U.S. behind detention of Venezuelan diplomat

Release Alex Saab!

By Sara Flounders

Sara Flounders is part of a humanitarian delegation to Cabo Verde, led by Bishop Filipe Teixeira of the Diocese of St. Francis of Assisi, Catholic Church of the Americas. The delegation has tasked itself with exposing the U.S. role in the kidnapping, torture and detention of Alex Saab.

Nearly a year ago, on June 12, 2020, Alex Saab was pulled off a plane after the U.S. demanded his arrest, during a refueling stop in the Republic of Cabo Verde, a small and very poor island archipelago nation off the West Coast of Africa.

Saab, a Venezuelan diplomat to the African Union, was on a humanitarian mission to Iran at the time of his seizure to arrange emergency shipments of food, medicines and essential supplies for Venezuela. Held in Cabo Verde since then, Saab was held for months in prison in total isolation and darkness and has been tortured.

Alex Saab’s case has received international coverage, especially African news media and a great deal of attention in Venezuela, but in the U.S. corporate media, there has been almost no coverage. (See Venezuela’s orinocotribune.com, May 21) Plans for a large international campaign to defend Saab are being urgently prepared.

Saab never worked in the U.S., never lived in the U.S. and was involved in no transaction that included the U.S. Every aspect of Saab’s seizure and abusive treatment violates international law.

If the U.S. government can win its demand to extradite Alex Saab to the U.S., Washington could be emboldened to seize, charge and extradite anybody anywhere. This kidnapping is a chilling reminder of the notorious U.S. program launched in 2001 of secret rendition and disappearances of hundreds of people worldwide, some held for years without trial.

That Saab is a credentialed diplomat makes this violation of internationally guaranteed diplomatic immunity ominous. Although diplomats may be expelled from a country, they are considered not susceptible to lawsuit or prosecution under any country’s laws.

U.S. sanctions on Venezuela, Iran and 37 other countries are illegal, violating international law and the U.N. Charter. Aimed at destabilizing a country through economic sabotage, sanctions create famines and shortages in essential supplies in order to target civilians.

The extradition request is entirely illegal, because there is no extradition treaty between the United States and Cabo Verde. Cabo Verde is an underdeveloped country whose population of 561,000 is spread over 10 volcanic islands and which imports 90% of its food.

U.S. targets Venezuela

The U.S.has attempted to stop shipment of any supplies to Venezuela for years and has especially targeted a direct, house-to-house, food delivery program, called the CLAP Program. This U.S. economic terrorism deprives Venezuelans of food.

The U.S. has long-standing charges against Alex Saab for his continuing diplomatic role of purchasing essential supplies for Venezuela, calling his work "money laundering." In March, however, after three years of investigations, Swiss prosecutors found insufficient evidence to prosecute Saab.

The bogus charge against Alex Saab, as well as similar cases against North Korea’s Mun Chol Myong and China’s Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, involve individuals engaged in perfectly legal international trade, not...
Another police murder protested
‘We’re here for Vincent’

By Martha Grevatt

East Cleveland, Ohio

A cross section of Cleveland area community activists turned out May 31 to express solidarity with the family of 18-year-old Vincent Belmonte, killed Jan. 3 by East Cleveland cops. Police stopped him while he was driving his partner to work, chased him and shot him in the back of the head. They then smeared Belmonte’s character, portraying him as a carjacker although he was driving a borrowed car.

Belmonte’s killer Larry McDonald, whose nickname is PacMan, is known as a “dirty cop” with a violent reputation.

The action opened with a land acknowledgment by Chrsisy Stonebraker-Martinez of the InterReligious Task Force on Central America and Colombia. Speakers included Kareem Henton of Black Lives Matter Cleveland, Mariah Crenshaw of Chasing Justice, Brenda Bickerstaff of Safer CLE and Antoine Tollbert of New Era CLE. “We’re here for Vincent,” said Henton.

Members of the Belmonte family and their attorney — and members of other families whose loved ones were murdered by Cleveland and local suburban police — all gave powerful statements at the rally and along the route of the march that followed. Some plugged Safer CLE’s ballot initiative effort to create an independent body to monitor police misconduct.

The rally site was chosen for its proximity to the place where unarmed Melissa Williams and Timothy Russell were chased by 62 patrol cars from Cleveland and five other local police departments Nov. 20, 2012. In the infamous “137 shots” incident, they were murdered in a hail of bullets fired into their vehicle.

Witnesses to the May 30, 2020, violent Cleveland police attack on a demonstration demanding justice for George Floyd spoke about their experiences one year ago. The crowd stayed engaged, in part thanks to local Black Lives Matter activist and candidate for Cleveland City Council Aisia Jones, who chaired the rally.

Jump into the fight for socialism!

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

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on immigrants, misogyny, LGBTQ+ 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 student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

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

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

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

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

Join us in the fight for socialism!

Members of Vincent Belmonte’s family demonstrate for justice, East Cleveland, Ohio, May 31.
Syria’s elections
‘The legitimate, democratic expression of the Syrian people?’

Statement from the International Delegation to the 2021 Syrian Presidential Election

This independent delegation was assembled to witness the May 26, 2021, presidential election in Syria and to investigate on-the-ground conditions of Syrian life in the current period. Activists and journalists from Palestine, Syria, South Africa, and the United States joined this delegation at the invitation of the Syria Solidarity Movement and Arab Americans 4 Syria. This joint statement details our observations and what it means for Syrians.

On election day, our delegation traveled to neighborhoods that had been outside of government control when the last presidential elections took place in 2014. Notably, we visited several places in the towns of Arbeen and Douma in the hard-hit Eastern Ghouta region southeast of Damascus, where residents are returning and beginning to rebuild their homes, after years of seeking refuge elsewhere. We witnessed Syrians cast secret ballots in polling places where monitors from opposition parties were present alongside election officials in accordance with the Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic. We saw nothing to indicate unfairness or coercion in the casting of ballots.

We also conducted extensive interviews with members of the Syrian general public. We were not inhibited in any way from conducting the first round of relative stability they have experienced in their living memory. Many expressed that they were not simply casting votes for the candidate they preferred for the presidency, but that after years of seeking refuge elsewhere, we

‘Lab leak’ conspiracy signals New Cold War against China

By Joshua Hanks

Shortly after the Dec. 30, 2019, announcement by the Wuhan Municipal Health Authority that a dangerous new respiratory infection had been detected in the Chinese city, conspiracy theories began to spread faster than the novel coronavirus itself.

One which is receiving renewed attention claims the virus was created at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) and was either leaked or deliberately released. This conspiracy theory, supported by wild speculation with no hard facts, represents one of a kind in China under the new government against China, one which looks more and more like a new Cold War. It is supported by both U.S. capitalist parties, which aim to indefinitely preserve Western imperialism’s grip on the global order.

The first tweet mentioning the lab-leak conspiracy was Jan. 5, 2020, from @GarboHK, a self-described “British-HongKonger” who regularly retweets figures like Trump’s former secretary of state, Mike Pompeo. “Today the evil regime strikes again with a new virus,” he tweeted. “Those crystals to humans. (nature.com, May 27)” The exact origin of the COVID-19 virus remains unknown, a year and a half after it was first described—but that doesn’t make the lab-leak conspiracy theory any more likely.

Now, over a year since the conspiracy theory began to circulate in China, a number of right politicians and media outlets, it’s still spreading—and not just in right-wing tabloids. The Biden administration and liberal corporate media are lending it credence.


Gottlieb claimed in the interview that despite “an exhaustive search” for an animal that could have spread the virus to humans, “We have not found such an animal.”

Much of the renewed interest in the “lab leak conspiracy” revolves around two articles recently published in the Wall Street Journal. The first, a closed document from an anonymous official, who allegedly served in former U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration, offered the claim that three WIV researchers were sick in November 2019. The second article alleged Chinese authorities had stopped a journalist from entering an abandoned mine, where WIV researchers had recovered coronaviruses from bats in 2012. The researchers have long maintained that none of the virus was SARS-CoV-2.” (nature.com, May 27)

So the current wave of interest in the conspiracy theory is not due to any new evidence. An undisclosed document from an anonymous former Trump administration official is hardly a bombshell, and the accusation that Wuhan Institute of Virology researchers were sick in November 2019 was addressed months ago by a World Health Organization investigative team that traveled to Wuhan earlier this year. Dr. Marion Koopmans, a virologist with the WHO team, told NBC News on March 11 that “there were occasional illnesses, but that’s normal. There was nothing that stood out.” She added that the number of researchers who reported cold-like symptoms was “maybe one or two. It’s certainly not a big, big thing.” A few researchers reporting cold-like symptoms in late autumn is not a smoking gun for the virus’ source.

Several other members of the WHO team disputes the reporting of papers from such as the New York Times, which has accused China of obstructing the team and lacking transparency. Peter Daszak, a British zoologist on the team, said on twitter: “[h]is was NOT my experience on @WHO mission. As lead of animal/environment working group I found trust & openness with my China counterparts. We did get access to critical new data throughout. We DID increase our understanding of likely spill-over pathways.”

Nearly a year ago, the magazine Scientific American published an extensive article on June 1, 2020, detailing the work of Shi Zhengli, a leading researcher at the WIV. In 2016 she was part of a team investigating a group of six miners who came down with a respiratory illness and two died. While researchers identified coronaviruses in six bat species inhabiting the mine, a fungus was identified as the source of the miners’ illness. Conspiracy theorists assert, without evidence, that they actually had the novel coronavirus, which the researchers sampled and brought back to the lab, and that

it later escaped or was deliberately released. When the novel coronavirus’ spread became known in Wuhan in late December 2020, Shi and her team immediately began testing patient samples and found that five of seven patients had genetic material common to all coronaviruses. Tests were repeated, and samples were sent off for a full genomic sequence, which was completed in just 40 hours—this process generally takes weeks—and immediately uploaded to the U.S. National Center for Biotechnology Information database Jan. 5. Meanwhile, Shi reviewed her lab’s records to check for any mishandling of materials, especially during disposal, and whether any of the samples her team had brought from mines or caves matched those of the new coronavirus. Everything came back normal, and no samples matched.

“[T]hat really took a load off my mind. I had not slept a wink for days,” she said. So far, “no lab in China has found samples of the novel coronavirus in its inventory.” Yet these facts do not deter those committed to attacking China. A change in leadership in Washington has only given new life to the lab-leak conspiracy, while the Biden administration keeps in place a “coronavirus fact sheet” hastily issued by the State Department during the Trump administration’s last days. At the time this “fact sheet” was released in late January, Secretary of State Pompeo was busy telling reporters that Trump would be the next president, despite having lost the election. However, while Democrats attack conservativess for supporting the “Big Lie” that Trump won the 2020 election, they seemingly embrace the false accusations made against China. (?)
Alabama miners’ strike
‘We are Union!’

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Centreville, Ala.

May 31 — In Brookwood, Ala., the 1,100 miners at the Warrior Met Coal’s Brookwood Mine #7 (Local 2245) are entering the ninth week of a strike begun April 1 against Warrior Met Coal. The company has refused to meet the miners’ just demands, and the bosses brought in nonunion workers to replace the strikers. Business Wire describes Warrior as “the leading dedicated U.S.-based producer and exporter of high quality metallurgical (‘met’) coal for the global steel industry.” (Feb. 24)

Striped-shirted, hard-hatted mining workers marched to Mine #7 on May 25 to confront the strikebreakers, chanting, “We are Union! UM doesn’t break!” Black strikers on bullhorns called out by name the scabs who were crossing the picket line: “Get out from behind the truck, D—! ... Come back where we can see you!” Mine boss John Tkach of Central Alabama has a tradition of Black and white worker organizing that goes back 100 years, in defiance of state segregationist law and policy.

A group of miners sat down in the road to block the entrance; eleven were eventually arrested. One miner said, “We don’t see how we’re breaking the law, when this company is trying to destroy our people.” (perfectunion.us)

The miners threatened to release arrested miners later in the day, they joined a union rally in progress, where speakers included Cecil Roberts, UMWA international president, and Liz Schuler, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO.

In the 2016 the miners accepted a drastic $6-an-hour pay cut and sacrificed health benefits to bring the company out of bankruptcy. Management promised the cuts would be restored once the business was solvent.

In a 2020 end-of-year statement Warrior CEO Walt Scheller said: “Despite the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on met coal demand and the worldwide depression, we were pleased to be cash flow positive again in the fourth quarter and nearly break even for the year.”

But when the miners demanded restoration of the bargain, and benefits, the company offered a contract with only a $1.50-an-hour increase and kept in place the discipline and firing policy. The company contract offered nothing to improve unsafe working conditions. After walking out, the miners voted 1,106 to 45 to reject the company offer.

The miners labor in one of the world’s most life-threatening workplaces. The Brookwood mines are 1,400 to 2,100 feet underground — some of the deepest vertical-shaft coal mines in North America. In 2001, methane gas explosions and a cave-in near the town of Tannehill killed 13 workers, including a former high school classmate of this writer. Coal is extracted in the Warrior Met mines with highly mechanized “longwall” machines. The explosive methane risk is omnipresent, including methane gas explosions, strata failure that tears hills, dust that permanently damages lungs, longwall mechanisms causing head and neck injuries, and deafening machine noise.

The company’s hard line, which is keeping experienced miners out of work, is also having a damaging impact on the surrounding environment, as inexperienced picket-line crosses are expected to run complicated machinery. Nelson Brooks with Black Warrior Riverkeepers says a polluted wastewater discharge smelling of chemicals is now flowing into local creeks from Warrior Met. These are creeks where children of the workers swim in the summer. Brooks says the Alabama Department of Environmental Management should immediately shut down Mine #7 and issue a cease-and-desist order to the company. (abc3340.com, May 3)

Miners’ solidarity rallies are being held at Tannehill State Park. Community support, including fundraisers and a food pantry, is helping the striking miners and their families keep going.

Workers need unions — Amazon offers ‘despair closets’

By Betsy Piette

Just when it seemed impossible for Jeff Bezos and other Amazon bosses to be any more clueless and insensitive toward the well-being of their workforce, the company introduced “Ama-Zen,” a wellness-isolation box for employees.

While the company touts these tiny cubicles as “self-care” spaces for warehouse employees “to focus on their mental and emotional well-being,” thousands of Amazon workers, responding to a video on social media of the company’s video on “Ama-Zen,” denounced this union-busting initiative as a way to distract workers from their demands.

The company announced its “Ama-Zen” initiative to workers on May 17, the company described it as a way to help workers recharge their “internal batteries.”

The ‘Ama-Zen’ boxes are 17 inches deep, 10 inches wide and 23 inches tall. In the small box, employees can find cheese, crackers, coffee and other “interactive kiosks.”

Amazon referred to these boxes as a way “to help workers recharge their internal batteries.” On May 17, the company states: “During shifts, employees can visit Ama-Zen stations and watch short videos featuring easy-to-follow well-being activities, including guided meditations, positive affirmations...[and] just pause and regroup.”

“Working Well” is supposed to provide workers with “physical and mental activities, wellness exercises and healthy eating support.” However, the company’s hype of the “interactive kiosks” fails to mention how overworked workers, on their feet for 10-plus-hour shifts and constantly in motion, would ever have time or energy for this program.

While it may sound good, nothing in Amazon’s videos mentions how overworked workers, on their feet for 10-plus-hour shifts and constantly in motion, would ever have time or energy for this program. The company is trying to distract workers from their demands, and the union-busting stations are an attempt to destroy the Bessemer, Ala., Amazon union drive earlier this year, including the lack of adequate breaks and the dehumanization of workers’ labor. Key issues included the unreliability of Amazon’s “time off task” system, where workers are constantly surveilled and penalized with docked pay, for every second taken away from production time. Workers unable to maintain the inhumane pace of work face injury risk.

The union drive raised the lack of adequate time for warehouse workers to leave at the end of their shifts. Workers go to the bathrooms — which are often the length of football fields away from their workstations. As for Amazon’s videos, many voiced concerns that they will just be more company propaganda trying to badger workers to go against union drives.

Now, offering coffin-size boxes for use during nonexistent breaks, management only exposes its contempt for workers. One comment suggested “Amazon has introduced the ‘Ama-Zen,’ to distract from the fact that they busted a unionization effort in Alabama.” Amazon CEOs know that unionized Amazon workers have collective bargaining power they would fight for and win genuine workplace improvements.
**Colombia, Brazil, Chile**

**Masses battle rightist regimes**

By John Catalinotto

Ongoing struggles in three South American countries show the general upsurge that began in 2019 is still challeng- ing right-wing ruling groups that had resumed control of governments.

A look at events in Colombia, Brazil and Chile demonstrate that the struggle continua- tes. Up to this point, the axis of the mass movement has been to remove the right- wing ruling groups controlling the govern- ments. It has not yet reached the level of an open attempt to smash state power — the army, courts and police that the ruling olig- archy garb in each country control.

**Colombia — repression and resistance**

A year ago, the political climate that began April 28 has put ruling circles in Colombia in turmoil for over a month, as it has drawn more and more sectors of Colombian society into activity. News and analysis from progressive media in the South American region oscillate between reporting President Iván Duque’s brutal military repression and documenting the courage of Colombia’s mass movement in continuing to defy this repression.

According to a report in resumen.com.ve May 29, during the month of strike actions, Colombia’s police — especially the fascist ESMAD or anti-riot squads and right-wing death squads — killed at least 60 people, wounded many more and disappeared between 89 and 346 people.

Along with this repression, as the writer Fernando Rubio in labahine.org acknowledges in his recent article: “For the third week now, the country, a general political strike focuses on paralyzing the economy and ceasing to be a marginal protest phenomenon, to challenge and take control of the central core of oligarchic domination.

“This process puts in a strategic place the working class and the rest of the mass of workers who — allied with the youth, the Indigenous Minga, the middle classes and the peasant masses — have focused the current movement on the terrain of the dispute for power to dissolve from the vital points in the regime of domination, the oligarchic clique that appropriates the national wealth.”

This heroic struggle has awakened sup- port among organizations worldwide that speak in the name of the working-class revolution. Some 18 such organizations, including Workers World Party and the Party of Liberation in Argentina, recently signed a statement expressing “sympathy toward the Colombian people, with special respect and value for the mass of youth who are on the first line of street fighting. And our solidarity in solidarity with com- bative social and political organizations, who are committed to the uprising before talking with Duque, looking for parliamen- tary or electoral advantages.”

“As well as condemning Duque’s cur- rent repression, we also repudiate the repression against social leaders and for- mer democrat guerillas, as this totally broke the 2016 Peace Accords signed with the FARC-EP — the regime never signed an accord with the ELN.” [Both the FARC-EP and the ELN were orga- nizations engaged in guerrilla war against the rightist regime.]

This is only one of many such state- ments condemning the Colombian regime, its position as lackey to U.S. imperialism and defending human rights in Colombia.

**Brazil — Bolsonaro out!**

In more than 200 cities of Brazil, thou- sands of demonstrators demanded the impeachment of President Jair Bolsonaro, whom they accuse of criminally mismanag- ing the pandemic crisis, which has already killed at least 460,000 of Brazil’s 211 million people. Photos of protests — which reached over 10,000 people in Rio de Janeiro alone — showed signs calling Bolsonaro’s actions “murder.”

The leftist organizations and student movements calling the protests distrib- uted protective masks and disinfectant and called on the demonstrators to keep their distance.

Bolsonaro’s approval ratings are cur- rently the worst since he took office on Jan. 1, 2019, and recent polls show that former President Luís Inácio “Lula” da Silva would outpoll him by about 35% to 34% in a 2022 election. Lula won the 2018 election only because a conspir- acy involving the Brazilian judiciary put Lula in prison and disqualified him from running for president. Bolsonaro’s manipu- lating for the Workers Party (PT) candi- date. Lula has since been vindicated and released from prison.

**Chile — constitutional elections**

In Chile, popular street actions have been taking place since the October 2019, and in mid-May these led to surprising electoral results throughout the country. Often in revolutionary street actions — which in Chile, as in Colombia, the state has met with brutal repression — the more active sectors of society, often the young, go far ahead of what the masses of voters are ready for. The Mass movement, however, reflected the changes in consciousness brought about by more than a year and a half of street actions. Argentine analyst Attilio Carabelli, writing in laohane.org, “Finally on Sunday [May 16] the result was a categorical triumph for the left and a crushing defeat for the right.”

Fewer than a third of the seats went to right-wing parties, which means these parties will be unable to veto changes to the constitution. The new, more progressive constitution will strengthen our alliances with worker-led grassroots organizations around the world.

By Tania Siddiqi

On the Muslim holiday Eid Al-’Adha, Gujjar Nala and Orangi Nala residents, known as affectees, established a protest camp outside of the Karachi Press Club to draw attention to the ongoing demolitions of poor peoples’ housing taking place in Karachi, Pakistan. At the demonstration, protesters and media connected their struggle with the situation in Colombia, where the government’s demolition of affectees’ homes are taking place.

One affectee, holding a Palestinian flag, stated that Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land, the demolition of Palestinian homes and systemic attacks against the Palestinian people are similar to the government and corporate entities’ actions against the Karachi’s poor workers. He explained how Israel’s bar- ritory against Palestinians is like Bahria Town and the sindhi government’s dis- placement and policing of Orangi Nala res- idents — oppressors inflicting violence against the oppressed for the sake of occupying and controlling land. (Fawad Haasan’s Tweet, May 13)

Since Workers World last reported on Karachi Metropolitan Corporation’s (KMC) “anti-encroachment” (demolition) drive against people residing near the Orangi Nala and Gujjar Nala, the state continues its attempt to dispossess the people, while the people continue to resist this state violence.

Orangi Nala and Gujjar Nala affect- ees, along with progressive organizations including the Awami Workers Party—Karachi and Karachi Bachao Tehreek (KBT), protested outside of the Supreme Court Karachai Registry during a hear- ing. They told the court that KMC is a court-ordered stay that would suspend the government’s demolition of affectees’ homes.

That same day, Pakistan Peoples Party, the dominating political party in Sindh, ransacked Awami Workers Party-Karachi’s office, used by KBT for meetings and organi- zational work and by the Gujjar Nala Mutasilreen Committee. On May 18, affectees were able to secure a stay order until June 1. While this was a vic- tory for the people, the state responded with horrific acts of violence.

On May 17, protest outside of Supreme Court, Karachi.

May 17, protest outside of Supreme Court, Karachi. © KARACHI BACHAO TEHREEK

Younis, a 32-year-old man, was barbarically murdered by Sindh police during a drug raid near Gujjar Nala. The police operation included a human chain around him and fought for protection, but failed. Younis attempted to run away, but fell into the Nala. “The police then crashed his skull by throwing a [large] rock at him.” (KBT Tweet, May 19)

Abid Asghar, President of Gujjar Nala Mutasilreen Committee, was brutally attacked May 24 for his involvement in resisting demolitions along the Organ and Gujjar Nala (streams). Days before Asghar’s attack, the home of Shakeel, another member of the Mutasilreen Committee, was set on fire.

Amid growing state violence against resisters, KBT members worked to secure a stay order from the court. On May 26 to document the state’s vio- lations of the court’s stay order. When KBT members arrived, KMC employees told them that KMC was at Gujjar Nala to clean the drains. However, demolition workers hired by KMC informed KBT that they were there to demolish homes.

After blatantly lying to KBT and violate the court order, KMC began aggres- sively ransacking KBT offices, showing that KMC members — government offi- cials — were not answerable to the people. The state then threatened to arrest a KBT member for filming the state’s intimida- tion tactics. Other KBT organizers formed a human chain around him and fought for his safety.

The KBT issued a statement that they expected an escalation in KMC’s brutality targeting the state’s workers’ movement. They called for solidarity and support to ensure that workers’ homes remain pro- tected. (KBT Instagram, May 28)

For those of us in the Global North, who reside at the center of the imperial- ist empire, now more than ever we must engage in international acts of solidar- ity and generate strategies and tactics to strengthen our alliances with worker-led grassroots organizations around the world.

Solidarity with Orangi Nala and Gujjar Nala affectees, Gujjar Nala Mutasilreen Committee, Awami Workers Party—Karachi, Karachi Bachao Tehreek and all who dare to struggle against state vio- lence! Let’s build a workers’ world! ☐
Palestinians, allies bring struggle to D.C.

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Many thousands of people demonstrated for Palestine May 29 in Washington, D.C., calling for an end to U.S. aid to Israel and a global grassroots campaign against the U.S.-backed racist Israeli state that has killed more than 254 Palestinians and committed during its latest attack on Gaza. The Israeli apartheid state is more than the racist oppressor of Palestinians and Arabs; it’s a hub of U.S. imperialism. Its tanks, its weapons, its bombs are paid for by the U.S. And so we in the U.S. have an extra responsibility. And the U.S. labor movement must now feel the hot global pressure to reverse its longtime, and unfortunate position of supporting the reactionary racist state of Israel.

Palestine elects the world

This revival of the struggle of the Palestinian people in such a strong united way, demanding an end to the apartheid Israeli state, may be the struggle that wakes up the workers and the oppressed of the world — because it appears to have electrified the workers and the oppressed everywhere. And the analogy with the struggle of the people of the United States, particularly Black and Brown people against racist police terror, is obvious.

But what we’ve seen in the month of May is nothing short of a revolutionary Palestine Liberation struggle, in a way that on many levels is unprecedented. Because, in addition to the brave resistance of Hamas soldiers fighting with inferior weapons against the tanks and the planes and the bombs that the Israelis are supplied with by the U.S. and Palestinians had a general strike on May 18. The strike was not, of course, not only in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank, but even in the Arab communities inside Israel.

It’s the first general strike joined by millions, supported by the Palestinian General Labor Federation, by other unions and community organizations.

And this brought into this resistance struggle — against this new violent Israeli attack on the Palestinian people — different social forces and gave the struggle a class character. That’s what a general strike does: ratchets the struggle up a couple of notches.

The world on both sides of the class barriers is paying a lot of attention to it. Maybe we are being a little equivocal because we have to see what happens now. This very well may be the beginning of the third Intifada of the Palestinian people, on top of what happened 20 years ago when then-Gen. Atef Safiya offended the Palestinians by going to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and then what happened approximately 13 years earlier with the first Intifada.

And this could be the biggest Intifada. It seems there is more unity and more solidarity among Arabs and Palestinians in occupied areas and around the Middle East. And to my recollection, there’s never been more international solidarity.

One has never seen so many protests, not only in large numbers but thousands of protests all over the globe — Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa, South Africa, the Middle East, the United States — but also the size of these demonstrations in the tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of people.

Palestine’s relationship to class struggle worldwide

By Larry Holmes

The excerpted remarks are from a May 27 conversation “From Palestine to Alabama — The Revolutionary Transformation of the Working Class.” A conversation with Larry Holmes, sponsored by Workers World Party. Holmes is WWP’s First Secretary. Go to tinglyr.com/2q686kg to see the entire program.

This revival of the struggle of the Palestinian people is a class struggle, to help lead ultimately toward worldwide socialist revolution. In order to make that real, we have to support the Palestinian liberation struggles.

It is the obligation, the revolutionary duty of communists, and all those who are in the class struggle, to help lead ultimately toward worldwide socialist revolution. In order to make that real, we have to support the Palestinian liberation struggles.

But what we’ve seen in the month of May is nothing short of a revolutionary Palestine Liberation struggle, in a way that on many levels is unprecedented. Because, in addition to the brave resistance of Hamas soldiers fighting with inferior weapons against the tanks and the planes and the bombs that the Israelis are supplied with by the U.S., Palestinians had a general strike on May 18.

by Larry Holmes

That’s the only solution, and it’s what we used to call working-class internationalism, where the goals of the imperialists mean nothing. We are against them [the imperialists]. The objectives and goals of a global working-class movement include all the oppressed people, have no boundaries, no geographical boundaries, no language boundaries, not even cultural boundaries. As important as culture is, that has to be the direction.

That’s what the Palestinian response to this latest aggression has reminded me of, what this new Intifada is showing us, whether it’s supporting the uprising or the Black Lives Matter struggle, which is so important.

Remember what was happening a year ago; it was a global rebellion by the millions.

Workers’ assemblies on Palestine

It’s our job to fight, to strategize, to plan with others to see that this struggle has an anti-imperialist character and that there is a class character, which means calling on unions, on the labor movement, to shut down workers in solidarity with the struggle against racism, so that it is known that this is a class struggle.

If we don’t do this, then we know what will happen one way or another, even after tremendous upsurges with millions of people militantly taking the streets and shutting shit down, the message will be usurped by the Democrats. The only way that you can stop that is if the struggle, more and more, takes on an anti-capitalist and class character.

We’re going to have to come up with a strategy for labor in relationship to showing maximum solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just liberation struggle.

Everyone knows the wisdom of having a workers’ assembly in solidarity with Palestine. Maybe because of COVID, it still needs to be a virtual event. But people can strategize and see if it’s safe for something on a local or regional level, to be face to face.

But wrapping up our heads around the prospects and the timing for a national workers’ assembly in solidarity with Palestine, as a planning session with trade unionists and workers, to map out a strategy that pushes the labor movement in the right direction — that’s not the most important thing. But until someone can think of something better, I think it should be on the table.
On supporting the Palestinian struggle

By Olugbile Alade

Being a recovering liberal, May 2021 might quite possibly be the most important month in my entire life. Seeing revolutionary theory put into practice by attending a rally on May Day and the #SaveSheikJarrah rally May 15 has really inspired me to invest more deeply into political organizing.

The May 1 events enabled me to get a first-hand view of how the capitalist system affects the lives of the working class, young and old. Witnessing speakers from all walks of life talk about how the U.S. economic system has wreaked their lives really hit home to this recent college graduate, who has to pay the bills by working in the service industry.

As great as the May 1 event was, it seemed like missing something. The problem was that I didn’t know what, until I attended the #SaveSheikhJarrah rally two weeks later.

While hearing stories from the U.S. proletariat was necessary for my political development, what really seemed to bear the class struggle from beyond the borders of the wealthiest country in history. I needed to witness the fervor and passion of activists resisting the clutches of U.S. imperialist hegemony. I found this at the rally for Palestine on May 15.

May 15's protest outside of the Museum Square all the way to the Philadelphia Art museum, along with thousands of other people, inspired me to be the best ally I could possibly be to the people struggling not just not in the United States but all over the world. Starting with #SaveSheikhJarrah and Palestine Liberation as a whole, I will use my platform and voice to fight for Palestine in the imperial core to extend my solidarity to all people seeking self-determination.

Concrete solidarity

By reading articles and listening to videos by Palestinian activists, I learned several ways to be a better ally to the Palestinian cause. The first one is to boycott corporations and companies that are complicit with Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian lands. The sad part about companies like Ben and Jerry's, HP, Puma and others is that they can coexist. There is no solidarity justice within the capitalist class.

The Abolition and Disability Justice Collective condenmed Israel's recent massacres of Palestinians and its ongoing occupation and settler colonization of Palestine. Disability justice cannot exist under settler colonialism, military occupation, imprisonment and apartheid. We write this in support of the Palestinian struggle for freedom, dignity and self-determination.

Abolition and Disability Justice Collective

Solidarity with Palestinian

From Workers World Party’s Disability Justice and Rights Caucus: The Abolition and Disability Justice Coalition (abolitionanddisabilityjustice.co), which issued the (following excerpted) wonderful statement of solidarity with Palestine, describes itself as “abolitionist psychiatry comrades with disability and their allies. We believe in and work toward the liberation of all.” It subscribes to the 10 principles of a leading disability justice organization, Sins Invalid, the first of which, Intersectionality, quotes Audre Lorde: “We do not live single issue lives, and “Abolism, coupled with white supremacy, supported by capitalism, unapologetically endures the racism and sexism of the majority of the world’s ‘minority.’” (The complete statement is online at workers.org.)

The Disability Justice and Rights Caucus of Workers World also joins the call from the Disability Rights Caucus because of the vanguard role of the Disability Justice Movement. We join with the AMIC, Sins Invalid and the Autistic People of Color Collective in their solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The Abolition and Disability Justice Collective condemned Israel's recent massacres of Palestinians and its ongoing occupation and settler colonization of Palestine. Disability justice cannot exist under settler colonialism, military occupation, imprisonment and apartheid. We write this in support of the Palestinian struggle for freedom, dignity and self-determination.

Israeli settler colonization is a disability justice issue that underscores the urgency of abolition and its interdependent dimensions. Israel routinely maims and traumatizes Palestinians, using money, weapons and policing tactics from the U.S. and Canada, among other settler-colonial states.

Israel has systematically targeted and killed disabled and nondisabled Palestinians, and Israel’s ongoing violence is uniquely disabling for children and Palestinians of all ages. Disability is spatially concentrated in the settler-colonial project known as Israel for a long time. As of 2020, the U.S. has been contributing to the settler-colonial project known as Israel for a long time.

We must be interpid in our stances and bold in our dismantling of spurious assertions about Israel’s alleged victimhood. This present moment is an opportune time for leftists and revolutionaries of various persuasions to unite and rally behind a noble and just cause.

Last, we need to contribute materially to the survival of Palestine and its people. In addition to spotlighting Israeli voices, the U.S. has been contributing to the settler-colonial project known as Israel for a long time.

With the future of Palestinian Liberty on the line, we must continue to support and fight with Palestinian people. With more representation in the U.S. Congress, we can do more to support the voices and work of Palestinian scholars, activists and journalists.

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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 3,560 per 100,000) were 2.25 times as likely to be arrested than straight individuals (with an arrest rate of 1,600 per 100,000). This disparity is driven by lesbian and bisexual women, who are 4.3 times as likely to be arrested than straight women (with an arrest rate of 1,960 per 100,000 compared to 860 per 100,000). Meanwhile, gay and bisexual men are 1.3 times as likely to be arrested than straight men (with a rate of 2,120 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 official count often overlaps with queer identity or not—tend to have the least amount of data to show what is happening to them.

“With the rise of black 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 genderqueer people (TGNC) 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 oppressive conditions related to race, disability and income. Data demonstrates that Black, Latinx and Indigenous people are locked up in numbers incredibly disproportionate to their share of the population. Many LGBTQ2S+ people are people of color, and many have disabilities. There are no data on Two-Spirit Natives incarcerated. However, according to The Appeal, South Dakota leads the country on jail admissions based on arrears 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 jail in the state. Natives 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 are perpetuated through various social enclaves such as, but not limited to, criminalization and the structure of the 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 to LGBTQ2S+ youth face after fleeing abuse and lack of acceptance at home. In order to survive, many pushed toward drug sales, theft and sex work—which dramatically increase the risk of arrest and confinement.

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, homogeneous thinking that allows for 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 profiling 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 migration. Who are the workers and oppressed people seeking to find a place they can survive.

Inside the 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.

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.

‘Good riddance’ to ICE detention in Butler County

By Martha Grevatt

Ohio immigrant rights organizations and attorneys held a virtual press conference May 28 to announce a win. Immigrants will no longer be subjected to the deplorable conditions of detention at the Butler County Jail, in Hamilton. Organizations are demanding Immigration and Customs Enforcement release everyone one detained in the jail.

Abdoulaye Lam and Demba Diawara, who were later deported to Mauritania, gave prerecorded testimony about the abusive treatment they were subjected to in the jail. Prison guards beat them and called them racial slurs. The food served was “horrible.” They were not given clean clothes. There were no hot showers, and the building was unheated in the winter. When they complained of stomach pain, they were not allowed to see a nurse. “This is something I will never, ever forget,” Lam said. Diawara demanded: “Shut down this jail!”

Lam and Diawara had spent many years in the U.S. and had small businesses in the community before being arrested and ultimately deported. Their spouses are legal residents, and their children were born here. “My daughter cries every single day,” said Diawara.

Speakers credited the “bravery and courage of the people who are inside,” like Lam and Diawara, for sending out letters about jail conditions, which led to a lawsuit. Rather than refraining from subjecting detainees to an inhumane situation, notoriously racist Butler County Sheriff Richard K. Jones ended the county’s contract with ICE.

Lynn Tramonte, representing the Ohio Immigrant Alliance, said, “We say good riddance.” Previously ICE abandoned its arrangement with the Morrow County Jail, where 100% of those incarcerated had contracted COVID-19 after being denied face masks, soap and implementation of social-distancing measures. Similar victories have been achieved in Georgia and Massachusetts.

Immigrant rights activists are collaborating with state organization groups to fight incontrollable county jail conditions, which people incarcerated by the criminal justice system are unable to be served if people without documents are merely transferred to other horrible facilities—or if they are deported. “Ohio is not a place where we want to detain immigrants,” said Danya Hoffman, with the mutual aid group Ohio Immigrant Visibility. The two remaining county jails in Ohio that contract with ICE are Geauga County in Chardon and Seneca County in Tiffin.

Technically, anyone who has been in the U.S. since at least November 2020, and is not deemed to pose a risk to the community, is legally eligible for release. However, immigration attorney Brian Hoffman pointed out that this is nearly impossible to prove before a judge without an attorney. Only 14% of migrants in ICE detention have attorneys, and the percentage is even lower in some states. Abolish ICE! Free them all! ☐
End privatization of prison mail!

By Mia X and Phebe Eckhardt
Boston

Banning paper letters for the incarcerated: Would you consider this torture? Would you consider this a violation of human rights? Write to us, sharing your story, if you have seen your family, children, loved ones for years, and now you are unable to receive paper mail from them. This means no birthday, anniversary or graduation cards. No love letters or pictures of your new baby. No crayon drawings from your 4-year-old or photos of the new baby in the family. Nothing to hang on the wall in your cell to look at daily and cheer you up. A letter is the only contact you have. Nothing touches the sanctity of your words, or perfume on you, read over and over. It is a lifeline to those behind bars.

Ban on paper mail is ‘punishment’

Susan M.’s disabled brother has been in prison in Massachusetts for 27 years. She explained to Workers World: “This is gratuitous punishment. The Department of Correction Weaponizes COVID-19 to further isolate prisoners. There have been no visits since last March, only adding to the previously escalating restrictions affecting contact between inside and outside.

“But prior to COVID-19, the DOC curtailed written correspondence by banning prisoners’ receipt of original hard-copy mail. Cards and letters are now digitally photocopied by disgruntled guards. Nothing from loved ones is ever held by the incarcerated. Such constraints cut off the family and surveil us at the same time. Everything that is written between us is seen by staff and stored.”

Susan explained further: “This practice has a chilling effect. Correspondence is a lifeline inside. Some people get only one or two letters a year. Communication is an intimate connection that makes them feel human again. They can also tell us what is happening, give advice and help us. This reciprocal contact restores their humanness. It keeps them connected to the larger world.”

In Massachusetts, guards are photocopying all letters that come into the Souza Baranowski Correctional Center and six other prisons. Guards are photographed doing this, and copies are often illegible or missing pages. State prison administrators and correctional officers claim this process is needed to deter contraband from being sent in.

There is “not publicly robust data suggesting mail is the primary culprit” for introducing drugs into prisons, wrote Ella Faessler. (Truthout, Feb. 23) Attorney Sara Winkler, with American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania, says evidence shows “the vast majority, at least of the drugs they discuss coming in, were coming in through staff or visitors.” (Prison Legal News, February 2020)

The exponential push for ending physical mail is primarily about expanding profit opportunities for private companies while simultaneously placing undue burdens on the incarcerated, their families and support networks.

Prison profiteers

A Tufts University report says, “there are thousands of companies who have range of contracts in both private and public prisons.” A staggeringly high number of corporations are involved in the prison industrial complex, including the whole network of parties with vested interests. (tufeds.upn.prisoninvestigation, 2021)

“The Prison Industry: Mapping Private Sector Players,” a report released by Worth Rises in May 2020, identifies and exposes over 4,100 corporations that profit from the devastating mass incarceration of our nation’s marginalized communities.” Billions of dollars are stolen from families — loved ones and children — who are supporting their incarcerated loved ones. There is a lot of money to be made through privatization of services in prison: on food, phone calls and books. If Smart MailGuard (SC) is contracted to a prison, they get MailGuard as an add-on, which includes tablets and kiosks. MailGuard, which started in 2020, is a pilot program with the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Tablets are sometimes free, but incarcerated people use them to send emails and photos and buy books, music and games. This means big profits for companies like SC. It means lots of expenses for the poorest and most vulnerable — the incarcerated and their families.

This communications company got a contract with Pennsylvania DOC in 2018 for $4 million per year. SC wants to introduce MailGuard to Massachusetts prisons. This means that physical mail would be sent to SC in Florida, to be inspected, scanned, digitally forwarded and stored into a database. Originals are destroyed. The scanned letter/mail is sent back to the prison for viewing in a public kiosk (no privacy) or via tablet or mailed back as photocopies for staff to print and distribute.

Families pay the price

Most services for those in prison are privatized by subscriptions, and that exploits the incarcerated and their family members. What they provide is often low quality and violates inmates’ civil rights.

A $4.73 a month “Who Pays? The True Cost of Incarceration on Families,” states: “One in three families go into debt just to be able to communicate with their incarcerated loved one.” (whopaysreport.org, September 2015)

Families must put money into email accounts, or sometimes incarcerated people must buy “stamps” to use email. There is an increase in “stamp” costs when character counts increase or there are attachments. Mail-through-MailGuard can be delayed two days, which means families often must use email and pay more.

In most cases, the incarcerated person was the major earner in a family. And 54% were the main sources of income according to the article. “Prisoners’ rights group Just Detention International calls it, ‘it is exceedingly difficult to sustain connections with loved ones and to foster meaningful relationships with children.’”

This “profit-driven incarceration, as prisoners’ rights group Just Detention International calls it, continues to be emotionally and financially stressful to the families and loved ones and potentially alienates or drives them apart.

For disabled people with traumatic brain injury or visual impairment, tablets and kiosks are not accessible. For those in solitary confinement, tablets are either forbidden or restricted. JDI stresses it “undermines crucial confidential communications, including between incarcerated survivors of sexual abuse and outside advocates.”

In January, there was a hearing on the privatization of paper mail organized by the Massachusetts DOC. The number of people attempting to join the virtual meeting overwhelmed the capabilities of Zoom, thus limiting overall public engagement.

Solidarity matters!

Solidarity is potent in the fightback against the policies and exploitation facing the incarcerated and their families.

In an interview conducted last year with an incarcerated mother currently at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, Tami Eldridge stated: “My children and I have irreparable memories of moments and events that we can look back on and share, that would not have been possible through any of these new forms of communication. I have what some of us long-termers call an ‘archive of love letters’ from my children that I am able to revisit. Eldridge stressed: “Moments like my children’s first time writing in scripted letters, their first picture they drew of me, their first song they wrote, them learning how to write poetry, their first crush and my most prized treasure: simply writing a few lines to show that, even when they were busy, they thought to say something to me and send it with a stamp.” (The Bremen Center, Sept. 29, 2020)"
People of African descent inside the U.S. have been fighting for the right to reparations, beginning when 4 million people were freed as chattel following the Civil War. The first call for reparations was for 40 acres and a mule — 40 acres of land for a free farmer and a mule to pull the plow.

For over 150 years, every atrocity and crime suffered by Black people — from police terror to disproportionate poverty to lack of political representation — has cried out for some form of reparations or justice. The long-term solution will only come about when all class relations, including white supremacy, are uprooted by a revolutionary transformation of society to bring about socialism.

One of the most egregious atrocities that cries out for immediate reparations took place 100 years ago in Tulsa, Okla. For two days, May 31 and June 1, racist vigilante whites went on a rampage in the African American Greenwood District, known as “Black Wall Street,” destroying homes, churches, schools and businesses owned by Black people. Greenwood had become economically prosperous due to the oil boom. But the Ku Klux Klan had gained strength in numbers throughout the country, and Tulsa was no exception.

Original reports claimed the death count of Black people to be 36, but according to some historians, the death count could have been as high as 300. Thousands Black people became homeless, and 40 blocks of the District were obliterated. For decades this massacre was hidden from the history books.

What sparked the “Tulsa Race Massacre” was the May 30, 1921, arrest of a young Black man, Dick Rowland, who was accused of assaulting a white elevator operator, Sarah Page. When a white mob of 1,500, with backing of city officials, tried to lynch a jailed Rowland, an armed group of 75 Black brave men, many of them World War I veterans, confronted them but were forced to retreat to segregated Greenwood. Rowland was eventually exonerated.

According to the 2001 Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, “Tulsa was likely the first city to be bombed from the air” in the U.S., with kerosene bombs dropped by white men from airplanes. Sixty-four years later on May 13, 1985, the City of Philadelphia dropped a bomb on the predominantly Black Osage Avenue destroying 60 homes in an attack on the MOVE family.

Leslie Benningfield “Mother” Randle, a 105-year-old survivor of the Tulsa massacre, filed a lawsuit saying that $500 million worth of property was destroyed in 1921, with no compensation from the mainy white ruling-class oil barons. The lawsuit goes on to say, “Greenwood and North Tulsa Community residents continue to face racially disparate treatment and City-created barriers to basic human needs, including jobs, financial security, education, housing, justice and health.” (CNN, Sept. 2, 2020)

The lawsuit calls for establishing “a victim compensation fund, mental health and education programs for residents of Greenwood and North Tulsa and a college fund for descendants of massacre victims. It seeks construction of a hospital in the community and asks that Black residents from the Greenwood and North Tulsa communities have priority consideration for city contracts.”

The Black people of Tulsa are long overdue for these reparations on behalf of the pain and suffering endured by their ancestors in 1921 — passed down as the present-day racist inequities they face.

In general, the U.S. descendants of enslaved African people, forced to work unwaged labor for hundreds of years under unspeakable inhumane conditions, deserve reparations — now! ☐

**French unions respond to housing crisis**

By G. Dunkel

According to the French housing alliance Right to Housing (DAL — Droit au Logement), cops are prepared to evict 30,000 families starting June 1. Some 130,000 families have notified that they need to leave their homes immediately, while tens of thousands could have their electricity shut off any time after June 1. France has more than 300,000 homeless people out of a total population of around 67.4 million.

June 1 is when the winter’s suspension of evictions and shut-offs expires.

The General Confederation of Labor (CGT), along with Right to Housing, the feminist collective Fast, formed to defend immigrant rights, and Paris DEx, an NGO focused on welcoming exiles, formed a coalition in March and called major demonstrations in 31 French cities under the slogan: “A roof is a right!” These demonstrations were coordinated with actions in other European countries and endorsed by many progressive unions, associations and political parties, including the Greens and the Communist Party of French Workers.

The CGT is the second-largest and oldest union in France, with a militant history of defending workers’ retirement rights and unemployment insurance, on the job, in the streets and in the political arena.

The program of this coalition is simple: decrease rents, increase investment in public housing and end evictions and removals. They point out that state assistance for lower-income individuals needs to increase and that officials who carry out an eviction are responsible for finding new housing for those evicted. In some cities they have set up large numbers of tents for the homeless.

The way the French government has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic sharply increased the profits of landlords and real estate investors.

The DAL and the CGT, through posts on their web pages and Facebook, managed to organize a number of small but significant demonstrations May 29 and 30 in Paris, as well as in Lille, Bordeaux, Lyon, Toulouse, Marseilles and other cities.

While French politics places a great deal of emphasis on protests, demonstrations and marches, the elections — especially for president — are also important. The next French presidential election is still 11 months away, tentatively scheduled for April 23, 2022, and the housing crisis is going to be a major issue.

**French unions respond to housing crisis**

The banner of French housing advocates reads: “Enforce the DALO law! A roof is a right!”

Even France’s far-right party, the National Rally (RN, rassemblement National), has declared the housing crisis a major problem for France. Its proposed solution takes up nearly nine pages and contains a lot of twists — such as making the purchase of real estate cheaper and providing low-cost loans to young people, encouraging them to buy public housing — which would give the public housing authorities the capital to produce more public housing. The RN proposals exclude non-French residents.

The RN and some voices in the corporate English-language media elsewhere, like the New York Times and BBC, are predicting that the RN could win in next year’s election, that it could break through the barrier erected by France’s two rounds of voting. But to get to the second round, this far-right party would have to do better than the French left. ☐

**French unions respond to housing crisis**

Beside an anti-racist mural in France, a sign exhorts “No evictions without resheltering!”

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**U.S. behind detention of Venezuelan diplomat: Release Alex Saab!**

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U.S. trade. (thegrayzone.com, April 27)

Cabre Verde is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This body ordered Saab’s immediate release in March. But under U.S. pressure, Cabo Verde has yet to respond to ECOWAS and is preparing an extradition trial.

Saab’s case has made waves on the African continent where 15 African countries are already under U.S. sanctions. It resonates in U.S.-sanctioned Iran and in Venezuela, where social media campaigns and demonstrations have demanded Saab’s release.

A campaign for release of Alex Saab of half a million Twitter posts led to Twitter censoring and suspending over 1,500 accounts. Despite aggressive efforts to silence support, an international campaign is growing.

Saab’s defenders presented the facts of his case in a May 19 panel, which featured two of Saab’s lawyers, Cabo Verde’s Geralddo da Cruz Almeida and Nigeria’s Femi Falana, in addition to activists William Camacaro, John Philpot, Stanfield Smith and Sara Flounders (this article’s author). It was streamed not only in the U.S. but countries in Latin America, Africa and West Asia with simultaneous translation into English, Portuguese and Spanish.

Organized by the Alliance for Global Justice and co-sponsored by the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle of New York, Chicaco ALBA Solidarity, Frente Hugo Chávez para la Defensa de los Pueblos Vancouver, Task Force on the Americas, Orinoco Tribune, Council on Hemispheric Affairs, International Action Center and CODEPINK, the panel drew a wide international audience. The Orinoco Tribune has published a report of the panel, which can be read at tinyurl.com/gossay9.

Ambassador Saab sent a letter to the African Union, as Venezuela’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the African Union, on May 25, a day celebrated across the continent as Africa Day, commemorating the founding of the Organization of African Unity on May 25, 1963. Alex Saab’s statement connected the celebration of “liberation from foreign control and oppression” to his imprisonment and “the importance of the continent of Africa to rise to fight elements of foreign domination and imperialist domination.”

The letter was published in CitNewsRoom, in Accra, Ghana and in other African news publications. (tinyurl.com/fosfarbeit) ☐
La representación excesiva en las prisiones: Las personas LGBTQ2S+

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lista — se ha utilizado para confinar, aislar y castigar a muchas personas LGBTQ2S+. Debido a las condiciones materiales a las que se enfrentan las personas LGBTQ2S+, muchas se encuentran con altos índices de depresión, ansiedad e ideación suicida. En este contexto, alguien que necesita atención de salud mental puede acabar recluido durante una temporada indefinida en un hospital bajo estricta vigilancia, experimentando algo más allá del castigo que a una ayuda.

Las cargas compartidas, abolición, liberación

La libertación de los oprimidos por sus género, orientación sexual, identidad o expresión se pauta significar una imaginación y construir un mundo sin pionera, cárceles y centros de detención de migrantes. Estas estructuras no mantienen a las personas a salvo de la violencia, sino que perpetúan la violencia arraigada en los orígenes de estas instituciones en este continente.

Las prisiones, las cárcel y los centros de detención de Estados Unidos eran el punto de partida para la esclavitud de los afroamericanos y las personas LGBTQ2S+. Durante el período de la esclavitud, se ha compartido constante la esclavitud y el castigo de personas. La auto-guía de las personas se basa en el beneficio de las personas. Ahora la lucha se ha centrado en acabar con el peligro de manufacturar un producto de abolición — ya sea la abolición de las prisiones o la abolición del capitalismo — no es simplemente una negación. Es un proyecto generativo que requiere una construcción colectiva. Esto significa construir un apoyo social para los jóvenes LGBTQ2S+ dentro de las familias, las escuelas, las comunidades y otras instituciones; eliminar el criminalización en contra de las personas LGBTQ2S+ en la vida cotidiana, el empleo y otros ámbitos; eliminar la vida de personas de color; y afirmar el género para todos. La liberación de las personas LGBTQ2S+ está ligada a la lucha por la liberación de los negros, al igual que está ligada a la lucha contra el colonialismo y el capitalismo de los colonos en nuestro pasado.

¡No a las jaulas! ¡No a las fronteras! No aceptaremos nada menos.
Las tasas de encarcelamiento también existen en el sistema jurídico penal. En todas las etapas del sistema de justicia, las personas LGBTQ2S+ están sobrerepresentadas, incluso dentro del sistema de justicia juvenil. Un nuevo reporte de Política Penalitaria, esto es así desde el arresto hasta la sentencia, pasando por el encarcelamiento, la libertad condicional y la liberación en la vida real. “En 2019, las personas negras, latinas e indígenas que se visten de mujer porque son depredado sexualmente por personas que se identifican como lesbianas son desproporcionadamente nativas.”

Si la ciencia no las estadísticas respaldan estos estereotipos retrógrados. “Creo que estas respuestas excluyentes son una solución en busca de un problema”, dijo Melanie Willingham-Jaggers, directora interina de GLSEN, una organización de defensa de los derechos LGTBQ+ que tiene un elenco católico de los atletas trans, pero sí entendemos los beneficios de género no binario e [indígenas] de manera importan! Organiza una acción donde se hable sobre la intersección de las luchas de clase y de género. Los medios de comunicación son una parte crítica del sistema jurídico penal para que dejen de ser trans.”

La sobrerepresentación de las personas LGBTQ2S+ en el sistema jurídico penal se debe en gran medida a los obstáculos a los que se enfrentan los jóvenes LGBTQ2S+ después de huir de los abusos y la falta de aceptación en sus hogares.

La policía no protege a la comunidad LGBTQ2S+ después de huir de los abusos y la falta de aceptación en sus hogares. Desde el 2013 ha habido 200. Los factores que contribuyen al alto nivel de ataques viciosos contra las mujeres trans incluyen la pobreza y la falta de vivienda, las relaciones íntimas abusivas, la atención sanitaria rutinaria y la no aceptación de las familias biológicas y la dependencia de trabajo sexual para sobrevivir. Todas estas condiciones tienen su origen en el estigma y la discriminación contra el género sexual y la relación con el racismo y el sexismo.

La discriminación en muchos ámbitos de la vida está bien documentada. La mayoría de las personas trans identifican como serio de los obstáculos a los que son de género no binario e [indígenas] de manera importan! Organiza una acción donde se hable sobre la intersección de las luchas de clase y de género. Los medios de comunicación son una parte crítica del sistema jurídico penal para que dejen de ser trans.”

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Representación excesiva en las prisiones: las personas LGBTQ2S+ trans — cuya orientación sexual puede coincidir con la identidad que no o — también suelen ser las que menos datos tienen para demostrar lo que les ocurre. “Una vez entre rejas, las personas trans se enfrentan a índices extremadamente altos de marginación y vulnerabilidad, se les niega con frecuencia la atención sanitaria rutinaria y corren un alto riesgo de ser enviadas a régimen de aislamiento, Black and Pink descubrió que al 44% de las personas trans, género no binario e [indígenas] de manera importan! Organiza una acción donde se hable sobre la intersección de las luchas de clase y de género. Los medios de comunicación son una parte crítica del sistema jurídico penal para que dejen de ser trans.”

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