Turmoil no excuse for invasion

U.S. hands off Haiti!

By G. Dunkel

In Haiti, around 1:00 a.m., July 7, brand new SUVs without license plates pulled up to the private residence of President Jovenel Moïse in Pétion-Ville. A team of assassins got out, slipped through his security and shot him dead. His spouse, Martine Moïse, was severely injured. President Joe Biden has expressed reluctance to openly intervene in the deadly, contentious situation following the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse is clear.

The real details of the assassination — who did it, who paid for it, what were their motives — are murky. The Haitian National Police (PNH) have charged 20 Colombian citizens and two U.S. citizens of Haitian origin with participating in the attack.

Let Cuba live!

July 12 — Today the capitalist media have turned their focus on anti-government demonstrators in Cuba, which the New York Times claimed to number in the “thousands,” in a country of 11 million people.

How many thousands, if there were really that many, isn’t stated (nor were there any videos of such-sized crowds), but in any case this represents a small percentage of the population who reportedly blame the Cuban socialist state for shortages of food and vaccines. By comparison, 25 million people in the U.S. are estimated to have taken part in the Black Lives Matter upsurge following the lynching of George Floyd.

Nevertheless, the number protesting in Cuba is treated as something “astonishing for a country that limits dissent.” (New York Times, July 12)

Yet on July 12, The Independent reports a measured response on the part of Cuban police: “Police began detaining people about 1/2 hours into the protest in Havana after some started pulling up cobblestones off the streets and throwing them at police.” About 20 were taken into custody.

Some Colombians were arrested inside the Taiwanese Embassy where they had taken refuge; others were arrested at the hospital where they had taken Moïse’s daughter and spouse. No reports say whether any of Moïse’s security guards, who were drawn from elite units of the PNH, were injured in the attack. The PNH postponed interviewing their leading officials until some time during the week of July 11, at least four days after the attack.

The PNH announced July 11 that some guards involved had been placed under house arrest.

Claude Joseph, whom Moïse appointed prime minister in April, now claims he gave orders to the 15,000 cops and the 500 army troops of the country. Dr. Ariel Henry was scheduled to replace Joseph as acting president on the day of the assassination. Because the president, Moïse, had been killed, Henry was unable to be sworn in.

Both Joseph and Henry claim to be acting president. The U.S. government and the United Nations, whose special representative in Haiti is Helen La Lime, have recognized Joseph as Haiti’s president.

The question that patriotic Haitians have to ask is: Who gave the U.S. and the U.N. the authority to determine Haiti’s president? Whatever is decided, both Claude Joseph and Ariel Henry have strong connections to the United States. When he was a student leader in Haiti, Joseph received substantial funding from the National Endowment for Democracy, which is a tool of U.S. intervention. Later, Joseph got his doctorate from the New School and taught in New York and Connecticut.

One of the first steps Joseph took as acting president was to request U.S. soldiers be sent to Haiti. Henry served as minister of interior and territorial communities and was politically active organizing around the second coup d’état against elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on Feb. 29, 2004. U.S.-based mercenaries carried out that coup, kidnapping and taking Aristide to house arrest.

Why should the U.S. decide?

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Why should the U.S. decide?

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Of the 39 countries on which the U.S. imposes deadly economic and financial sanctions, the longest and most onerous sanctions have been imposed on Cuba through a 60-year blockade.

And while Cuba, in defiance of the blockade, has survived and even succeeded in providing a countryside free of ill health care and educational systems, the blockade has caused severe shortages in food, fuel and medical supplies on the island.

In the face of these economic difficulties, Cuba has been an example of international solidarity by sending medical brigades to scores of countries in response to natural disasters and other health crises. The Henry Reeves Brigades have provided medical care and assistance to numerous countries during the current coronavirus pandemic.

At the same time Cuban scientists have developed several successful anti-COVID-19 vaccines. Cuba, Vietnam and Iran, in collaboration, plan to produce over 100 million doses of vaccines for their populations, as well as for other countries that have received very small amounts or none of the vaccines.

Nearly every country in the world has recognized Cuba’s contributions to the international community. This was confirmed June 23 by an overwhelming 184-2 vote in the United Nations General Assembly in support of a resolution to end the U.S. blockade. Only the U.S. and its creation, the settler state of Israel, voted against the resolution.

Workers World Party, through its organizing and its outreach literature, has supported all efforts to end the criminal blockade, from the beginning. On June 20, WWP members joined the monthly New York City car caravan and street rally in support of the Cuban people. The caravan, which began in Miami during the height of the pandemic when it was unsafe to gather in person, have become a monthly event throughout the world.

Cars — decorated by activists calling for the end to the blockade and for the U.S. to get its military prison out of Guantánamo Bay — drove around Harlem and other neighborhoods, receiving cheers from people in the community. The caravan culminated in a street rally, joined by activists without cars. A large caravan will take place July 25 in Washington, D.C. The event is timed to greet and join Carlos Lazo, a Cuban American school teacher, and six other Cuban Americans who are walking 1,300 miles from Miami to Washington. There they will present the Biden Administration with a petition signed by over 25,000 people calling for an end to the U.S. blockade and demanding the end of all sanctions against revolutionary Cuba.

Despite Cuba’s success in producing five vaccines that have been proven effective against the virus, the inoculation of its population has been seriously affected by the blockade. While enough doses have been produced to vaccinate the entire population of Cuba, the blockade has prevented medical supplies crucial to that effort, such as syringes, from reaching Cuba. In response, Workers World has joined the Cuban Solidarity movement in a campaign to purchase and deliver 20 million syringes to Cuba. So far, over $430,000 has been raised, and the first shipment of 1.5 million syringes is due to arrive in Cuba July 12.

Contributions to the Syringes for Cuba Campaign can be made on Global Health Partners’ website: ghpartners.org.

If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994
Homeless union forms in Atlanta

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

On the evening of July 4, the federal holiday known as Independence Day, an encampment of 15 or more tents was set up on the tree-shaded lawn of City Hall. This was the first public act of the newly formed ATL Homeless Union. A press release widely circulated on social media expressed the frustration and pain of the thousands of people who have been forced to live on the streets of the “city too busy to hate.”

The statement demanded the end of superficial “band aid” measures by successive city administrations that have failed to provide safe housing for all those in need.

Initiated by Diesel, a disabled homeless man, the four main demands of the Union resonated with unshelethed people, several who happened upon the tents that night while searching for a safe place to lie down. A banner stretched across a barricade on the City Hall property read “ATL Homeless Union Demands: Housing, Health care, Water/Sanitation and a Seat at the Table.”

On July 5, with City Hall closed for the holiday, Atlanta City police gave a series of announcements declaring everyone would be arrested if they didn’t leave the area.

A support group kept serving food and water to encampment members, as more and more homeless people were drawn to the scene.

The number of police kept growing until there were at least 50-60 Atlanta police and Fulton County sheriffs with multiple cars and prisoner vans. All at once, police grabbed and dragged people who were in one of the tents to awaiting vehicles. Six people were charged with trespass on public property.

The Union then reassembled its encampment on the grounds of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, a block from City Hall.

The struggle continues! ☑

Philadelphia march against Israeli apartheid

By Betsy Piette
Philadelphia

Hundreds of people carrying Palestinian flags, protest signs and banners gathered at City Hall for a March Against Israeli Apartheid July 10.

A spirited march up the Benjamin Franklin Parkway to the Art Museum followed, with speakers on a sound truck leading chants the entire route. One popular chant was “We don’t want your ‘two states,’ we want all of ‘48” in reference to Palestinian territory designated as the “state of Israel” in 1948.

The event was organized by Philly for Palestine and co-sponsored by Philadelphia chapters of Jewish Voice for Peace, Students for Justice in Palestine, Council on American-Islamic Relations and IBONow along with the Philadelphia Free Palestine Coalition, Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, and Workers World Party. Sponsors also included Temple University and Swarthmore College SJP and JVP-Swarthmore.

Rally speakers included Dr. Anthony Monteiro, Rabbi Linda Holtzman, Palestinian-American poet Samya Abu-Ouf, Ted Kelly for WW, Pastor Nicolas O’Rourke with Working Families Party, Ahmet Tekelioğlu from CAIR, Nada Abuassi from the University of Delaware SJP and Deandra Price for Black Alliance for Peace.

A collective of bicycle riders provided security for the event.

Celebrate the Cuban Revolution with Workers World!

Workers World/Mundo Obrero joins with the Cuban people in celebrating the 68th anniversary of an event which changed the course of history for their island nation. On July 26, 1953, Cuban revolutionaries boldly attacked the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba and simultaneously conducted a siege of the army barracks in Bayamo. These courageous acts were aimed to strike a blow against the brutal U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Although the military goals were not achieved, and the struggle suffered a temporary setback, the armed struggle had reached a new stage that continued until the dictatorship was overthrown on Jan. 1, 1959. As the guerrilla forces fought in the mountains, an underground movement spread across the country.

Cuba has not only developed in every sphere since the socialist revolution, this island nation has carried out acts of international solidarity to aid oppressed countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa, whether with military might or medical personnel and supplies. This assistance has been given generously, despite the horrific blockade implemented against Cuba by Washington for six decades.

Even now during the pandemic, despite having a dearth of medical supplies for inoculations, Cuba plans to share COVID vaccines with countries denied them by the imperialist West. Cuba has deservedly won the support and respect of people around the globe.

Workers World has shown our unwavering solidarity with this socialist country on this newspaper’s pages and incountless activities on the streets.

your donations count!

We know you read WW/MO for class truth, free from corporate lies and geared to working and oppressed people. We need your help! Join the WW Supporter Program, initiated 44 years ago, to aid in funding the newspaper. Since the early 1990s, these donations have also helped maintain the workers.org website.

New articles are posted daily at workers.org. During the pandemic, the weekly newspaper has been printed and mailed out once a month; and WW weekly editions continue to be posted in PDFs on our website. We plan to print more frequently when it becomes safer, as the pandemic is resolved.

For an annual donation of $75, $100 or $300, members receive a year’s subscription with news articles and analyses of timely issues, and one, two or three free subscriptions, respectively, for friends. Members can receive our book, “What road to socialism?” (Notify us.) Or read it free at workers.org/books.

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

We’re grateful for your help in building Workers World! ☑
HIV/AIDS has its roots in European imperialism and the exploitation of African labor. The Congo, a then-colony known as the Belgian Congo, was used as a source of labor for the extraction of natural resources.

From 1885 until it won independence in 1960, the present Democratic Republic of Congo was a colony under Belgium monarchs and then its state. The peoples appropriated along with their land and opportunity to the Congo, settled largely in Léopoldville, where the sex-work industry was centralized. Due to the lack of proper health care, medicine and hygiene, diseases in this area were very common. Under these circumstances, the earliest form of HIV developed through mutation and transferral from the Simian Immunodeficiency Virus...the white Belgian colonizers traveled around and left the country, unknowingly infected. This resulted in a rapid transmission across countries and even continents.

As these industries grew, lining the pockets of the Belgian bourgeoisie while draining everything the Congolese workers had, another industry flourished: sex work. White Belgians, mostly men, traveling to the Congo, settled largely in Léopoldville, where the sex-work industry was centralized. Due to the lack of proper health care, medicine and hygiene, diseases in this area were very common. Under these circumstances, the earliest form of HIV developed through mutation and transferral from the Simian Immunodeficiency Virus.

HIV/AIDS in the U.S. prior to 1981

In 1969, Robert Rayford, a Black teenager in St. Louis, Mo., died of what doctors then deemed a “mysterious illness,” although they associated it with Kaposi’s sarcoma, which was later associated with HIV/AIDS. Samples of Rayford’s tissue were collected after his death and frozen for almost 20 years. In 1987, the samples were analyzed and tested positive for HIV/AIDS, retroactively making Rayford the first person in the U.S. known to die of AIDS.

Additionally, there are countless stories of people, largely in LGBTQ+ communities, who contracted or even died of HIV/AIDS in the 1970s. These stories are not well-documented, because of prejudice and the resulting lack of information surrounding the disease. Many who survived this plague and look back on it, however, often conclude that a friend, family member or lover who died sometime between the 1970s and 1981 from what was then a “mysterious illness,” actually died of AIDS.

Reparations for Africa now!

The peoples of Africa deserve colonial reparations due to the centuries-long plundering — by Europe, the U.S. and NATO-backed capitalist forces — of African lands, resources and the labor and very lives of its peoples. It is imperative that full reparations be paid for these colonial, neocolonial and imperialist crimes against humanity — including for the medical crises and plagues, like HIV/AIDS, that arose under this exploitation. These disgusting crimes — committed by capitalism and imperialism — must be put to death by socialism.

Part 3 will focus on the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the refusal of the Reagan administration to acknowledge it and early movement resistance to the plague.

Devon 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.

Lavender & Red

Cuba and HIV/AIDS

How to combat an epidemic

By Azra EL

Boston

This is an edited version of a talk given July 9 at a Workers World Party–Boston meeting on the theme “Cops and Colonizers Out of Pride.”

Pride 2021, when we celebrated the 52nd anniversary of the righteous Stonewall Rebellion, also rang with inspiring calls from the world over to lift the imperialist blockade of socialist Cuba. How are these struggles connected?

In the U.S., we have recently seen wave-after-wave of anti-trans legislation, which continues under President Joe Biden, who many eagerly voted for, duped by claims he was the candidate of the marginalized. Trans women are being shot out of dressing rooms, bombarded with death threats and murdered at alarming rates. All the while corporations merely change their advertisements, and then about-face to contribute large sums to antigay politicians.

But throughout the U.S., there have been signs of grassroots, worker-led reclaimations of Pride. Here in Boston, LGBTQ+ radicals led by Black Trans women have, for the second year in a row, organized the aptly named Trans Resistance march. Spitting in the eye of corporatized Pride, this action called for a return to the revolutionary spirit of Stonewall. Thousands gathered at Trans Resistance to celebrate and call for the end of Pride-for-profit, its history of capitulation to capitalist profiteers and its disgusting collaboration with cops.

This Pride month also saw another moment decades in the making. The countries of the United Nations, for the first time, approved a resolution calling for decriminalization of that calling for lifting the imperialist U.S. blockade of revolutionary Cuba. The blockade was put in place in 1962. This year, and typically, only two governments, the U.S. and Israel, voted against Cuba.

Cuba’s scientific socialism

After a revolutionary army led by Fidel Castro freed Cuba from the Yoke of Batista regime in 1959 and threw capitalist interests off the island, Cuba has been a growing and glowing beacon of human rights. Free health care, the elimination of homelessness, a nearly perfect literacy rate and a robust history of internationalism — from medical support to military aid — have all spoken to the continuing success of Cuba’s revolutionary project. U.S. imperialist threat from its beginning, Cuba has shown the promises of socialist science.

Despite expected difficulties during the beginnings of the Revolution, Cuba has worked tirelessly to confront anti-LGBT+ bigotry — a legacy of the colonial past — and to politically enshrine the human rights of LGBTQ+ people to the point of ensuring free access to gender-affirming treatments.

A brilliant measure of this commitment was the Cuban response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

In 1983 in the U.S., 3,422 deaths had already taken place due to AIDS. But it would be two years and 9,887 deaths before U.S. President Ronald Reagan would even utter the term “AIDS,” despite the rising death toll. Our country’s response began at the very moment the disease was recognized.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study in 1994 and visited the sanitoria himself: “They had the health and well-being of those with HIV/AIDS. Care in Cuba’s sanitoria

A charge of “quarantine” has been leveled against the Cuban sanitoria, and it must be emphasized that this word does not describe the sanitoria by a long shot. That charge equates Cuba’s approach to the outright demonic U.S. “quarantine gay community.” These were disgustingly exemplified in Baptist minister and politician Mike Huckabee’s homophobic rantings: “I feel homosexuality is an abhorrent, unnatural and sick lifestyle, and we now know it can pose a dangerous public health risk,” and “If the federal government is truly serious about doing something with the AIDS virus, we need to take steps that would isolate the carriers of this plague.”

Quarantine, as proposed under capitalism, would have been part of a system that left those with HIV/AIDS dead or barely surviving, left them jobless, homeless and without treatment. The reactionaries wanted to wash their hands of the disability and devastation their policies cause, forget about People With HIV/AIDS and condemn them to death — out of sheer hatred.

A dramatic example was the racist detention of Haitian refugees at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, in a prison on land occupied by the U.S. military. There HIV-infected “refugees” in deplorable conditions, were subjected to violence and repression by the U.S. military, deprived of proper medical care and left without any legal recourse of their rights. (Karma R. Chavez, “ACT UP, Haitian Migrants, and Alternative Memories of HIV/AIDS,” Quarterly Journal of Speech 88, Feb. 1, 2012)

In the sanitoria, those living with HIV/AIDS received housing, food, facilities for sport and exercise, entertainment and medical, psychological and social services — all at no cost. Further, they were given their full weekly wages by the government. (workers.org/books, Leslie Feinberg, Lavender and Red #99: “AIDS: Quarantine” in Cuba: Care and prevention, not repression)

Océano Manago, a same-gender-loving Black man travelled to Cuba to a 200-person delegation in August 1994 and visited the sanitoria herself: “They had 24-hour health care, the option of having family members, even a dog or a cat stay with them. Same-gender-loving and heterosexual couples living together at the complex is a common occurrence. “I asked people living there about the conditions in which they live. None were happy about having HIV or AIDS, but all were very appreciative of the care they were getting.” Manago chose to stay where they were guaranteed prepared food, a comfortable home and prompt medical attention,” Manago reported. “This particular center offered ambulatory care for those with jobs or who wanted to continue with school. To my knowledge there is nothing similar in the U.S.” (Cuba from a Black, Male, Same-Gender-Loving Perspective, Sonoma County Free Press, August 1994)

ACT UP fights AIDS catastrophe in the U.S.

In the U.S. measures to stop the HIV/AIDS epidemic have been won on the backs and bodies of the activists in ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power). Formed in 1987 in New York City, ACT UP focused on getting treatment into the hands of those living with HIV/AIDS. By the time of its founding, over 16,000 people had died from AIDS-related complications in the U.S. (factlv.org/statistics). ACT UP, the first drug to treat HIV/AIDS, was made available in 1987; ACT is an antiretroviral originally studied for use on cancer. Given its extremely expensive price, only those with good insurance were able to get what was considered a lifesaving treatment.

ACT UP was dedicated to civil disobedience, direct action and a cell-structure organizing system. In a lit- tle over two years, ACT UP was victorious in getting the price of AZT lowered, but the organization’s activism did not stop there. In recent years here in Boston, ACT UP has been raising hell in order to prevent cuts in funding for programs essential to slowing the spread of HIV and in assisting the seropositive.

Be like Cuba!

Cuts to HIV/AIDS funding are happening frequently in the U.S. Together with the prolific levels of racism, transphobia and drug-use stigma in this country, the rise in new infections is occurring in the most marginalized communities. Communities at highest risk for seroconversion in the U.S. are Black and Latinx gay men and trans women, and people who inject drugs.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study in 2016 estimated that one of every two Black gay men would become seropositive in their lifetimes. (imprisonedbythevirus.org) A 2020 CDC report on Black trans women in major U.S. cities found 62% had HIV. (tinyurl.com/4bj86tnb)

Racism and queerphobia play a distinct role in health care disparities. When you factor in homelessness and drug-use stigma, it becomes difficult to see any light at the end of the tunnel in the U.S. Even more daunting, COVID has added to the ever expanding evidence of the failure of this country’s health care system.

The U.S. government cannot combat a pandemic — especially not in a way that prioritizes the safety of the most marginalized.

It is abundantly clear that to overcome these and all injustices created by the primate of profit over people, we must become like Cuba. We must be fearless, resolute and revolutionary — and to coin a phrase I have heard tossed around here once or twice — We must build a workers’ world!

The writer is a trans lesbian, a stone butch, a revolutionary communist and an organizer with ACT UP.

Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba

By Leslie Feinberg

“Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba” is a compilation of 25 articles about same-sex love and sex/gender variance in Cuba’s pre- and post-revolutionary history. These articles make up parts 86 to 110 of the Lavender & Red series, which has run as a feature in Workers World weekly newspaper since the first article appeared in the June 3, 2004, issue.

Available as a FREE download at workers.org/books.
Haitian Revolution shook empires

By Makasi Motema

This slightly redacted article was originally published in Workers World/Mundo Obrero, Feb. 7, 2019.

In a Vodou ceremony led by Dutty Boukman in 1791, several hundred enslaved people swore to fight to the death against all systems of slavery and torture. The revolt that followed would shake the greatest empires of Europe and burn the slave society of Saint-Domingue to the ground. The ashes formed the first Black Republic in the Western Hemisphere and the first nation founded by a Successful slave rebellion: Haiti.

In the 18th century, Saint-Domingue — the western French-owned half of the island of Hispaniola — was the most lucrative colony in the Caribbean. Its primary export was sugar, which was extremely valuable. By 1780, Saint-Domingue was producing 40% of the sugar consumed in Europe.

The incredible profits were the product of incredible human suffering. Harvesting sugar cane was labor intensive, and enslaved people imported to the island in greater and greater numbers as sugar profits rose. By 1787, the colony was importing over 200,000 enslaved people per year. More than 60% of enslaved people on the island were African-born.

Enslaved people were worked to death and treated brutally if they resisted. Mortality rates were high — 50% of enslaved people died within a year of arriving in Saint-Domingue. But the businessmen and planters who had simply imported enslaved people rather than improve treatment.

In any slave society, sexual assault is rampant; as a result, many mixed-race children were produced. In Saint-Domingue, the French referred to them as “Coloreds.”

Meanwhile, enslaved Blacks observed the revolutionary ferment and planned to secure their own liberty. Historian Carolyn Fick argues that enslaved people held secret meetings every week throughout the summer of 1791.

The Haitian Revolution would never have been possible without the information network that connected Blacks throughout the island. Enslaved people who worked in the ports overheard the news from sailors and merchants. Through Black overseers and churches, news of revolution was spread throughout the island. Enslaved people were able to meet and coordinate their actions in the remote mountainous regions of the island. It was during these meetings that rumors spread of new laws passed in France. The possibility that reforms in treatment were coming, perhaps the banning of the whip and all other forms of torture, filled enslaved people with hope and courage. But if such reforms had been made, there was no evidence that the white masters planned to implement them. Drastic measures had to be taken, and the plot for revolution was born.

On Aug. 14, 1791, Black conspirators slipped back into their plantations in the night, killed their masters and took the instruments of their enslavement. Sugar cane fields are highly flammable; Blacks were able to set them ablaze. All the machinery on the sugar plantations was destroyed; the means of production were not merely seized but annihilated, so that the planter system could never return.

White citizens, who had retreated to the large port city of Cap-Français, looked out on a landscape of smoke and ash. In the midst of this explosion of liberty, the white slaves of Saint-Domingue had done little to prepare for the possibility of a slave insurrection, even though a few captured Blacks had confessed to the plot several weeks prior.Blinded by white supremacy, the colonists could not imagine that “their” enslaved people would fight as fiercely and bravely as any Europeans to free themselves from oppression. Angry and confused white colonists descended into rioting and lynching any Blacks they could find in the city.

But the insurrection could not be stopped. France effectively lost control of Saint-Domingue in those first few months and never regained it. Why?

What followed were several years of both guerrilla and conventional warfare. Several leaders emerged from this struggle: The most famous was Toussaint Louverture. Louverture had been born into slavery under a lenient master. He learned to read and studied European classics. He was likely tutored in the ways of African warfare by his father, reported to have been an African chief. By the time the revolution broke out, Louverture had been free for many years and worked as a supervisor on his former master’s plantation. Louverture joined the growing insurgency, and his education and ability resulted in his rapid appointment as a rebel commander.

As the French Revolution sent shock-waves throughout Europe, the surrounding monarchies declared war on France one by one. Britain invaded Saint-Domingue from the west, hoping to snatch the most valuable colony in the Caribbean while France was embroiled in chaos. Spain, already holding the eastern half of the island (Santo Domingo) and, seeing an easy opportunity to undermine the revolution in France, began supplying the Black insurgents with weapons and supplies. This encouraged many rebels, including Louverture, to join the Spanish and resist the French during 1792 and 1793.

Forces allied with France to resist the monarchists. But a hammer and anvil, Lenin wrote in the “War of Knives,” was needed to crush the empire. And Napoleon Bonaparte, who dominated Saint-Domingue from France, had won the island back for France. This made Louverture a valuable asset for the colonial government. The white members of the French Civil Commission, who dominated Saint-Domingue from Cap-Français, relied on Louverture to enforce their decrees and maintain order in the colony. The Black people had won their freedom, and most were content to live as subjects of France, so long as France respected that.

But the plantation owners, who had been made refugees by the insurrection, continued to plead their cause in France. As the forces of counterrevolution took hold in Europe, the exiled colonists gained more sway. When Napoleon Bonaparte seized power in 1799, the proponents of slavery in Saint-Domingue were granted a sympathetic ear.

During the period of 1795-1800, contradictions mounted in Saint-Domingue. Although the Black population was free, the French Civil Commissioners were eager to restore the profits from sugar exports. They mandated that Blacks be dropped on the plantations to work as paid laborers. The Black masses resented this sequestration, but there was little they could do. Meanwhile, the Black leadership sought to appease the French. There was only one nation in Europe which would tolerate free Blacks in such a wealthy colony, so Black generals, Louverture included, enforced the labor laws demanded by France.

There was also a division of race and class between the Blacks and the Coloreds. The Coloreds believed that their wealth and education made them better suited to governing and resenting seeing formerly enslaved Black people in positions of power. These contradictions culminated in the “War of Knives” in 1799. Instigated by Revolutionary French Commissioner [Gabriel] Hédouville, the most prominent Colored leader Rigaud rebelled against Louverture’s mostly Black forces.

Rigaud’s southern army was outnumbered, but he counted on aid from the British. That aid never came. It was not long before Louverture’s most dangerous lieutenant, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, moved south and crushed Rigaud.

‘Haiti’ is born

Louverture consolidated his power, becoming master of Saint-Domingue. He devoted himself to rebuilding the plantation economy. But he was determined seeing formerly enslaved Black people in positions of power. These contradictions culminated in the “War of Knives” in 1799. Instigated by Revolutionary French Commissioner [Gabriel] Hédouville, the most prominent Colored leader Rigaud rebelled against Louverture’s mostly Black forces.

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Fighting continued through 1802. By the time the fighting stopped, 500,000 to 1 million enslaved people had died. But the Black population was not without resistance. The Black champions of continued resistance to embargoes, occupation, dictatorship, U.S. intervention and global capital.

Available as a FREE download at tinyurl.com/IACbooks

Haiti: A Slave Revolution

200 years after 1804

Published in 2004, “Haiti: A Slave Revolution” uses art, poetry, photos and essays to document the victory of an enslaved people who defeated a mighty empire without racial discrimination. It encouraged racial equality in a new constitution and declared himself governor for life.

But in France, Napoleon Bonaparte saw...
The United States began its military occupation of Haiti over a century ago, sending an armed force ashore on July 28, 1915, just south of Port-au-Prince. Somewhat earlier, a raiding party of U.S. Marines stole Haiti’s gold reserve of about $300,000, and turned it over to First National City Bank in New York—now Citibank.

Haitians — on the island and in its diaspora — have been fighting for over 200 years to resist forces of colonizing enslavement, imperialist racism and capitalist exploitation.

**Historical background to the occupation**

Haiti was the second country in the Western Hemisphere to gain its independence. After a 12-year-long struggle against France ended in 1804, slavery was eradicated and the slave owners expelled from the country.

The U.S. had sent its first regiment to Haiti in 1793. By 1861, $750,000 worth of food and arms — to the slave owners in Haiti to put down the revolt. At that time, $750,000 was big money. The U.S. Constitution did not recognize slavery, and U.S. leaders held up Greece and Rome, whose economies and societies depended on slavery, as models for the state they were building.

In the 19th century, U.S. owners of enslaved people were extremely worried that Haiti’s ex-slaves would spread rebellion, and 10,000 white owners and families fled Haiti to the U.S. where enslavement was still legal; mainstream coverage of the revolution was extensive.

The U.S. didn’t recognize Haiti as an independent country for 60 years, actively working to keep Haiti diplomatically and economically isolated. Haiti’s “original sin,” in the opinion of many Haitian historians and activists, was becoming the only country to have had a successful slave revolution.

The occupying Marine forces came from the U.S. South, where anti-Haitian sentiment and racism were at high levels. The Marines forced Haitian peasants, the vast majority of the population at that time, into workshops to build roads, bridges and dams. Their treatment was so rotten that it provided the impetus for a revolt of the cacos, armed peasant guerrillas, under the leadership of Charles Pérard and Benoît Batraville. This revolt lasted, even after the execution of Pérard and Batraville, until 1921. After the end of the armed resistance, popular opposition, sparked by nationalist students and by the formation of the Haitian Communist Party under Jacques Roumain, intensified until the U.S. forced its withdrawal in 1934.

The first opposition to the U.S. invasion came from the Black community in the U.S. and was part of the NAACP’s international work. According to Mary Renda’s book “Taking Haiti,” the U.S. Communist Party, in its attempt to mobilize allied groups, played a prominent part in organizing this opposition. The occupation of Haiti and of the Dominican Republic were issues in the U.S. presidential campaigns of the 1920s.

Continuing U.S. control in Haiti

The withdrawal of the U.S. Marines didn’t really end U.S. control over Haiti. The National Guard, which became the Haitian army, was formed and trained by the Pentagon. It supported the reign of the oppressive Presidents Duvalier, father and son [Francois and Jean-Claude, respectively], from 1957 to 1986. It then sponsored, maneuvered and supported various military regimes until the elections that brought Jean-Bertrand Aristide into the presidency in 1991. Aristide, a proponent of liberation theology, was Haiti’s first democratically elected president. The U.S. supported and helped organize two coups that finally forced him from office in 2004, through kidnapping and exile.

From 2004 [to 2017], a United Nations military force called Minustah occupied Haiti, furnishing a ready-made excuse for U.S. troops, which could be quickly sent in if Washington felt it necessary. For example, 25,000 U.S. troops arrived a few days after the earthquake of 2010 wiped out the U.N. command.

Beyond exercising military and political rule over Haiti, U.S. rulers want to humiliate it, pretending it can’t run its own affairs without outside assistance, and discount and deprecate its culture.

The Haitian progressive movement has organized protests of 100,000 people or more in Port-au-Prince and nationwide, even though most Haitians live without reliable electricity or telephone service. They can certainly organize themselves. Long live a free and independent Haiti!

For more information, see the book “Haiti: A Slave Revolution,” available as a PDF at tinyurl.com/IACBooks.

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**Haitian Revolution shook empires**

Continued from page 6

Saint-Domingue as the launching point for a new North American empire. He proposed an endless round of attacks that would never end but that would consume the profits of the slave economy that only a slave economy could produce. And he resisted the Black general who proposed to rule Haiti according to its own laws and proclaimed the 1801 Saint-Domingue constitution and the 1804 Haitian constitution without his approval. In 1805, Napoleon sent his brother-in-law, Général Charles Leclerc, with 40,000 French troops to oust L’ouverture and restore white rule.

The result was a war where disease, a veteran Black army and ceaseless guerrilla warfare devastated the French forces, leaving only about 8,000 survivors to return to France. L’ouverture would not live to see the end of the war; he would be captured by Leclerc and die in a French prison in 1805. It was left to Dessalines and the masses of armed free Blacks to beat back the French and establish an independent Haiti on Jan. 1, 1804.

In choosing the name “Haiti,” the name given the island by its original Taino inhabitants, Dessalines repudiated not only slavery, but 300 years of colonialism. Today, as we see Haiti struggle under the oppression of neo-colonial forces, we should remember that this small island nation was founded as a symbol of resistance and liberation. It is exactly that symbol that imperialists have always sought, yet failed, to destroy.
Unequal justice in Philadelphia

By Betsy Piette
Philadelphia

As protests over the police murder of George Floyd engulfed the U.S. in spring 2020, in Philadelphia two polar-opposite demonstrations took place.

On the afternoon of June 1, thousands of demonstrators protesting police brutality spilled onto the I-676 highway in Center City. Police responded to these peaceful protestors with a barrage of rubber bullets, tear gas and pepper spray directed at individuals’ faces, while they freely used their police batons. Several people were injured, and hundreds were arrested with many still facing charges.

Later that day, in Philadelphia’s Fishtown neighborhood, a group of white vigilantes, armed with baseball bats, walking clubs and tools, threatened, harassed and assaulted peaceful counter-protesters. They claimed to be “protecting their neighborhood” from nonexistent looters and rioters.

Over 60 occupants called to report the threats and attacks of this white mob. Yet police who showed up did nothing to intervene. When members of the vigilante group attacked and injured two people—a protester and a reporter—police stood by, watching the assaults, and made no arrests, for fear of retaliation in the area, with several seen chatting with the vigilantes.

Washington World spoke with Fishtown resident Scott Williams who described the white-supremacist vigilantes: “People in the neighborhood, especially people of color, were terrorized, and as a result many moved out. They saw white guys with baseball bats, roaming around the neighborhood looking to beat up people of color and people associated with the Black Lives Matter movement.”

“We were demanding justice for our black community for the death of Breonna Taylor,” Williams explained. “Over the next two nights, thousands of people marched through the neighborhood in massive, spontaneous, pro-BLM demonstrations. Local small business and property owners were [the people] who were defending the police. It wasn’t poor white racists; it was rich white guys including some gentrifiers, and they were exposed.”

With little fanfare, weeks after the attack, one of the vigilantes, George Graf, 36, was charged with conspiracy, aggravated assault and reckless endangerment for punching and kicking (PBS) WHYY producer Jon Ehriens who was videotaping the scene. Graf was charged with felony criminal conspiracy to engage in aggravated assault. Graf pleaded guilty to simple assault twice before; one case involved anti-Asian violence.

Why did it take weeks for Graf to be held to account for his violent attacks?

[Unanswered questions]

At the same June 1, 2020, racist march, Richie Goodwin repeatedly punched Black Lives Matter supporter Matt Williams near the police station, while police stood by. Williams and his partner Kara Khan were biking home after being tear-gassed by police during the I-676 protest. As they neared the area where the white vigilantes were gathered, someone threw a water bottle at Williams’ head and yelled obscenities and racial slurs at him and Khan. Goodwin then shoved Williams off his bike and repeatedly punched him in the head until his ear and face bled.

Finally, on July 7, 2021, Goodwin—brother of a 26th District Philadelphia police officer—was arrested for the attack on Williams and charged with assault and recklessly endangering another person.

There are many unanswered questions about this incident. Goodwin has a history of violence. He has previously served prison time for fatally punching a man during a bar brawl in 2008 but was out on probation by 2012. Why did it take over a year for Goodwin to be charged for beating Williams and only after he turned himself in?

Why was Goodwin out on probation in less than four years on a murder conviction—when some Pennsylvania incarcerated people are serving decades in prison on much less serious charges? Demetrius Grant, a Black man incarcerated in SCI Albion, and a regular contributor to Workers World’s Tear Down the Walls pages, is serving his 28th year for simple assault.

Unequal justice

Many Black Lives Matter protestors were arrested during the demonstrations in 2020. Several, including BLM activist Anthony Smithy, have since been charged with federal felonies that carry heavy possible sentences for allegedly setting police cars on fire. If convicted, the mandatory minimum sentence for this property damage is seven years.

But again this year, late on the evening of July 3, Philadelphia police stood by, doing nothing to intervene, when a group of 200 white-supremacist men, marching through Center City, attacked and brutalized people who challenged their right to threaten and endanger the people of this city.

¡Liberación Sí! ¡Traslados No!

Liberation Yes! Transfers No!

After years of protests, York Prison, near Philadelphia, will no longer be housing ICE detainees after Aug. 12. But instead of releasing those incarcerated, prison authorities are sending them to other states, far away from their families and their legal service providers. Members and supporters of Movement of Immigrant Leaders in Pennsylvania (MILPA), JUNTOS, New Sanctuary Movement, Amnistía Internacional and Viet Lead protested July 9 at Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) offices in Philadelphia. Protesters demanded the detained be released— not transferred—so they can continue with their cases outside of detention, alongside their loved ones.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

SCI Phoenix: Hunger strikers in solitary win demands

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

Prisoners in solitary confinement who went on a hunger strike June 23 in the State Correctional Institution at Phoenix — Pennsylvania’s largest prison — ended their difficult struggle July 6 with a stunning victory.

According to Levittown Now, more than 20 incarcerated people were demanding the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC) “acknowledge that they are being held in a currently undefined ‘intensive management unit’ (IMU) and provide a policy and guidelines in the department handbook for it; provide people better access to the unit with programming and mental health services; give incarcerated people a path out of solitary confinement; and end long-term solitary confinement times.”

Some of the strikers have been held in solitary for decades. Several were transferred to Pennsylvania following an uprising at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center in Delaware in 2017. They have been held in solitary since being transferred from Delaware, where solitary confinement for long periods of time is not allowed.

Solidarity, not solitary

On July 6, supporters organized by the Human Rights Coalition held a protest outside SCI Phoenix. “They’re in a cell in the size of your bathroom, and there’s no rules, no regulations, no place for this IMU program,” said Patricia Vickers of HRC. “No rules to say how often you can get out, no rules to say how many phone calls you get, no rules to say how often you get a shower.”

According to the Abolitionist Law Center, organizers celebrated three immediate wins: The day of the protest, PA DOC Secretary John Wetzel announced he was signing an agreement that everyone misconduct-free for a year will transition off the “Restricted Release List,” an indefinite solitary confinement program. Several hunger strikers were then transferred from RRL. An IMU Handbook has been written and will be issued soon. (tinyurl.com/ ydpdcw, twitter, July 7)

A state bill, HB1073, which would prohibit the use of solitary confinement for certain groups like pregnant women as well as people younger than 21 years old or older than 70, was introduced in the Pennsylvania state legislature in March. The proposed law would also restrict the length of solitary confinement for all inmates to no more than 35 days, as recommended by the United Nations. (tinyurl.com/pltfmd3c4)

Prolonged solitary confinement is a form of torture that has long-lasting, detrimental effects on mental health. It is cruel, inhuman, degrading and racist.

The successful hunger strikers at SCI Phoenix are an example of how solidarity can win in the global struggle to end solitary confinement once and for all! (PHOTO: K. PAYNTER)

Marching in response to white vigilantes, Fishtown residents raised fists in solidarity with protests against the death of George Floyd, June 3, 2020.
No ‘middle ground’ Abolish the death penalty!

By Mirinda Crissman and Ted Kelly

President Joe Biden is under intense pressure from activists around the country to abolish the federal death penalty after a string of brutal killings and state executions. Finally, President Biden made a statement on the end of his predecessor’s first and only term. President Donald Trump went on a killing spree and had 13 people legally lynched in the last six months of his presidency between July 2020 and January 2021. Prior to those executions, there had not been a federal execution since 2003.

“The pace of [Trump’s] federal executions has no historical precedent,” said Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, in a press release Nov. 30, 2020. “The last time more than one person was executed during a transition period takes us back to Grover Cleveland’s first presidency in the end of the 1880s.”

Among the executions Trump carried out, the death penalty killing spree was the only woman on death row — and Navajo Nation citizen Lezmond Mitchell, despite formal protests by the Navajo Nation and even the prosecutor who had convicted Mitchell.

Trump’s federal killing spree did not happen until term’s end because he was not able to have the justice in procuring the necessary lethal injection drugs. According to Reuters, it took three years to establish a supply chain to assemble the poisonous cocktail for the lethal federal injections. (tinyurl.com/h0v3xdbh)

It has been difficult for the U.S. government to procure drugs for executions in the 21st century, largely due to opposition from European activists. Michael Tarn reported on these events for the AP on June 18: “[J]Pharmaceutical companies in the 2000s began banning the use of their products for executions, saying they were meant to save lives, not take them.”

“Some states have refurbished electric chairs as standbys for when lethal drugs are unavailable. On June 16, South Carolina ended its federal death row, now the only state that could set up public firing squads. The to disbelief of many, Arizona went so far as to acquire materials to make cyanide hydrogen — the poisonous gas deployed by Nazis to kill 865,000 Jews at Auschwitz — for use in the state’s death chamber.” (tinyurl.com/29ayf5yj)

Biden is the warden of “Imprimis Nation”

President Biden is not just silent or “dragging his feet” on his campaign promise to end the federal death penalty. The Biden administration has already insisted to the Supreme Court that the federal death penalty be reinstated for Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, 20 years old when arrested for his role in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. (tinyurl.com/14q2yews)

Biden is offering no more than a suspension that can be ended when the next president takes power. A moratorium or suspension of federal executions does not mean anyone’s life has been or will be spared. Even if Biden doesn’t order a single execution, he leaves the death penalty as an option in the future, effectively handing a successor a loaded gun. Even to argue for its use as a consequence for “the worst of the worst” crimes still means the U.S. capitulates to the structures of state and society by deciding what constitutes “the worst.”

Just weeks after Biden’s January inauguration, Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) criticized the Democrat for his apparent betrayal of earlier promises to abolish the death penalty.

State-sanctioned murder is not justice, no matter how heinous the crime. President Biden has repeatedly expressed his opposition to the death penalty and has the historic opportunity to finally bring an end to this inhumane, racist and flawed practice,” Pressley said at a Feb. 4 press conference. “I am deeply disappointed that the Department of Justice would move in conflict with the President’s stated policy position and abandon promises made to voters.” (tinyurl.com/rumz46k8)

Prior to his campaign promise to abolish the racist death penalty, Biden helped write the infamous 1994 crime bill that added 60 new federal crimes for which a person could be sentenced to life in prison. (deathpenaltyinfo.org)

For more information, the caucus can be reached at workers.org    July 15, 2021    Page 9

Yudelovich is a DJRC caucus activist with neurodiversity

PHOTO: THE TEXAS DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION MOVEMENT

Support for abolition grows

Public support for the death penalty has grown in the past decade, with the majority of people in the U.S. opposing its use. (deathpenaltyinfo.org)

Next up for the caucus is to proceed with the Defense for the Death Penalty and its actual use has dramatically declined over the last decade in a number of states. The places where it persists are in the U.S. South, largely in states where Black Reconstruction efforts were beaten back mercilessly by racist counterrevolutionaries.

In total state murders, Texas leads with 752 executions, followed by Virginia, Oklahoma, Florida, Missouri, Georgia and Alabama with 113, 112, 99, 90, 76 and 67 executions, respectively.

Virginia made history this year as the first former Confederate state to abolish the racist practice via their state legislature. This is a huge step forward.

But no one state can rescue every prisoner from a state-sanctioned murder. Only the U.S. president has the power to commute every death sentence with a single stroke of a pen.

Abolish the life sentence and end the death penalty

The abolition of the death penalty is one necessary step in dismantling the entire prison industrial complex. But it must be remembered that many thousands of people are still sentenced to life without parole. (or other words, they are sentenced to die by way of prison conditions. At least 2,715 people have died since March 2020 after contracting COVID-19. (tinyurl.com/0php3yjx)

The Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party demands that the Biden administration take immediate action to end federal death row and end all death row executions, but to abolish the death penalty nationwide.

There is no acceptable “middle ground” position to take on a matter of life or death.

Disabled people demand wage equality and benefits

The Disability-Justice and Rights Caucus of Workers World Party holds a 2nd Sunday Dialogue by zoom every month. On July 11, at the sixth of these dynamic sessions, DJRC speakers discussed important struggles to get access and fair wages for disabled people.

DJRC activist Renée Imperato related how New York City’s outdoor dining expansion during the COVID-19 pandemic invoked many social contradictions. The reckless rush to open up the city economy, in hope of saving the collapsing restaurant industry, tore to pieces sidewalk- and street-accessible businesses. Finally, Princess Harmony reported the closing of the 2nd Sunday Dialogue building at the annual March to Abolish the Death Penalty in 2011. —workers.org —workers.org
Let Cuba live!

Continued from page 1

away in police cars and other vehicles. The U.S. is rarely excoriated by the media for “limiting dissent,” despite numerous arrests, assaults and even killings of protesters by police last summer, and despite 34 state legislatures considering bills that drastically curtail the First Amendment right to protest. The anti-Cuba bias is manifested in another way: the media’s failure to address the root cause of the shortages of necessities faced by the Cuban people. It is the six-decade-old U.S. blockade, tightened multiple times by the Torricelli Act, the Helms-Burton Act, and more recent moves by the Trump administration that President Joe Biden shows no signs of ameliorating. This web of restrictions under the blockade regime prevents countries from trading with Cuba if they seek trade relations with the U.S.

The U.S. economic war on Cuba

As Cuba stated to the United Nations before a June 23 vote on ending the blockade: “In the last four years, the Government of the United States has added more than 240 coercive measures against the Cuban people and its Government which remain in effect. These measures are not mere attempts to frighten the people, but in methods, some of them unprecedented, that have escalated the economic war against Cuba to extreme levels, as seen in the shortages that are part of daily life for every Cuban.” (misiones.minrex.gob.cu)

Only the U.S. and the apartheid state of Israel opposed the resolution, which for the 29th time left the U.S. isolated on this question, with 184 countries voting to end the blockade.

A prime example is an issue reportedly driving the protests: lack of access to COVID vaccination. Under the blockade regime, U.S. pharmaceutical companies cannot sell vaccines to Cuba, but Cuba has developed its own vaccines against COVID-19. Both Abdala, and Soberana 02 in tandem with Soberana Plus, show an efficacy rate of over 90%. The vaccine research has not generated one dollar in profits; all of it was conducted for public good under Cuba’s socialized health care system.

Yet Cuba needs syringes to administer the vaccine! And, due to the U.S. blockade, the country cannot buy them from its neighbor 90 miles away. Cuba solidarity activists in Canada and the U.S. have launched a campaign to raise funds to make up for a shortfall of 20 million syringes. (ghpartners.org)

This is but one example of the innumerable hardships imposed by the blockade that affect every aspect of life, from food production to medical care to combating climate change. Difficulties have been compounded by the pandemic, which in Cuba like everywhere, has made it unsafe to perform many necessary jobs.

The U.S. blockade is essentially an act of war aimed at destroying Cuba as a beacon of socialist construction and revolutionary internationalism.

Cuba has challenged the U.S. with instigating the protests, and Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez called on the people to come into the streets. “We know that there are revolutionary masses confronting anti-revolutionary groups. We will not accept that any mercenaries and sellouts of the U.S. empire will provoke destabilization in our people,” said Díaz-Canel Bermúdez.

Late on the night of July 11, multiple videos were posted on twitter by Cubans of thousands of revolutionary taking the streets in Havana and around the island, chanting “I am Fidel.”

Break the blockade! Long live the Cuban Revolution! ☐

COVID-19 and capitalism

Is the COVID-19 virus on the way out? Is the U.S. government taking appropriate steps to eliminate this disease?

To even begin to answer these questions, the first fact to understand about the COVID-19 pandemic is that pandemics affect everyone in the world. All parts of today’s world are interconnected by the globalized economic supply chain. Only by eliminating the virus worldwide, as was done with smallpox 44 years ago, will everyone be safe from the disease, which has already killed 4 million people and disrupted the world economy.

Once COVID-19 spreads in any population anywhere in the world, variants of the virus will arise. Any dominant variant will eventually reenter those countries that have vaccinated their population. Thus, people in the imperialist countries, mostly in North America and Europe, whose leaders have monopolized possession of vaccines to the detriment of poorer countries, will still be vulnerable.

U.S. imperialism’s political leaders serve the interests of giant transnational monopolies, protecting and increasing their profits. Because of this, they are also equipped to guide the world or even the country out of this COVID crisis.

The drive of the imperialist governments to protect so-called intellectual property rights through enforcing patents is in direct contradiction with the need of humanitarians for access to lifesaving technology, in this case access to vaccines. The practices of the imperialist world prioritize the profits of Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, et al, above the need to quickly maximize the production, shipments and distribution of vaccines.

Capitalist states uphold the “intellectual property” of the monopolies, even though government funds financed the development of the vaccines and often government laboratories are part of the research.

China, on the contrary, whose priority is protection of capitalist profits, has offered to share its technology and aid other countries in producing any of the seven vaccines it believes are effective in countering COVID-19. By that date, two-thirds of the adult population of the U.S. had received at least one dose of the vaccine, only a few points short of Biden’s 70% goal. Compared to the anti-scientific approach of the administration, which poisoned the attitudes of a large section of the population and contributed to the death of hundreds of thousands of people— the Biden approach seemed intelligent.

It was a low bar for comparisons. The Biden group as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention faced the pressures of the ruling class to reopen economic activity sooner rather than later. What followed was the government’s rapid abandonment of precautions meant to slow the spread of the disease, precautions that had at least taken root in parts of the country. There is ruling-class pressure to abandon supplementary unemployment payments, which have allowed some workers to avoid working in dangerous conditions.

The government and CDC advice has led to dropping much of the effort to mandate mask-wearing—simple for most people—and more confining measures, such as restricting large gatherings or mandating social-distancing in indoor events. In parts of the country where vaccination rates are low, new COVID-19 cases and deaths continue.

Making vaccines safely accessible to everyone is necessary. This includes all migrant workers, who must face no negative consequences based on their immigration status. Also necessary are outreach, education and easy geographical access to get doses— which now exist in quantity within the U.S.

Zigzagging on these questions by the government will give an opening for the Trumpites— who are opportunists and will seize any question that can be used to discredit their Democratic Party opponents.

The more delicate and truly debatable question about resuming in-person schooling has left much confusion and hostility. No children under 12 can be vaccinated yet, and parents and school staff are divided about resuming in-person classes.

The lesson of all these points is that the capitalist organization of society, prioritizing competition among the people and maximizing profits for the monopolies, makes monopoly capitalism incapable of handling and controlling global crises such as that brought about by COVID-19. It is one more reason to fight for a socialist world. ☐

El que no trabaje (por un salario bajo) no comerá

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a trabajar antes de que expiraran las prestaciones. (CBS News, 2 de junio)

Estos políticos están realmente tratando de obligar a la gente a trabajar por salarios bajos. Si $300 dólares cominados con su cheque de desempleo normal—como máximo el 70% de su paga semanal media—suman más de lo que ganaban trabajando 40 horas, eso significa que no ganaban más de 15 dólares por hora antes de la pan- demia. Muchos ganaban mucho menos.

Y si trabajaban para una cadena de comida rápida, un jefe ganaba mucho más. El director general de McDonald’s, Chris Kempczinski, ganó casi $110 millones de dólares el año pasado. El pobre director general de Wendy’s ganó apenas $6,7 millones de dólares. Pero José Cil, director general de RBH —la empresa matriz de Popeye’s, Burger King y Tim Horton’s— tiene un sueldo de $120 millones de dólares!

La pregunta que se ha calderilla comparada con el jefe de Amazon, Jeff Bezos, un centibillonario (que vale $100.000 millones de dólares) por partida doble.

Ahora estos jefes asquerosamente ricos y sus secuaces políticos tienen un mensaje para los trabajadores: Si no os sometéis a nuestra despiadada explotación y trabajáis por salarios bajos, no comedáis. Ni tendréis asistencia sanitaria. O mantén un techo sobre tu cabeza.

¡Ya basta! Triplicad el salario mínimo. No a los recortes en las prestaciones por desempleo, ni ahora ni en septiembre! ☐


El que no trabaje (por un salario bajo) no comerá
By Martha Grevatt

Robert David Castillo Mejía, accused by prosecutors of “mastery killing” the assassination of beloved Honduran environ- mentalist and Indigenous leader Berta Cáceres, was found guilty of homicide July 5 by a three-judge panel.

Cáceres was the leader of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH). At the time of her killing, March 3, 2016, COPINH was resisting the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam project on the Galápagos River, an indigenous water source, on mic- drinking water and a sacred waterway for the Indigenous Lenca people.

Castillo Mejía was the manager of the DESA corporation and was supervising the dam’s construction.

In 2018, seven paid hit men were found shot to death in Mexico, including one dressed as a woman and a Mexican supporter of COPINH. A mountain of evidence pre- sented to the judge in the trial of Castillo Mejía he arranged the assassination and paid off the hit men. Analogous to the conviction of Elliott Fly’s hit man, Darryl Hunt, the verdict in this trial represented for COPINH “a step toward breaking the impunity pact.”

Since this 2016, a broad-based grassroots group against democratically elected President Manuel “Mel” Zelaya in 2009, impunity has been the rule not the exception for those who torture and murder popular leaders. Many people involved in assassinations, includ- ing Castillo Mejía, received training in the U.S. — often at the desegregated School of the Americas (now the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation).

The chain of command in Cáceres’ murder goes higher than Castillo Mejía. A statement jointly issued by COPINH, and the mother and children of Cáceres states: “We reaffirm that the Berta Cáceres Justice Cause [campaign] in Honduras does not wind down with the acquittal of Castillo Mejía and Jacobo Ávila and other persons and institutions involved.”

The Atala Zablah family of Honduran oligarchs owns DESA as well as FICOHSA, the finance capital behind the Agua Zarca project. “It’s them or us,” the Global Energy Board members, Pedro Atala and Jacobo Zablah, reportedly said in October 2015, referring to COPINH. No member of the family has been charged in Cáceres’ killing.

The bank has hired former House Rep. Alan Wheat to lobby against the Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act in the U.S. Congress. The Act would prevent funding of Honduran police and military, “until such time as human rights viola- tions by Honduran state security forces cease and their perpetrators are brought to justice.”

Cáceres’ defence of nature, the Lenca people

This writer had the priv- ilege of meeting Berta Cáceres in November 2013 in Honduras, while represent- ing the International Action Center as a human rights observer during the presi- dential elections. Berta was stolen by the U.S.-supported right-wing candidate, Juan Orlando Hernández. In the time leading up to the meeting with U.S. solidarity activists, Cáceres had been incognito due to death threats and an arrest warrant against her.

Cáceres explained how the Lenca were being evicted from their own ancestral land to give transnational corporations “concessions” to own rivers and exploit resources including gold, iron, platinum and silver. Their territory has been “mil- itarized” by the coup regime and the U.S. military, which has built bases inside the Lenca region.

Cáceres told us that the Lenca today have “inher- ited an entire history of rebellion against colonial- 1ism” and are now “in a life- and-death struggle.”

The leader of COPINH spoke passionately and poetically about the rebellion against capi- talism for its “pervasive notion of giving nature a dollar amount.”

In 2005, Cáceres was the recipient of the Goldman Environmental Prize. The strug- gle began by her and COPINH continues under the leadership of her daughters Bertha and Laura Zúñiga Cáceres.

Verdict won through struggle

Throughout the three-month trial of Castillo, thousands of Hondurans demonstrated out- side demanding justice, while a “Campamento Feminista Viva Berta” kept up an encampment until the judges handed down the verdict.

“We have been sustaining food, the different ways of being and relating, the effort to stay day and night, saying that Berta is multiplied in our lives and that this is also justice for her,” the Camapemento said in its final statement.

Since the 2016 assassination, a popular saying has been “Berta did not die, she multiplied.” The verdict was achieved, the statement added, because of the Honduran Resistance “taking out full that fall of racism, classism and anti- Indianism from the Supreme Court of Justice building, to the street, to the square that we have occupied for 90 days today to talk about the movements, the injustices, the struggles, the desire to change this country.”

Laura Zúñiga Cáceres, Berta’s young- est daughter and the only family member allowed inside court, stated: “This is a col- lective victory, and my message to other communities is this: The fight is hard, but in the end, as my mom said, that we are going to triumph, and we are going to dismantle the violence against our people.” (The Guardian, July 5)

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Stop privatizing Puerto Rico!

The U.S.-imposed Fiscal Control Board continues to try to impose all possible neoliberal policies of privatization on the people of Puerto Rico. Although the people have continued to fight back, most recently against LUMA Energy, the pri- vate contractor that took over operation of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), we have prepared a letter to the U.S. Congress, requesting an investigation about the allocation of billions of federal funds to this company. We ask all organi- zations, institutions — and all people who can — to endorse the letter at this link: tinurl.it/abzaxvb.

Dear Representative Grijalva:

We urge the House Natural Resources Committee to undertake an urgent investi- gation into LUMA Energy’s role in the decision to privatize the utility.

• Is LUMA prepared to manage more than $14 billion in FEMA funds for the rebuild of the grid?

• What is the current status and level of training of LUMA’s workforce?

• What agreements have already been reached between FEMA, HUD and LUMA?

• Why does the federal Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico (FOMBA) continue to allow FEMA and HUD funding to this company? Is this a boon to LUMA’s corporate affiliates?

• What agreements will FEMA and HUD take to ensure that its funds are used to further Biden administration climate policy and to prevent the contracting process for such funds becoming a boon to LUMA’s corporate affiliates?

• What agreements have already been reached between FEMA, HUD, LUMA Energy and/or PREPA?

• Why does the federal Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico continue to support this contract, which has increased costs for the Commonwealth government and does not further the island’s renewable energy goals?

• How did this unknown consortium win the contract to operate Puerto Rico’s electrical grid against other bidders with greater experience in managing electrical sys- tems? What role did Quanta Energy Services’ federal lobbying play in the award of the contract?

We hope that your committee will undertake an urgent investigation to provide the people of Puerto Rico with answers to these questions.

In San Juan, Puerto Ricans protested the privatization of energy under LUMA Energy. June 1, 2021.

PHOTO: ALEJANDRO GRANADILLO

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Intolerance tras hoja de higo

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Estambul y en el corazón de la propia Roma, las relaciones homonegativas se aceptaban como expresiones válidas de una capacidad dada por Dios para amar y competir con los de su mismo sexo. Una vez que podía celebrarse, honrarse y bendéc-irse tanto en nombre de, como a través de la Eucaristía en presencia de Jesucristo”. (Irish Times, 11 de febrero de 2008)

Antes de la llegada del colonialismo de los colonos, las culturas indígenas reco- nocían muchos géneros y relaciones de pareja.

En realidad, el tribunal está validando la larga historia de misoginia patriarcal y de opresión contra el colectivo LGBTIQ+S+ enraizado en la ley y la cultura dominante. LUMA no hizo ni la mayor parte de la previ- sa funcionamiento del Puerto Rican Electric Power Authority (PREPA).

As a result of failing to hire a trained and experienced workforce, LUMA has been unable to properly manage the grid, putting lives and property at risk due to prolonged outages and voltage fluctuations that have caused fires and tens of thousands of dollars in damages.

Under the contract, LUMA receives a fixed fee of more than $100 mil- lion per year to manage the grid, regardless of its performance.

LUMA has disregpected the Puerto Rican legislature, forcing it to go to court to try to compel LUMA to provide information on how many linemen the company has, where its Puerto Rico call centers are located and other basic infor- mation. As you know, LUMA also failed to appear to testify at a June 30 House Natural Resources Subcommittee hearing on the AES coal plant in Puerto Rico.

This debacle would not be occurring if not for the influx of billions of dollars in FEMA and HUD CDBG [Community Development Block Grant] funds to Puerto Rico. Under its contract, LUMA Energy will manage and subcontract the federal funds without having to invest any of its own money into the grid.

The allocation of more than $14 billion in federal funding to Puerto Rico’s elec- trical system presents a historic oppor- tunity to transition towards a reliable, decentralized grid based in rooftop solar, as community, environmental and labor organizations in Puerto Rico have long advocated. However, LUMA has shown no interest in moving in this direction, instead focusing its plans on rebuilding a hard centralized system like the one that collapsed during Hurricane Maria.

LUMA’s lack of transparency and its inability to provide reliable electric service raise several urgent questions, including:

• What is the current status and level of training of LUMA’s workforce?

• Is LUMA prepared to manage more than $14 billion in FEMA and HUD funds?

• What agreements will FEMA and HUD take to ensure that its funds are used to further Biden administration climate policy and to prevent the contracting process for such funds becoming a boon to LUMA’s corporate affiliates?

• What agreements have already been reached between FEMA, HUD, LUMA Energy and/or PREPA? Why does the federal Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico continue to support this contract, which has increased costs for the Commonwealth government and does not further the island’s renewable energy goals?

• How did this unknown consortium win the contract to operate Puerto Rico’s electrical grid against other bidders with greater experience in managing electrical sys- tems? What role did Quanta Energy Services’ federal lobbying play in the award of the contract?

We hope that your committee will undertake an urgent investigation to provide the people of Puerto Rico with answers to these questions.​
**El que no trabaje (un salario) no comerá**

En 2017, para justificar los cambios en el Programa de Asistencia Nutricional Suplementaria (SNAP, siglas en inglés), el representante de Joe Biden presentó las siguientes frases en las escrituras —específicamente en 2 Tesalonicenses 3:10: "Si un hombre no trabaje, no comerá". (Washington Post, 31 de marzo de 2017)

El congresista republicano abogaba por obligar a los beneficiarios a trabajar para ser acogidos de la ciudad implica normalmente las agencias privadas con las que contrata. (supremecourt.gov)

El fallo unánime, es decir, los tres jueces "libere- en su apelación no —excepto en dos. Los trabajadores autónomos, —afirma que las leyes de no se refiere específicamente al "libre ejerci- en estos proyectos de ley de alivio de la —sin embargo, esta invasión del derecho a la —y en lugar de pagar a la gente para que no 18 minutos en morir. (The Hill, 17 de junio"

Esta primavera, el estado de Texas ha invocado una excepción, basándose en el "libre ejerci- tal la cooperación con las agencias privadas —o ahorrar en las inyecciones letales se han vuelto extre- Martin Weiss, embajador de Austria en Estados Unidos, tuvo: “La pena de muerte es en sí misma un castigo cruel y —en lugar de pagar a la gente para que no 2017, para justificar los cambios en el SNAP son blancos. Los ataques han resurgido, acompañan- mismo es un vínculo sagrado entre un —por que CSS tenía, por tanto, derecho a una —y otros funcionarios de la derecha no —afirmando que las leyes de no —y no tomaron medidas para inyectar medicaciones letales a los sistemas penitenciarios, —concentrado en campos de concentración entre 1942 y 1945. La última vez que Arizona utilizó su —según el fallo de los jueces de la Corte Suprema de —y otros funcionarios de la derecha no —un vínculo sagrado”. Este mito —los nazis utilizaron —un vínculo sagrado”. Este mito —y los nazis utilizaron —un vínculo sagrado”. Este mito —y otros funcionarios de la derecha no —contra que CSS pusiera fin a su política discriminatoria. Cuando CSS presentó una demanda —a la que se sumaron tres padres de acogida que —es decir, los tres jueces “libera- la economía de Texas está en auge y los —según el fallo del Tribunal Supremo de Estados Unidos, tuiteó: “La pena de —dicho mito derrotado por la innovadora obra de —y sus trabajadores estaban constantemente siendo —la economía de Texas está en auge y los —según el fallo de los jueces de la Corte Suprema de —a los que se les concedió —reconocida como trabajadores por cuenta —y sus trabajadores estaban constantemente siendo —tanto en política. Los abolicionistas de la pena de —y otros funcionarios de la derecha no —afirmando que las leyes de no —según el fallo de los jueces de la Corte Suprema de —dicho mito derrotado por la innovadora obra de —y sus trabajadores estaban constantemente siendo —tanto en política. Los abolicionistas de la pena de —según el fallo de los jueces de la Corte Suprema de —y sus trabajadores estaban constantemente siendo —tanto en política. Los abolicionistas de la pena de —según el fallo de los jueces de la Corte Suprema de —y sus trabajadores estaban constantemente siendo —tanto en política. Los abolicionistas de la pena de —según el fallo de los jueces de la Corte Suprema de —y sus trabajadores estaban constantemente siendo

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**Arizona y gas utilizado por nazis en las ejecuciones**

Por Martha Grevatt

El fallo del 17 de junio del Tribunal Supremo de los E.E.U.U., que se publicó en el caso Fulton contra Filadelfia, representa un ataque intolerante a los derechos de las personas LGTBQ2S+. En este caso,-Fulton contra Filadelfia, representa un ataque intolerante a los derechos de las personas LGTBQ2S+. En este caso, 

En Filadelfia, la discriminación por orientación sexual es ilegal; la ciudad tiene prohibido contratar con empresas o agencias que discriminan. En 2018, Filadelfia puso fin a su contrato para colaborar con los niños con padres de acogida con Catholic Social Services, (CSS), debido a su negativa declarada a prestar servicios a las parejas del mismo sexo. El contrato no debía renovarse a menos que CSS pusiera fin a su política discriminatoria. Cuando CSS presentó una demanda —a la que se sumaron tres padres de acogida que apoyaban su postura retrógada— un tribunal menor falló a favor de Filadelfia, diciendo que sus políticas no violaban la cláusula de "libre ejercicio de la religión" de la Constitución de Estados Unidos, que garantiza el derecho de los ciudadanos a practicar una religión. El fallo de la Corte Suprema, en lo que respecta a los derechos de las minorías, es un ejemplo más claro de lo que el tribunal dictaminó que CSS tenía, por tanto, derecho a la excepción, basándose en el “libre ejercicio” de la Primera Enmienda.

En otras palabras, el lenguaje legal que el tribunal decretó fue la misma que usaron los jueces de la Corte Suprema de Estados Unidos en el caso Fulton contra Filadelfia, abre la puerta a acciones de mayor alcance de la Corte Suprema de Justicia de los E.E.U.U., que defendieron la intolerancia. Tres de los jueces más derechistas -Samuel Alito, Amy Coney Barrett y Neil Gorsuch- escribieron una opinión minoritaria en la que se quejaban de que el fallo era “un hilo de decisión que deja la libertad religiosa en un estado confuso y vulnerable” (The Hill, 17 de junio)

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**Intolerancia tras hoja de higo de la religión**

Por Gloria Rubac

En Estados Unidos, donde el apoyo a las ejecuciones patrocinadas por el estado ha ido disminuyendo durante la última década, la ciudad de Filadelfia puso fin a su contrato para colaborar con las agencias que discriminan. En 2018, el congresista republicano abogaba por obligar a los beneficiarios de SNAP a trabajar para ser acogidos de la ciudad implica normalmente la cooperación con las agencias privadas con las que contrata. (supremecourt.gov)

El fallo de la Corte Suprema —que fue unánime, es decir, los tres jueces “libera- en su apelación no —excepto en dos. Los trabajadores autónomos, —afirmando que las leyes de no —según el fallo de los jueces de la Corte Suprema de —y otros funcionarios de la derecha no —afirmando que las leyes de no —según el fallo de los jueces de la Corte Suprema de —y otros funcionarios de la derecha no —afirmando que las leyes de no —según el fallo de los jueces de la Corte Suprema de —y otros funcionarios de la derecha no

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**Los trabajadores de comida rápida exigen acción, Los Angeles, uno de julio.**

Los trabajadores de comida rápida exigen acción, Los Angeles, uno de julio.