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Buffalo, N.Y., Pride march, June 12.
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PHOTO: WILLOW BEVERLY

Struggle goes beyond

Juneteenth

Emancipation and resistance

By Mirinda Crissman

After decades of struggle for recognition, Juneteenth has been made a federal holiday by Congress and was signed into law by President Joe Biden June 17. Federal workers had Friday, June 18, off as a paid holiday, as June 19, the official date, falls on Saturday. This is the first new federal holiday since Martin Luther King Day was enacted and signed in 1983, although not officially observed until 1986.

Two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln, the news of freedom reached the still-enslaved people of Texas by way of Galveston June 19, 1865.

Rebellions carried out by enslaved people had ultimately forced the signing of the 1863 Proclamation. Manisha Sinha states in “The Slave’s Cause: A History of Abolition,” “Prominent slave revolts marked the turn toward immediate abolition, and fugitive slaves united all factions of the movement and led the abolitionists to justify revolutionary resistance to slavery.” (New York Times, June 18, 2020)

Major General Gordon Granger and his Union troops marched through Galveston on June 19, 1865, reading General Order No. 3, which stated: “The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves the absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages.” (Galveston Historical Foundation 150)

It took years for this message and Union troops to reach the hundreds of thousands of enslaved people in Texas; and even then, not all enslaved people were freed instantly. In fact the material conditions of Black people remained largely the same in many ways via sharecropping and the system of convict leasing.

Leading up to the general’s message, it was known



Juneteenth Freedom March, June 19, 2020,
Washington, D.C.

that Texas was a safe haven for enslavers. Galveston, with its deep-water port, has the oldest known police force in the state. The police protect the property and wealth of the richest people. Like many early police forces on this continent, they served as slave patrols.

Henry Louis Gates explained: “Since the capture of New Orleans in 1862, slave owners in Mississippi, Louisiana and other points east had been migrating to Texas to escape the Union Army’s reach. In a hurried reenactment of the original middle passage, more than 150,000 enslaved people were moved west to Texas.” (“What is Juneteenth?” PBS.org)

After news of emancipation reached Texas, the rich still relied on the labor of those who were once legally considered their property. They did what they could to maintain that dominance and superexploitation.

Convict leasing = enslavement

That exploitation evolved into systems like sharecropping, where the formerly enslaved still worked in the same Texas fields under similar conditions. Another way the ruling class carried out their will was through the system of convict leasing, which was designed to keep freed Black people in “legal” slavery. This was sanctioned through a clause which still exists in the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

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WORKERS WORLD editorial

Reparations and abolition

Finally, the U.S. has a federal holiday recognizing the emancipation of Black people from slavery. Congress passed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act on June 15 — barely four days ahead of a day that Black people have been celebrating every year since 1865.

Lawmakers were pushed to vote by a massive outpouring of anti-racist outrage at the police murder of George Floyd last May. Millions of people, led by Black Lives Matter, protested that Black people should — at the very least — be free of the threat and reality of cop killing.

This holiday certainly doesn’t guarantee that — it doesn’t even mandate a paid day off. And the same Congress just refused to pass a voting rights act that would especially protect voters of color!

What continues to happen are bold and repeated acts of Black self-liberation. These are part of a glorious history of Black resistance in the U.S. — carried out for hundreds of years with no blessing from bosses or owners on high.

As soon as African peoples, kidnapped and forced into slavery, set foot on what later was called “U.S. soil,” they began to fight to free themselves. They ran away from owners, established maroon communities with Indigenous peoples forced from their lands and mounted armed uprisings against plantation masters. (Herbert Aptheker, “American Negro Slave Revolts,” 1936)

In “Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880,” the great Marxist sociologist W.E.B. DuBois argued that the thousands of Black workers who walked away from enslavement during the Civil War did so not “from merely the desire to stop work. It was a strike on a wide

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South African ex-political prisoner
**No Pride in prisons, jails
and detention centers**
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'A fighter from beginning to the end'

By Betsey Piette

Consuewella Africa, 67, a beloved sister in the MOVE Organization, passed away June 16 following hospitalization for breathing problems due to stress. Her family cites the probable cause as revelations surfaced in April that the University of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia still held the remains of her daughter Katricia "Tree" Africa, 14, who was murdered by the government May 13, 1985.

Learning that the University of Pennsylvania Museum and Princeton University used remains believed to be from Tree had troubled and weighed heavily on her, according to MOVE member Janine Africa. At a press conference in April regarding the mishandling of the remains, Consuewella tearfully denounced the state, saying, "It's just continuous, nonstop, vicious, violent, sadistic, ongoing abuse of the MOVE organization. Why? Because we stand up and tell the truth about this rotten world system."

Compounding the agony, weeks after the April 26 press event, the city revealed that Health Commissioner Thomas Farley had ordered the remains of other MOVE members cremated and discarded without notifying relatives in 2017. After Farley was pressured to resign, another medical examiner's office employee reported that Farley's orders were not carried out.

Janine Africa stated, "The situation just put so much on her that it tore her down, and she couldn't come out of it." (Philadelphia Inquirer, June 17) MOVE family members expressed hope that Tree and Consuewella could be buried together.

Consuewella Africa suffered decades of assault from the system. Her daughter Zanetta "Netta" Africa, 12, was also killed in the 1985 fire ignited when the state dropped a bomb on the family's home in West Philadelphia, resulting in the deaths of six adults and five children and the destruction of over 60 homes. She is survived by her son Lionel "Lobo" Dotson, 44, and spouse Frank Edwards.

A native of South Philadelphia, Consuewella joined the MOVE organization in the early 1970s. In 1978, she was



Consuewella Africa (right) with MOVE sisters Janet and Janine Africa, May 30, 2019.

among MOVE members collectively charged in the death of a police officer, who many suspect was killed by another cop. She spent 16 years in state prison for simple assault before being paroled in 1994. Her daughters were killed while she was imprisoned.

Consuewella was well-known and respected by the movement in Philadelphia and beyond. Described by many family members as "no nonsense," she is remembered by Sue Africa in the same Inquirer obituary as "very vibrant, very alive, a very strong runner, very strong period, very vocal and assertive."

Pam Africa, Minister of Confrontation for the MOVE Organization, recalled meeting Consuewella in May 1977 during the police blockade of the family's Powelton Village home. "She never waived," Africa told WW. "I remember her sitting in the sun with her son Lobo. I saw her go through the Aug. 8, 1978, confrontation with the police.

"When she and Alberta Africa were in state prison, on Dec. 3, 1981, the guards tried to mess with Bert. Consuewella confronted one 'white shirt' officer and knocked him out cold.

"Consuewella was kind, loving, caring, but you messed with her family you had hell to pay. She was a fighter from beginning to end — a 360 revolutionary, respected by people around the world." □

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

this week

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

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

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

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

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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Ballot initiative advances to hold police accountable

By Martha Grevatt

On June 16, Citizens for a Safer Cleveland announced success in collecting 15,000+ petition signatures for



a ballot initiative addressing the major public safety issue of racist police brutality. If the signatures are approved, voters can decide in November to hold police accountable through a commission that includes community activists and families of people killed by the police.

The organization held a press conference outside City Hall featuring Alicia Kirkman (pictured speaking above), mother of Angelo Miller; Brenda Bickerstaff, sister of Craig Bickerstaff; and LaTonya Goldsby, cousin of Tamir Rice and president of Black Lives Matter Cleveland. Their three loved ones were all murdered by Cleveland police.

The 15,000 signatures represent twice the number legally required to place the initiative on the ballot. The boxes of petitions were carried into City Hall after the press conference.

— Report and photo by Martha Grevatt

SCOTUS ruling Bigotry behind the fig leaf of religion

By Martha Grevatt

The June 17 ruling by the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Fulton v. Philadelphia*, represents a bigoted attack on the rights of LGBTQ2S+ people.

In Philadelphia, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is illegal; the city is barred from contracting with companies or agencies that discriminate. In 2018 Philadelphia ended its contract for placing children with foster parents with Catholic Social Services, due to its stated refusal to provide services to same-sex couples. The contract was not to be renewed unless CSS ended its discriminatory policy.

When CSS sued — joined by three foster parents who supported its backward stance — a lower court ruled in favor of Philadelphia, saying its policies did not violate the “free exercise of religion” clause in the First Amendment. The church-based agency argued its faith-based belief that “marriage is a sacred bond between a man and a woman” could not legally be used by Philadelphia to end its relationship with CSS. The city’s foster placement process normally involves cooperation with private agencies it contracts with. (supremecourt.gov)

The SCOTUS ruling — which was unanimous, meaning the three “liberal” justices concurred — countered the lower court, stating Philadelphia’s nondiscrimination laws had a clause allowing the city to make “exceptions.” The high court ruled CSS was therefore entitled to an exception, based on “free exercise” under the First Amendment.

In other words, legal language barring discrimination becomes null and void when that discrimination is carried out under the cover of “religious freedom.” This religious loophole is routinely used to deny basic civil rights to LGBTQ2S+ communities. In this case it harms children waiting for a foster home.

While this decision’s impact is limited, because it’s specific to Philadelphia’s “exception” allowance, it opens the door to more far-reaching SCOTUS actions upholding bigotry. Three of the most right-wing judges — Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas and Neil Gorsuch — wrote a minority opinion complaining the

ruling was “a wisp of a decision that leaves religious liberty in a confused and vulnerable state.” (The Hill, June 17)

Bogus religious defense

The history of Christianity does not support the position of CSS, which is run by the Catholic Diocese. The Catholic Church would have the public believe that same sex couples were denied recognition since the church’s inception, based on religious belief in the “sacred bond.” This myth was exploded by John Boswell’s groundbreaking 1994 work, “Same Sex Unions in Pre-modern Europe.”

The book “proves that for much of the last two millennia, in parish churches and cathedrals throughout Christendom from Ireland to Istanbul and in the heart of Rome itself, homosexual relationships were accepted as valid expressions of a God-given ability to love and commit to another person, a love that could be celebrated, honoured and blessed both in the name of, and through the Eucharist in the presence of Jesus Christ.” (Irish Times, Aug. 11, 1998)

Before the arrival of settler colonialism, Indigenous cultures acknowledged many genders and partner relationships.

The court is really validating the long history of patriarchal misogyny and anti-LGBTQ2S+ oppression — rooted in private-property relations and continuing under European medieval feudalism, settler-colonialism, chattel slavery and capitalism — which both church and state have an ugly history of upholding. □

Texas

‘Stop attacks on reproductive rights! No to Senate Bill 8!’

By Gloria Rubac and Kathy Durkin

Gov. Greg Abbott told the media May 19, “Our creator endowed us with the right to life,” as he signed the most restrictive anti-abortion bill in the country in Austin, Texas. Within eight hours, he OK’d the racist legal lynching of Quintin Jones in Huntsville’s death chamber, proving that the “right to life” does not apply to all living people.

Nearly a dozen other states have passed draconian bills like Texas’, which limit abortions after six to eight weeks of pregnancy, with no exceptions for rape or incest victims. Texas’ law adds even more brutal restrictions. State government won’t enforce this law — but anyone in any U.S. state can sue a person who not only performs an abortion in Texas after six weeks of pregnancy, but anyone involved. And they don’t even have to know them!

Criminal charges can be brought against anyone working in a clinic, from doctors to receptionists: people who drive friends to a clinic; a rape crisis counselor who explains options to rape victims seeking to terminate a pregnancy; anyone who donates to or volunteers at an organization which funds abortions, or even those who tell a friend the name of an abortion provider.

Legal experts comment that this is a clever law, because abortion providers can’t sue the state attorney general or other officials because they have no role in enforcing the law. Clinic operators, on the other hand, can be sued.

Swift opposition to Senate Bill 8

A demonstration in Austin May 29, drew 500 people who condemned the new law and the governor for signing it. One sign read, “You’re pro-life until the baby is poor, transgender, Black, gay, Mexican, Indigenous, disabled, sick, etc.” Another read, “Protect fetuses: ‘Ban fracking!’ and ‘Prevent pollution.’”

To cheers from classmates and staff, Paxton Smith, valedictorian at Lake Highlands High School near Dallas, defiantly tore up her preapproved valedictory speech at her graduation ceremony May 30. She bravely denounced this draconian law and emphasized, “We cannot stay silent!”

Amy Hagstrom Miller, CEO of Whole Woman’s Health, clinic operator in Texas, said: “They are determined to legislate abortion out of existence. We see

firsthand that Black and Brown communities are hit the hardest by these oppressive laws, and we know these laws do not reflect the values Texans hold.” (reproductiverights.org, May 19) Frontera Health, based in the Rio Grande



Pro-choice rally, Austin, Texas, May 29

Valley bordering Mexico, responded, “This bill is harmful to all of Texas and especially to our border community. We serve a number of individuals with documentation barriers. This bill destroys any pathway for them to receive the care they deserve. Our role as an abortion fund is to help people navigate and overcome the extensive, medically unnecessary restrictions Texas already has in place.” (abortionfunds.org, May 5)

Additionally, “To think that we and anyone who helps someone get an abortion in Texas can be sued by anyone in the U.S. is unfathomable. This is a direct attack on us and the community we serve.”

Elisabeth Smith, Center for Reproductive Rights chief counsel for state policy and advocacy, says reproductive health advocates are crafting a legal strategy opposing this extreme measure, scheduled to be enacted Sept. 1. She says, “The law will be challenged with the goal of stopping it from ever taking effect.” (The Guardian, May 19)

Diana Gomez of Progress Texas said: “Let me be clear: Abortion is health care, and it is still legal in Texas. This six-week abortion ban is unconstitutional, and others like it have been struck down by federal courts across the nation.

“Roe v. Wade is still the law of the land; and regardless of whatever bill Gov. [Greg] Abbott signs, no law will stop abortions from happening. It’s unfortunate that anti-abortion politicians were more focused on restricting access to essential medical care this session than providing COVID relief and tackling our failed power grid.” (kxan.com, May 19)

While Texas’ new law will be fought in the courts, reproductive justice activists must be on the alert to the U.S. Supreme Court hearing a Mississippi case in the fall. This will be the first abortion case the top court will hear with its 6-3 conservative majority. The court will weigh the constitutionality of a 2018 Mississippi law that bans abortion after the 15th week of pregnancy. It could undermine the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that legalized the right to choose abortion.

Just as women, people of other genders and their allies fought to make abortion legal, they will continue to fight restrictions on this basic right. No government should ever interfere in health care. Having an abortion is a personal decision about one’s health care. All people who are able to become pregnant must demand the right to control their own bodies. Period. □



Outside Supreme Court, Oct. 8, 2019, demanding legal protection from anti-LGBTQ2S+ discrimination.

Indigenous and environmental victory – Keystone XL pipeline ‘dead in the water’

By Stephanie Tromblay

In an immense victory for Indigenous water protectors and land defenders on this continent, TC Energy, formerly known as TransCanada, revealed its investors have quit the Keystone XL pipeline. Work has completely halted — the KXL tar-sands pipeline is “dead in the water.”

The Indigenous Environmental Network stated June 9: “After more than 10 years of organizing we have finally defeated an oil giant; Keystone XL is dead! We are dancing in our hearts because of this victory! From Dene territories in Northern Alberta to Indigenous lands along the Gulf of Mexico, we stood hand-in-hand to protect the next seven generations of life, the water and our communities from this dirty tar-sands pipeline. And that struggle is vindicated. This is not the end — but merely the beginning of further victories.”

Fort Belknap Indian Community President Andy Werk said, “We were not willing to sacrifice our water or safety for the financial benefit of a transnational corporation. We are thrilled that the project has been canceled.” (NARF.org, June 9)

Rosebud Sioux Tribe President Rodney M. Bordeaux said, “This is great news for the Tribes who have been fighting to protect our people and our lands. The treaties and laws guarantee us protections, and we are committed to see that those laws are upheld.”

Big Oil giant TC Energy is building multiple pipelines from the tar sands in western Canada. The ecological damage of tar-sands extraction is a nightmare scenario that has unfolded in Alberta. While the world faces the horrors of increased global warming, tar-sands mining has destroyed boreal forest (which naturally traps massive amounts of carbon) and wasted habitats and wetlands. Extraction of the extremely heavy bitumen oil from the tar sands uses vast amounts of freshwater and releases huge quantities of toxic wastewater into the environment. (Greenpeace, May 17)

Indigenous-led fight against fossil-fuel pipelines

TC Energy planned this network to move 800,000 barrels of crude oil a day from the tar sands to ports on the Gulf Coast. Most of this network was built during President Barack Obama’s administration and was already operational. The entire network is an environmental nightmare of looming catastrophes. Its completion was an existential threat to the delicate geology of the Nebraska Sand Hills, where a spill would ruin the entire region’s groundwater and contaminate drinking water supplies for humans and all life.

KXL’s route ran through fragile ecological habitats,

Indigenous sacred and burial sites, as well as prime farmland. Indigenous communities were joined by white farmers and ranchers in the Cowboy Indian Alliance to fight the KXL pipeline from Lincoln, Nebraska, to Washington, D.C. The KXL was stopped by the struggle in 2015, but incoming President Donald Trump gave it a green light in 2017 with a new permit.

Meanwhile, the Indigenous women leaders of the KXL water protectors had inspired Lakota youth from Standing Rock reservation, who returned home and kicked off the powerful struggle against the Dakota Access Pipeline. The youth carried out long-distance runs to broadcast that pipeline’s threat to the drinking waters of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. Then Indigenous women joined by Two Spirits built the struggle at Standing Rock against DAPL — a majestic struggle joined by thousands of Indigenous people and supporters from all over Great Turtle Island and beyond.

In the fight to protect Standing Rock’s constitutionally guaranteed “Winters Rights” — protection of a reservation’s clean waterways under the 1908 Winters v.



Indigenous members of the Cowboy Indian Alliance protest the KXL in front of the U.S. Capitol.

the U.S. decision — the water protectors faced brutal repression by county and state cops from many states, the National Guard and illegal mercenary thugs. Water protectors were beaten, bitten by attack dogs, pepper sprayed, shot with rubber bullets, injured by illegal use of sound cannons, brutalized while praying, strip searched, shot at by National Guard snipers, arrested, then numbered and held in dog kennels. A young woman had her arm blown off by a concussion grenade.

Then, while Obama was still in office in November 2016, the forces of repression attacked Native water protectors and their allies with water cannons in the freezing temperatures of the Northern Plains. Linda Black Elk, of the Standing Rock Medic and Healer Council,

treated protesters for injuries and hypothermia. “Last night was a really critical life-or-death situation. There were hundreds of people out on the frontlines. People were first soaked down with tear gas and then sprayed with a bunch of water.” (nbcnews.com, Nov. 21, 2016)

After President Trump’s inauguration, Energy Transfer Partners (ETP) also got approval to finish DAPL. Millions of gallons of crude oil, fracked from the depleted Bakken oil fields of North Dakota and Montana, now flow under the Missouri River to a pipeline in Illinois, then down to refineries in the Gulf for export, threatening clean water for Standing Rock and the 18 million people who live downstream.

Fighting Enbridge Line 3

The KXL victory represents one battle in the war to stop tar-sands oil. Big Oil planned to triple production of this dirtiest crude oil, with a goal to flood the U.S. with 6 million barrels a day. (nrdc.org, Aug. 13, 2015) Native nations and environmentalists are now intensifying the struggle to shut down the other Trump-approved pipeline projects, including DAPL and Enbridge Line 3 and Line 5.

The proposed expansion of tar-sands oil pipeline Enbridge Line 3 is opposed by Anishnaabe activists and allies. Line 3 threatens 200 bodies of water, including the Mississippi River’s headwaters, and the age-old, traditional, Anishnaabe people’s wild rice beds. (stopline3.org) In Minnesota, police have arrested hundreds of water defenders. (The Guardian, June 10)

Line 5 consists of two pipelines over 60 years old that threaten the Great Lakes in Michigan, Wisconsin and Canada. Enbridge is fighting a multistate Indigenous and environmental movement and orders by Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to shut down Line 5.

The fight goes on, but stopping KXL is a major victory against Big Oil. Ponca Tribe of Nebraska Chairman Larry Wright Jr. said, “On behalf of our Ponca Nation we welcome this long overdue news and thank all who worked so tirelessly to educate and fight to prevent this from coming to fruition. It’s a great day for Mother Earth.”

All humanity and all species are threatened by global warming, resulting from the use of fossil fuels. Stopping global warming will require transition out of the fossil-fuel economy. And saving Mother Earth requires saving waterways from contamination by Big Oil. Clean water is a human right and a right of all species in our precious biosphere on Earth.

Tromblay’s heritage is Huron nonstatus and mixed Southeast nations undocumented.

On the picket line

By Marie Kelly

Volvo workers overwhelmingly reject contract

United Auto Workers Local 2069 workers at the Volvo Truck plant in Dublin, Va., are back on the picket lines after rejecting the second tentative agreement negotiated between the UAW and the Volvo Group, in a 90% vote to send negotiators back to the table. The rank and file voiced their frustration, using a Facebook group page, with the International United Auto Workers and the union bargaining team. The initial strike began April 17, but then UAW international leadership stepped in and suspended the strike after Local 2069’s negotiation of the first tentative agreement. Yet, the union bargaining team failed to resolve major issues which the workers had identified with the corporation.

The latest contract proposal retained the two-tier

wage system, where newly hired employees receive lower wages than those with more seniority doing the same job. This is a decades-old tactic, which is meant to institute lower wage scales across the board and historically victimizes Black and Brown workers.

Union workers had objected to an alternative work schedule model, eliminating overtime pay after an 8-hour shift. A pay increase in the second tentative contract would be wiped out by higher health care costs, and workers want to keep their cost-of-living allowance.

The picket lines are solid, and strikers — knowing the company does not want to lose orders — are aware of their leverage. Volvo brought supervisors back into the plant to

try to perform tasks normally done by the union workers — to scab the strike. The company has reached out to temporary employment agencies to get strikebreakers willing to cross the picket line.

Not surprisingly the Volvo Group recorded \$1 billion in profits in the first quarter of 2021. The workers deserve the credit for that success, as their plant is the single largest producer of trucks in North America and the biggest truck manufacturer in the Volvo Group.

Cornell University labor track tool

Check out a new labor action tracking tool that is more comprehensive than data compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Developed at Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations, this tool tracks not just strikes but rallies and protests. For example, the tracker covers the 2,000 food-delivery gig workers who rallied in New York City and the 800 nurses in Massachusetts currently in the longest strike in the country. Rallies are not included in BLS data, and BLS data only counts strikes of 1,000 or more workers.

Hopefully, we can expect the tool to track actions similar to what happened this past week in Pittsburgh, where the entire staff of a Family Dollar store and a Subway sandwich shop walked out in protest of poor working conditions. (striketracker.ilr.cornell.edu/) □



PHOTO: UAW 2069

UAW workers on strike at Volvo plant, Dublin, Va.

Anti-apartheid guerrilla fighter: ‘We made the system ungovernable’

By Ted Kelly

Mpho Masemola is Secretary General of the Ex-Political Prisoners Veterans Association of South Africa (EPPA) and was an underground guerrilla fighter as a member of the Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress. He was a political prisoner, incarcerated along with Nelson Mandela at Pollsmoor Prison and later at Robben Island. Masemola was one of ten signatories of the International Delegation to the 2021 Syrian Presidential Election (bit.ly/syria2021). He lives in Johannesburg, South Africa.

This interview was recorded June 16, the 45th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising, when 20,000 Black students protested white supremacist schooling policies in apartheid South Africa. The full audio of this conversation can be heard at wwp.pub/pod.

Workers World: Comrade, how did you get involved in the struggle against apartheid?

Mpho Masemola: When I was arrested, I was just a young person. I was a young political activist, but I was a student during the time, a high school student. Because of the height of the struggle and the situation that we were living in, the abhorrent situation of racial segregation and the education that we got in South Africa.

In South Africa during the '80s, it was the height of the struggle where our masses were very much politically conscious. It was the height of the resistance of the Black population, then the non-white population. And then it is where the nonracial element of the struggle emerged, as white liberals joined the popular movement under the banner of what we call the United Democratic Front. It was a nonracial institution, galvanizing and mobilizing our people across racial lines to say, “We want to build a South Africa that is nonracial, democratic, nonsexist and free.” That was the message to the world.

During that height of the struggle, the president of the African National Committee in exile — my comrade, the late Oliver Tambo — made a declaration to the country through Radio Freedom (propaganda arm of the ANC) to say, “Now is the time, South African youth; you can and must make apartheid ungovernable!” And during that time, I joined the underground movement. Because, remember, the ANC was banned in 1960.

So nobody could operate overtly and raise the banner of the organization. Many activists faced arbitrary detention, were tortured, thrown in solitary confinement and faced imprisonment for carrying the flag of the ANC and for carrying the document that is called the Freedom Charter. It was illegal! Apartheid was so evil, to such an extent that when you walk in town in the so-called white areas, there was a place reserved for white people on the pavement! So if they find you walking on the pavement, then you get arrested. Right. And if you want to relieve yourself, you see the signs of apartheid.

Those were the attitudes that formed apartheid. And in the '80s, all those things were visible to us. And we said, “Now is the time to make apartheid ungovernable.”

A guerrilla army defeats apartheid

WW: How is it that guerrilla armies like Umkhonto we Sizwe, without superior military technology and resources, were still able to defeat a system like apartheid?

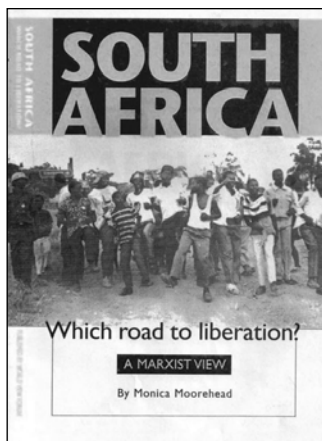
MM: Ted, maybe that question you can ask the Americans when they were defeated by the Vietnamese. (Laughter) Maybe ask that question to General Ho Chi Minh! (Laughter) Some of our fighters were trained in Vietnam by General Ho Chi Minh in the art of warfare.

South Africa: Which road to liberation?

By Monica Moorehead

“The inevitable victory of the South African revolution will change the entire landscape of the struggle on the African continent.”

An eye witness account written by Monica Moorehead in 1993. Download the free PDF at workers.org/books.



Mpho Masemola, second from left, in Damascus, Syria, with other members of the International Delegation to the 2021 Syrian Presidential Election. PHOTO: JOHNNY ACHI

And it worked. One of the important elements in guerrilla warfare — you must work within the masses. Political propaganda, it must be the cornerstone of your campaign.

The military wing of the ANC was providing us with military combat work, as well as political education. You cannot lead people without political education; you must understand the content and the context of the national democratic revolution right here in South Africa. Who is the enemy? Why are we fighting? You must understand the working class is the pillar and the social force to be mobilized in order to transform the society from apartheid into a nonracial, democratic society.

Underground, we received so-called “banned” material from the ANC. We were reading it, and we educated ourselves. We were taught by various guerillas underground about military combat work and political education up until we were arrested in 1985.

It was on the 11th of August of 1985. As I recall, the day after I was arrested, the apartheid minister of police, Adriaan Vlok, declared the state of emergency because of the height of the struggle. The country was ungovernable. There was a call from the international community to release political prisoners, for apartheid to be demolished.

I was arrested on the 11th of August from the safe house, together with my two comrades. One of them escaped; and later he resisted with an AK-47, but he was shot at and died. They found a lot of material. The so-called banned material of the ANC.

Unbroken by torture

On the first day of our arrest, we were tortured, brutally tortured. I was electrocuted on the testicles. They put some wires there. And then there was a generator where they increase the voltage. And then they touch it on your testicles. You urinate on yourself, you can't control it. Continuous interrogation techniques.

Sleepless — you don't sleep. They continue to interrogate you the whole day and night. You have been deprived of food. They use physical violence. They broke my hand; even now, you can see it on the knuckles of my right hand. Here it was, broken, broken, totally broken, the hand. With a chair. You are being beaten to a pulp. This was at the police station, the time of the interrogation.

The apartheid regime used a system that is called the Straitjacket. It's like a blanket, but it is made out of rubber with a belt. They strip you naked and lying on the cold floor; they pour water on you, then wrap you in it. They squeeze you in it tight; they squeeze you to such an extent that you can't breathe. Then they throw you down there; they pour water on you, then they leave you like that up until the following morning.

And I want to tell you now that many of our comrades died of suffocation. If you have ailments, if you are asthmatic, you can't breathe in that thing. If you've got high blood pressure, you will die in that thing. I'm talking out of experience. You can't breathe in that thing. When they come the following morning, if you are lucky, you will still be breathing. And then they wanted you

to confess: “Where is the ammunition? What are you doing; who are your sources?”

I lost close to six to seven comrades who died with me watching them. The following day, you see them on the stretcher, covered, and they are no more.

So that was the system that they used. And I survived that.

There was a notorious apartheid clause, Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. Very similar to what the Zionists use in Palestine. Detention without trial. It's an arbitrary detention, where you don't have any rights, no visits, no books. We are being punished with a “spare” diet, they called it, half rations. So if you are diabetic, then you won't survive. You'll die.

They throw you in a small cell, four meters square. No bed. Just a mat. With a blanket so thin, you can see the light through it. Sometimes they take your blanket and throw water on the floor. They don't switch off the light, a very bright light to torture your eyes.

WW: Were you in solitary confinement at this point?

MM: Yes, when I left the police station with a broken hand, they charged me with Section 29. I was sent to an isolated prison, maximum security, with a special site where they held us as political prisoners. This was before Robben Island.

WW: What do you do under those conditions to keep your humanity?

MM: Well, Ted, all those things were mechanical. But I would like just to tell you something. Because of courage and our commitment to liberate this country, there was nothing that was going to stand before us. So many people died, being shot at, resisting. Now that we are in prison, why should we abandon the struggle?

Meeting Mandela

We knew that Nelson Mandela was in prison for quite a long time. Fighting for us. We knew that one day we would win, through courage, resilience. And another tool that made us very strong is political education.

In Robben Island after solitary confinement, then we were charged with high treason and terrorism. You see, saying you wanted to overthrow the apartheid regime makes you a terrorist. They were the terrorists. But they're saying I'm a terrorist. So I was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Then I met Nelson Mandela. It was during the night, a stopover from Johannesburg to Cape Town at Pollsmoor Prison. We were told that Mandela was there. And I'm telling you, chief, we couldn't sleep. We couldn't do anything. We said we're not going to eat. When they wanted to give us food, we said no, we don't want food. We want to see Madiba. They refused. After three days, he was told. Then he said, allow them to see me. Then we saw him.

I'm telling you — I did not wash my hand after that. The morale was so high. Madiba was asking us: “Hey, you young man, why are you here in prison? What do you want here?” Then we said, “Madiba, we're here to release you. We're here to, you know, take you out of this jail.” He said, “But you are also in jail! And serving long terms!” Morale was so high, I could see then that we were going to be free.

Remember, Madiba was moved from Robben Island in 1983. The white regime, they wanted to start negotiations with him and say: “Can you save us now because the country is ungovernable? Can you talk to your people and tell them to resist violence?”

Later when I was transferred to Robben Island in 1985, it was a different phase of the struggle.

The Soweto uprising

WW: Comrade, what significance does June 16th hold for South Africans?

MM: Today, as you will know, it is the 45 year anniversary of the 1976 June 16 uprising where the South African Black youth stood up and said “no” to Afrikaans. Because Afrikaans is the language which has been used as an instrument to suppress the Black people. So-called Bantu education was given to us to make us subjugated to white supremacists. So today it was the celebration of Youth Day in the country.

I was very young at that time and still doing my primary education. I was still a little boy, but was reading revolutionary material, being influenced by the Black consciousness movement, by revolutionaries like Steve Biko. But my uncle, William Masemola, was involved; may his soul rest in peace. He passed on.

Continued on page 6

Buffalo

Second annual People's Pride

On June 12th the Buffalo branch of Workers World Party hosted its second annual People's Pride event. Much of the focus this year was around shutting down many of the anti-trans bills flooding the legislature as we speak, but also the call to keep cops and Zionist colonizers out of Pride. The march held both lanes of traffic on Elmwood Avenue during the popular event known as Porchfest. Onlookers to the event watched and cheered and joined in chants such as "Defend trans youth!" and "L G B T, we'll fight till we are all free!" The members of the branch are looking forward to hosting this action again next year, even if after the "end" of the COVID crisis other Pride events resume.

— Story and photo by Ezra Echo



Cleveland

Crush anti-trans legislation in Ohio!



Ohio is one of over 30 states where bigoted legislators have introduced bills that attack trans youth. Ohio House Bill 61 and Senate Bill 132 would bar trans-youth athletes from playing on the teams of their gender identity and would deny access to health care for trans youth who are transitioning, even if their parents support them.

Cleveland activists picketed the state office building downtown June 18, chanting: "Keep your hate out of our state." The demonstration, part of a week of action called by the LGBTQ+ Caucus of Workers World Party around the theme "Defend Trans Youth," was endorsed by Black Lives Matter Cleveland, the LGBT Center of Greater Cleveland, Trans Ohio, Margie's Hope/Margie's Closet and Don Bryant of Ohio Peace Action.

The demonstrators discussed the need to take the protest effort to Columbus, the state capital.

— Report and photo by Martha Grevatt

‘We made the system ungovernable’

Continued from page 5

My uncle was arrested and detained for some few weeks, because he was teaching history in one of the famous secondary schools in one of the provinces in Mpumalanga. He's famously known as "Mr. Masemola."

Unequivocally, he was teaching history from the current material conditions that were happening in the country. Our "history" was based on the white history. There was no Black history. The African National Congress, after liberation we said to them: "We need to change the structure of education from the kindergarten through the primary level, so that our youth can be able to know what happened, about the struggles against colonialism, about the struggle against apartheid, and who were the leaders that were involved in the struggle."

Now, I'm happy that they are putting that history into context. My son is doing grade eight; I saw his history book. He asked me, "Daddy, I saw they are speaking about Robben Island here. What happened in Robben Island? You were there with Mandela!" So, I was very much happy to hear that recently our history has been recognized.

Because we'd been taught about Jan van Riebeeck. He was the settler colonialist who made a mess when he landed the first time on this country in 1652. A colonial settler, coming from Holland, who dispossessed our people of their land and cattle. This launched the Khoisan war, the resistance of the Black chiefs. Those who resisted, some of them were beheaded.

Some of them, the chiefs, were sent to Robben Island in the early 1600s. It was a colony of torture. It was a hellhole. [They taught that] those who had a different

opinion in the country must be thrown into the hellhole. And in isolation there, in solitary confinement in very harsh winter conditions, isolated from the community.

But fortunately, we as political prisoners, with Madiba as our leader, we have turned the tides; we have turned Robben Island into a university. From the hellhole to the triumph of the human spirit. Against pettiness. Against evil things. Because we did not want Robben Island to be our monument of suffering. We turned it into a beacon of freedom to all the world, to the peoples of the world. A message that, coming from the hellhole, hole of separation, terrorism and torture, we emerged as victorious. As a winning people to say to the world, even if our detractors have killed us, this is for the future of our people. Here we are today, Ted, as a proud nation. □

Support a Marxist voice for LGBTQ2S+ rights

For over half a century, Workers World newspaper has covered the global struggle to end all forms of discrimination, persecution and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and gender-nonconforming communities.

WW has consistently backed up our activist coverage with analysis. In the early 1970s, WW ran a series of articles that led to publication of "The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal" in 1976. Then in 1993, WW published "The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View," with the first book's original text and a new preface and afterword. (Read it at workers.org/books)

In 2004 WW managing editor and globally recognized transgender leader Leslie Feimberg began the "Lavender & Red" series, which ran until 2008 in WW. A group of 25 articles from that series was later published as the book "Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba." In 2012 Feimberg performed civil disobedience and wrote articles defending Black trans woman CeCe McDonald, who was charged with manslaughter after defending herself from a racist, bigoted attack.

WW helps to build mass struggles, like what's been going on in the streets from coast to coast. This righteous outpouring of rage and protest over the racist cop murder of George Floyd came as the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted Black, Latinx and Indigenous peoples and immigrants.

Please help us get out the word. Join the Workers World Supporter Program. For a donation of at least \$75 a year — or \$100, or \$300 or more if you can — receive a year's subscription to WW; a regular letter about timely issues; and one, two or three subscriptions, respectively, to give to friends. Members can receive a copy of the book: "What Road to Socialism?" upon request. (Or read it at workers.org/books)

New articles are posted daily at workers.org. Currently, one issue a month is being printed and mailed to subscribers. As soon as it's possible, the newspaper will resume more frequent printing and mailing.

Write monthly or annual checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to Workers World,

147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up at workers.org to donate each month.

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



New York City Pride, 2019

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

WW COMMENTARY

LGBTQ2S+ people Overrepresented in prisons

By Mirinda Crissman

At every stage in the criminal injustice system, LGBTQ2S+ people are overrepresented, including within the juvenile justice system.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, this is true from arrest to sentencing to incarceration to probation to parole: “In 2019, gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals (with an arrest rate of 3,620 per 100,000) were 2.25 times as likely to be arrested than straight individuals (with an arrest rate of 1,610 per 100,000). This disparity is driven by lesbian and bisexual women, who are 4 times as likely to be arrested than straight women (with an arrest rate of 3,860 per 100,000 compared to 860 per 100,000). Meanwhile, gay and bisexual men are 1.35 times as likely to be arrested than straight men (with a rate of 3,210 arrested per 100,000 compared to 2,380 per 100,000).” (tinyurl.com/LGBTQbehindbars)

Incarceration rates reflect the discriminatory trends of the arrest rates, with queer women facing the brunt of disproportionality. They, along with trans women — whose sexual orientation may overlap with queer identity or not — tend to have the least amount of data to show what is happening to them.

“Once behind bars, trans people face extremely high rates of harassment and physical and sexual assault, are frequently denied routine health care and are at high risk of being sent to solitary confinement. Black and Pink found that 44% of transgender, nonbinary gender and [Indigenous] Two Spirit [people] in their sample were denied access to hormones they requested.” (Prison Policy Initiative)

This high percentage of LGBTQ2S+ people persists in prisons, jails and migrant detention centers and interlocks with other oppressions based on race, disability and income. Data demonstrate that Black, Latinx and Indigenous people are locked up in numbers incredibly disproportionate to their share of the population. Many



ART AND CAPTION BY T. BOUCHER

“We reject hate crimes legislation, ‘gender-responsive’ prisons, and all other measures that use gay rights rhetoric to expand the systems that murder and imprison us. We are in solidarity against a prison industrial complex that targets people of color, immigrants, queer and trans people, sex workers, and poor people. We believe in queer imagination and transformative justice to build a new world based on liberation and interdependence.”

LGBTQ2S+ people are people of color, and many have disabilities.

There is no data on Two-Spirit Natives incarcerated. However, according to the Appeal, South Dakota leads the country on jail admissions based on arrests for nonviolent crimes, and Native people account for the majority of all arrests in that state.

“In South Dakota, the people who are arrested and admitted to jail are disproportionately Native. Although Natives make up 8.7% of South Dakota’s population, they are roughly half of those booked into jails in the state. Racial disparities in incarceration rates exist nationwide — Black people are jailed at more than 4 times the rate of white people — but disparities in South Dakota are far greater:

According to data from the Vera Institute of Justice, Natives between the ages of 15 and 64 are incarcerated at 10 times the rate of white people in South Dakota.” (The Appeal, Sept. 18, 2019)

Roots of oppression

Gender-based oppression and oppression based on sexual orientation have their roots in the rise of private property and capitalism. These oppressions have similar roots as other class-based oppressions like race and disability.

Oppression based on gender and sexual orientation is maintained through various social enforcements such as, but not limited to, criminalization and the structure of the patriarchal nuclear family. These tactics rely on the punishing power of imposed isolation, confinement and imprisonment.

Overrepresentation of LGBTQ2S+ people in the criminal legal system is largely due to obstacles LGBTQ2S+ youth face after fleeing abuse and lack of acceptance at home. In order to survive, many are pushed toward drug sales, theft and sex work — which dramatically increase the risk of arrest and confinement.

Up until 1973, the American Psychiatric Association listed homosexuality in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). That medical definition — and the assumptions that continued even after it was delisted — has been used to confine, isolate and punish many LGBTQ2S+ folks. Because of the material conditions faced by LGBTQ2S+ individuals, many find themselves with high rates of depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation. In this context, someone needing mental health care can end up confined for an indefinite stint in a hospital under strict surveillance — experiencing something more like punishment than help.

Shared struggles, abolition, liberation

Liberation for those oppressed based on their gender or sexual orientation means envisioning and building a world without prisons, jails and migrant detention centers. These structures do not keep

people safe from violence, but perpetuate violence rooted in the origins of these institutions on this continent.

Prisons, jails and detention centers in the U.S. evolved from enslavement of African people. Enslavement legally codified Black people as property. During the shift from slavery to the system of convict leasing to today’s mass incarceration, there have been continuously shared struggles to abolish these institutions that are based on profiting on people.

Now the fight has turned to ending the profit-making prison-industrial complex and abolishing the legal status of capitalist private property. Abolition also means the end to borders and criminalization of migrants, who are simply workers and oppressed people seeking to find a place they can survive.

Societal organization based around meeting human needs can and must be built in the wake of the afterlife of enslavement.

Many of the reasons LGBTQ2S+ people end up being held in prisons, jails and detention centers could be alleviated first and foremost by abolishing capitalism. This project of abolition — whether it be prison abolition or the abolition of capitalism — is not simply a negation. It is a generative project that requires collective building.

This means building up social support for LGBTQ2S+ youth within families, schools, communities and other institutions; eliminating discrimination against LGBTQ2S+ people in housing, employment, and other realms; eliminating homelessness, for housing is a human right; ending criminalization of sex work; and providing free, gender-affirming health care for all.

LGBTQ2S+ people’s liberation is bound to the struggle for Black liberation, just as it is bound up with the struggle for disability justice. Our liberation is bound to the struggle against settler colonialism and capitalism at home and around the world.

No cages! No borders! We will accept nothing less. □



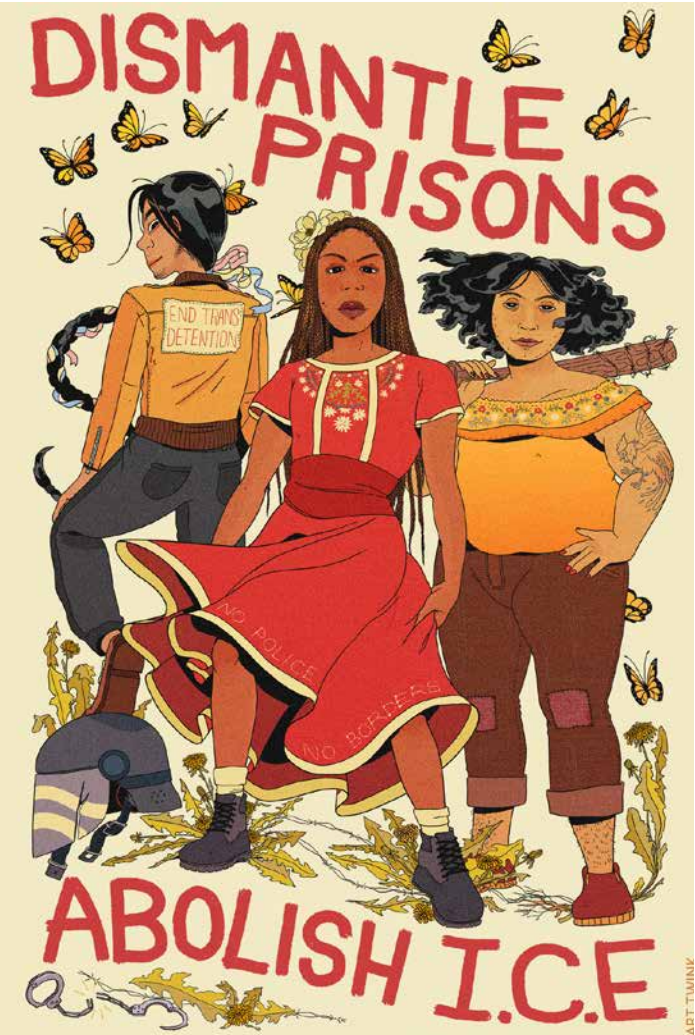
Atlanta ‘No Pride in Detention’



PHOTOS: JESSE PRATT LOPEZ

Members of several trans and Latinx organizations assembled at the Atlanta ICE headquarters June 15 to declare “No Pride in Detention.” Initiated by Community Estrella and its founder, Li An (Estrella) Sanchez, the main demand was to end the detention of trans people. As the group marched around the heavily fenced building, some were dressed as detainees, medical staff and prison guards, to illustrate the oppressive, inhuman and medically inadequate conditions suffered by immigrants in ICE detention. They then held a rally, at which Estrella spoke about the harrowing 13 months she had spent at Stewart and Irwin detention centers in Georgia before winning her asylum case. The names of three trans women who died in detention were called out: Roxsana Hernandez, Johana Medina and Victoria Arellano.

— Story by Dianne Mathiowetz



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Kamala Harris goes to Central America, so does Wall Street

By Teresa Gutierrez

In 1973, Eduardo Galeano wrote what was then a groundbreaking book, “Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent.” Galeano carefully detailed and beautifully summarized how colonialism and then capitalism, specifically U.S. capitalism, overtook the Americas by chicanery and force to rob and plunder the people of this hemisphere for over five centuries.

If anyone now believes that the migration of children and youth from primarily Central America is divorced from that history, they are very mistaken. It is a history which Vice President Kamala Harris as a woman of color and daughter of immigrants ignores at her own peril.

Migration: a crisis of epic proportions

The current migration of youth and children at the U.S./Mexican border is a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. It is a crisis not just at the southern U.S. border but around the world, as workers of all ages are forced to leave their homelands as a result of primarily U.S. wars, economic exploitation and climate change.

It is a crisis that helped make Donald Trump and one-term president, whose premise for his administration was built on the most vile, racist, anti-immigrant platform in U.S. history. Immigrants in the U.S. and their advocates helped defeat Donald Trump, which in turn was a win for Joe Biden. The demand that the Biden administration end the war on migrants therefore is not only just, it is earned.

Parents do not send their young on a dangerous journey on a whim. It is literally a painful, heart-wrenching decision made as a matter of life or death.

When Vice President Harris traveled to Guatemala and Mexico on behalf of the Biden Administration, she said, at a press conference in Guatemala, “I want to be clear to folks in this region who are thinking about making that dangerous trek to the U.S. Mexico border: Do not come. Do not come.” (Guardian June 8)

“Do not come” — what an outrageously cynical statement! As more than one migrant has pointed out: “We are here because you were there.”

The forces driving workers, and right now mainly unaccompanied children and youth, to leave their homes and families, putting their lives at risk crossing scorching deserts, confronting drug and organized crime syndicates that include human traffickers, and much more, to get to the U.S. border are deeply rooted in U.S. policy towards Central America.

Galeano was right in 1973, and he is right today.

A report from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean released March 4, stated that “Extreme poverty in Latin America reached levels in 2020 that had not been seen in the last ... 20 years ...”

This poverty and inequality are nothing new. Yet for decades, the U.S. government has touted the line that it has given millions, in fact billions, of dollars to “help” the people of Central America.

One of the central messages from President Biden that Vice President Harris was supposed to carry on her June trip was that the U.S. would continue to send aid to the region. In fact, the Biden/Harris plan calls for a commitment of a whopping \$4 billion for Central America according to the New York Times.

But even this ruling-class mouthpiece stated, “Expanded aid programs have failed to stem migration.” (NY Times, June 6) What the Times does **not** say is that it is that aid and more that has caused the migration.

The Times reported that as Vice President, Biden had led “an enormous push to deter people ... by devoting hundreds of millions of dollars to Central America.” Where did that money, and the money that every administration had sent before that, go?

Where did billions of dollars in aid go?

The Times continued “... in Guatemala, which has received more than \$1.6 billion in aid over the last decade, poverty rates



Detainee in Arizona.

have risen; malnutrition has become a national crisis; corruption is unbridled, and the country is sending more unaccompanied children to the U.S. than anywhere else in the world.”

The revolutionary left in Central and Latin America and diverse social activists and the movement here in the U.S. have for decades pointed out that this money has not gone to help the masses. Long before the New York Times found it politically expedient to state, the people’s movement has decried U.S. aid as just one more example of imperialist intervention.

The aid is meant to control and repress; it is meant to defend the corporate interests of Wall Street, which run counter to the interests of the workers and oppressed. As the Times confirmed, “... much of the money is handed over to [U.S.] companies,” which use the money more for “salaries, expenses and profits.”

One project, called the Rural Value Chains Project, spent part of its \$20 million in USAID funds building outhouses for potato farmers in Guatemala. Most were quickly abandoned or torn apart for scrap metal.

Historically, this aid is channeled through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), founded in 1961 by then President John F. Kennedy. During the revolutionary period of the 1960s and ’70s, the movement in Latin America and

in the U.S. denounced USAID and called for its ouster in the region.

U.S. forces quell popular uprisings

Today, it is more of the same. Vice President Harris may come to Central America with buckets of money, but this will only serve to prop up governments that are beholden to U.S. imperialism. It is an established fact that every time the people of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua or Mexico rise up to fight against repression and exploitation, every time they rise up to try and build a society based on peoples’ needs and not U.S. interests, Washington sends in forces to quell these rebellions.

The U.S. government always manages to help exterminate organizations that fight against capitalism, but it never manages to stop corrupt drug-running governments such as that in Honduras today. Many members and leaders of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) in Guatemala were assassinated with bullets made in the USA, yet the drug cartels in Mexico and elsewhere can freely operate with impunity.

Perhaps Galeano could never imagine that a woman of color, a child of immigrants herself, would ever be a representative of Washington in Central America. But he would be told that that diverse representation comes not from the kindness of the ruling class, but from the struggle of the oppressed — for representation and for justice.

But no matter the gains that have been made at the end, what matters is what you are fighting for. Just as President Barack Obama became the Deporter-in-Chief, as he deported more immigrants than any other U.S. president, Harris or anyone else will be called out for their complicity.

Not just once but twice, she said: “Do not come. Do not come.”

Without a doubt, the ruling class, the fascists, the top elite are not diverse; the very powerful are white. But in the struggle to break glass ceilings, it must be made clear that the struggle must be to end the system, not to represent that system.

The struggle for migrant rights is a righteous struggle that demands solidarity and support from all sectors in the U.S.

It is time to revive the slogan “U.S. AID out of Central America.” It is time to end U.S. intervention in the region, pay reparations for centuries of pillage and allow the Indigenous, LGBTQ+, women, organized and unorganized workers, peasants and everyone to determine their own destiny free of imperialist domination. □

Peru Fujimori threatens pre-emptive coup

By John Catalinotto

Thousands of poor Peruvians from the countryside and mountains have gone to Lima to demonstrate support for Pedro Castillo, the progressive candidate of the Perú Libre (Free Peru) party who won a narrow election victory for president.

His opponent, rightist candidate Keiko Fujimori, has without evidence been claiming election fraud and wants Castillo’s victory thrown out. Thirty-five special election juries have already rejected over 800 of Fujimori’s 943 petitions, but the National Jury of Elections, as of June 20, has refused to ratify Castillo’s election. In a public statement, retired military officers called for preventing Castillo from taking office.

Castillo is a schoolteacher and pro-socialist. His supporters hope his victory by 44,240 votes, or just 50.13 percent, will overturn the decades of right-wing governments, help reduce the inequalities that plague Peruvian society, and weaken the rule of the country’s super-rich. Peru is among the countries most ravaged by COVID-19, with 190,000

deaths out of a population of 32 million.

Keiko Fujimori is an open right-winger who identifies with the policies of her father Alberto Fujimori, Peru’s president from 1990 to 2000, who ruled as a virtual dictator. Since 2009 he has been imprisoned for corruption and

charged with human rights crimes. Keiko Fujimori also faces corruption charges.

See workers.org/2021/06/57008/ for a detailed report on the June 6 Peruvian election and its background.



Pedro Castillo’s supporters rally in Lima, June 19, demanding recognition of his victory.

Haiti

Guerrilla warfare and COVID break out in Port-au-Prince

By G. Dunkel

Starting in early June, firefights broke out among the armed neighborhood militias in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, with the cops sometimes participating when their precincts were attacked. When it became apparent that some of these militias had more fire power than the security details in wealthy neighborhoods, a general panic set in. (Haïti Liberté, June 2)

In that period, nine police stations were attacked, with weapons stolen and a Haitian police inspector killed. According to a National Network of the Defense of Human Rights recent report, over 30 cops have been killed in fighting since the beginning of the year. (Miami Herald, June 15)

There are shifting alliances between these groups. Some of them appear to have ties to the cops, since they have uniforms, body armor, communication devices and weapons used by the National Police of Haiti. Some of them engage in kidnapping and other forms of extortion; others are mainly intended for neighborhood defense.

A lot of the fighting took place in the southern area of Port-au-Prince, leading thousands of families to take refuge in the sports stadium in Carrefour, south of the capital city, at the invitation of Mayor Jude Édouard Pierre. According to UNICEF, nearly 8,500 women and children have had to flee their homes in the last two weeks, while about 600,000 people throughout the country have been impacted by the fighting.

There is another situation impacting the Haitian economy. Electricity of Haiti (EDH) is the national supplier of electric power with a major hydroelectric installation at Péligre in central Haiti near the Dominican Republic's border. EDH has not been able to meet Haiti's need for electricity.

Since June 15, some of EDH's security guards have been occupying the plant and preventing needed repairs from being done. They are upset, since a corruption scam developed by these guards, which involves "ghost" employees, was uncovered. (Alter Presse, June 18)

COVID-19 overwhelms hospitals

As of June 10, public health officials claim Haiti has registered 16,662 infections and 358 deaths from COVID-19, in this country of 11.5 million people. These figures don't reveal the full measure of the crisis. Almost

every day hospital representatives in Port-au-Prince state on the radio that their facilities are full, and they have run out of oxygen and do not have room for more patients, even though most of them have financial means.

As of June 19, it doesn't appear that the Haitian public health system has provided even one vaccination. The members of the elite who have cash, visas and foresight have flown out of the country to get their protective jab. But many others, even those among the elite who lack these resources, have caught COVID and have died, report obituaries.

Additionally, the fighting in Port-au-Prince has created obstacles to supplying hospitals with oxygen. A tank only contains enough oxygen for four hours of use. Tanks have to be refilled from a central facility.

"As a vital part of our commitment to share at least 80 million safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, the Biden administration is actively engaging with Haitian government officials on how to get vaccines to Haiti as soon as possible," a White House official told the Miami Herald June 15. But "no plans have been finalized."

Since the U.S. government owns all the COVID-19 vaccinations produced in the U.S., Haiti is unlikely to get any vaccines without Washington agreeing to the transfer. Apparently, U.S. government officials arrogantly say they don't have confidence that Haiti's health care system is capable of distributing vaccines. But Washington could offer assistance to Haiti, the most oppressed country in the Western Hemisphere!

But will the U.S. provide help? The long history of U.S.-Haiti relations illustrate that the world's richest country won't lift a finger to aid the island nation's health care system.

Given that Haiti has not even started to rebuild the main public hospital in Port-au-Prince which was destroyed in the 2010 earthquake, it's highly unlikely that the country can improve its public health system enough to satisfy U.S. requirements. Notably, while the U.S. has taken Haiti's resources for decades and super-exploited its workforce, Washington has not provided the kind of help that Haiti needs.



Families take refuge in Carrefour's sports center.

Yet socialist Cuba has provided exemplary medical aid and health workers to assist Haiti! Former Haitian president and popular mass leader, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, will be treated for COVID in Cuba.

U.S. overt and covert control of Haiti

If push comes to shove, if U.S. imperialism's interests are directly challenged or imperiled, military force is used. But given the current international climate, the U.S. prefers a proxy force. For example, after the U.S. occupied Haiti in March 2004, a U.N. force called MINUSTA replaced the U.S. soldiers three months later.

But the U.S. has other subtler tools of control. Fully one-third of Haiti's gross domestic product comes from remittances sent from the U.S. by Haitians who are supporting their families or friends.

There are 150,000 Haitians living in the U.S. who benefit from "Temporary Protective Status" visas, which are dispensed to allow citizens from a distressed country to remain and work here. While the previous administration sought to end TPS for Haitians, the Biden administration extended these visas for 18 more months May 22.

If the U.S. seeks to put more subtle pressure on Haiti, Washington can either slow down or stop remittances or remove TPS visas behind the scenes. Either tactic would be a painful blow aimed at the Haitian people. □

WW COMMENTARY

Palestinian resistance forces changes in Zionist regime

By Michael Kramer

The U.S./NATO-backed Israeli settler state has been forced into a change in leadership by the steadfast unity and resistance of the Palestinian people to their occupation and oppression. Another factor has been the explosion of international solidarity worldwide aligned with their anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle.

Benjamin Netanyahu, who held office from 1996 to 1999 and again from 2009 until 2021, is out as the long-time prime minister. Naftali Bennett is in. Like all bourgeois political movements, Zionism has multiple trends and factions. Both Netanyahu and Bennett have lived for

extended periods of time in the U.S. as adults and are one-time allies. They come out of the same right-wing, overtly racist, pro-apartheid Zionist trend, but they are leaders of their own factions or political parties.

These trends differ only on how to deal with the Palestinian resistance to Israel's occupation. Some Zionists call for mass expulsions of Palestinians and a new "Nakba," referring to the "catastrophe" in 1948 when Palestinians were forcibly ejected from their homes and farms. Others wave the flag of social democracy.

The political parties within these factions are generally based in different communities within Israel's settler population, such as those which are religious, secular,

Russian-speaking, or Mizrahi, meaning those of North African and Iraqi heritage.

However, all of the trends and factions agree on key fundamental issues: No democratic rights should be extended to the Palestinian people; apartheid laws will remain intact, and there would be no "right of return" to their ancestral homeland for the millions of Palestinian refugees forced to live in other countries.

"Divide and conquer" has been a tool of Western imperialism

against Indigenous peoples for centuries from North America to East and West Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere. It may work for a time. This strategy has now failed in Palestine.

May 18: United strike sends shock waves

The proof is in the historic general strike of Palestinian workers on May 18. It was a major political defeat for the Zionist occupation and a psychological blow to its Israeli settler population. The message of this tremendous action was seen and understood by the Biden administration, U.S. Congress and various factions in the Zionist movement.

The hundreds of thousands of Palestinians demonstrating on the streets of Haifa, Lod, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus and Gaza shredded the U.S.-backed Israeli plan to divide this population based on where they live, depending on when the military occupations of their lands began, whether in 1948 or 1967.

Also, the large and growing wave of international solidarity with the Palestinian people has added to the deepening crisis in which the Israeli settler state finds itself.

Reformatting the Zionist leadership or rebooting the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) will make no difference to those living under occupation or those who are in solidarity with them. The entire Zionist project is on a downward trajectory.

Palestine's supporters and allies can only look forward to the day when the Palestinian people put in place a completely new operating system in their homeland.

Kramer lived in Israel and served in the Israeli Defense Forces during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. He is a longtime supporter of Palestinian self-determination.



Rally in front of the Israeli Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, May 15.

Reparations and abolition

Continued from page 1

basis against the conditions of work.” He argued this “general strike” not only ended slavery but was also based on a vision of a different economic and social order—a new reality emancipated from all forms of enslavement.

The Juneteenth holiday is a faint reflection of this vision. Though federal troops brought the final word of freedom to Galveston, Texas, June 19, 1865—two years after proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln—many landowners openly defied compliance, with reports of people held in bondage as long as six years after emancipation. (tinyurl.com/5f88cpwm)

Thwarted from using African peoples’ work for no wages, the Southern owning class turned to white terror massacres, lynchings, rapes and finally legalized Black Codes to control Black workers, including convict-lease arrangements with plantations and factories.

That slavery continues in the U.S. to this day, explicitly authorized by a clause in the 13th Amendment to the Constitution: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

This loophole has allowed not only 19th century forced labor, but also the current massive exploitation of workers

WORKERS WORLD editorial

incarcerated in the U.S. prison-industrial complex.

A true act of emancipation would be to strip the vile language of slavery from the Constitution and abolish the forced labor of imprisoned people beaten, denied calls and visits with family, put into solitary confinement or given marks on their record—all for not taking a prison “job” or not being able to do work they are assigned.

Real emancipation would include the abolition of police, along with all jails, prisons and detention centers built and filled with people under capitalism.

Emancipation from the legacy of enslavement would mean unimpeded voting rights for all, especially those historically disenfranchised. But there would have to be more. There have been centuries of theft of body, land and life from African American people.

A program of reparations is necessary to rectify the accumulation over generations of the value of unpaid and low-paid labor of people of African descent. Reparations for this exploitation — which amounts to untold trillions of dollars and unquantifiable collective injustice — would be a step beyond survival toward true emancipation and liberation.

Our work is to create a world where we celebrate Juneteenth not only because people have been freed from the killing brutality of bodily enslavement. Let’s build a world that frees all workers from the exploitation of their labor. □

Emancipation and resistance

Continued from page 1

Under this system, the Texas Department of Corrections hired out incarcerated workers—who were often Black and had been arrested by law enforcement for little or no reason—to plantation owners as laborers. Convict leasing could be even worse in some ways than slavery, because those exploiting the labor of the leased people had no economic stake whatsoever in their well-being or even in keeping them alive.

According to historian Robert Perkinson in “Texas Tough: The Rise of America’s Prison Empire,” more than 3,500 leased incarcerated workers died in Texas between 1866 and 1912—more people than the number lynched in that period.

Despite all of this, Black people in Texas have celebrated in defiance of being branded as property and treated as less than human. They have carried the tradition of celebrating Juneteenth into the present.

Elizabeth Hayes Turner’s essay “Juneteenth: Emancipation and Memory” quoted a direct heir to the tradition of the holiday: “The 19th of June wasn’t the exact day the Negro was freed. But that’s the day they told them that they were free..., and my daddy told me that they whooped and hollered...”

Juneteenth celebrations over a century have featured rodeos, barbecues, family reunions, dramatic readings, parades, ball games and Blues festivals. And they have even been used as political rallies around voting rights. (Texas State Historical Association)

Attica Locke, a Houston-born writer, told the New York Times that her family would usually join community celebrations at local parks, where dozens of people would grab tables and party to music. She explained, “The way our freedom is celebrated is by one of the greatest things that was robbed from us, which was connection.” (NY Times, June 18, 2020)

In Houston, many of those same parks are still used to celebrate Juneteenth, including Emancipation Park in the Third

Ward. The park land was purchased in 1878 by Rev. Jack Yates and his congregation at Houston’s oldest Black church, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church. Many church members were formerly enslaved. At that time almost all Houston parks were segregated and off-limits to African Americans. (Workers World, June 18, 2014)

Historical revision: a form of violence

While the emancipatory holiday’s origins are in the Lone Star State, “the people from Texas took Juneteenth Day to Los Angeles, Oakland, Seattle and other places they went,” wrote Isabel Wilkerson in “The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration.” (Vintage, 2011)

Juneteenth is jubilant in its origins. It calls upon us to consider the promises of freedom that have not been realized in the United States—particularly in 2021, its first year as a federal holiday.

Meanwhile, in opposition to what is called “critical race theory,” many states have proposed legislation banning the teaching of the racist history behind Juneteenth.

The attempts to rewrite such a history of jubilation in defiance of white supremacy and colonialism is a form of violence. Also violent are the prisons still standing in Texas, which were constructed during the era of convict leasing and which still cage and kill disproportionate numbers of Black people. In Texas, 75 out of 104 state prisons do not have air conditioning in a place where summertime temperatures regularly top 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Incarcerated workers in Texas are still legally required to labor for free. The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston was experimenting on Texas prisoners as recently as the year 2000. (Prison Legal News, December 2002)

Juneteenth must come with reparations for Black people for all the harm that has been done and continues to be done as the legacy of enslavement. Anything less than reparations is essentially symbolic and an affront to the carriers of this true history. □

Biden, Blinken and Burns U.S. ‘American’ imperialism is back

By John Catalinotto

Joe Biden ended his weeklong diplomatic trip to Europe June 17 and returned to Washington. It revealed what he meant by “America is back.” Washington aims to retain its place directing the super-rich ruling class worldwide.

Biden met with the richest and most powerful imperialist leaders in the G7 in Cornwall, Britain. He gave friendly greetings to the militarist NATO military alliance in Brussels. And he held a summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin, his adversary, near Geneva.

The G7 countries are the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Canada, in order by GDP. All except Japan are leading powers in NATO.

“Imperialist” is a scientific term describing these leaders and the super-rich bankers and industrialists they represent. They dominate the world’s currency, capital, technology and propaganda, which allows them to exploit the resources and labor of the planet. The profits they rob by lending and investing capital, they protect with a monopoly of arms.

Biden and his European and Japanese allies serve the world’s plutocracy. They are members of a cabal, with Biden the top gang leader and the others his local and regional cronies. They are leaders of the extension of the colonial powers that met in Berlin in 1884-85 to divide Africa up into colonies. (See workers.org/2021/06/57014/)

In a position paper on NATO, the Biden administration stated that “many of Trump’s critics, including European leaders, warned that his strong criticism of European allies was damaging NATO cohesion and credibility.” (NATO: Key Issues for the 117th Congress)

Biden’s diplomatic/military initiative in Europe this June was thus aimed at reestablishing relations disrupted by Trump. His departments of State and Defense, along with the CIA, aim to use the G7 and NATO alliances against Russia and China and to extend imperialist control over Africa, Asia and—if the U.S. can’t do it itself—Latin America.

NATO, imperialist tool

In the post-World War II Cold War, the U.S. promoted and established NATO as a weapon. Its major task was to prevent worker uprisings in Western European countries like France, Italy and Greece, where there were strong, pro-socialist, working-class movements. Its other task was to confront the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies.

At the time, the U.S. was the pre-eminent imperialist power and built command structures into NATO that guaranteed U.S. leadership of any actions. Those structures remain.

In 1967 NATO provided the plans for a coup by Greek colonels that kept a military dictatorship in that country for seven years.

The corporate media and the NATO powers describe NATO’s history as “defensive” against the Soviet Union.



Washington, D.C., March 30, 2019

WW PHOTO: TED KELLY

Truth is, the Soviet-led alliance, the Warsaw Pact was established only in 1955 and was dissolved in 1991, as was the Soviet Union itself. The U.S. set up NATO in 1949 and has expanded NATO since the 1990s.

In 1999, as it was approaching its 50th anniversary, a U.S.-NATO bomb and rocket campaign hit Yugoslavia for over two months, destroying schools as well as chemical factories and eventually tearing Yugoslavia apart.

NATO forces are still in Afghanistan. NATO helped the U.S. occupy Iraq in the years after the 2003 invasion. NATO carried out the bombing and destruction of Libya and played a role in the war against Syria.

While Biden was visiting Europe, NATO’s “Defender Europe” war exercises moved toward the Russian borders, and the “African Lion” exercises scoured Northern and Western Africa. NATO’s original 12 have now grown to 30, most new members from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Far from being for defense, NATO aims at conquest.

Blinken, Burns and Austin

Biden’s cabinet members running the imperialist state apparatus are Antony Blinken at the State Department, William Burns at the CIA and Lloyd Austin III at the Defense Department. Blinken and Burns are career diplomats, and Austin a 41-year career officer who was a four-star general when he retired, quite recently. All are trained in a Cold War mentality—which morphs easily into anti-Russia, anti-China policies.

Normal imperialist diplomacy is based on lies and hypocrisy, flattery and bribes, backed by force. Trump publicly demanded more military spending from the European NATO leaders and then insulted them. As reported, Biden spoke softly and sweetly, which likely means Biden assured U.S. allies they would get their share of the loot stolen from the world’s working class. No gang leader could do less.

Biden urged the Europeans to back him against Putin and join with U.S. initiatives blocking Chinese economic successes in the world market. Reports are that Biden offered Putin some concessions. Even if true, these would be aimed at preventing Russia and China from allying against the imperialist offensive.

While Biden and his team speak diplomacy, never forget that the dollar, the Euro, the Japanese yen and the imperialist war machine are lurking nearby to destroy the sovereignty of any existing independent nations and threaten another Cold War against China and/or Russia that could explode in a hot war. □

Workers’ power on display as Chinese taikonauts arrive at Tiangong space station

By Joshua Hanks

China’s new Tiangong space station received its first three astronauts June 17, marking a major milestone in the country’s rapid scientific and technological development. Tang Hongbo, Nie Haisheng and Liu Boming, known as “taikonauts,” successfully docked their Shenzhou-12 spacecraft with the Tianhe-1 core module, which had been placed into orbit during a previous uncrewed launch. Together with a cargo ship, these three components form the first phase of the world’s newest space station.

Completing the station will require a total of 11 launches through 2022: four crewed missions, four cargo missions and three module launches. In addition to the Tianhe-1 core module, two laboratory modules will form the station’s habitable areas. Expandable in design, additional launches through 2030 will see the station potentially grow to 180 metric tons in mass and operate for 15 years. (CGTN, June 18)

By contrast, the International Space Station, launched in 1998, will be decommissioned in the coming years, likely making Tiangong humanity’s only permanent outpost in space. This is ironic, considering the U.S. had banned China from participating in the ISS. Russia has announced it will likely pull out of the ISS by 2025. The station shows signs of aging, with leaks becoming a periodic concern. (sciencemag.org, April 20)

Tiangong comes with cutting-edge features, such as an automated docking system that drastically reduces the time from launch to completed docking. China’s previous mission, Shenzhou-11 took 40 hours to dock with a prototype module in 2016. Shenzhou-12 took just six and a half hours. (Global Times, June 17) By contrast, SpaceX’s Dragon Capsule, which docked with the ISS in April, took 23 hours.

Tiangong has an innovative QR code system, so that everything on the station can be quickly located. It features two robotic arms on its exterior to help with construction and resupplying. Likened to a three-bedroom apartment, it has sleeping areas, a dining area and kitchen, a gym and a sanitation area. With onboard WiFi, a smartphone app controls such indoor environments as lighting and temperature. Each person onboard has a private line to talk with their families back on Earth. (Global Times, June 18)



PHOTO: XINHUA/JU ZHENHUA

Crewed spacecraft Shenzhou-12, atop a Long March-2F carrier rocket, launched from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China’s Gobi Desert, June 17.

Crews of three will rotate on missions lasting six months, and the station will be open to other countries. Seventeen countries have officially confirmed their participation, and astronauts from several countries are now learning Chinese. Astronauts from the European Space Agency have already trained on a mock Shenzhou spacecraft and could participate in future missions to Tiangong.

Russia may pursue its own space station, but is cooperating with China on other projects, including constructing a groundbreaking lunar base which could host its first cosmonauts and taikonauts by 2030.

China rises despite U.S. hostility

The U.S. government, however, will not participate in any Chinese space project. The head of the U.S. Space Command ridiculously charged in a May congressional hearing that the station’s large robotic arms could potentially “grapple” a satellite, making it a “threat” to the U.S. military. Despite the fact that the U.S. has been using robotic arms since the 1990s, the U.S. media and government hyped up this “threat” and turned it into yet another justification for conflict with China.

Such scare tactics show up repeatedly in U.S. foreign policy, as when former Secretary of State Colin Powell in 2003 held up a mock vial of anthrax at the United Nations to scare nations into backing the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Now the specter of a “giant Chinese robotic space arm” has provided Space Command, hastily created by former

President Donald Trump, with more reason to exist. Despite the hostile actions of the U.S. to undermine China’s overall development, it has nevertheless achieved a remarkable ascent. In fact decisions like excluding China from the ISS only motivated it to independently develop its own, newer station. The foundations for China’s success were laid with the 1949 Chinese Revolution, which created the conditions for its technological development. China first produced airplanes and cars in the 1950s. It launched its first satellite in 1970. Many capitalist countries even today do not produce cars, airplanes or satellites, which require a high level of technical development and industrial capacity. These were tremendous achievements for a country that had so recently been devastated by wars and imperialism.

China’s space program continues to progress since its first satellite launch more than 50 years ago. The Chang’e-4 mission in 2019 made China the first to land a rover on the far side of the moon. The Chang’e-5 returned lunar soil samples to Earth. In May this year, its ambitious Tianwen-1 mission to Mars succeeded in placing an orbiter around the planet, plus a lander and rover on its surface.

China is the only country to accomplish all three on a first mission. China is planning robotic missions to capture and return samples from asteroids and crewed missions to the moon and Mars.

Perhaps the most profound part of Tiangong is not the technology, but the fact that all three members of the first crew come from rural farming families. Just a few generations ago before the Chinese Revolution, this would be inconceivable — not only from a scientific perspective but also from a social one. Peasants, the vast majority of the population then, were harshly oppressed by semifeudal landlords. The Chinese nation was under foreign imperialist domination.

Tiangong means “heavenly palace.” Now, 100 years since the founding of the Communist Party of China, the children of farmers have entered the heavenly palace. The first human in space, Yuri Gagarin of the Soviet Union, was the son of a bricklayer and a dairy worker. The first woman in space, Valentina Tereshkova, also of the USSR, had been a textile factory worker.

Workers, whether on Earth or in space, make everything run. □

Salute on the Communist Party of China’s 100th Anniversary

Workers World Party, founded in 1959, is a Marxist-Leninist party in the U.S. From its beginning, Workers World has been a staunch supporter of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, with great appreciation for the guiding role of the Communist Party of China in that revolution. As a revolutionary working-class party in the center of world imperialism, we are determined to defend all the gains of our class on a world scale. The following is an excerpted version of Workers World’s salute to the Communist Party of China on its looth anniversary. Go to workers.org/2021/06/57124/ for the complete statement.

For 5,000 years, China was one of the world’s most advanced societies in culture, art and technology. It was attacked in the 18th and 19th centuries by powers whose rapid capitalist development gave them temporary advantage in military and industrial strength. Colonial looting, unequal treaties and military occupation reduced China to staggering poverty, famines, social chaos, enforced underdevelopment and wars.

Imperialist domination

Most people brought up in the United States are unaware that, in the 19th century, armed units from the U.S., Britain, France, Germany and Japan occupied Chinese cities. Their gunboat diplomacy imposed unequal treaties, making China pay imperialist countries huge indemnities. With U.S. participation, Britain unleashed two Opium Wars on China to enforce its “right” to sell opium — calling that “free trade.”

Students mobilizing against Chinese rulers compliant with imperialists were repressed. A nationalist movement grew. Despite the courage of young participants, they were unable to coalesce into a movement that could mobilize the masses of people — one-quarter of the world at that time — and liberate China.

Then the Communist Party of China was founded in

July 1921 by a group of leaders including Mao Zedong. It grew, developed and met the challenge of liberation.

A great revolutionary upheaval

During World War II, the Communist Party of China took advantage of contradictions among the imperialist powers — in particular, war between the U.S. and Japan — to lead in liberating China.

The CPC forged a great revolutionary upheaval of hundreds of millions of workers and peasants. They drove out imperialist occupying powers and broke the stranglehold of corrupt warlords, landlords and feudal elements. Providing leadership, education and organization to the mass resistance, the CPC led the Chinese Revolution to victory. The Red Army restored sovereignty to most of the country in October 1949, placing the Communist Party in power in the People’s Republic of China.

Perhaps the most admirable characteristics of the CPC throughout its history have been (1) its ability to change strategy and tactics when confronted with new developments; (2) as a party with state power, its ability to plan far in advance, taking advantage of the socialist organization of the Chinese economy; and (3) its ability to mobilize the Chinese masses to support any changes in policy.

There have been several tumultuous historical eras since the founding of the CPC. Historic change never happens in a straight line but is dialectical, filled with contradiction, with sharp, sometimes unexpected twists based on material conditions. Throughout the past 100 years, the Communist Party of China has maintained its ability to move in a revolutionary direction, even in the most difficult periods.

These challenges have included defeating a Japanese invasion; defeating a reactionary Kuomintang government backed by U.S. imperialism; initiating revolutionary changes at every level of society including land distribution, reorganization of industry and

infrastructure, establishment of literacy and health care; and opening the country to foreign capital investment in the late 1970s while seeking to maintain a socialist direction with centrally planned focus on raising the economic level of the whole population.

China has met and exceeded the basic material needs of its 1.4 billion population. More than 800 million people have been pulled out of dire poverty, something without precedent in modern history. Nevertheless, the CPC leadership rightfully calls China “still developing.”

International solidarity

China’s economy can now compete successfully on a world scale, as the CPC advocates “building a community with a shared future for humanity.”

China’s trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative provides infrastructure loans, equipment and training to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. China leads the world in clean energy investment. It now provides and shares globally hundreds of millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines and technology for their production.

U.S. imperialism is attempting to maintain a faltering grip on world domination and prevent the rise of People’s China which — under the leadership of the CPC — offers an alternative world order based on multilateralism, mutually beneficial economic relations and noninterference in internal affairs.

China, with advanced technology, internal cohesion and many trading partners, is now in a stronger position to resist arrogant U.S. demands.

Nevertheless, clarity and militant working-class solidarity are still essential in opposing all threats to China from U.S. imperialism and its giant military machine.

Workers World Party salutes the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China. We have much to learn and a world to win. U.S. imperialism — Hands off China! □



El ‘motín’ en la cafetería Compton, San Francisco, 1966.

Socialismo y liberación trans

Transcrito por Mirinda Crissman

Los siguientes son comentarios seleccionados de lxs panelistas en un seminario web del 1 de abril: “Día de la Visibilidad Transgénero: una perspectiva socialista”, patrocinado por el Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero, que se puede ver en Workers World YouTube: tinyurl.com/35944sht. Lxs camaradas del WWP Ezra Echo, Devin Cole y Romeo Channer se unieron a la Dra. Susan Stryker, autora de “Transgender History: Las raíces de la revolución actual”; Jupiter Peraza, una mujer trans indocumentada, activista, receptora de DACA y asociada al programa del Distrito Transgénero de San Francisco; e Indigo Lett, la secretaria y coordinadora de medios sociales de la organización activista transgénero de la Costa del Golfo STRIVE.

Historia trans, fronteras trans

Ezra: ¿Puedes explicar la historia de cómo se ha construido el movimiento trans en Estados Unidos y algunas de las luchas con las que se ha aliado el movimiento?

Susan: En realidad, el movimiento trans se remonta en Estados Unidos a la década de 1890. Se formó un grupo en la ciudad de Nueva York en un lugar llamado Columbia Hall, que era una especie de bar, cervecería, lugar de actuación, lugar de encuentro, lugar de reunión de trabajadoras sexuales y hotel. Luego hubo un grupo llamado Cercle Hermaphrodites en Nueva York que estaba formado en su mayoría por personas trans femeninas, que se llamaban a sí mismas andróginas, y que decían que se unían para la defensa común contra las amargas persecuciones del mundo.

El activismo trans empieza a despuntar realmente como movimiento activista de identidades minoritarias en los años 50 y 60. En los años 50 se publica una revista llamada Sociedad para la Igualdad en el Vestido. A principios de los años sesenta se empieza a ver gente que aboga por la posibilidad de cambiar los nombres en los documentos legales. Cuando se inician los movimientos sociales de la década de 1960, se ve a las personas trans organizándose en la política de la calle y participando en la acción directa radical contra la policía y el encarcelamiento.

Hice una película “Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria”, sobre las mujeres trans del Tenderloin [barrio] de San Francisco, que pasaban la noche en la cafetería, una especie de zona para platicar para todo el barrio. La policía hacía redadas con regularidad, y una noche de agosto de 1966 — tres años antes del más famoso levantamiento de Stonewall — la policía entró y las reinas se defendieron. Como dice la mejor descripción contemporánea del suceso, esa noche se armó un caos general en el Tenderloin.

Creo que, sobre todo en el siglo XXI, después del 11 de septiembre de 2001, gran parte de la violencia a la que se han enfrentado las personas trans es violencia estatal que tiene que ver con las fronteras

el cruce de fronteras y la documentación de identidad y el acceso a los servicios sociales. Las personas trans, a menudo se nos engloba bajo el paraguas LGBT, pero en cierto modo, creo que los problemas de las personas trans tienen menos que ver con cuestiones de orientación sexual que con cuestiones de estatus de ciudadanía, de quién se cuenta como miembro del cuerpo político.

No puede haber socialismo sin liberación trans, y no puede haber liberación trans sin socialismo.



IMAGEN: MARÍA PRIETO PIÉDROLA

Así que el activismo trans está muy alineado con el activismo pro-migrante, pro-asilo y pro-fronteras abiertas.

Jupiter: En cuanto a cómo se ha construido la historia del movimiento trans en EE.UU., el movimiento trans ha dado una especie de salto a medida que se ha unido a movimientos y rostros de la historia. Por ejemplo, la Revolución Industrial llevó a la gente a los centros urbanos, en esta ubicación geográfica donde no eran conocidos por nadie más. Porque cuando vives en una ciudad pequeña, en un pueblo pequeño, todo el mundo te conoce; existe esta presión de tener que ser muy conservador y limitado en la forma en que te expresas. En la Revolución Industrial, la gente acudía a las ciudades y experimentaba con su expresión.

Otro ejemplo: Tras el fin de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, vimos cómo aumentaba la atención internacional sobre Christine Jorgensen [una ex soldado estadounidense que se operó de afirmación sexual en Dinamarca en 1951]. Su participación en la guerra le dio una nueva luz y una nueva atención al movimiento trans. Y si avanzamos algunas décadas hasta la epidemia del SIDA, también vemos que las personas trans se ven afectadas y que los temas trans se plantean bajo una nueva luz.

Pero históricamente, las cuestiones heteronormativas cisgénero se destacan más que las personas trans. Eso es algo con lo que creo que las personas trans siempre han luchado. Todo lo que sucede, realmente tenemos que llamar la atención sobre cómo afecta a las personas transgénero. Por ejemplo, dentro del movimiento Black Lives Matter, con el asesinato de mujeres trans negras, ahora

estamos experimentando el grito de “¡Las vidas trans negras importan!”. Este es un ejemplo perfecto de cómo podemos poner de relieve las luchas trans en lo que está ocurriendo ahora mismo, con la brutalidad policial, por ejemplo.

Dire que creo que estamos haciendo un trabajo increíble en la comprensión de los problemas y fortalezas trans y en llamar la atención sobre las luchas trans para hacer de esta una sociedad mejor para las personas trans.

La lucha trans por el socialismo

Ezra: ¿Por qué es fundamental luchar por el socialismo para asegurar la liberación trans?

Romeo: Quizá un punto muy obvio es que la atención de salud es un derecho humano, y el acceso a la atención de salud es especialmente necesario y urgente para las personas trans. Es una de las mayores batallas por las que luchan las personas trans en todo el mundo. Si vives en un país socialista, eso proporciona asistencia de salud a toda su población.

Devin: No puede haber socialismo sin liberación trans, y no puede haber liberación trans sin socialismo. El capitalismo y el imperialismo están diseñados y creados para dividir a la gente, incluso por género,

para construir la opresión sobre el género.

Aunque hay gente que cree que la transexualidad no es tan importante en la lucha por el socialismo, ¡es fundamental! El camarada Leslie Feinberg, miembro del Partido Mundo Obrero [Workers World Party] desde hace más de 40 años, expuso intrincada y meticulosamente la conexión de que la opresión de género surgió como parte de la opresión de clase, en su análisis histórico marxista, “Guerreros transgénero”. La lucha por el socialismo es la lucha por la liberación trans, y viceversa.

Susan: Para lograr realmente una sociedad justa, habitable y sostenible que trate a todo el mundo con equidad — donde todo el mundo tenga lo suficiente y nadie tenga demasiado — tenemos que pensar en Estados Unidos en particular, en la dimensión colonial de los colonos, en el hecho de que Estados Unidos está construido sobre mano de obra robada y tierra robada. Para mí, el socialismo es simplemente la creencia, la convicción, de que se puede, de hecho, tener un orden social justo. Y si un sistema de gobierno no aborda eso, sigue siendo colonialismo de colonos.

Indigo: Para mí, el socialismo es comprender lo malo que es el capitalismo. Para la gente de la clase trabajadora, tenemos que entender el punto económico, obviamente, y el punto sobre el racismo, pero también tenemos que entender el punto internacional — entender el papel de Estados Unidos como país y cómo eso afecta a otras personas en otros países. Históricamente hay comunidades de terceras personas en todas partes, y se ven afectadas por el colonialismo y el capitalismo.

Luego, especialmente el año pasado con la pandemia, eso realmente demostró que necesitamos tanto: atención sanitaria, educación y tantas otras cosas. Eso nos lleva obviamente al socialismo. Con la administración que tenemos ahora, básicamente van a intentar devolvernos a donde estaban los Estados Unidos antes de la pandemia, ¡que seguía siendo un lugar muy terrible! Así que creo que para nosotros, es sólo un constante, constante desaprendizaje de nuestros propios comportamientos tóxicos, para seguir aprendiendo más sobre nosotros mismos y empujar hacia el socialismo de una manera que todos podamos sentirnos bienvenidos y cómodos y vivos.

Romeo: Sólo quiero añadir que personalmente no me sentiré liberado si las hormonas que tomo se fabrican en tierras palestinas robadas, que es de donde procede gran parte de la terapia de sustitución hormonal. Este es sólo uno de los muchos ejemplos de cómo todas estas luchas en el mundo están materialmente vinculadas. No sólo en la forma en que tenemos que mirar a las estructuras y hacer frente a las estructuras, sino en la conexión física material real que la globalización y el capitalismo han unido. Nuestro género sigue siendo controlado y vigilado en gran medida por estos sistemas de capitalismo e imperialismo. □