union, and our job is to protect our workers.”

The entire union movement, especially the national leadership of the AFL-CIO, should not only heed Thomas’ words, but more importantly

should put into practice what he expressed — that every worker should be part of a union to show that an injury to one worker is an injury to all workers.

To take on a behemoth like Amazon, as the Bessemer warehouse workers are attempting to do, will take the backing and political solidarity of all workers, whether employed or unemployed, full-time or part-time — to lay the basis for helping empower the global working class to fight against profit-driven corporations like Amazon.

As Michael Foster, a poultry worker in Bessemer and RWDSU organizer told Amazon workers: “[T]hey are part of a movement that is worldwide. I want them to know that we are important, and we do matter.” (NY Times, Jan. 25). □

Capitalist greed kills six Georgia poultry workers

Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta, Ga.

Jan. 31 — Prior to Jan. 28, most of us were likely unaware of the death-rendering results of exposure to liquid nitrogen, including the low-wage workers at Foundation Food Group in Gainesville, Ga. It is used in food processing plants across the country to rapidly freeze products for shipping.

Kept at -320° F, the odorless, colorless vapor is released in a confined space to flash freeze whatever it touches. In sufficient quantities, it can reduce the amount of oxygen in the air and cause asphyxiation.

A little after 10 a.m. on Jan. 28, calls began coming into the Hall County, Ga., 911 emergency phone number. Workers were collapsing, unable to breathe or suffering from freezer burns. A liquid nitrogen line had ruptured.

When emergency crews arrived, they found 130 panicked workers outside the building. Several were in medical distress. The survivors described a thick fog that obscured their vision and impacted their breathing. There were reports that supervisors had been told of a problem with the liquid nitrogen lines the day before, on Jan. 27, but they told the workers they needed to make production and to keep working.

Workers’ safety comes last

Five workers were dead at the scene, and one died in the hospital. Five of the six who died were Latinx. At least 10 to 12 more people, including four firefighters,



People gather on Jan. 30 for a vigil outside the plant in Gainesville, Ga., where six workers were killed in a liquid nitrogen leak.

were taken to area hospitals. As of this writing, while some of those stricken have been released, including the emergency personnel, at least three workers are still in critical condition.

Georgia leads the country in the poultry producing and processing industry. Gainesville and its surrounding area — located about 60 miles northeast of Atlanta — is considered the “poultry capital of the world.” Besides the giant corporations that have plants in the state, there are a lot of small businesses like Foundation Food Group, a company formed from a recent merger between Prime-Pak Foods Inc. and Victory Processing Inc. The business has four facilities in Gainesville.

It should be noted that Prime-Pak was fined several times in recent years

by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for using unsafe equipment, amputation injuries in two workers’ fingers and defects in eye protection.

The plant’s workers process raw chicken into chicken tenders, nuggets and individual cuts used by restaurants and food service operations, partially cook them and then freeze them for later use.

Industry’s mega-profits come first

This low-wage, repetitious, fatiguing work in Georgia’s \$41 billion poultry industry is largely done by immigrants, documented or undocumented, and people of color, many of them women. The industry is largely nonunion, and abuses of all kinds, from stolen wages to sexual and racist harassment, can occur without consequences.

In addition, the COVID-19 rates in Georgia and particularly in this region of the state are alarmingly high.

Although the immigrant community has built religious, community and business structures that offer some protection, there is a strong presence of virulent anti-immigrant forces. These include the Ku Klux Klan and others, who over the years have posted threatening flyers and held rallies and marches in the Gainesville area. Following the Jan. 28 deaths, denigrating and hateful comments appeared on social media sites reporting this story.

A number of local, state and federal agencies are investigating the cause of the liquid nitrogen release, but their reports are not expected anytime soon.

Meanwhile the families of Jose DeJesus Elias-Cabrera, 45; Corey Alan Murphy, 35; Nelly Perez-Rafael, 28; Saulo Suarez-Bernal, 41; Victor Velez, 38; and Edgar Vera-Garcia, 28, face an uncertain future. A 3-year-old child lost both parents.

Immigrant rights activists in the area are concerned about the workers’ emotional and financial security. And they are concerned about possible retaliatory measures by Foundation Food Group if workers testify about the company’s safety failures or are subjected to harassment or detention by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

No worker should fear they will be injured or die under totally preventable circumstances on the job. Workers should have the final say of whether their workplace is safe. That is the lesson to be learned from Jan. 28 in Gainesville, Ga. □

GM 1937, Amazon 2021

Continued from page 1

and environment,” the company boasts. Employees are monitored for union advocacy.

Amazon — which markets its monitoring device, the Modjoul SmartBelt to other companies — claims it is designed “so you can prioritize areas of focus for safety and productivity.”

This is a flat-out lie. “In 2019, Amazon recorded 14,000 serious injuries across its fulfillment centers, which equates to an injury rate of 7.7 serious injuries per 100 employees, Reveal found. That’s nearly double the most recent industry standard, according to Reveal. Amazon may also be underreporting warehouse worker injuries.” (cnbc, Sept. 29, 2020)

Now, less than a year after the Bessemer warehouse opened last March, at least 2,000 Amazon workers there

have signed union cards, enough for the NLRB to order an election.

General Motors 1937, Amazon 2021

There are historical parallels between the current struggle and an earlier period of fierce class battles: the 1930s. The world’s largest corporation then was General Motors, whose president, Alfred P. Sloan, was the world’s highest-paid executive. Workers were monitored by GM’s elaborate network of company spies. Supporters of the United Automobile Workers hid their union buttons under their collars.

The conditions on GM’s assembly lines were not that different from Amazon. One of the main issues motivating the fight for UAW representation was the notorious “speedup” — when management would repeatedly make the moving assembly run faster to increase production. Wealthy companies were united in their

opposition to unions. They hired mercenary goons from the notorious Pinkerton union-busting outfit.

Organizers in the newly formed Congress of Industrial Organizations recognized the key to future success: A win at GM would have a domino effect, inspiring successful union drives in a range of industries. But it would not be easy to get GM to do what it swore it would never do: recognize a union. It took a 44-day occupation of GM plants in Flint, Mich., to force the company’s hand.

Feb. 11 marks the 84th anniversary of the victory in the famous Flint Sit-down Strike. In 1937, there were over 500 sit-downs and other strikes involving workers in steel, meatpacking and other plants, along with retail, hotels and the public sector. After the Flint workers won, the CIO unions grew exponentially, bringing into the labor movement industrial workers whom the conservative, craft-based American Federation of Labor had written off.

Among the workers not welcome in the AFL were the Black steelworkers of Bessemer. It took the Communist Party-led Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union to organize the mills in the Deep South. Black southern steelworkers were an important part of labor history in the 1930s. Even today union consciousness is high in Bessemer.

Amazon has launched a glitzy propaganda website, “Do it without dues,” aimed at getting Bessemer workers to vote against union representation. There is fear and intimidation; a majority-yes vote is not guaranteed.

Once union representation is won, the battle has just begun. Next comes the fight to win a decent contract. A strike might be necessary, and union supporters might be



Alan Grant, RWDSU organizer.

fired. Amazon could threaten to close the warehouse, as Walmart has done when stores were organized.

The drive to organize Amazon is comparable in importance to wresting the first union contract from GM in 1937. Tactically there are differences between a secret ballot election and a strike, whether an outside picket or an occupation. But the class essence is the same: labor vs. capital.

Thus the struggle begs the question raised in the famous old union song: Which side are you on?

What is most needed is mass, global solidarity. None of us is very far from an Amazon warehouse or a Whole Foods store where we can put up a solidarity picket line. A Feb. 6 support rally is planned in Bessemer.

The stakes in the current battle could not be higher — with ramifications for Amazon workers everywhere and ultimately for the global working class. Amazon BHM1 workers need to know that the international working class has their back. That will tip the scales and help them win against the richest centi-billionaire in human history. □



Solidarity with the Flint Sit-down Strike inside GM plants.

WW COMMENTARY

Immigrant/refugee rights: It's now or never, Joe

By Teresa Gutierrez

Since the beginning of the most recent war on immigrants — which took shape starting in 2006 with the hypercriminalization of undocumented workers — the U.S. Congress has repeatedly talked of passing legislation labeled “Comprehensive Immigration Reform” to right some of those wrongs.

We are long past “reforms,” however. Conditions during the past 15 years for documented, undocumented and refugee workers, not only in the U.S. but around the globe, have been dismal — which is an understatement. The time is **now** to bring workers out of the shadows, out of the detention centers and out of the countless deplorable migrant tent cities around the world and grant workers **immediate** full, legal, human and workers’ rights.

The condition of migrant workers is a crime against humanity. Relief and aid must happen **now**, not tomorrow.

Global working-class issue

According to the U.N., “more people than ever live in a country other than the one in which they were born. In 2019, the number of migrants globally reached an estimated 272 million. ... The number of globally forcibly displaced people topped 70 million for the first time ... [this] includes 26 million refugees, 3.5 million asylum seekers and over 41 million internally displaced persons.” (tinyurl.com/hbxsqafc)

It was not just in the U.S. that a white supremacist right-wing xenophobe used immigration to whip up a nativist base. Both Trump and right-wing leaders in Europe used the age-old tactic of divide and conquer the global working class.

It is no surprise that immigrant allies and organizations in the U.S. organized in record numbers to remove Donald Trump from office. Their work helped to oust one of the worst racist and misogynist presidents ever. This can be considered a win for them. Allies report that some migrants in camps in Matamoros, Mexico, actually

cried with relief when they heard Trump had lost the election.

This should not come as a surprise when you consider the following news.

On Jan. 30, the Associated Press reported that at least 19 migrants were found shot and burned to death in Mexico near the U.S. border. The migrants appeared to be mainly Guatemalan and Mexican. “The bodies were found Jan. 22 piled in a burned-out truck on a dirt road in the northern border state of Tamaulipas. The truck had 113 bullet impacts.”

This kind of atrocity is the tip of the iceberg of crimes that occur against migrants and refugees as they try to make their way into developed countries.

In a camp in Lesbos, Greece, hundreds of refugees stand close to one another as they wait in line for food, as “less than one in five are wearing a face mask” despite the deadly pandemic sweeping the globe. Said one Cameroonian woman refugee: “We are like inside an overcrowded chicken farm. We are lumped together during food distribution; it’s impossible to have one meter of distance between us.” (InfoMigrants, Sept. 16, 2020)

Were it not for a heroic African American health care worker, Dawn Wooten, it would not be known that migrant women were being forcibly sterilized in an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Irwin County, Ga. One woman reported that she had not even been properly anesthetized. (Workers World, Sept. 23, 2020)

End of an era?

Will the administration of Democrat Joe Biden usher in a wave of victories and gains for migrants and the undocumented in the U.S.?

The hard-working, greatly committed and superbly organized movement for immigrant rights is hopeful. But they are not unwise. They have been here before. They will not be duped again. They know they must keep up the fight.

When the first Black U.S. president was elected in 2008, not only immigrants but

many people of color and progressives were ecstatic. Tens of thousands were hopeful. This writer will not forget scenes of people in Kenya out in the streets in celebration or meeting a woman in Harlem who had traveled from Jamaica just to see the historic inauguration.

It was a privilege to be in Harlem the night Barack Obama was elected. Black and Latinx people and many others poured into the streets in jubilation. The police could not contain the spontaneous takeover of the streets and did not even try. The people controlled the streets that night.

But for those who know this voracious, despicable capitalist system, **we KNOW WE must fight ON**. No matter the election history being made or the glass ceiling being broken, **THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE SYSTEM MUST GO ON**.

Indeed, Obama tragically earned the title of Deporter-in-Chief as he — with then-Vice President Biden — came to deport more people than any other U.S. president in history.

“Biden’s decision to use part of his political capital on immigration may seem bold to some, but to many who have watched years of immigration inaction, the move generates skepticism,” wrote Julio Ricardo Varela, founder of Latino Rebels. (tinyurl.com/y3zzg328)

A key leader of the Dreamers movement, Korina Iribe, a DACA recipient in Arizona, wrote in the New York Times, “The first version of the Dream Act, which would have given young people like me a path to citizenship, was introduced in 2001. But nearly 20 years on, our futures still hang in the balance. Comprehensive immigration reform . . . has failed to pass under both Republican and Democratic administrations.” (tinyurl.com/yy2lc4xs)

Since Biden’s election, she continued, he “has taken various actions on immigration, including fortifying DACA. He also sent Congress the U.S. Citizenship



Act of 2021, which would offer a pathway to citizenship to the millions of undocumented immigrants living . . . [here]. The plan has been hailed as bold, but undocumented people have been here before. We can’t go on like this.”

In fact, the legislation Biden sent Congress **DOES** offer a pathway to “citizenship” — **BUT** would take almost 8 years and has many requirements and fees!

Haven’t the undocumented and their families faced enough? Haven’t they been terrorized by vigilantes at the border, ICE and police agents around every corner, a vile Trump, malicious court and law officials, and factory owners who super-exploit at the workplace?

Haven’t immigrant workers shown in this horrid pandemic that they are **essential** to this country?

Eight years is too damn long. Immediate legalization can be granted if Joe Biden wanted it. What is lacking is the political will to stand up to the Republicans and big business.

The time is **now** for all immigrants and refugees to be granted their full human and workers rights.

Open up the borders. Close the detention centers and the camps. Abolish ICE and the police or — in the words of the National Day Laborers Organizing Network “Abajo con la POLI-MIGRA! (Down with Pol-ICE).”

There is a reckoning taking place. Immigrants and allies are not just hopeful. They are mobilizing and stepping up their tactics in each phase of the struggle for their rights.

If justice does not happen now, what will this movement do next to demand what has already been earned a hundred times over?

It’s now or never, Joe. ” □

Prisionero de Pensilvania en crisis de COVID— Los guardias eran los transmisores

Por Miley Selena Fletcher
SCI Forest, Marienville, Pensilvania

Desde que Workers World recibió esta carta, el Departamento de Correcciones de Pensilvania ha confirmado casi 7.000 casos de COVID-19 entre los prisioneros y más de 2.500 entre el personal, que no están sujetos a pruebas obligatorias. Muchos prisioneros que reportan síntomas de COVID-19 han sido colocados en unidades de vivienda restringidas, tachadas de “el agujero”. Los presos que se enfrentan a la tortura psicológica del confinamiento solitario tienen menos probabilidades de informar cuando están enfermos, lo que permite una mayor propagación del COVID-19.

Los informes de muertes por COVID en las cárceles de Pensilvania varían ampliamente, de 49 a más de 65. Es difícil de verificar ya que el PA DOC solo dará a conocer el nombre de la primera

persona encarcelada que muere en cada prisión. En muchos casos, ni siquiera se notifica a los miembros de la familia.

La siguiente es una carta de una mujer trans encarcelada.

Durante ocho meses, el Bosque de la Institución Correccional Estatal (SCI), donde estoy encarcelada, no tuvo ningún caso de COVID-19. La administración de la institución quedó impresionada por los números cero. Pero a principios de diciembre del 2020, el virus golpeó a SCI Forest. Muchos de nosotros nos preguntamos: “¿Cómo sucedió esto?” Después de que me senté y revisé cómo pudo haber sucedido, la realidad se instaló.

La única forma en que pudo haber sucedido fue que los guardias y el personal lo trajeron. También hubo transferencias masivas al bosque SCI durante la pandemia. Aunque SCI Forest tiene un bloque de cuarentena, no fue suficiente. Parece

que los guardias y el personal fueron los principales transmisores.

Ahora los presos dan positivo por el coronavirus. Lo que me molesta es que nos lo trajeron, pero nos vemos obligados a ajustarnos a las restricciones. De repente, estamos encerrados forzosamente en nuestra celda, con solo 20 minutos para usar el teléfono, tomar una ducha y usar los kioscos para enviar correos electrónicos a sus contactos. No hay tiempo para respirar aire fresco; ¿No hay tiempo para pasar todos los días así?

Una cápsula de bloques tardó dos días y medio en completar dicho proceso. Algunos esperaron tres días. ¿Sabes lo estresante? ¿Cómo influye eso en la inestabilidad mental de alguien? ¿Qué tan frustrada se vuelve la gente?

Si un preso va y se para frente a la celda de alguien, se nos da mala conducta por un área no autorizada. Una vez que eso sucede, el prisionero recibe restricciones

de celda. ¿Dónde está eso justificado?

Ahora los prisioneros están siendo colocados con más restricciones. No estaríamos en este bloqueo forzoso, lleno de restricciones, si no nos hubieran traído el virus.

La Junta de Libertad Condicional y Libertad bajo palabra de Pensilvania incluso les está dando a los presos “visitas” en sus fechas mínimas, sin liberarlos. Están dando a los presos golpes de uno o dos años, lo que los obliga a permanecer en la cárcel. Escucho a muchos presos decir: “Es más seguro en la cárcel que salir a la calle en este momento”. Pero me irrita que se nos hayan dado estas restricciones transmitidas por el Secretario de Correcciones del Departamento de Correccionales de Pensilvania, John Wetzel. ¡Y son sus guardias y su personal los que han traído COVID-19 a la prisión! □

Veteran union organizer

'We neutralized the fascists'

Excerpts taken from the Jan. 14 webinar, "Workers Can Defeat Fascism and Racism," sponsored by Workers World Party, moderated by Ted Kelly. Ed Childs spoke from the WWP Boston branch. To view the entire panel discussion, go to youtu.be/d9_NDIKTovw.

Ted Kelly: What are the root causes of these neo-fascist insurgencies that we have seen in the 1920s in Germany, that we've seen in the 1970s in Boston, that we're seeing now across the world? Why is this rise happening right now?

Ed Childs: Yeah, I've seen this in the 70s, I've seen it in other countries. In 1974, when they were going to integrate the Boston school system, these same fascist elements organized thousands of people. The summer before school opened, they headed two demonstrations of 20,000 people in Boston itself. They marched downtown, and any Black person downtown would be assaulted. And the assaults would be supervised by the police.

That was an actual fascist movement, showing the connection to racism. They also had demonstrations every week-end in white neighborhoods, some up to 7,000 people, but most around 1,000, which is a lot for Boston. There were the same elements of people — a lot of police, a lot of lawyers, petty bourgeois, larger landlords and store owners. But a lot of workers also, who were not so much leaders, but were suckered in to get 20,000 people into Boston.

So we've seen this fascist movement here before. We've dealt with it before. And we've defeated it before.

Ted: That's right. Fascism is the sledgehammer that the capitalists wield to smash the working class. So to fight fascism is to fight the person wielding the sledgehammer.

Ed: I participated in both the Irish struggle and the South African anti-apartheid struggle. In both, to keep the colonial situation alive, the [ruling class] needed a loyalist fascist base — which obviously in South Africa was the white population. And in Ireland, it was the oyalist Protestant population.

But a remarkable thing happened at a fairly similar time — there was a world economic crisis, there was a 16 percent unemployment rate both among white South Africans, and also the Loyalists in Ireland. What happened — because both the African National Congress and the Irish Republican Army and Sinn Féin were extremely strong and moving — they started to recruit a lot in the working class. The ANC said they had never recruited so many whites as at that period of time. And the IRA people I interviewed in prison, a lot of them were ex-Loyalists.

The capitalists try to buy the movement off. Our side has to be extremely strong to pull people back. In our struggles against fascism, we do it two ways. One, we go with strength — but also issues, working class issues. We go with jobs, not racism. We go with health care, not racism. We go with education and not war. We appeal to economic needs, what the working class needs at the time.

Fighting the fascists in Boston, 1974

Ted: Could you tell us about the successful way that you were able to mobilize workers against racism in the 1974 struggle in Boston?



Ed Childs, center, at Boston rally for Temporary Protected Status immigrant workers in September 2020.

Ed: At the time, there was an economic decline. The Civil Rights Movement had won the right to integrate schools in Boston, the last major city in the country to do so. The racist movement had a hold on Boston like no other city. And they mobilized huge.

My job in the movement at the time was actually to infiltrate that movement. One thing that I had to notice was its appeal to the white workers. How were they brought in? Because otherwise the racists couldn't have had a movement. They needed 20,000 people on the street, because they knew the Civil Rights Movement could also muster people.

So the racists did it kind of like Trump did it now — xenophobia, extreme racism. They would say that "they're gonna start stealing your jobs, you don't have a job because of this, you don't have a job because of that, you could have better education than that." These were all stated or implied.

Now, the problem with that approach is that they only can do that in a vacuum, because if there's opposition, they're in trouble.

So we organized the opposition. They had a 20,000-person demonstration, they were organizing in the neighborhoods — so we did too. And we ended up with 25,000 to 30,000 people, led by the Black community, showing huge unity — with the main issue being "We say NO to racism!" This implied to everybody that the approach is unity, and we're gonna fight for all goals under unity.

Who made up the other side? The same as those who made up the Capitol attack on Jan. 6. The police — I'd say when they had 20,000 people on the street, at least 1,000 were police. Large landlords, lawyers, priests and a lot of petty bourgeois. Then they suckered in a lot of workers, who had had no place to go. In their ignorance, they went to the fascist movement.

Well, when we had 25,000 to 30,000 people on the street, there was a place for them to go. We went into the diehard racist areas 5:30 in the morning and leafleted. We did have security, but we knew we wanted to reach the workers in that community. And who's out at 5:30, but the workers? And same in the subway. We did that, and it was some of our best recruiting. At 5:30 in the morning we recruited a lot of those workers who were in the racist areas to come join with us.

We had the 1974 march — it was very strong, and the police actually attacked it.

And we pushed the police back. And there hasn't been one demonstration in Boston, to this day, of a large fascist movement. We stopped that in its tracks.

'You've got to organize'

That's how you do it. Support and build up the Black community and the Latinx community and the progressive community. But the other thing we were looking at: How to undermine the fascist movement?

We analyzed that they did have the leadership, and they had their elements who benefit. But they also had the workers who do not benefit from the fascist movement. So we went after them — the workers on the fence. They're looking for who's the strongest, and they go to whoever the strongest is. When we became the strongest, a number of them, I wouldn't say a lot, but a number of them came to us, and became organizers with us. And that's what the struggle does.

I think that's a big lesson for today. How do we get that done? You've got to organize, you got to do deep organizing. We organized tenant unions, we organized unions, we organized door-to-door, we organized on the subway, we organized workers as they went to work, we had small demonstrations. And it was dangerous. The security we had was very tight. When we were leafleting on subways, we had 10 people — seven on security, three leafleting. That's how it's got

to be done.

When we did that, we totally neutralized the fascists. They weren't able to respond at all. The movement in Boston became so much stronger. Leadership in the Black community really strengthened, and you can see it still today. Black politicians — there weren't any at that time in Boston — started to get elected. It changed the whole atmosphere.

Obviously, everything we did hasn't been undone, but we need to build like that again. How do the fascists flourish? Well, first they have to defeat us. There is the famous quote that came out of Germany, that every anti-fascist has run into, the quote by a minister that says: "First they came after the communists, and I did not help them because I wasn't a communist. Then they came after the Jews. And I wasn't a Jew, so I didn't help them. Then they came after the trade unionists, and I didn't help them...." Well, that's similar to today. To organize like this, you got to be tough, you got to be a communist.

Ted: We have seen living examples of the alive fascist movement on Jan. 6 in Washington, D.C. And we've been talking about what working people need to do.

Ed: I want to say something that recently happened in our union, Unite Here Local 26 in Boston. In July 2020, two of our Black members were brutalized by the police in Lynn, a city outside of Boston. We organized a group of 500 people, 100 union members and 400 community organizers and people in Lynn. We had a very militant march to police headquarters in town, where the police forces were mobilized. And we won! We got the charges dropped on our union members, we got a couple of police fired.

But the important thing that happened was that the people in Lynn loved it. And afterwards, when we had organizing drives in some of the hotels, it turned out some of the workers lived in Lynn, and had seen what Local 26 could do — and joined in. They had seen the struggle against racism being picked up by the local, they saw the union was very strong. These militant issues help build a coalition.

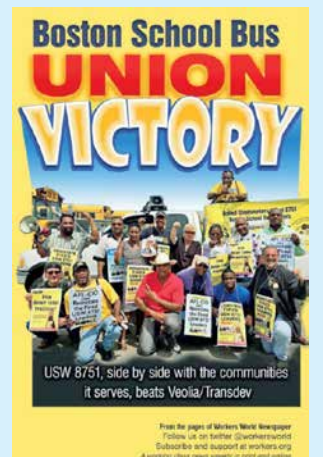
I think everybody talks about how we have to have a coalition. But you're not going to have a coalition if you don't fight about all the issues. □

Boston School Bus Union Victory

In October, 2013, the rank-and-file members of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751, made a historic stand against the unfair and illegal practices of Veolia Transportation, Inc. On July 1, Veolia had taken over managing Boston school transportation from First Student. Grievances were piling up so fast that sixteen Unfair Labor Practices had to be filed before the school year started in September.

Against Veolia/Transdev, a powerhouse of privatization, just how did the Boston School Bus Drivers Union finally win after a 27-month struggle? That is a powerfully important question for today's labor movement, which has suffered so many setbacks, and for all working-class and oppressed people. This pamphlet, which contains a selection of articles from Workers World newspaper written in the heat of the battle and concludes with excerpts from a post-victory conversation on "harvesting the lessons," is an attempt to provide the answers.

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Demonizing China

The new U.S. administration’s foreign policy appointees have quickly bared their teeth to People’s China. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken’s first remarks clarified that U.S.-China relations are both important and adversarial. That’s diplomat-speak meaning that U.S. imperialism is hostile to China, and Chinese successes have the U.S. ruling class terrified.

Joe Biden’s regime plans to give no space to China on the seas or in the financial markets. It will resume the “pivot to Asia,” started under Barack Obama’s administration, and try to pretend the last four years were a strange aberration instead of a symptom of U.S. imperialist decline.

While the twice-impeached former president and assorted Republican hacks have called Biden “soft on China,” even right-wing Fox News disagrees. Fox’s military analyst, retired Gen. Jack Keane, said Jan. 20 that a bipartisan anti-China

policy prevails: “The fact is that the people around President Biden pretty much agree with Trump’s redefinition of the global security challenges that we’re facing.”

After Blinken’s wink, the corporate media opened up a propaganda blitz against China as January ended. Media from the New York Times to NPR to Fox News pilloried China for (1) “authoritarian” handling of the COVID-19 crisis, (2) alleged repression of internal minority populations and (3) its possessive attitude toward Hong Kong and Taiwan.

We point out that the last two territories had been part of China for millennia, before imperialist wars and maneuvers snatched them away.

Times opinion columnist Nicholas Kristof’s Jan. 30 piece epitomized the media blitz. Kristof has an undeserved reputation as a “progressive,” because he writes of violations of human rights and

especially of women’s rights. The twist is that he often uses the sympathy created by his description to argue for U.S. military intervention — such as the 2011 U.S.-NATO overthrow of the Libyan government and the continued U.S. military occupation of Afghanistan — allegedly to protect women’s rights against the Taliban.

Kristof omits the fact that from 1979-91, Washington armed every reactionary and misogynist Afghan counterrevolutionary — including those who murdered women school teachers under the then pro-socialist Afghan government and its Soviet allies.

Kristof’s Jan. 30 column continued his pro-imperialist bent. He had the nerve to call China’s leader Xi Jinping “an overconfident, risk-taking bully who believes that the United States is in decline,” and he insisted that “Biden needs to manage Xi and reduce the risk of war without

pulling his punches.” He urged U.S. strategists to take advantage of alleged differences within the Chinese Communist Party’s leadership.

Kristof got one thing right: U.S. imperialism is in decline. And the one area where the U.S. is still number one is the production of overconfident, risk-taking bullies, as the last president and the recent attack on the Capitol demonstrated. That attack showed the world which ruling class and its political representatives have the sharpest and most irrational differences.

The corporate media may have confidence that Biden’s appointees will carry out a coherent anti-China strategy. Workers World expects an aggressive and dangerous policy from Biden.

We call on the U.S. population to confront the lies of the U.S. ruling class, its politicians and its media, and to mobilize to prevent any aggressive moves by U.S. imperialism against People’s China.

Electric cars and China

Another great leap forward

By Deirdre Griswold

China is now the world’s biggest market for automobiles, accounting for a third of global car sales. “It is bigger than the American and Japanese auto markets combined. GM and Volkswagen both sell more cars through joint ventures in China than in their home markets.” (NY Times Business Section, Jan. 30)

That shouldn’t be surprising. China is the world’s most populous country.

Just a generation ago, however, it was still very poor. Not forgotten are the days when people and goods were transported by human-drawn rickshaws. But today, China is a highly developed country that needs modern means of transportation.

And what kind of cars will the Chinese be driving?

Not gas-guzzling, polluting cars. Electric cars, made in China, are now starting to overtake diesel and gasoline autos in both production and consumer purchases, thanks to large government subsidies of the electric car industry. And Beijing has announced that, by 2035, all vehicles sold in China must be powered by “new energy,” with at least half of them electric.

This has impacted automakers in imperialist countries like the U.S. It helped lead General Motors to announce on Jan. 28 that it plans to eliminate the production of gasoline and diesel cars by 2035. “When it comes to

global automakers’ electric vehicle plans, all roads lead back to Beijing,” admitted Michael Dunne, a former president of GM’s Indonesia operations.

In a little over a decade, China’s production of electric cars soared from just 2,100 in 2008 to 931,000 in 2020. This was the result of a conscious policy on the part of the government to subsidize production in order to combat pollution and global warming.

In addition to producing and importing electric vehicles, China has become “the leading maker of big battery packs for electric cars, producing considerably more than the rest of the world combined,” says the Times. “Chinese companies dominate the world’s production of electric motors.”

According to the World Bank, China’s poverty rate fell from more than 80% in 1981 to 12% in 2010 — the steepest decline in the world. That’s hundreds of millions of people liberated from extreme want.

Had it not been for the success of the great Chinese Revolution in overcoming both imperialist and domestic oppressors, the country would today be mired in poverty and underdevelopment for the vast majority. One need only look at India, Pakistan, Mexico, Nigeria and other



China leads the world in electric vehicle production.

large countries still shackled to the world capitalist system to see what toll this takes on billions of people.

Poor countries are the ones most impacted by climate-driven disasters, which China’s green initiatives will help reduce.

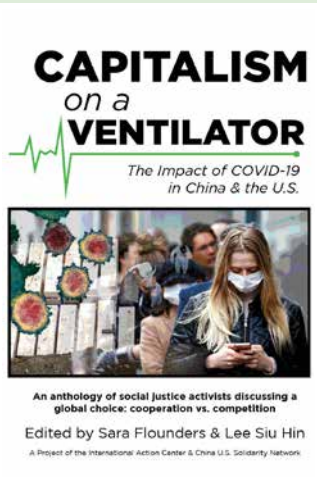
What all this shows is not just the power of technology to change the world, but the power of a revolution to change how that technology is used.

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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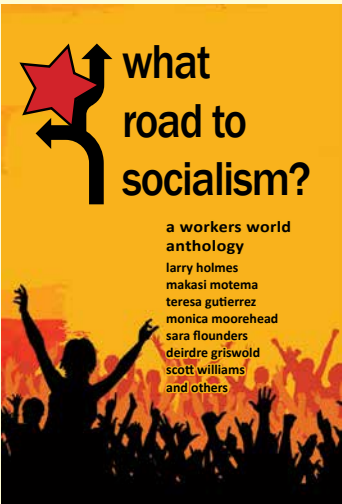
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The struggle continues: Indian protesters resist state terror

By Tania Siddiqi

In September 2020, India's Parliament passed three "farm bills" intended to crush India's workers. To serve capitalist interests, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, leader of the fascist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), lent his support to the bills depriving farms of current protections. He allowed corporate greed to further encroach on India's agricultural sector.

On Nov. 26, 2020, in response to the government's terror targeting the masses, workers launched a 250-million-strong, one-day general strike. In solidarity with fellow workers, thousands of Punjabi farmers marched to Delhi and created numerous protest sites on Delhi's borders — including the Tikri, Ghazipur and Singhu borders — to demand the government repeal the anti-farmer laws. (Workers World, Dec. 1, 2020)

In maintaining their uncompromising principles and to put pressure on the oppressors, farmers launched another march to Delhi on Jan. 26, India's Republic Day. An estimated 20,000 tractors along with tens of thousands of farmers were present at the rally. As demonstrators made their way to the capital, they were met with intense state-sponsored violence. Police placed barricades throughout the city, used tear gas and beat protesters to prevent them from entering Delhi. (The Wire, Jan. 26)

However, the farmers successfully breached the blockades and scaled the historic Red Fort, one of the sites where R-Day's events were set to take place. Once within the Fort's parameters, protesters hoisted the farmers' union flag, the Indian flag and the Nishan Sahib (a flag of religious significance to Sikh communities). The events at the Fort demonstrated an assertion of identity — a refusal to allow the state to disappear the people.

As expected, the oppressor's response came in the form of both physical and

structural violence. On the day of the monumental rally, police shot and murdered Navneet Singh, then tried to conceal their homicidal act by telling reporters Singh's death was due to his tractor toppling over. Police and BJP supporters attempted to forcibly remove protesters from their protest sites at the Ghazipur and Tikri borders. (The Wire, Jan. 30)

At the Singhu border, BJP supporters brutally attacked members of Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, a union that was present at the tractor protest. To choke any expression of discontent and to prevent people from joining their fellow workers, India's government suspended internet service at protest sites. (Al Jazeera, Jan. 29) Moreover, Twitter India suspended multiple accounts for several hours for reporting on the farmers' protest. (The Wire News India, Feb. 1)

Although the state is desperately attempting to tighten control on the masses, it is clear that the power dynamics in India are beginning to shift. The farmers' actions have sparked a movement, and the people are doing their part to ensure we achieve liberation.

Broad solidarity with farmers

At various protest sites, workers have offered sewa, mutual aid, to demonstrators. Rural India reports that there are an estimated 30 medical sites at Singhu border to ensure demonstrators have access to healthcare. (tinyurl.com/1gqfwbta) Doctors have set up medical camps to ensure protesters have access to health care. A village in Haryana sent a truck with solar panels and charging ports, which provides demonstrators with access to charge their phones. Additionally, people from Ludhiana have transported a huge sugarcane-crushing machine and offer fresh sugarcane juice to anyone who passes by.

Demonstrators have responded with their own acts of solidarity. Massive school closures attributed to the pandemic



Protesters and fascists clash on India's Republic Day.

have greatly harmed children who do not have internet access. At Singhu border, protesters have converted some of their tents into classrooms to provide schooling to children who live in neighboring villages. That school has over 160 students, and demonstrators expressed that teaching children is important to the collective movement. (Al Jazeera, Jan. 22)

Acts of solidarity extend beyond India's borders. In Pakistan, members of the Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee organized a demonstration near the Wagah border, a checkpoint where millions of migrants crossed from India and Pakistan during the Partition of India in 1947. Those belonging to the South Asian diaspora have also shown solidarity with farmers in India. In Detroit, hundreds of

people participated in a car caravan to express their connection to the protests.

In this movement, the people are united. The farmers' and workers' actions in India give us a chance to reimagine a world where the people are in power. The organizational strategies used to sustain the protests demonstrate the potential for building alternative infrastructures to ensure people get their needs met.

The symbolic solidarity in Pakistan allows the possibility of healing generational wounds inflicted by British imperialism. Protests led by South Asians around the world show that we all must engage in the collective struggle against fascism.

Deep solidarity with protesters in India; build a workers' world! □

Maliens demonstrate against French military presence

By Carlos Lopes Pereira

The author writes regularly on African events for the Portuguese Communist Party. This article was published in the PCP newspaper Avante on Jan. 28. Translation: John Catalinotto.

There have been further protests in Mali against the presence of French troops in the Sahel.

On Jan. 20, the Malian authorities dispersed "several hundred people" in Bamako who, defying the ban on gatherings because of the health crisis, expressed their opposition to the presence of the "anti-jihadist" force sent by Paris to the Sahel.

According to reports from Agence France Presse and other sources, police and soldiers "in large numbers" used tear-gas grenades to disperse the demonstrators, on foot and on motorcycles, concentrated on Independence Square in the Malian capital. Motorcycle caravans leaving from different neighborhoods to participate in the demonstration in the square, where demonstrations are usually held, were stopped by police roadblocks.

In the face of police action, a spokesperson for the promoters of the protest declared that the movement had been suspended and will "reorganize" itself.



PHOTO: STRINGER/AA

Malian people protest against France at Independence Square during the 60th anniversary of Mali gaining independence from France on Sept. 22, 2020.

He reported three lightly wounded and at least three arrests.

France has been intervening militarily in Mali since 2013. Currently France has 5,100 soldiers in the Sahel, as part of Operation Barkhane, which operates with land and air forces mainly in Mali but also in Niger and Burkina Faso. Operation Barkhane's headquarters are located in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad.

In Mali, notes RT France, the presence of the French expeditionary corps in the region regularly arouses expressions of animosity on social networks, in declarations of personalities and at

demonstrations in Bamako. France's intervention in Mali has had U.S. logistical and intelligence support. [Instability increased enormously in the Sahel region following the U.S.-NATO imperialist overthrow of the Libyan government in late 2011. — WW]

Several supporters of the recent protests are members of the National Transitional Council, a legislative body, created after the Aug. 18, 2020 coup d'état, whose military leaders promised to hand over power to civilians after 18 months. The coup perpetrators have pledged to continue military cooperation

with France, but there are reports that some sectors, including the armed forces, are in favor of opening talks with insurgent groups.

On the ground, however, terrorist attacks against Malian and French troops continue, causing casualties among military and civilian personnel. Later this week, the Malian army confirmed that a double attack by "extremists" in the central region of the country caused the deaths of 6 soldiers and about 30 insurgents.

The actions took place simultaneously in Mondoro and Boulkessi, near the border with Burkina Faso. The targets were a barracks of Malian troops in Mondoro and a combined G5-Sahel barracks with troops from Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Chad in Boulkessi.

These events come at a time when French President Emmanuel Macron is signaling that Paris will soon "adjust" its "military effort" in the Sahel by downsizing the troops of Operation Barkhane — a way of pressuring other European countries to engage even more in the Mali war.

Mali is where more than 1,000 European Union military "instructors" are already involved, and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Mission for the Stabilization of Mali (MINUSMA) has been stationed for years, with around 14,000 soldiers and police. □

Para combatir el fascismo

‘La educación política es crucial para la gente’

Por Tania Siddiqi

Extractos tomados del seminario web del 14 de enero, “Los trabajadores pueden derrotar al fascismo y al racismo”, patrocinado por Workers World Party/ Partido Mundo Obrero y moderado por Ted Kelly. Tania Siddiqui habló desde la filial del WWP en Houston. Para ver el panel de discusión completo (en inglés), vaya a youtu.be/d9_NDIKT0vw.

Ted Kelly: Camaradas, quería hablar de por qué la burguesía necesita el fascismo, y lo que eso significa. Quiero preguntar a los camaradas sobre este movimiento fascista blanco que atacó el Capitolio el 6 de enero.

Tania Siddiqui: Creo que es realmente importante que la gente tome nota de ciertas conversaciones que están teniendo lugar dentro de sus redes o fuera de sus redes. Y es realmente importante que la gente preste atención a su propia respuesta a lo ocurrido en el Capitolio. Aunque creo que es algo que tal vez todos los panelistas vieron venir, a mí al menos me sorprendió mucho el nivel de violencia de la supremacía blanca que se manifestó. Y luego la respuesta fue “Bueno, vamos a seguir haciendo lo que sea que estábamos haciendo”.

Estoy en la escuela de derecho — y muchos abogados son los guardianes del poder del opresor. Cuando vi esto en las noticias, me pregunté cómo esto podría quizás empoderar a la gente no sólo para decir cosas en clase, sino para ver el tipo de trabajo que harían fuera de clase. Hay una organización en mi escuela llamada Sociedad Federalista. Ahora veo que surge un discurso que valida la violencia de la supremacía blanca. De hecho, hubo una pregunta en clase sobre si a un supremacista blanco se le debería permitir ejercer la abogacía. Y alguien argumentaba: “Sí, absolutamente”.

Creo que [el ataque al Capitolio es] un acto de desesperación de la clase dominante, porque ves cómo el capitalismo está en declive y ahora mismo están haciendo lo que sea para mantener su poder. Acudiendo a estos actos tan desesperados.

En la India, tienes mucha violencia sectaria, los musulmanes están en el punto de mira, principalmente por la administración del [primer ministro] Modi. (workers.org/2019/09/43768) Y eso estuvo presente en la insurrección, o como queramos llamarla, en el Capitolio. Allí se vieron banderas indias.

Y hubo mucho discurso que vi en diferentes medios de comunicación diciendo [de esas banderas]: “Bueno, ¿a quién apoya esta persona? ¿Quién podría ser?” Pero está claro — debido a la relación de Trump y Modi y lo estrechamente que Estados Unidos está trabajando ahora con la India, construyendo su sector energético — o al menos pareciendo que están construyendo su sector energético.

Creo que todo esto es para mantener un nivel de poder. También se puede ver la violencia no sólo en India, sino al otro lado de la frontera, en Pakistán. Hace

poco escribí sobre el pueblo Hazara de Baluchistán, en Pakistán, y sobre el genocidio que está sufriendo su comunidad. (workers.org/2021/01/53705) Eso también es una forma de violencia sectaria.

Porque el pueblo Hazara pertenece a la comunidad chiíta. Y Pakistán es un país predominantemente suní. Si nos fijamos en dónde están los recursos y a dónde va el dinero, el carbón, el granito y diferentes minerales muy valiosos se extraen de Baluchistán, y luego se transportan a las zonas más ricas del país. Pero el pueblo Hazara nunca ve nada de esa riqueza. Es muy fácil que desaparezcan los trabajadores.

Y por eso es tan importante que los trabajadores se movilicen realmente ahora. Porque pueden ver que hay un ataque a nuestra clase, y los fascistas acudirán a cualquier medio para mantener su posición tal como es actualmente.

Ted: El fascismo es el mazo que empuña el capitalista para aplastar a la clase obrera. Así que luchar contra el fascismo es luchar contra la persona que empuña el mazo.

Tania: Creo que es muy importante que construyamos lo que significa luchar contra el fascismo. Y creo que cada vez que pedimos ejemplos históricos, a menudo pienso, especialmente con nuestro sistema educativo en los Estados Unidos, que no aprendemos la historia como realmente es.

Una cosa de la que también hay que hablar cuando se trata de aumentar la conciencia de clase es que la educación política es enorme. Es importante que la gente entienda que unirse a una

organización también proporcionará esos materiales, ¿verdad?

Para entender la posición de Estados Unidos como nación imperialista, bueno, ¿qué significa eso? Mirar eso desde una perspectiva histórica, y trazar líneas para conectar eso con lo que vemos hoy. Siempre que hablamos de la lucha de los trabajadores, creo que enmarcar algo en un contexto histórico realmente exige también educación política.

Ted: Ese es un punto crucial, Tania. Sé que he aprendido más en mi tiempo en el WWP — de los compañeros, a través de nuestro periódico, a través de los libros que publicamos, a través de la lucha en las calles — que lo que aprendí a través de años y años de escolarización.

Tania: En la escuela nunca me enseñaron sobre el atentado contra MOVE [por la policía de Filadelfia]. Una vez que me uní al partido, fue cuando empecé a aprender. Incluso el movimiento Free Mumia, no lo conocía antes de hablar con los compañeros. Así que creo que la educación política es crucial para la gente — tal vez esto es un poco fuera de tema. Pero, por ejemplo, siempre que hablamos de la abolición de la policía, creo que es importante entender cómo la policía sólo sirve a una clase dominante. ¿Y qué protegen? Sólo la propiedad privada.

Para contextualizar eso, creo que es importante ver la formación de la policía a partir de las patrullas de esclavos, de la esclavitud, y luego hablar de la policía de hoy en día, la esclavitud moderna de los seres humanos en el estado carcelario en este país.

Ted: Muy bien, camarada. Nunca está

fuera de tema hablar de la policía cuando estamos hablando de fascismo. Y puedo decirte que crecí en Filadelfia, fui a escuelas públicas allí. Ni una sola vez en ninguna de mis clases aprendí sobre Mumia Abu-Jamal, o el atentado contra la organización MOVE.

Tania: Sólo quería añadir una cosa rápida. Creo que, especialmente en medio de una pandemia mundial, la gente puede sentirse muy aislada porque no nos estamos organizando como lo haríamos sin COVID-19. Pero lo que espero es que la gente que no sea miembro o candidato del WWP — o quizás seas alguien que no ha trabajado con el partido— puedas construir donde estás y la gente te ayude.

Y escuchen a lo que sienten, porque no deberían trabajar hasta la muerte. Literalmente, si piensas en cómo se trata a los trabajadores de Amazon, cómo trabaja la gente en UPS, esto no es algo humano, ¡no lo es!

Y si te sientes así, y hay preguntas que tienes, o quieres construir, no sólo tu educación política, sino que tal vez quieras ayudar a organizar a los trabajadores en tu comunidad o en tu trabajo, dondequiera que estés — busca, porque habrá alguien, un grupo de personas de nuestro partido, que te ayudará a construir.

Creo que para las personas que se unan al seminario web esta noche, que pueden no ser parte de una organización, creo que es realmente, realmente crucial que se unan a un partido y construyan la organización a la que se unan — ojalá sea Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero — porque lo que está sucediendo en este tiempo es algo que debe ser tomado en serio. □

Racismo, recesión e intento de golpe por Trump

El capitalismo es un sistema económico inherentemente inestable, sujeto a crisis cíclicas de sobreproducción. El término “sobreproducción” no tiene nada que ver con la producción de más bienes de los que la gente necesita. Las personas pueden tener muchas, muchas necesidades insatisfechas, desde comida y ropa hasta refugio y medios de transporte. La sobreproducción se refiere solo a que se produce más de lo que se puede vender, con una ganancia.

Dado que la actividad económica capitalista depende de la obtención de beneficios en lugar de satisfacer las necesidades humanas, es un hecho bien conocido que la producción y el empleo oscilarán hacia arriba y hacia abajo a medida que los mercados suben y bajan. Cuando los mercados y las ganancias caen, se llama recesión. Si permanecen abajo durante mucho tiempo, es una depresión.

Desde febrero del 2020, EE.UU. ha estado en lo que los economistas llaman la recesión COVID-19, con el desempleo oficial alcanzando un máximo del 14,8% en abril del 2020.

Este ha sido el nivel más alto de desempleo en este país desde 1938 y la Gran Depresión.

Ni siquiera están incluidos en estas cifras de desempleo los trabajadores

explotados en lo que se llama la “economía del trabajo ocasional.” Tienen poca o ninguna protección laboral y generalmente no se cuentan como desempleados cuando sus trabajos se agotan.

Esta recesión ha afectado a muchos de la denominada “clase media” — la pequeña burguesía — los autónomos o propietarios de pequeños negocios condenados a ser reemplazados por grandes cadenas, pero cuya desaparición ha sido acelerada por el virus. La recesión actual, al borde de una depresión, debe tenerse en cuenta al analizar el violento movimiento de derecha que se ha multiplicado en apoyo de Donald Trump. Históricamente, estos movimientos han buscado a los demagogos en períodos de crisis económica.

En términos de clase, su base está en la pequeña burguesía, pero ven a las figuras de las grandes empresas como Trump como sus salvadores. En los EE.UU., Son especialmente propensos a la demagogia racista que culpa de su creciente inseguridad a los logros obtenidos por las personas de color que luchan.

El racismo les proporciona un chivo expiatorio, de la misma manera que el antisemitismo sirvió al movimiento fascista en Alemania durante la Gran Depresión. El capitalismo era tan odiado

en Europa en ese momento que los nazis tuvieron que disfrazarse de “nacional-socialistas”, mientras culpaban al pueblo judío de todos los crímenes del capitalismo.

Sin embargo, el camuflaje del socialismo falso de Hitler no confundió a la gran burguesía de Alemania. Los Krupps y otros capitalistas ricos hicieron un trato con Hitler y obtuvieron enormes beneficios de su máquina de guerra.

Siempre ha habido un sector de la clase dominante estadounidense que simpatiza con el fascismo como arma contra la clase trabajadora. En el Sur de EE.UU. particularmente, pero no exclusivamente, ha tomado la forma de racismo como el arma principal de los patrones para combatir la solidaridad de clase entre los trabajadores.

El resurgimiento de este incipiente movimiento fascista, como se ve en su ataque al Congreso, e incitado por Trump, es producto de la crisis económica capitalista que se ha agravado con la pandemia de COVID-19. Refleja todas las peores características de este anticuado sistema capitalista.

Si bien la administración entrante de Biden intentará cubrir las grietas del sistema, solo un movimiento de trabajadores multinacional y de género múltiple fuerte puede derrotar a los fascistas y al sistema capitalista que los genera. □

MUNDO OBRERO
editorial