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Alabama prisons: ON STRIKE!

By Devin Cole
Occupied Muscogee Creek/Cherokee/Yuchi/
Choctaw/Shawnee/Chickasaw land

As of Jan. 1, 2021, incarcerated workers in Alabama’s odious prison system are on strike! Led by the Free Alabama Movement, incarcerated workers throughout the state of Alabama have put down their work tools and refused to go to work from now until Jan. 31.

The inhumane conditions of Alabama Department of Corrections, their negligence around COVID-19, and their implementation of video visitation equipment in prisons that ADOC claims is “due to COVID,” but is really a front for eliminating in-person visitation, has contributed further to the psychological warfare against everyone incarcerated in Alabama prisons and has fueled this strike.

Officially called the “30 Day Economic Blackout,” the strike was called to order in a powerful statement via video from Free Alabama Movement co-founder Kinetik Justice, who states that this economic blackout is the culmination of six years of reports on the inhumane conditions inside the walls of Alabama prisons by the Free Alabama Movement, and the subsequent foot-dragging of the government to do hardly anything about it. At the core, the ones suffering the most inside Alabama prisons are Black men.

Alabama prisons a death trap for Black men

A groundbreaking report from Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice entitled “Death Traps” (bit.ly/34SrShU) reveals that Black men are at the highest risk for violence inside Alabama prisons. Out of 48

homicides in Alabama prisons between June 2014 and September 2020, 37 were of Black men. They are also 3.3 times more likely than their white counterparts to be murdered within the walls of Alabama prisons.

The ADOC has been ruled the deadliest prison system in the country. An imprisoned person in Alabama prisons is ten times more likely to be a victim of homicide than the national average. In 2019 the homicide rate in Alabama prisons was 73 people per 100,000, compared to the overall rate in Alabama of 7.8 people per 100,000.

The Free Alabama Movement, founded and operated by Black men behind the walls, has sought to bring this knowledge to the public, which is one of the main reasons behind the prison strike. Their lives are on the line; this is a matter of life and death for them.

Alabama prisons ruled ‘unconstitutional’ twice in 18 months!

Twice in the last 18 months, the conditions inside ADOC prisons have been revealed to be so shocking that the Department of Justice ruled that the entire Alabama prison system is “unconstitutional under the Eighth

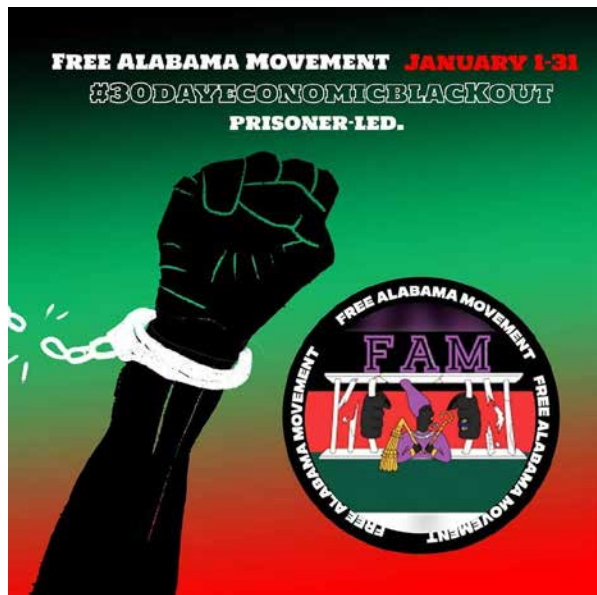
Amendment.” Video footage from within the prisons shows deplorable living conditions, overcrowded cells, violence between inmates and excessive force from guards, and many other violations of the Eighth Amendment. On Dec. 9, 2020, the DOJ filed a lawsuit against ADOC over these inhumane conditions, citing understaffing and ongoing violence as two major factors in the lawsuit. (abcn.ws/2KMzhZ7)

AP reporter Kim Chandler writes: “Alabama had been in negotiations with the Justice Department since the first 2019 report in the hopes of staving off a lawsuit, but federal officials said the state has ‘failed or refused to correct’ the unconstitutional conditions.

“The 24-page lawsuit said that conditions in Alabama prisons have gotten worse since the initial findings — with homicides increasing and prisons becoming even more overcrowded than in 2016 when the investigation was initiated. ‘The State of Alabama is deliberately indifferent to the serious and systematic constitutional problems present in Alabama’s prisons for men,’ the lawsuit states.” (Dec. 10, 2020)

In a disgusting, careless response, Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey has vowed to have three Alabama mega-prisons

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‘A better world is possible. Happy 2021!’ Poster from Cuba on the anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. More on p. 3.

Buffalo, N.Y.

Press conference demands COVID relief

By Hadley Willow
Buffalo, N.Y.

While the U.S. government has comfortably resigned itself to a criminally negligent stasis regarding any effective long-term COVID-19 response, Workers World Party, Queen City Workers Center, and the Green Party hosted a live-streamed press conference in downtown Buffalo on Dec. 28, demanding immediate relief for the multinational working class and small businesses.

People held signs with slogans such as “COVID is capitalism’s last breath” and “Planned economies respond better to crises.” Local resident Laskesha Johnson spoke about her long struggle during the pandemic and aptly highlighted the need for us to “learn to fight together for our rights.”

Carol Sandy Przybylak, vice-chair of the Erie County Green Party, described the glaring hypocrisy of politicians like New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who rest on their laurels while dooming us to lasting economic catastrophe, even as corporations like Amazon profit immensely from our misery. Behind the speakers was a banner listing WWP’s socialist demands for the COVID-19 crisis. (A full list of these demands can be found at workers.org.)

The divisiveness over issues like mask-wearing, economic shutdowns, and government provision of financial relief is not arbitrary. It is a purposeful attempt by the



WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITTE

capitalist class to divide and weaken us. As Mary Lister, organizer with the Queen City Workers Center, put it: “The ruling class is forcing us to choose between two unacceptable options — to either work in unsafe conditions or to refuse to work and face homelessness, with no way to put food on the table.”

In order to cut through the government’s deadly game of inaction, we demand a national economic shutdown and financial relief for all affected people. This includes free health care for all, rent and eviction cancellation, paid utilities—including Internet access—and direct payments to all members of the working class, including im/migrants and hard-hit low-income and oppressed communities. □



WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITTE



Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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Racist police killings Year ends on a note of outrage

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

Three days before Christmas, Andre Hill visited the home of a family friend on Dec. 22 to drop off some holiday cash. Police, called to the neighborhood for an unrelated situation, shot and killed the 47-year-old Black father and grandfather. Hill, whose family and friends describe him as “passionate” about Black Lives Matter, was wearing a T-shirt demanding justice for George Floyd.

Officer Adam Coy, who is white, reportedly observed Hill raising his friend’s garage door. Hill, who was not ordered to raise his hands, complied with an order to come out of the garage with one hand lowered and the other holding a cell phone. Hollering that Hill was hiding a gun, Coy then fired multiple shots. Hill was unarmed.

Police then handcuffed Hill. Coy and other officers on the scene failed to administer first aid, a fact confirmed by bodycam footage revealed Jan. 2. He lay “struggling

for life for five minutes and 11 seconds,” according to civil rights attorney Benjamin Crump, who is representing Hill’s family.

Coy, against whom there were previous complaints of misconduct, was fired Dec. 28, but as of this writing no charges have been filed against him or the other cops involved. This is the second racist cop murder in Columbus in December—the first being Casey Goodson, shot by a Franklin County Sheriff’s deputy on Dec. 4. Activists have held several protests in response to the two killings and are demanding Coy be arrested and charged.

Meanwhile, people gathered at the site of a Dec. 30 police killing in Minneapolis, the second there since the lynching of George Floyd May 25. The victim Dolal Boyd Idd, who is Somali, was stopped at a gas station for an alleged felony, but authorities haven’t said if there was a warrant for his arrest. Despite below-freezing temperatures, protesters faced off against cops fully clad in riot gear, staying at the site throughout the night of the shooting.

Idd’s family disputes the police version of events, which allege that Idd shot at officers before being killed. According to Idd’s father Bayle Gelle, police entered their home after the shooting, pushing family members to the floor and handcuffing some. Protests, which Gelle and others in

Idd’s family have attended, continue.

In another notorious case of racist police brutality, more Louisville, Ky., police officers involved in the March murder of Breonna Taylor are to be fired — finally — but none face criminal charges.

Tamir Rice: “Justice” Department denies justice

Just seven days after the murder of Andre Hill, another racist outrage occurred involving police in Ohio.

On Dec. 29 the misnamed U.S. Department of Justice announced they were closing their investigation into the 2014 killing of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, who was Black, by white Cleveland police. Rice’s killer, Timothy Loehmann, and his partner at the time, Frank Garmback, will not face federal charges.

According to the Dec. 29 New York Times, “Justice Department officials said in a lengthy statement on Tuesday that they could not establish that the officers involved in Tamir’s killing willfully violated his civil rights or that they knowingly made false statements with the intent of obstructing a federal investigation.”

Tamir’s mother Samaria Rice, in a prepared statement, said, “It was blatantly disrespectful that I had to learn from the media that the Department of Justice had shut down the investigation, after career prosecutors recommended a grand jury be convened.”

In 2015, at the recommendation of then-Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Timothy McGinty, a county grand jury declined to



PHOTO: BLACK QUEER INTERSECTIONAL COLUMBUS Peoples Conference, Dec. 23, Columbus, Ohio.

charge Loehmann and Garmback. When the Cleveland Police Department fired Loehmann, it was for lying on his job application, not for killing Tamir.

Black Lives Matter Cleveland responded to the outrageous ruling: “We can improve the quality of life for all Americans when we begin to value people over property and profit and realize that in order to do this, we must divest from structures of institutional racism, like law enforcement, and reinvest into black communities and communities of color. Then, and only then will we begin to see that Black Lives Matter in America.” (Black Lives Matter Cleveland Facebook page)

This past year has destroyed the myth that police brutality happens because of “a few bad apples.” The whole barrel—the barrel being the oppressive capitalist system we live under—is rotten. Racism is built in and enforced by the state apparatus.

The new year must — and most certainly will — be a year of continued, accelerated struggle. □



Protest outside site of Dolal Idd’s killing, Dec. 31.

SIXTY-TWO YEARS Cuba’s revolution continues

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

During the first week of January, Cubans celebrated the 62nd anniversary of their great Revolution, marking the day when Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos and the revolutionary forces entered Havana and ousted the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Since the victory in 1959, Cuba has resisted attack after attack by U.S. imperialism and still continues on its road toward socialism.

Get energized to take action to support that revolution by watching “Don’t Mess with Cuba (No Te Metas),” documenting the unbreakable determination of Cuba’s people to defend their national sovereignty.

In this just released video, hundreds of Cuban singers, dancers, actors and other cultural figures rap, “Whoever wants the truth, let them come and see” and “My beautiful country, my flag and my identity

are to be respected!”

And if the U.S. does not? Then, they sing: “We know not fear, so don’t try to work that angle!” They will be like “the Mambi warriors still wielding the machete” — the guerrilla soldiers of African, Chinese, Indigenous and Spanish descent who fought for Cuba’s independence from Spanish colonialism in the 19th century.

The English-subtitled video is available on Facebook through the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the People at tinyurl.com/ya5wydkj.

Cuba’s revolutionary health care

Cuba’s many revolutionary accomplishments include building one of the world’s most effective primary health care systems. Cuba leads the globe in the lowest patient-per-doctor ratio and has one of the world’s highest life expectancies, 77 years. (tinyurl.com/ktu7ot4)

As the U.S. staggers under a catastrophic COVID-19 infection rate, with 358,308 deaths as of Jan. 2, by the same date Cuba had only 146 deaths. (worldometer.com)

Cuba has two vaccines against the coronavirus in clinical trial, leading South America and the Caribbean in vaccine development. The revolutionary country promises to be a potential supplier to neighboring countries and to poor, remote or Indigenous communities who would struggle to access the high-priced medicines of capitalism. (tinyurl.com/y7fuuxuk)

The late revolutionary leader, President Fidel Castro, supported Cuban biotech development in the 1980s, in part because the U.S. trade blockade of the island cut off access to medical supplies and innovations. Since then, biotech has become a major part of the country’s economy.

The U.S. blockade continues in force to this day, despite the global pandemic.

Cuba is committed to solidarity with all countries struggling to maintain independence from imperialist domination. Its government shared the country’s

important developments in coronavirus response as the pandemic descended on the world. More than 45 countries have requested Cuba’s Interferon Alpha 2B protocol to use in COVID-19 treatment. (Workers World, Aug. 25)

In 2005, Cuba established the Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade to aid victims of Hurricane Katrina in the U.S., although Washington rejected that aid. Now, during the pandemic, Cuba has sent 53 contingents of health workers from the Henry Reeve Brigade to over 40 countries, in addition to the Cuban medical personnel who were already working in 58 countries. (Granma, Nov. 23)

Scores of peace, justice, medical and solidarity organizations have nominated — and thousands of individuals have endorsed — Cuba’s Henry Reeve Brigade for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize for its unprecedented contributions to the health of the world’s peoples. They hail Cuba’s “selfless humanitarian work saving lives and promoting friendship and cooperation among nations,” especially during the pandemic. (tinyurl.com/ya7vz3fg) □

‘Cuba sí, blockade no!’



Workers World Party joined with Cuba solidarity groups on Dec. 27 in a car caravan through the streets of Midtown Manhattan, N.Y., demanding an end to the U.S. blockade of Cuba and an end to the U.S. occupation of Guantanamo. The event culminated in a rally at the statue of Cuban hero José Martí. Simultaneous caravans were held in Miami and other cities.

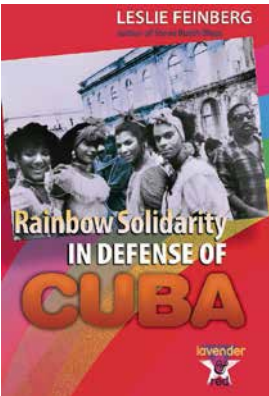
—Photo and story by Bill Sacks

Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba

By Leslie Feinberg,
author of *Stone Butch Blues*

This book is an edited compilation of chapters 86 to 110 from the Lavender & Red series in Workers World newspaper that began June 3, 2004.

It is available online at: workers.org/books



California's Prop. 22 and the essence of capitalist exploitation

By Marcello Severo

In November, voters cast their ballots in the most expensive, and hence, most thoroughly corrupted, election in U.S. history.

On California's ballots were 12 direct initiatives, ranging from medical regulation to privacy statutes. In such a corrupted environment, it is unsurprising that the appearance of direct democracy did not ensure across-the-board victories for the working class. While 59% of voters passed an initiative to enfranchise formerly incarcerated people, on the other hand 60% rejected an initiative to expand subsidized housing, and 57% voted to uphold the state ban on affirmative action.

In the most expensive campaign among these 12 initiatives, and indeed all initiatives in California history, 59% of voters passed Proposition 22, an unprecedented bill that legally strips Uber, Lyft and DoorDash drivers, among others, of their status as employees of those companies. Analyzing the law, as well as following the money and tactics behind the campaign, illuminates the reasons for, and the significance of, the passage of this monumental, regressive initiative.

What will the law do?

The substance of the law consists of the reclassification of “app-based drivers” (i.e. delivery and transportation workers who are employed through an app) from “employees” to “independent contractors.” This is not a meaningless distinction. The entirety of federal labor law applies only to workers formally classified as employees. This includes minimum wage law, overtime pay, on-the-job safety protections, workers' compensation and Affordable Care Act-mandated health insurance from large employers. As a result of this well-funded attack, all these rights are denied to workers affected by Prop. 22.

The law sets separate labor standards, which are significantly inferior to those mandated for formal employees. For instance, the effective minimum wage for cab drivers, accounting for all expenses and special provisions of the law, is \$5.64, just 43% of California's minimum wage (UC Berkeley Labor Center).

But perhaps the most significant consequence of the law is the denial of the right to organize unions to super-exploited so-called “contractors.” The 1935 National Labor Relations Act formally recognized the right to unionize, but only to those classified as employees. (The NLRA also denied protections to public sector workers, domestic workers and farmworkers.) Workers affected by Prop. 22 have been stripped of the legal right to unionize. If the drivers do try to unionize, they could face crackdowns by the “rideshare” bosses and/or militaristic law enforcement.

Before Prop. 22 passed, rideshare companies had already breached labor law, when they unilaterally declared workers to be contractors and treated them as such. That much should be expected under a capitalist system, where the profiteers can always afford to hire high-priced lawyers to help them circumvent the law.

Nonetheless, gig workers have noted a rapid acceleration of exploitative practices since the initiative passed. According to a DoorDash worker, the company now counts less than half of all time at work as paid work. Nominal wages declined as



Protest against Proposition 22, San Francisco.

well, as corporations take advantage of a larger and larger army of surplus labor during the pandemic.

Legislative action to reverse Prop. 22 is practically impossible, as the initiative requires a seven-eighths majority in the California legislature to make any amendment whatsoever. There is talk of organizing gig workers despite barriers — both

In reality, the legal text allows work up to 12 hours in a 24-hour period, and even more if the driver has been logged off at least 6 consecutive hours — or the “flexibility” to work an 18-hour workday, when you need the money to make ends meet.

Most perniciously, the proposition pits sections of the working class against each other by convincing nondrivers to sup-



Protest against California Proposition 22.

inside and outside California — but as of yet the efforts have been informal and limited in scope. Ultimately, it is inevitable that labor rights will continue to backslide unless direct working-class action is taken, with a broad view of the working class that includes gig workers.

Transparent corruption and dirty tactics

The campaign to pass Prop. 22 received \$189 million in contributions, with the overwhelming majority of these contributions coming from Lyft, DoorDash, Uber, etc. By comparison the opposition campaign, whose largest contributors were the labor unions, received \$16 million — they were outspent 12-to-1 (California Secretary of State). Such a system, which allows the utter monopolization of political discourse by the ruling class, is a disgrace, subverting even a pretense of democracy.

So what propaganda tactics did these corporations use to manipulate voters?

One typical ad, produced explicitly on behalf of Lyft, gave arguments which are grossly misleading. For example, they claimed the bill would increase pay for drivers or provide health care benefits, as if it were somehow necessary to spend tens of millions in an electoral campaign to do so.

Similarly, rideshare companies claim to have guaranteed flexible work schedules because of Prop. 22, but that is transparently not prohibited by federal labor law. (U.S. Department of Labor, “Flexible Schedules”)

racial oppression. The legal text toothlessly addresses discrimination and sexual harassment. Meanwhile, sexual harassment claims continue to pile up, while the gig workforce — disproportionately composed of people of color — becomes increasingly precarious and is pushed to the brink by this very initiative.

Prop. 22's significance

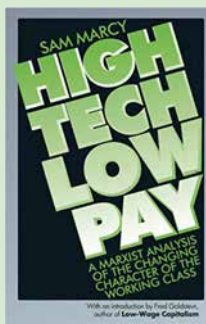
Prop. 22 demonstrates beyond a doubt that the so-called “employer-employee” relationship never explained the essence of capitalism. If one digs deeper, it becomes apparent that the capitalist class profits off exploitation, regardless of how this exploitation is labeled. So long as there are capitalist private-property relations, workers must sell their labor power, and there is unequal exchange in this market. What we have fundamentally is the exploitation of the working class by the owning class — the exploitation of precarious laborers by accumulated capital.

The euphemistically termed employer-employee relationship hardly defines the exploitation by the imperialist powers of the victims of their imperialism; some \$6.5 trillion worth of commodities are robbed from oppressed countries of the Global South every year. (Zak Cope, “Divided World, Divided Class”)

A king remains a king regardless of what he is named — when Augustus, the first Roman emperor, ascended to the throne, he declared himself Princeps, the “first citizen,” fearing public backlash and political instability should he have declared himself king. Likewise changing the language and terms of capitalist exploitation does not alter its essence. What we have here is a more severe, more shameless form of exploitation that paradoxically goes by a more polite name. “Contracting” is doublespeak for subjugation just as “first citizen” was doublespeak for the king.

Proposition 22 has the potential to be disastrous — not just for the drivers whom this legislation directly impacts, but for the working class as a whole. If wages, limits on hours and labor rights can all be taken away from these drivers, why could the same not happen, via “contracting,” to fast-food workers, retail workers or the remainder of transportation workers? All the hard-earned, significant concessions won by the working class, forged through centuries of struggle, are on the verge of being eliminated through a simple reclassification of workers' legal status.

Labor rights have never been in so much peril from such seemingly innocuous and underhanded legislation. We must solidarize with the drivers as they organize, agitate and struggle — not only for the drivers themselves to be legally recognized as workers — but in solidarity with the whole working class. The ultimate goal is to overthrow capitalism itself and bring a final end to their subjugation! □



High Tech, Low Pay

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of *Low Wage Capitalism*.

Available at major online booksellers.

Or read it at workers.org/marcy/cd/samtech/index.htm

After massive cyberattack, imperialist U.S. blames Russia—and China

By Ben Carroll

U.S. officials and cybersecurity experts are calling it perhaps the most extensive and costly “cyberattack” in modern history.

Revelations have come to light that in mid-December numerous U.S. government agencies and some of the world’s largest corporations discovered they had been hacked over the course of several preceding months.

U.S. officials were quick to blame Russia — and also China — as the culprits behind the attack.

It appears those behind the breach exploited a weakness in information technology (IT) systems management software developed by a company called SolarWinds. IT is the use of computers to store, transmit or manipulate data, typically within business or government operations.

Dozens of U.S. departments and agencies use SolarWinds software. In addition to doing business with the U.S. government — including all five branches of the military — SW’s clients include 425 of the Fortune 500 companies, all of the largest U.S. telecommunications companies, the British government and NATO. (forbes.com, Dec. 14, 2020)

The hackers injected destructive malware into updates released by SolarWinds between March and June 2020. In this way, whoever perpetrated the attack gained access, at the very least, to email communications between top officials from numerous U.S. government agencies. It is likely they got access to government databases, customer information

and potentially much more.

More than 18,000 companies and government agencies are known to have been affected by the hack, and as many as 33,000 may ultimately have been impacted. Given the broad nature of the breach, estimates place the price tag to repair the damage in the tens, if not hundreds, of billions of dollars.

The list of U.S. government agencies and corporations impacted is extensive, and includes the Treasury Department, Commerce Department, Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Department of Homeland Security, and Microsoft.

SolarWinds is valued at over \$6 billion, and selling software to the U.S. government is a lucrative business for the company, with licensing contracts alone mounting up to millions of dollars. In August 2020, SolarWinds renewed a contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that included licenses for the software involved in the breach. The deal was on the order of \$2.8 million.

New Cold War accusations

After news of the hack broke, President Donald Trump took to Twitter to speculate that China might be responsible. He took this opportunity to add vitriol to the racist campaign he has led against that country in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the broader anxiety within the U.S. ruling class about China’s growing economic power.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Attorney General William Barr and other leading officials claimed, without providing any evidence, that Russia was

behind the breach. U.S. corporate media outlets were quick to pick up and significantly amplify the anti-Russia hostility that has been carted out at every opportunity, especially over the last few years. The Russian government officially denied these accusations.

Responding to news of the hack, U.S. president-elect Joe Biden said that whoever was identified as the source of the breach “can be assured that we will respond. And probably respond in kind.” (msn.com, Dec. 24)

The breach is an especially crushing embarrassment for U.S. imperialism, which spends billions every year on developing sophisticated systems both to prevent such attacks and to more effectively threaten and wage wars on peoples across the globe.

In the big business press, various officials and cybersecurity experts have begun open speculation about how the U.S. government will ultimately characterize the breach — as an act of espionage, or as something more aggressive — and what the U.S. response should be, based on that accusation.

On Dec. 22, Russia and China embarked on a joint patrol mission over the Western Pacific — a significant development to strengthen ties between countries targeted in a developing new Cold War by the U.S. and other imperialist powers. (apnews.com, Dec. 15)

Warfare behind the computer screen

The U.S. government is quick to cry foul when targeted by cyberattacks. But the reality is that the Pentagon and the U.S. government have pioneered and carried out some of the most vicious and extensive cyberattacks across the globe.

In 2010, the U.S. government conducted a cyber attack against an Iranian nuclear facility, using malware called Stuxnet, which damaged or destroyed upwards of 1,000 nuclear centrifuges, by some estimates. Iran has long maintained that its nuclear program is strictly for peaceful purposes of economic development, not for weapons.

In 2013, Chinese research institutions, technology companies and mobile phone carriers were targeted by a U.S. hack that mined extensive information from millions of Chinese people and from higher-level targets. This attack came to light in a trove of documents from the U.S. National Security Agency released by whistleblower Edward Snowden.

And in 2019, the Russian electrical grid came under a cyberattack led by the U.S. Cyber Command, as reported by the New York Times. (June 15, 2019)

These are but a few of the numerous instances of cyberattacks carried out by the U.S. government in recent years, not to mention many other ways that the



The breach is an especially crushing embarrassment for U.S. imperialism, which spends billions every year on developing sophisticated systems to prevent such attacks and to more effectively threaten and wage wars on peoples across the globe.

Pentagon has employed technology — namely by the extensive use of drone warfare — to rain terror and destruction down on people around the world in the quest by the U.S. ruling class to hold onto power and profit.

Continuing to prop up U.S. militarism, on Dec. 8, 2020, Congress passed a \$740 billion budget for the Pentagon. Despite it being vetoed by Trump, Congress easily overrode that veto and authorize this staggering budget.

Congress passed the military budget with near unanimous consensus from both the Democratic and Republican parties. But for months they refused to pass meager economic assistance for the tens of millions of workers and oppressed people struggling to survive in the current staggering economic crisis. Millions have lost their jobs and health care, and are now experiencing hunger, the threat of eviction and loss of their homes, and other severe hardships during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The goal of the U.S. government is to maximize the profits of the ruling class, whatever the human cost. It refuses to respond comprehensively to the desperate needs of people living and dying within its borders. Whether the recent hacking came from its imperialist rivals or others, it is clear that U.S. attacks for profit on people around the world — through direct military war and indirect economic war by sanction — have created more than enough reasons for the recent historic cyberattack on U.S. government and corporate entities. □

FILM REVIEW

“Signed, Sealed and Delivered: Labor Struggle in the Post Office”

By Joe Hirsch

“Signed, Sealed and Delivered: Labor Struggle in the Post Office,” is a 45-minute-long film made in 1980 by Tami Gold, Dan Gordon and Erik Lewis. On December 20, postal worker activists took part in a webinar where the historic film was viewed and discussed. Below is a lightly edited review, of the film originally published in *Workers World* July 10, 2013.



A postcard promoting the film depicts the postal workers wildcat of 1978.

On July 21, 1978, thousands of postal workers walked off their jobs when their contract expired, saying “no” to mandatory overtime, forced speedup and unsafe working conditions.

As a result of the wildcat strikes — one took place in Jersey City, N.J., at the New Jersey International Bulk Mail Center — 600,000 postal workers won a better contract. However, 200 workers were arbitrarily fired by postal management for “illegally” striking.

The film shows the above events and the struggle of postal workers to win back their jobs. And it follows their fight into the streets, onto the floor of the American Postal Workers National Convention and among workers and communities nationwide.

However, it took the tragic death of

Michael McDermott — a 25-year-old mail handler who worked at the N.J. Bulk Mail Center in Jersey City, who was sucked into a conveyor belt and crushed to death — to bring their hazardous working conditions to national attention.

Some points underlined by the discussion in the film are relevant to the biggest challenges facing postal workers today and to the current crisis in the U.S. Postal Service. A struggle must be waged to keep postal services public and push back privatization; the community and labor must get involved to save the Postal Service.

The film can be viewed at tinyurl.com/y9brpyo3.

Joe Hirsch is a retired mail handler who participated in the wildcat strike of 1978.

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Demand Philly DA Exonerate Mumia Abu-Jamal!

By Betsey Piette

Donald Outlaw became the 17th exonerated in three years in Philadelphia, when his murder conviction from 2000 was overturned Dec. 28. A teenager when arrested, Outlaw served over 15 years in prison until his release in 2019.

Outlaw's freedom is credited to the Pennsylvania Innocence Project and the work of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Conviction Integrity Unit, created by current District Attorney Larry Krasner when he took office in 2018.

The grounds for Outlaw's exoneration are allegations of serious official misconduct, including witness intimidation and homicide detectives helping a witness concoct false, later recanted, testimony. Outlaw's spouse posted flyers in the crime area and found a new witness to the murder. But the DA's office sought to retry Outlaw, claiming that new evidence (recanted testimony) "fails to even budge the needle on the scale, weighed down by the evidence of the defendant's guilt." (Inquirer.com, Dec. 29, 2020)

The pattern of wrongful conviction

News of Outlaw's exoneration was nearly overshadowed by Dec. 30 reports that Chester Hollman III was awarded \$9.8 million in one of the largest wrongful-conviction settlements in Philadelphia's history. Hollman is the third exonerated during Krasner's tenure.

When he was 21, Hollman was charged and convicted for murder in the shooting of a University of Pennsylvania student in 1991. A judge ordered his release at age 49 in 2019, citing evidence that convicting District Attorney Lynn Abraham had withheld evidence of the likely murderer and that DA and police manipulated key witnesses to falsely identify Hollman as the shooter.

Other exonerations since 2018 have cost Philadelphia an additional \$35 million in settlements. Since 1993 there have been over 50 — many stemming from claims of city police misconduct in the 1980s and '90s.

Following the exoneration of Andrew Swainson on June 12, 2020, Assistant District Attorney Andrew Wellbrook

described the case as emblematic of how the city's criminal justice system functioned: Arrests and convictions for alleged homicides took precedence over justice. Police and prosecutors used any means to obtain those goals, including perjury, official misconduct, false or misleading forensic evidence and evidence suppression. As a result, in Philadelphia the percentage of cases considered "cleared" by arrest was between 83% and 96% — 20% higher than the national average. (Inquirer.com, June 12, 2020)

Tip of the iceberg

While Philadelphia police and prosecutors gained notoriety for their "success" rate, they were not alone in using any means necessary for convictions, often of innocent people.

In September 2020, the National Registry of Exonerations released a report on 2,400 overturned convictions across the U.S. in the last 30 years. The shocking figures revealed that

54% of cases were dismissed due to intentional or negligent mistakes by police and prosecutors. In overturned murder cases, 72% of all exonerations since 1989 involved police and/or prosecutor misconduct. Of the overturned cases, 93 involved the death sentence. (Inquirer.com, Sept. 15, 2020)

While every exoneration is a victory — a person freed, perhaps a family reunited after decades — these 17 Philadelphia exonerations are just a fraction of those fighting against unjust incarceration. Another 96 Philadelphia cases are currently under review. And the DA's Conviction Integrity Unit has rejected around 350 cases from defendants seeking to have cases overturned.

Then there are the cases which for political reasons DA Krasner appears reluctant to fully investigate. The most glaring is Mumia Abu-Jamal's 1982 conviction by the notoriously racist Judge Albert Sabo — from its beginning a case

rife with racism, and police, judicial and prosecutorial misconduct.

Parallel between Abu-Jamal's case and other exonerations

The exoneration of the 17 innocent defendants — after decades spent in prison — came after the exposure of ineffective counsel, false witness testimony, witness coercion and intimidation, phony ballistics evidence, prosecution failure to turn over evidence to the defense as



In Philadelphia, the call to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners is loud and clear, July 4, 2020.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

required by law, racist jury selection and other legal errors.

These same unjust practices are glaringly evident in Abu-Jamal's wrongful conviction and subsequent appeals of a death sentence for allegedly killing a Philadelphia police officer. But DA Krasner has maintained that he sees no evidence that challenges Abu-Jamal's conviction. This despite Krasner "unearthing" at least six boxes of evidence from Abu-Jamal's case in December 2018 — hidden in a nearly inaccessible storage room.

According to reports, the hidden boxes bear variations of Abu-Jamal's name and are labeled as "18/29, 21/29, 23/29, 24/29, 29/29" with one unnumbered — implying there may be more hidden boxes. The DA's office claims it had no records of these boxes in its database.

Evidence in the boxes, which Abu-Jamal's attorneys were able to review, reveals police witness tampering, coercion

of witnesses by the prosecution, including payment of a witness, and jury tampering to keep Black people off the jury.

Illegal police and prosecution actions

Failure to secure evidence or actual suppression of evidence in Abu-Jamal's case was widespread. No ballistic tests were ever taken to determine if Abu-Jamal even fired his gun, which was not a .44 weapon. The police officer involved was killed by a .44 caliber bullet.

The DA withheld evidence that the prosecutor had said he would consider reinstating the driver's license of its key witness Robert Chobert, whose testimony was central to Abu-Jamal's conviction. Chobert claimed his taxi was parked behind Faulkner's police car. It is doubtful that Chobert, with a suspended license and on probation for firebombing a school, would park behind a police car.

In addition, photographs taken at the scene by an independent photographer expose Chobert's perjury. The photos — which the state was aware of, but never entered into evidence — show no taxi parked there. When prosecutors withhold evidence from

the defense that could blow holes in the prosecution's case, they commit a "Brady Violation." In a parallel to Abu-Jamal's case, at least 7 of the 17 Philadelphia exonerations involved a Brady Violation.

In a final damning fact, Ronald Castille, Philadelphia DA from 1986 to 1991, oversaw several of the exonerations' cases as well as Abu-Jamal's Post Conviction Relief Act appeals — when he became a Pennsylvania Supreme Court Judge — a clear conflict of interest.

DA Krasner faces reelection in 2021. Many wonder if he will continue to bow to pressure to ignore the facts in Abu-Jamal's case — or if Krasner will finally do the right thing and add Mumia Abu-Jamal to his list of exonerates.

Workers World thanks Cindy Lou, with Food Not Bombs Solidarity, for providing much of the background research for this article.

Pa. prisoner on COVID crisis — Guards were the transmitters

By Miley Selena Fletcher
SCI Forest, Marienville, Pa.

Since Workers World received this letter, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has confirmed nearly 7,000 cases of COVID-19 among prisoners and over 2,500 among staff, who are not subject to mandatory testing. Many prisoners who report COVID-19 symptoms have been placed in restricted housing units, reviled as "the hole." Prisoners faced with the psychological torture of solitary confinement are less likely to report when they are sick, allowing for further spread of COVID-19.

Reports of deaths from COVID in Pennsylvania prisons vary widely — from 49 to over 65. It is difficult to verify since the PA DOC will only release the name of the first incarcerated person to die in each prison. In many cases, family

members are not even being notified.

The following is a letter from an incarcerated trans woman.

For eight months the State Correctional Institution (SCI) Forest, where I am incarcerated, did not have any COVID-19 cases. The institution's administration was impressed by the zero numbers. But at the beginning of December 2020, the virus hit SCI Forest. A lot of us are asking: "How did this happen?" After I sat and reviewed how it may have happened, reality set in.

The only way it could have happened — the guards and staff brought it in. There were also massive transfers into SCI Forest during the pandemic. Even though SCI Forest has a quarantine block, it was not enough. It seems that guards and staff were the main transmitters.

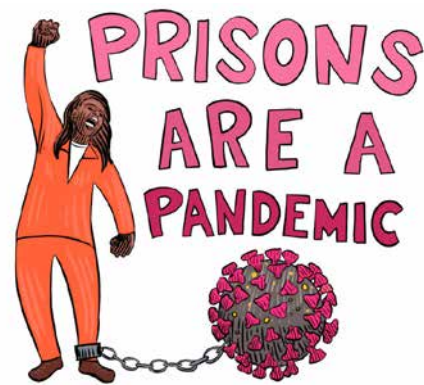
Now inmates are testing positive for the coronavirus. What bothers me is they

brought it in to us, but we are being forced to adjust to restrictions. All of a sudden, we are in forced lockdown in our cell, with only 20 minutes to use the phone, take a shower and use the kiosks to email your contacts. No yard time for fresh air; no time — to actually go through every day like that?

One block pod took two and a half days to complete such a process. Some waited three days. You know how stressful? How that pulls on someone's mental instability? How frustrated people get?

If a prisoner goes and stands in front of someone's cell, we're given misconduct for unauthorized area. Once that happens, the prisoner is then given cell restrictions. Where is that justified?

Now the prisoners are being placed with more restrictions. We wouldn't be on this forced lockdown — full of restrictions — if they hadn't brought the virus in to us.



ARTWORK: ROGER PEET FOR JUSTSEEDS.ORG

The PA Board of Probation and Parole are even giving prisoners "hits" on their minimum dates, not releasing them. They are giving prisoners a year or two year hits, making them stay in prison. A lot of prisoners I overhear say, "It's safer in prison than going out there in the streets right now." But it irks me that we're given these restrictions passed down from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel. And it's his guards and staff alike who have brought COVID-19 into the prison! □

Hunger strikes at three New Jersey prisons

By Sara Flounders

The filthy conditions, indefinite incarceration and escalating COVID infections have touched off desperate hunger strikes at three New Jersey county jails. Each jail operates as a prison-for-profit, renting space at \$120 a day for ICE to jail out-of-state migrant detainees.

The New Jersey counties use the contracts to generate tens of millions of dollars in revenue annually. Immigrant detention has become a moneymaking “cash cow” raising more than \$87 million in revenue.

There are four immigration detention facilities in New Jersey — Bergen, Essex, and Hudson County jails, and the Elizabeth Detention Center, run by CoreCivic, the private prison-for-profit company. The COVID-19 infection rate doubled at the Hudson County Jail in Kearny between Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve. This is the second spike of infections at the jail; the spike in Spring led to 60 infections.

As news of the new infections spread, two dozen ICE detainees began a hunger strike to demand their release while they continue their legal appeals. The demand for the immediate release on bond, or supervised release of all ICE detainees with medical conditions or over the age of 65, was a priority. Public health experts have called for decarceration as a lifesaving tool in the fight against COVID-19.

At the Essex County Jail in Newark, a COVID-19 outbreak led to a hunger strike beginning Dec. 28. The Hudson and Essex hunger strikes follow two recent hunger strikes at Bergen County Jail and two hunger strikes in March at the Hudson County Jail.

Among reports of egregious conditions, the jails are not responding to medical sick calls; prisoners with diabetes are not given insulin, and there are sick people in units who are not being tested or treated. Prisoners have reported black mold on walls, rat infestations, no disinfectants and lack of heat. Broken phone and video

equipment cut detainees off from families and from their legal counsel.

The detainees on hunger strike in Bergen faced retaliation including denial of water, denial of medical care, denial of heat, blocked windows and manipulation from facility staff. Immigration detention facilities have relied on widespread solitary confinement amid this pandemic, exacerbating the harm caused by the virus.



Cars that drove by Bergen County jail honked their horns in support of protesters and detainees on Dec. 1.

PHOTO: ROWAIDA ABDELAZIZ

ICE further retaliated against participants in November’s hunger strike by transferring and deporting people. Hunger strikers were shipped away from families and supporters to as far away as Buffalo, N.Y. and Miami.

The fight against ICE contracts

The COVID outbreak and hunger strikes followed the recent renewal of Hudson County’s contract with ICE for up to 10 years. On Nov. 24, the Hudson County Board of Chosen Freeholders voted 6-to-3 to renew the contract with ICE, despite vocal community outcry against the contract.

A marathon, nearly 13-hour meeting demanded Hudson County not renew the contract. More than 100 public speakers denounced the board and the county

executive for failing to end the contract in 2020 as was promised. In an arrogant response to speakers opposing the prison contract, at the following Freeholder virtual meetings the elected officials closed the meeting rather than listen to speakers as they are obligated to do.

Following five consecutive nights of vigils and flyer distribution in the Jersey City Heights neighborhood, on Dec. 12 four people were arrested by county sher-

iffs as political retaliation and intimidation after protesters charged officials with taking “blood money” outside of Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise’s home.

DeGise and four other Hudson County freeholders next obtained a temporary restraining order against five named defendants, associated with the Abolish ICE NY/NJ Coalition, and up to 20 “John Does and Jane Roes.”

A restraining order by County Court Judge Jeffrey Jablonski on Dec. 8 bans protests within 200 feet of the DeGise home. The order limits protests to once every two weeks, with attendance limited to no more than 10 people.

The Essex County Jail in Newark has faced vocal opposition to their ICE contract since at 2010, but protests have increased in frequency and intensity since

the pandemic.

Support actions and rallies for the migrant detainees at the Bergen County Jail in Hackensack, N.J., were brutally attacked with smoke grenades and pepper spray, and nine protesters were arrested by county sheriffs on Dec. 12.

Democratic Party machine and ICE

The selling of jail space to ICE is an example of how even progressive gains won through struggle are turned on their heads under capitalist financial pressure.

In 2017, after years of public pressure, New Jersey finally enacted the N.J. Criminal Justice Reform Act, eliminating money bail in the state. Formerly hundreds of prisoners were held for months in jail awaiting trial, unable to raise \$500 to \$1,000 in bail money.

After the act passed, the county jail populations declined 35%. But that did not lead to closing of the jails. Instead the race was on to find new ways to fill the prisons. ICE was only too glad to help.

Every one of the decisions on the detention centers are made by Democratic Party county machine politicians. Based on massive popular pressure against the Trump policy of caging migrant children, liberal Democratic Governor Phil Murphy and N.J. State Attorney General Gurbir Grewal issued a well-publicized directive for state noncompliance with ICE. Liberal Democratic Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop pushed local noncompliance with ICE. However, both politicians slyly excluded the ICE detention contracts.

The New York Family Immigrant Unity Project, the nation’s first public defender system for immigrants facing deportation, released a statement on Dec. 29: “With COVID surging in New York, New Jersey, and across the country, releasing all people from immigration detention has never been more urgent . . . The ongoing hunger strike is yet another urgent call to action by detained people taking enormous personal risks to demand justice and safety.” □

The Pentagon, corporations and slave labor in U.S. prisons

By Sara Flounders

This article was originally published in Workers World June 11, 2011.

It is not only federal prisons that contract out prison labor to top corporations. State prisons that used forced prison labor in plantations, laundries and highway chain gangs increasingly seek to sell prison labor to corporations trolling the globe in search of the cheapest possible labor.

One agency asks: “Are you experiencing high employee turnover? Worried about the costs of employee benefits? Unhappy with out-of-state or offshore suppliers? Getting hit by overseas competition? Having trouble motivating your workforce? Thinking about expansion space? Then Washington State Department of Corrections Private Sector Partnerships is for you.” (educate-yourself.org, July 25, 2005)

Major corporations profiting from the slave labor of prisoners include Motorola, Compaq, Honeywell, Microsoft, Boeing, Revlon, Chevron, TWA, Victoria’s Secret and Eddie Bauer.

IBM, Texas Instruments and Dell get circuit boards made by Texas prisoners.

Tennessee inmates sew jeans for Kmart and JCPenney. Tens of thousands of youth flipping hamburgers for minimum wages at McDonald’s wear uniforms sewn by prison workers, who are forced to work for much less.

In California, as in many states, prisoners who refuse to work are moved to disciplinary housing and lose canteen privileges, as well as “good time” credit, which slices hard time off their sentences.

Systematic abuse, beatings, prolonged isolation, sensory deprivation and lack of medical care make U.S. prison conditions among the worst in the world. Ironically, working under grueling conditions for pennies an hour is treated as a “perk” for good behavior.

In December [2010], Georgia inmates went on strike and refused to leave their cells at six prisons for more than a week. In one of the largest prison protests in U.S. history, prisoners spoke of being forced to work seven days a week for no pay. Prisoners were beaten if they refused to work.

Private prisons for profit

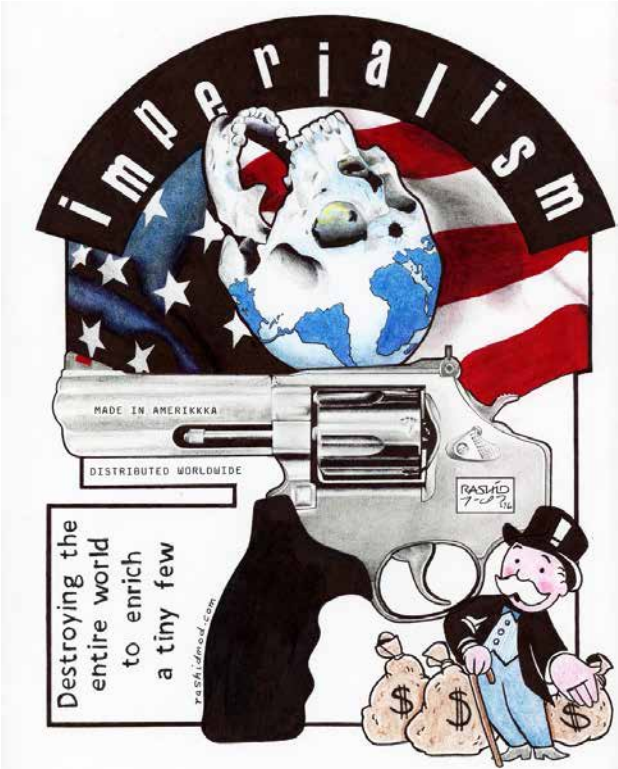
In the ruthless search to maximize profits and grab hold of every possible

source of income, almost every public agency and social service is being outsourced to private for-profit contractors.

In the U.S. military, this means there are now more private contractors and mercenaries in Iraq and Afghanistan than there are U.S. or NATO soldiers.

In cities and states across the U.S., hospitals, medical care facilities, schools, cafeterias, road maintenance, water supply services, sewage departments, sanitation, airports and tens of thousands of social programs that receive public funding are being contracted out to for-profit corporations. Anything publicly owned and paid for by generations of past workers’ taxes — from libraries to concert halls and parks — is being sold or leased at fire sale prices.

All this is motivated and lobbied for by right-wing think tanks like that set up by Koch Industries and their owners, Charles and David Koch, as a way to cut



ARTWORK: KEVIN RASHID JOHNSON

costs, lower wages and pensions, and undercut public service unions.

The most gruesome privatizations are the hundreds of for-profit prisons being established.

The inmate population in private for-profit prisons tripled between 1987 and 2007. By 2007, there were 264 such prison facilities, housing almost 99,000 adult prisoners. (house.leg.state.mn.us, *Continued on page 8*)

Eleven Alabama prisoners begin hunger strike!

By Devin Cole
Occupied Muscogee Creek land —
Montgomery, Ala.

With the announcement of the Alabama prison strike/30 Day Economic Blackout, 11 incarcerated workers in the segregation unit of Kilby Correctional Facility in Montgomery, Ala., have begun a hunger strike. They are protesting the inhumane conditions of the prison, as well as in all prisons across the state of Alabama. These 11 incarcerated workers, unable to hold jobs within the prison due to their being segregated, have vowed to hold this hunger strike until January 31. They are:

- Bernard Jamison — #179080
- Brandon Cargill — #214181
- Gerald Griffin — #247505
- Karon Similton — #294981
- Patrick Banegos — #297614
- Ronnie Miller — #244648
- Kenyeda Johnson — #231169
- Delbert Tillery — #183233

- Pat Brown — #275685
- Cornelius Bridges — #264222
- Deandre Wilson — #224433

These comrades would love to receive letters of encourage, solidarity, and support, which can be sent to:

Kilby Correctional Facility
P.O. Box 150
Mt. Meigs, Alabama 36057

On the morning of Jan. 4, a prisoner participating in the #Alabama11 hunger strike was beaten and bloodied by a guard, Officer Landrum, at the instructions of Sgt. Williams, for his participation in the hunger strike. The prisoner’s name is Ronnie Miller, #244648. He is out of the infirmary, but photos show him with a busted lip and large lumps on his head and cheek.

All power to the Alabama prisoners on Strike and the Alabama 11 on hunger strike! □



PHOTO: WORKERS ASSEMBLY AGAINST RACISM

The New York Workers Assembly Against Racism did a banner drop at Hudson Yards in solidarity with incarcerated workers on strike in Alabama.

The Pentagon, corporations and slave labor in U.S. prisons

Continued from page 7

Feb. 24, 2009) Companies operating such facilities include the Corrections Corporation of America, the GEO Group Inc. and Community Education Centers. Prison bonds provide a lucrative return for capitalist investors such as Merrill Lynch, Shearson Lehman, American Express and Allstate. Prisoners are traded from one state to another — based on the most profitable arrangements.

Militarism and prisons

Hand-in-hand with the military-industrial complex, U.S. imperialism has created a massive prison-industrial complex that generates billions of dollars annually for businesses and industries profiting from mass incarceration.

For decades, workers in the U.S. have been assured that they benefit from imperialist looting by the giant multinational corporations. But today more than half the federal budget is absorbed by the costs of maintaining the military machine and the corporations, which are guaranteed profits for equipping the Pentagon. That is the only budget category in federal spending that is guaranteed to increase by at least 5% per year — at a time when every social program is being cut to the bone.

The sheer economic weight of militarism seeps into the fabric of society at every level. It fuels racism and reaction. The political influence of the Pentagon and the giant military and oil corporations — with their thousands of high-paid lobbyists, media pundits and network of

links into every police force in the country — fuels growing repression and an expanding prison population.

The military, oil and banking conglomerates, interlinked with the police and prisons, have a stranglehold on the U.S. capitalist economy and reins of political power, regardless of who is president or what political party is in office. The very survival of these global corporations is based on immediate maximization of profits. They are driven to seize every resource and source of potential profits.

Thoroughly rational solutions are proposed, whenever the human and economic cost of militarism and repression is discussed. The billions spent for war and fantastically destructive weapons systems could provide five to seven times more jobs if spent on desperately needed social

services, education and rebuilding essential infrastructure. Or it could provide free university education, considering the fact that it costs far more to imprison people than to educate them.

Why aren’t such reasonable solutions ever chosen? Military contracts generate far larger guaranteed profits to the military and the oil industries, which have a decisive influence on the U.S. economy.

The prison-industrial complex — including the prison system, prison labor, private prisons, police and repressive apparatus and their continuing expansion — are a greater source of profit and are reinforced by the climate of racism and reaction. Most rational and socially useful solutions are not considered viable options. □

Alabama prisons: ON STRIKE!

Continued from page 1

constructed over the next several years, costing Alabama taxpayers more than two and a half billion dollars! Two of the prisons, slated to be built in Brierfield and Tallassee, Ala., have been met with fervent local resistance by residents who do not want a prison in their communities or neighborhoods. (bit.ly/34Ri3AW)

Video visitation: economic and psychological warfare

Another core of this revolutionary strike is to protest the implementation of video visitation equipment in prisons across Alabama. This equipment, designed by Securus Technologies, has been touted as “a safer alternative to in-person visits during COVID-19,” but there are no guarantees that this equipment would be removed and in-person visits resumed once COVID-19 rates begin to drop.

Many prison abolition advocates in the Free Alabama Movement say that this is a long-conceived plan from ADOC to

eliminate in-person visitation altogether, as a form of psychological warfare on those incarcerated workers behind the wall. When incarcerated workers have to deal with cell overcrowding, violence, and heinous living conditions, in-person visitation is for many a brief reprieve from the sickening situations they are in. But the state of Alabama, hoping to break them mentally and emotionally, is seeking to do away with even this small reprieve.

Psychological warfare is not the only reason behind this. Follow the money! Securus Technologies rakes in over \$1,750,000,000 a year from this equipment installed in prisons. It currently has 6,000 contracts out with prisons across the U.S. (bit.ly/3psMq8z) While Securus profits, the ADOC can cut costs and make more money for its prison-industrial complex.

Securus Technologies is one of five companies that the Free Alabama Movement is asking all those in solidarity to actively boycott during the month-long strike. The others are JPay, Access

Corrections, Union Supply Company, and Alabama Correctional Industries, all of whom directly benefit from the slave labor of incarcerated workers in Alabama prisons.

Support the strike! Abolish the prisons!

Although the ADOC has been ruled the “deadliest prison system in the country,” it is important to note that all prisons are inherently deadly, inhumane, and cruel — a massive monument to capitalism-imperialism, colonialism, and slavery. In a Dec. 10 interview, Free Alabama Movement co-founder and abolitionist Swift Justice said: “I personally wouldn’t sit there and try to gauge how inhumane one prison is over another prison in the United States. Any prison that has any human rights violations is inhumane; it’s all equal in our eyes. The issue here in Alabama is that for so long society in Alabama — they just cherish the fact that individuals come to prison and are basically tortured and treated like animals.” (bit.ly/3aWcll7)

In the coming month this strike, led

by Black incarcerated workers behind the walls of Alabama prisons, will be the revolutionary boost that kicks off 2021. Halfway through the strike, Joe Biden will be inaugurated as president, but has announced no plans to even address prison reforms. His victory, seen as “revolutionary” by bourgeois liberals, will be challenged at every turn.

The Alabama prison strike/30 Day Economic Blackout will kick off resistance to the decaying neoliberal, capitalist-imperialist system in the U.S. It is critical that progressives unequivocally support the Alabama prison strike, the Free Alabama Movement, and the continued struggle to tear down the walls and abolish prisons once and for all!

Devin Cole is a transgender Marxist organizer and writer. They are the president of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative), a transgender advocacy organization in northwest Florida, and a member of the Workers World Party – Central Gulf Coast (Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi) branch.

Brexit

Britain leaves EU; workers bear burden

By G. Dunkel

Brexit — the rupture between Britain and the European Union — was completed at midnight, Dec. 31.

In a 2016 referendum, in a xenophobic, racist vote fueled by dreams of a withered and long-passed imperial glory, British voters narrowly supported a proposal to leave the European Union. Only 51.9% of the votes supported the “leave” option; in Scotland, Wales and the six counties of northeast Ireland, the “remain” option won big majorities.

The 4 1/2 years since the Brexit vote have been devoted to working out the details and settling on the necessary compromises between the British bourgeoisie and the big French and German capitalists, who essentially control the EU. There is a lot to work out since Britain has been part of the European Economic Community since 1973, although it was never part of the eurozone, keeping its own currency.

There was a lot at stake. While Britain is on an island separated from the continent, it is historically, culturally and economically part of Europe. Some 250,000 small and medium British businesses find major parts of their markets in Europe. Trade between Britain and the EU amounts to nearly \$68.5 billion a year, carried in about 4.5 to 5 million truckloads a year.

This trade flowed without hindrance, when Britain was part of the EU. It no longer does.

The financial markets in London — banks, insurance companies, stock traders — did about a third of all the financial transactions in the EU in 2018 (the last year figures are available). The negative effects of Brexit on this market, which has brought the British financial capitalists tremendous profits, might wipe the smile off their faces. How deep the British bourgeoisie will frown is yet to be determined.

Other issues remain undecided, and many work-arounds could collapse. One of the major wrinkles in this Brexit deal is how the land border between the Republic



Mass anti-Brexit protest, London, Sept. 3, 2019.

of Ireland and the six counties in the north-east of Ireland that London still controls has been shifted to the Irish Sea.

It is going to take a considerable amount of time to work through the 1,250 pages of the bill implementing Brexit.

Effect of Brexit on workers

While there are no official figures, it’s estimated that there are around 3.6 million EU citizens living in Britain and about 1.7 million British citizens living in the EU. Their situations are complicated, but Brexit will make thousands of these EU citizens illegal, even those who have lived in Britain for decades.

The Trades Union Council of England has clearly stated its objectives on Brexit. Most of its members — at least 60% of them according to polls — oppose Brexit. The TUC wants to preserve “all the hard-won workers’ rights that come from the EU” and intends to make “sure that [British] workers get the same rights as workers in the EU into the future.”

It demands “Guaranteeing the rights of EU citizens working in [Britain], and those of Brits working abroad.” (tinyurl.com/yacjzf6k)

The European Transport Federation, which represents truck drivers and ferry

workers, has built a working alliance with Unite the Union, which is the largest union representing truck drivers and ferry workers in England and Ireland. They are both very much concerned about the delays and extra work that will result from conforming to the new customs declarations and the COVID-19 restrictions about testing and crossing borders.

While truck drivers are, after agricultural workers, already the worst off in terms of working time and working conditions, the current limits imposed by European law on driving time “are the only way, although very insufficient, to

ensure some safety on European roads” according to the ETF. British drivers are probably no longer covered by these regulations after Brexit, even if they are driving on the Continent.

The ETF, strongly supporting the demands of Unite on the British government, points out “that the average age of truck drivers is 54 years old. They are a group of workers who have been exposed to the stress and pressure of work for decades.” (force-ouvriere.fr, Aug. 27)

Trucks were moving additional freight in anticipation of customs duties going into effect at year’s end, as France closed its borders to traffic from England on Dec. 20. This provoked a huge traffic jam. In days, some 17,000 large trucks stacked up in England’s southeast where the ferries and tunnel to France are located. Drivers had no toilets and no food, with many upset they were not getting home for Christmas.

Both the ETF and Unite worked to resolve this problem, which involved testing and quarantine facilities for drivers who tested positive for COVID-19. This immense jam showed how sensitive traffic between England and France is to any hitches.

Unions representing truck drivers, who will be immediately affected by Brexit, are working hard to keep the costs and pressures of Brexit off the backs of workers. □



Truckers face enormous logjams because of Brexit-related delays.

Long live the Haitian Revolution!

By Devin Cole

January 1 marked the 217th year of independence for the Republic of Haiti. The Haitian Revolution was led by formerly enslaved Black revolutionary François-Dominique Toussaint



Jean-Jacques Dessalines

Louverture and later by Jean-Jacques Dessalines. A majority of Louverture’s army were born in Africa.

The Haitian Revolution began in 1791 after a Vodou ceremony at Bois Caïman, where a Vodou mambo and a Vodou priest, Cécile Fatiman and Dutty Boukman respectively, spoke of an uprising by those enslaved, who were encouraged to take revenge against their French oppressors. One week later, the revolution broke out; 1,000 enslavers were killed and 1,800 plantations destroyed.

Over the next 13 years, the Haitian army, created from enslaved Africans who had liberated themselves, fought vigorously with the French colonizers in Haiti. Besides Louverture, there were other prominent leaders: Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Sanité Bélair, a Haitian woman and Black revolutionary leader who was captured and executed in 1802.

After Louverture was captured by French trickery in 1803, Dessalines continued to lead the revolution — destroying Napoleon’s army and declaring Hayti (later Haiti) free and independent on Jan. 1, 1804. Haiti was the first Black independent republic and the first nation in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery.

Today, Haiti is still weighed down by burdens imposed by French and U.S. colonialism and imperialism. It is kept subjected through embargoes and sanctions, demands for debt repayment and a U.S. occupation behind the veil of U.N. peacekeepers.

Workers World Party honors the

freedom fighters of the Haitian Revolution, whose struggle had worldwide resonance. We congratulate the Haitian people on another year of revolutionary struggle against colonialism and imperialism! We say unequivocally: Stop all embargoes and sanctions on Haiti; cancel the debt, and pay reparations to Haiti! □



Haitians rally against police brutality, June 7, 2020.

PHOTO: KIM IVES/HAITI LIBERTÉ

Why is the world’s richest country so unprepared?

The big question one must ask about the COVID-19 epidemic — which as of Jan. 2 has killed more than 1,850,000 people around the globe — is “Why was the United States so unprepared?”

This is a highly developed and rich country. It has more than 600 billionaires, according to Forbes. It has the most expensive and powerful military on the planet — supposedly to defend the people. Yet way more people have died in the U.S. of the coronavirus — over 360,000 as of Jan. 3 — than in any other country in the world.

Furthermore, this is not the first pandemic to have gone global, hitting the U.S. especially hard. Nor is it the worst.

The so-called Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918 was more deadly. It is now thought to have started in Kansas, but due to WWI quickly spread to Europe and

through the Western Hemisphere and then around the world. Before it was over, it had “infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide — about one-third of the planet’s population — and killed an estimated 20 million to 50 million vic-

tims, including some 675,000 Americans.” (tinyurl.com/yxnnex62)

Many of those killed by the virus in 1918, as the first global imperialist war was grinding to an end, were U.S. draftees living in packed barracks before being sent overseas. (A relative of a WW editor was eyewitness to that grim experience.)

It is now a full century later. In this time span, science and medicine have advanced enormously. The standard of living has risen in the United States; commu-

nications and transportation have leaped ahead. Government budgets at all levels have skyrocketed. And the population can be informed of new developments almost

simultaneously via radio, television and the Internet.

You might think that this new pandemic, less deadly than the one in 1918, would be quickly overcome. That the very large, modern and expensive medical system here would have been more than equal to the task. And that a plan would have, at the least, been discussed about what to do to prepare for the next pandemic.

But none of that has happened. The U.S. medical system is now in a crisis. The economy is a mess. Millions of people have lost income and are facing unemployment and loss of housing, all because of the virus.

And, as always in this racist capitalist country, it is the poorest and most oppressed who are suffering the most. Hunger is growing, even as the stock market rewards the very rich.

Vaccine distribution bungled

Vaccines have been developed! They should be available now. But they are not getting to the people in a timely fashion. NPR reported on Jan. 3: “More than 4.2 million people have received the initial vaccination dose as of Saturday [Jan. 2], according to the CDC. That number is far below the government’s goal of having 20

million people in the U.S. vaccinated by the end of December.”

The distribution of vaccines is not taking place on a federal level. There’s no plan. Instead, it is up to state and local governments to do the job. The billionaire gangster in the White House is focused on trying to overturn the election he lost.

Some states and cities are much poorer than others. Already it is clear that the people with money and political power are jumping the line to get their shots, even as many in frontline jobs most exposed to infection are passed over.

The prisons, where poor people are warehoused for “crimes of survival,” are hotbeds of the pandemic. But this makes headlines only when prison guards get infected. When will incarcerated workers get the vaccine?

Oppression breeds resistance. The suffering and tragedies unfolding today can arouse a higher level of awareness of the crimes committed by the powers that be and a greater struggle against the profit system itself.

Fighting for a free national health care system would be a good start! Dumping capitalism for socialism is the only solution. □

Argentina

Women’s movement wins free, legal abortions



Women celebrate passage of law allowing legal abortion on Dec. 30, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. PHOTO: TELESUR

By Kathy Durkin

Thousands of women cheered, jumped and cried tears of joy when the Argentinian Senate in the country’s capital of Buenos Aires voted to legalize abortion on Dec. 30. The lower house of Congress had passed the legislation backing the right to abortion earlier the same month.

The law, which provides free, safe and legal abortions, was the result of decades of struggle led by the women’s movement and supported by the LGBTQ+ community, labor unions, left parties and human rights groups. It is important to note that Argentina’s law may be the most progressive in the world in one respect: It specifically allows for not only women, but people with other gender identities who can become pregnant,

to obtain legal abortions in the country’s health care system.

This fervent struggle triumphed over the Catholic Church and reactionary political forces, which had ferociously fought against the most fundamental of women’s rights for years. It is a significant development for women throughout Latin America and the Caribbean in that, up until now, abortion has been permitted only in a few countries including Cuba, Uruguay, and Mexico City and the state of Oaxaca in Mexico. This victory is a major boost for women who are organizing for full reproductive rights throughout the vast region.

A more extensive article about this victorious struggle will be published in the Jan. 14 issue of Workers World newspaper and posted at workers.org.

Long live the DPRK! Long live socialism!

Workers World Party sent the following message to the Eighth Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea, taking place this month.

January 1, 2021

Comrade Kim Jong Un
Chairman of the Workers’ Party of Korea
Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK
Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the DPRK
Pyongyang, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

Dear Comrade Kim Jong Un,

Workers World Party sends its congratulations and best wishes to the Workers’ Party of Korea as you hold your Eighth Congress.

This important occasion is yet another example of how the Workers’ Party of Korea and its leadership have successfully enabled the Democratic People’s

Republic of Korea to continue to withstand the economic and military machinations and attacks of U.S. imperialism which, for over 70 years, has failed in its attempts to overcome your exemplary socialist system.

The resolve of the Workers’ Party of Korea in the face of its enemies can only be further strengthened by the process of organizing and holding a Party Congress, which can review and reflect on the progress of the DPRK in building socialism on the Korean peninsula. The DPRK continues to be an inspiration to the people of the world who are fighting to achieve in our own countries a new and just society based in the working class.

Long live the DPRK! Long live socialism!

Comradely,

Larry Holmes
First Secretary
Workers World Party



Monument to the Workers’ Party of Korea, Pyongyang.

A tale of two classes

By Monica Moorehead

The second stimulus package finally passed in both houses of Congress Dec. 27, accompanied by much controversy. It woefully fails to provide any meaningful support for the millions of workers and their families teetering on the edge of economic disaster.

The bill was delayed for a week, when Trump demagogically demanded that stimulus checks be increased from \$600 to \$2,000, knowing that would be shot down by the millionaire Senate. This impasse caused millions of unemployed workers to lose a week's worth of benefits, which the bill increased by a miniscule \$300.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) led the charge against this increase, stating that \$2,000 would "fall into the hands of Democrats' rich friends who don't need the help." (Washington Post, Dec. 30) This heartless statement was a slap in the face to all poor and working people.

Kentucky, the state McConnell represents, is home to 10 of the 25 poorest counties in the U.S. (courier-journal.com, March 13)

According to Census Bureau survey data, more than 27 million adults stated that they did not get enough to eat from late November to early December. And, of course, these astounding numbers do not take into consideration undocumented workers or children.

What does this \$900-billion bill passed by Congress include? Along with stimulus checks that began to be issued Jan. 1, other provisions include the extension of unemployment benefits until mid-March and an extension of Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Assistance, which allows those who have exhausted their state benefits, including part-time and gig workers, to get an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits. Workers have until Jan. 31 to apply for these benefits.

There is an extension of the moratorium on evictions until Jan. 31. Joe Biden will have the authority to further extend that once he takes the oath of the presidency on Jan. 20. And there is an additional \$25 billion in assistance for renters. The Aspen Institute Financial Security Program and the Covid-19 Eviction Defense Project have estimated that upwards of 40 million renters face eviction due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bill allots \$20 billion for the purchase of coronavirus vaccines, supposedly to make the vaccine available to anyone who can't afford it. There is a provision that provides \$8 billion for vaccine distribution, which includes \$20 billion to assist states with coronavirus testing.

The bill will make \$284 billion available to small businesses, with first and second forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loans, expanded PPP eligibility for nonprofit organizations and news outlets and modifications to the program to serve small businesses, nonprofit organizations and independent restaurants. This money amounts to a drop in the bucket for small businesses, which can barely stay afloat, nor will it help to reopen small businesses that have permanently closed.

According to forbes.com, over 163,000 U.S. businesses have closed since March 1. This staggering figure represents an increase of 23% over last July 10, when the

count of closures was over 132,000.

As far back as Sept. 16, some 32,000 restaurants had shuttered since the start of the pandemic, with 61% of closures expected to be permanent. Nightclubs and bars, a smaller market, had lost more than 6,400 businesses, over half permanently, while retailers had seen 30,374 closures.

On the flip side, Congress passed a U.S. military budget amounting to \$740 billion. This represents 15% of the overall federal budget for 2021 and doesn't even include wars of occupation like Afghanistan or the \$500 million aid to apartheid Israel. The U.S. spends more on its military than China, Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Britain, Japan, South Korea and Brazil combined. (Peter G. Pederson Foundation)

Wall Street profits soar while people suffer

The coronavirus vaccine, which is finally starting to trickle down to millions of people in the U.S., has not prevented a resurgence of the pandemic, which has now killed over 360,000 people and infected an estimated 20 million more. Hospitals have run out of beds and makeshift morgues have been created to store the dead. And this is on top of the millions of people suffering from unemployment and hunger.

But there is one small clique that has enjoyed the outcome of the pandemic. They are the Wall Street billionaires and the corrupt system that drives them. Profits for the big corporations have been soaring during the pandemic, as they fill the void left by the demise of small businesses.

In fact, 45 out of the 50 most valuable U.S. trading firms — like Walmart, Salesforce, Cisco Systems, Netflix, Zoom and PayPal — have reported a profit since last March. Twenty-seven of those firms have laid off a combined 100,000-plus workers. (Washington Post, Dec. 16)

Michael Farr, president of D.C.-based money management firm Farr, Miller & Washington, says, "That a pandemic-induced economic shutdown of epic proportion



Dec. 27 protest, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Capitalism's COVID relief shell game



"Keep your eye on the stimulus check!"

has been digested with stocks ending the year 15% higher is mind-blowing. 2020 has been stunning." (Washington Post, Dec. 31)

To add insult to injury, not only have large corporations been the main culprit in the mass layoffs of workers, but they have benefited greatly from tax breaks in the billions of dollars, thanks to their millionaire Republican buddies in the Senate and compliant Democrats.

"The markets are dominated by the folks who are in the upper echelons. They don't feel any pain. They read about it, but they don't experience it. What they do experience is the flip side: We have had very substantial productivity gains with Zoom and other daily life efficiencies," commented David Kotok, founder of Cumberland Advisors.

What this pandemic has exposed in stark reality is that capitalism is an economic system that cares more about raking in profits for big business and its super-rich CEOs than for the well-being of the billions of people who inhabit the planet and struggle on a daily basis for jobs, shelter, food, health care, education, land and equality.

Only a full transformation of society from capitalism to a socialist economic system will lay the basis for meeting people's needs, by empowering the global working class to end the nightmare of capitalist greed and war once and for all. □



Waiting for food in Chelsea, Mass.

Black Lives Matter y la ley de seguridad global de Francia

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decir, el pueblo esclavizado que Francia perdió a causa de la Revolución Haitiana. Estos pagos fueron una enorme carga económica para Haití durante los próximos 100 años. Haití se vio obligado a devolver con dinero lo que había ganado con la sangre de su pueblo.

En 1830, las fuerzas armadas de Carlos X iniciaron la conquista de Argelia, que tardó unos 20 años en completarse. Los argelinos, y más tarde los norteafricanos de Túnez y Marruecos junto con los africanos occidentales, fueron tratados como una mano de obra barata cuando Francia necesitaba trabajadores en sus industrias en expansión. Cuando necesitó soldados en la Primera Guerra Mundial, Francia reclutó a 450.000 de sus colonias africanas. El actual presidente Emmanuel Macron admitió en un tuit del 2018 que 200.000 de ellos habían muerto.

La burguesía francesa luchó amargamente para retener el control de Argelia, que, como las islas de Guadalupe y Martinica en el Caribe, fue tratada como un

departamento de ultramar de Francia. Los argelinos acusan a los franceses de matar a más de un millón de personas durante la guerra por la independencia de Argelia.

Ahora, la religión con el mayor número de creyentes practicantes en Francia es el Islam, que es la fe de la mayoría de las comunidades del norte de África y muchas de las comunidades de África occidental en Francia, como la comunidad de Malí, que se estima en 250.000 miembros.

Las protestas semanales golpean las leyes racistas

Las manifestaciones coordinadas a nivel nacional contra dos nuevos proyectos de ley que impulsa el gobierno de Macron se han producido todos los sábados desde el último sábado de noviembre. Un proyecto de ley, la Ley de Seguridad Global, le daría a los policías en Francia, que están directamente bajo el control del gobierno de Macron, más poder para recopilar información sobre los manifestantes y hacer ilegal que el público filme a los policías.

El otro proyecto de ley protestado se conoce como la

"ley separatista". Esta legislación obligaría a grupos similares al Collectif Contre Islamophobie en France (CCIF), que ofrece asesoramiento legal sobre el fanatismo anti-musulmán, a disolverse — el ministro del Interior ordenó a CCIF detener — y evitar que las escuelas de la Sharia enseñen el Islam sobre fines de semana.

Las manifestaciones del 5 de diciembre se realizaron conjuntamente con la Confederación General de Trabajadores (CGT), que protestaba contra el desempleo y exigía empleos permanentes a tiempo completo. Philippe Martínez, secretario general de la CGT, dijo a la prensa al inicio de la manifestación en París: "No hay oposición entre las libertades públicas e individuales y la lucha por los empleos permanentes y contra el desempleo, especialmente en este período".

Las manifestaciones del 19 de diciembre plantearon las necesidades de los inmigrantes indocumentados.

Twitter: @dunkel_greg.



PHOTO: RADIO HAVANA

¡Viva la Revolución Cubana, 61 años!

Lxs jóvenes son la vanguardia

Por Scott Williams

Una charla pronunciada por medio del seminario web “Lxs jóvenes comunistas hablan: ¿Por qué unirse a un partido revolucionario?” Seminario web patrocinado por Workers World Party el 10 de diciembre.



Scott Williams

Lxs trabajadores jóvenes han encendido importantes luchas contra la brutalidad policial racista, contra la guerra del capitalismo en el planeta y contra la austeridad, los recortes y la creciente amenaza del fascismo en todo el mundo.

Estamos aquí reunidos hoy para hablar sobre la crisis que enfrentan lxs jóvenes trabajadores y la intensa radicalización de las generaciones más jóvenes aquí en el corazón del imperio.

Está claro que lxs jóvenes de hoy cargan con todo el peso de un sistema capitalista en colapso.

En todos los aspectos, a lxs jóvenes les va mucho peor que a las generaciones de sus padres.

Una de las formas en que vemos esto todos los días es la guerra contra la salud mental de lxs jóvenes, que, según todas las estadísticas, se ha deteriorado drásticamente. Hemos visto un aumento vertiginoso de las tasas de suicidio. Las tasas de depresión son 20 veces mayores que en la época de nuestros abuelos. (tinyurl.com/y7l4lgvk)

Las generaciones más jóvenes también enfrentan aumentos masivos en los trastornos de ansiedad. Todo esto es evidencia del declive objetivo del capitalismo, incluso aquí en el vientre de la bestia.

Desde el 2010, la expectativa de vida en los EE.UU. ha disminuido continuamente. Las personas nacidas hoy tienen vidas más cortas que sus padres.

El veinticuatro por ciento de lxs jóvenes de 21 años se encuentran por debajo de la línea de pobreza federal de ganar \$12.760

por año. ([healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov)). Esto no incluye a los estudiantes de tiempo completo.

El desempleo juvenil alcanzó un récord del 27 por ciento en Estados Unidos la primavera pasada. Lxs trabajadores de raza negra en Estados Unidos enfrentan el doble de desempleo en comparación con los de raza blanca. A nivel mundial, según la Organización Internacional del Trabajo de las Naciones Unidas, el porcentaje de jóvenes que forman parte de la fuerza laboral sigue disminuyendo y lxs trabajadores jóvenes se enfrentan a una creciente precariedad en todos los aspectos de la vida.

Somos los millones de trabajadores de curros, trabajadores de restaurantes despedidos y minoristas, conductores de Uber, trabajadores temporales y subempleados crónicos, especialmente ahora durante la pandemia. Cabe preguntarse si alguna vez volveremos a tener un empleo pleno. Los trabajos de lxs jóvenes son los que tienen más probabilidades de automatizarse y deshabilitarlos.

Nuestros salarios son más de un 50 por ciento más bajos que los de las personas de entre 40 y 50 años y esta disparidad sigue aumentando. ([brookings.edu](https://www.brookings.edu)) El cincuenta y dos por ciento de las personas de entre 18 y 29 años viven con sus padres debido a la pandemia. ([pewresearch.org](https://www.pewresearch.org))

Tenemos \$1,6 billones en deuda estudiantil, que asciende a \$29.200 por joven.

([forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com)). Personalmente, tengo muchas más deudas que eso.

Mientras tanto, julio fue el mes más mortífero para lxs jóvenes en la historia moderna, ya que la pandemia y otras crisis matan a miles de jóvenes.

Los capitalistas no tienen sueños, ningún futuro nos depara. Las empresas de construcción de prisiones planean construir nuevas prisiones en las ciudades, basándose en los resultados de las pruebas de tercer grado de los que abandonaron la escuela secundaria. Muchos jóvenes, especialmente las personas de color, tienen más probabilidades de ser arrestados por la policía y encarcelados que de ir a la universidad.

En conjunto, el capitalismo está librando una guerra contra lxs jóvenes. Lxs jóvenes de nacionalidades oprimidas, géneros oprimidos, jóvenes de la clase trabajadora, todos enfrentan los mayores impactos de un sistema que no tiene futuro para ellos.

¿Cual es la solución?

Las leyes del marxismo muestran que la intensificación de la opresión y la explotación por parte de una clase de multimillonarios cada vez más desesperada se convertirá en su opuesto, en una revolución. Muchos jóvenes pequeño burgueses y jóvenes de entornos más

ricos han sido empujados hacia abajo socialmente. Hemos sobrevivido a dos crisis económicas que han sido las más grandes que se recuerdan recientemente. Vivimos una pandemia que es el resultado total del capitalismo.

Sin embargo, rápidamente nos hemos convertido en una generación de resistencia. Comenzamos a ocupar los centros de las ciudades en todo el mundo al final de la última crisis económica: el movimiento Occupy. Desde entonces, lxs trabajadores jóvenes han encendido importantes luchas contra la brutalidad policial racista, contra la guerra del capitalismo en el planeta y contra la austeridad, los recortes y la creciente amenaza del fascismo en todo el mundo. Lxs jóvenes han estado a la cabeza.

Estudiamos historia para entender cómo cambiar el futuro. Lxs jóvenes, a lo largo de la historia, han sido la vanguardia de los movimientos revolucionarios. Che Guevara tenía 30 años en el momento de la Revolución Cubana. Fidel tenía 32 años. Mao tenía 26 años cuando se fundó el Partido Comunista Chino. Revolucionarios como Mumia Abu-Jamal y Fred Hampton organizaron ramas de las Panteras Negras cuando eran adolescentes.

Aquí, en el centro del imperialismo y el capitalismo, lxs jóvenes están marcando el camino. □

comentario

Black Lives Matter y la ley de seguridad global de Francia

Por G. Dunkel

A veces es difícil darse cuenta del impacto mundial del movimiento Black Lives Matter. La indiferencia del idioma, la cultura y los medios de comunicación pueden entorpecer. Algunos países simplemente no tienen el tipo de eventos (protestas, marchas, mítines) por una variedad de razones, donde aparecería la influencia de BLM.

Francia es diferente. Gran parte de su política se desarrolla en las calles. Los trabajadores, generalmente a instancias de sus sindicatos, salen a la calle, no solo por el salario, el empleo y las condiciones laborales, sino también por cuestiones

políticas como la nueva ley laboral y un nuevo plan de jubilación. Los trabajadores de empleadores privados tienen el derecho legal de hacer huelga sin poner en peligro su trabajo. Como todos los derechos de los trabajadores en una sociedad dirigida por la burguesía, este derecho está constantemente bajo ataque, pero la huelga se utilizó de manera constante en el movimiento de los chalecos amarillos.

Y no son solo los trabajadores los que salen a las calles para protestar. Médicos, agricultores, pescadores, todo tipo de grupos comunitarios y estudiantes, algunos de los cuales están en sindicatos, y grupos de mujeres, todos de vez en cuando alzan la voz colectivamente.

Todos estos grupos, en particular los sindicatos, dependen de la solidaridad y de las alianzas con otras organizaciones. Dado que generalmente es el caso de que más de un sindicato representa a los trabajadores en una planta o industria en particular, para cerrarla deben trabajar juntos. Este es especialmente el caso si se proyecta una

movilización masiva como una huelga general.

Black Lives Matter en Francia

Buscando en archivos de imágenes de protestas en Francia a partir de 2015, encontré miles de imágenes de cientos de manifestaciones que se referían explícitamente a eslóganes de BLM, como “pas de justice, pas de paix, stop aux violences policières” (Sin justicia, sin paz, detener la violencia policial) y “est-ce un crime d’être black?” (¿Es un crimen ser negro?) Y, por supuesto, en inglés, para que la audiencia internacional no pudiera confundirlo, “Black Lives Matter”.

“Vies Volées” (“Vidas robadas”) es una organización francesa — algo así como el Proyecto Vidas Robadas en los Estados Unidos — liderado por Ramata Dieng que apoya a las familias de víctimas asesinadas y heridas de la brutalidad policial. Ha creado una petición para la liberación de Mumia Abu-Jamal con un video de la declaración de Colin Kaepernick apoyando a Mumia (doblada en francés). En su sitio web, hay otra petición que expresa solidaridad con las víctimas



Manifestación de Black Lives Matter, Francia.

estadounidenses de asesinatos de policías y con los presos políticos estadounidenses, junto con un poderoso rap en francés. ([viesvolees.org](https://www.viesvolees.org))

La violencia policial y el racismo han sido históricamente problemas en Francia, que ha sido y sigue siendo una potencia imperialista en África Occidental, África del Norte y el Caribe.

En 1804, Francia fue derrotada en Haití, que había sido la colonia más rentable del siglo XVIII; Haití obtuvo más beneficios para Francia que los que Gran Bretaña extrajo de todas sus colonias norteamericanas. En 1825, Carlos X, el último y más reaccionario rey borbón de Francia, envió una flotilla a Haití y la obligó a pagar todas las “propiedades”, es

Continúa en la página 11



Manifestaciones en Francia, 5 de diciembre: ‘¿Es un crimen ser negro?’