Word has come that Pennsylvania political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has tested positive for COVID-19. Supporters learned of the diagnosis March 3, as they were gathered in front of the office of Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner to call for Abu-Jamal’s release and that of all incarcerated people over 50, who are vulnerable to premature death from COVID-19 and other illnesses.

Johanna Fernandez, with the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, received word from Abu-Jamal’s medical attorney Robert Boyle confirming a diagnosis all had feared. Abu-Jamal, who had been hospitalized to remove excessive fluid from his lungs, was also diagnosed with congestive heart disease.

Fernandez described speaking with Abu-Jamal on Feb. 26, noticing his speech was altered. “He reported having labored breathing and feeling a weight he described as ‘having a little elephant on my chest.’ Mumia rarely complains about his health. We immediately mobilized to put pressure on the prison system to test him for COVID-19.”

Initially SCI Mahanoy officials said Abu-Jamal’s COVID-19 tests were negative. His supporters, however, aware of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections’ historic neglect of serious health conditions for Mumia and other incarcerated people, posted an alert calling on prison officials to seek additional health treatment. It appears that this international pressure campaign made a difference.

Fernandez reported that 66-year-old Abu-Jamal has severe liver damage, because in the past the PA DOC had delayed treatment for his hepatitis C. “Prisons in the U.S. are a death trap. U.S. prisons have resisted decarceration under COVID-19, yet countries around the world, including Iran and Italy, have had mass release of prisoners.

“There were over 500,000 unnecessary deaths in the U.S. because of COVID-19. Who are we as a society — willing to allow elderly people, disproportionately Black and Latinx, to die prematurely and unnecessarily because of the vindictiveness of the criminal justice system?— Minnie Bruce Pratt

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

A historic organizing drive is underway in Bessemer, Ala., at the Amazon BHM1 warehouse. Almost 6,000 majority-Black workers — almost half women — are deciding whether to unionize with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). Voting is continuing until March 29.

If the workers succeed, they will form the first-ever union inside Amazon in the U.S. — a huge victory against the international capitalist behemoth.

According to BAmazonUnion.org, workers are fighting for “dignity and respect” along with safer working conditions. Theirs is both a civil rights and a labor struggle. They are part of the proud history of the Bessemer-Birmingham area’s Black community, from the independent, interracial unionism of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in the 1930s and 40s to the 1963 Children’s March against racist segregation.

Amazon’s system is entrenched in racism, as revealed Feb. 26 by Vox/Recode. Review of internal data and interviews with workers and diversity managers showed that Black Amazon employees are underrepresented in decision teams, promoted less frequently and assessed more harshly than non-Black peers. (tinyurl.com/kjuvjs66)
Workers with disabilities fight in Cincinnati

Visually impaired and blind workers, who are two-thirds of the workforce at a factory run by the Cincinnati Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired, have petitioned management to address unfair labor and safety concerns. It first began back when the company laid off those who continued to work 12-hour shifts throughout the strike for a $1 an hour pay increase. These essential workers continued to work under dangerous conditions, including areas where heavy machinery is used. Dave Perry, a visually impaired member of Teamster Local 100 and factory teachers, says, "This is a clear case of management failing to follow seniority rehiring rules. The complaint states several blind workers have been unfairly targeted and not reinstated.

Other workers were brought back and forced to work at different jobs for less pay. The company also removed safety barriers that had protected disabled workers from areas where heavy machinery is used. Dave Perry, a visually impaired member of Teamster Local 100 and factory teacher, referenced Teamster organizers of the 1930s who preferred a short, page-long union contract. He said, "the bosses clearly seem to have more difficulty sticking to even that length of a contract without us making them do it." (The Militant, March 8)

Teachers union ties to Women’s History

Prior to the industrial revolution, teaching was a job for men. There was no public education system, and teaching was nothing like the profession it is today. Industrialization provided more work opportunities, and men moved on to better and higher paying jobs and away from the classroom. Young women were tapped by school boards to fill the gap, because of the expanding population in the late 19th century and the development of the public school system.

Patriarchy still defined the field. Women were paid less than their male counterparts and were forced to leave their positions when they married. Men were the administrators of the public school system. Women responded to this exploitation by demanding better conditions and equal pay. The Chicago Teachers Federation was formed in 1869 by teachers Catherine Coggin and Margaret Haley. It grew into what is today the American Federation of Teachers, one of the most powerful unions in the country. By the 1940s, the AFT was collectively bargaining with school boards.

Today, AFT and other teacher union locals in major cities across the country are fighting for the safety of their members. They are defying mayors and board of education officials by refusing to return to in-person classrooms until it is safe for both teachers and their students. They continue the legacy of the women who defied the patriarchal norms of the 19th and 20th centuries. (tinyurl.com/rnh957nw) 

Join us in the fight for socialism!

After proving that the layoffs are retaliatory is difficult and labor laws don’t go far enough to protect workers’ organizing efforts. (tinyurl.com/87776sh8)

Bosses retaliate against Hunts Point workers

Business retaliation against union organizing is nothing new. Weak laws and minimal fines embolden corporate America. Last week, a local of the Teamster union at a factory run by the Cincinnati Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired, have petitioned management to address unfair labor and safety concerns. After the factory reopened following a pandemic-related shutdown, management failed to follow seniority rehiring rules. The complaint states several blind workers have been unfairly targeted and not reinstated.
One year after her death
Remembering Breonna Taylor

By Monica Moorehead

At first, few people knew of the heinous crime carried out by three white Louisville, Ky., police officers responsible for the murder of a 26-year-old African American emergency medical technician, Breonna Taylor, on March 13, 2020. Taylor was shot multiple times while laying in bed, when the police attempted to conduct a “no-knock” warrant for a phony drug bust at Taylor’s house. None of the officers, including the one who fired the bullets that took Taylor’s life, were arrested or indicted for murder — not even manslaughter — by a Kentucky grand jury last September for this despicable act.

Free Khalida Jarrar!

By Susan Abulhawa

The author of this essay is a Palestinian writer, whose latest novel is “Against the Lovelless World.” Atria, 2020.

In advance of International Women’s Day on March 8, Israel sentenced one of Palestine’s most prominent women to two years in prison, in a military court wherein no evidence could be presented against her except her affiliation with an outlawed political organization.

Khalida Jarrar, a senior leader in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Marxist-Leninist organization, was arrested in her home in October 2019. Israel has imprisoned her since then without charge or trial, under their “administrative detention” protocols, which are reserved only for Palestinians, part of a legal apartheid system in which multiple tiers of law apply to citizens based on their religion and location. Administrative detention allows Israel to imprison whenever it wants for three-to-six-month periods, which can be renewed indefinitely. Detainees do not have a right to know the accusations or evidence leveled against them, nor can they appeal.

Israel has repeatedly imprisoned Jarrar through this apartheid system. In fact, when she was arrested in October 2019, she had only been out of administrative detention for nine months. Prior to that, she was jailed without charge or trial for 20 months. Women in Israeli prisons often report persistent humiliation and sexual abuse, typically by male Israeli guards, as well as other physical and psychological abuse and neglect.

The latest arrest comes just as Palestinians are preparing for long-awaited national elections, which have not taken place since 2006. Prisoner rights organizations Addameer reports that at least 440 Palestinians have been detained since January, of whom 158 are children; 37 are women; and 9 are elected legislative members, bringing the total number of political prisoners to 4,900.

Without a hint of irony, Israel has criticized Saudi Arabia’s arrest of women political activists.

Depletion of fertile soil
Could it trigger a bigger U.S. food crisis?

by Ted Kelly

U.S. farmland in the Midwest has lost over one-third of the soil necessary to sustain crop production, according to scientists at University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The study concluded that fertile soil has been destroyed — not as a result of natural wind and water erosion, but by a century of overplowing.

Topsoil is the “black, organic, [carbon and mineral] rich soil that’s really good for growing crops,” said Iyin Thaler, Ph.D. student at UMass. Topsoil accumulates over centuries and is teeming with microorganisms.

The healthy and fertile soil was effectively managed and stewarded by Indigenous peoples of the region for centuries, if not millennia. But after a few hundred years of hyperexploitation, first by European colonial settlers and later big agribusiness, a third of all the topsoil across Illinois, Iowa, Indiana and Minnesota is now gone according to a study reported in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. (tinyurl.com/4x3y49dv) This figure is much higher than has been reported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Lead researcher Thaler said, “I think the USDA is dramatically underestimating the amount of loam.”

This assessment is corroborated by a 2006 study from Cornell University which found fertile soil is disappearing faster than it’s being replaced, stating: “Each year about 10 million hectares of cropland are lost due to soil erosion, thus reducing the cropland available for food production. The loss of cropland is a serious problem because the World Health Organization reports that more than 3.7 billion people are malnourished in the world. Overall soil is being lost from land areas 10 to 40 times faster than the rate of soil renewal impeding future human food security and environmental quality.” (tinyurl.com/cpav2xj9) [One hectare is the equivalent of 100 acres.]

This follows a global trend that has caused a drastic reduction in fertile farmland due to capitalist overdevelopment. Almost all food production — 97% — according to the Cornell study — depends on healthy topsoil. But half of it has been destroyed in the last 150 years according to the World Wildlife Federation. (tinyurl.com/poxc3y7b)

An impending food crisis is not the only issue at stake. Low-nutrient soil produces low-nutrient crops. Food today simply does not have as many vitamins and minerals as it did a few decades ago.

Another study, conducted by the University of Texas at Austin, found “reliable declines in the amount of protein, calcium, phosphorus, iron, riboflavin (vitamin B2) and vitamin C in dozens of fruits and vegetables since 1950. (tinyurl.com/3jthwzzk)“

Genetic modification of plant species, like corn, is aimed at making more profitable — not healthier — produce. “Efforts to breed new varieties of crops that provide greater yield, pest resistance and climate adaptability have allowed crops to grow bigger and more rapidly, but their ability to manufacture or uptake nutrients has not kept pace with their rapid growth,” the UT study claimed.

Cuba shows the way

There is a model, however, for soil replenishment and food production that could point to a way forward that would avoid famine and nutritional starvation. And it comes, unsurprisingly, from the socialist world.

The “Special Period” in the history of revolutionary Cuba refers to the great upheaval immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which socialist states around the world had depended on for economic support. In 1993, the Cuban Communist Party formed agricultural cooperatives to manage hundreds of state-owned farms. The goal was to increase domestic food production, while providing jobs and housing to Cuban workers, and to rely less on imported chemical pesticides and other synthetic farming techniques.

“The land redistribution program has been supported by solid research-extension systems that have played key roles in the expansion of organic and urban agriculture, and the massive artisanal production and deployment of biological inputs for soil and pest management,” writes Miguel Alietti, one of the founders of the Cuban Association of Organic Agriculture. (Monthly Review, “The Paradox of Cuban Agriculture,” Jan. 1, 2012)

Even more impressive is the growth of food production on urban farms, or organoponicos. “Cuba’s achievements in urban agriculture are truly remarkable — there are 383,000 urban farms, covering 50,000 hectares of otherwise unused land and producing more than 4.5 million tons of vegetables…using no synthetic chemicals.” (Urban farms supply 70% or more of all the fresh vegetables consumed in cities such as Havana and Villa Clara.)

Capitalism is at a dead-end by every conceivable metric. Socialist societies point the way forward to providing healthy, nutritious foods for all without a profit motive.

Organic urban farm in Havana, Cuba.

Khalida Jarrar, senior leader in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.
Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

March 7—Streets and sidewalks around 111 Taylor Street, a semi-lockdown halfway house run by the for-profit GEO Group, was crowded with resounding chants: “What’s the call? Free Malik, and free them all!” Over 200 protesters carrying brightly colored handmade banners overtook the facility. Commanding Malik Washington be released from custody and allowed to go home. Washington is a former incarcerated federal prisoner held at Taylor, and he is also the new editor-in-chief of the San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper. He recently broke the silence around GEO’s mishandling of a COVID outbreak at the lock-up. For exercising his First Amendment rights as a Black journalist, he is threatened with immediate return to federal prison.

When GEO officials reached Washington, he was communicating with people outside the Taylor facility, they placed him in house arrest in his room and confiscated his phone. Public pressure eventually won him a return to work. Only recently was his phone returned. (Workers World, Jan. 19)

Today’s rally showed the depth and breadth of support in the Bay Area for Washington and his strong opposition to GEO. Speakers included Nube Brown, managing editor of the SF Bay View; Matt Haney, San Francisco Supervisor for District 6; Sandy Valenciano of Immigrant Legal Resource Center/ Dignity Not Detention; Jeremy Miller with Poor Magazine; Pierre Lobaisiere of the Haiti Action Committee; and Susan Stryker, trans activist and historian.

Stryker pointed to the first floor of the Taylor facility and said, “That used to be GEO Group’s ocupation of this building.” (the Guardian, June 21, 2019)

In August 1966, three years before the Stonewall Rebellion, drag queens, trans women and sex workers rose up and fought the police in this downtown Tenderloin neighborhood in the Compton’s Cafeteria Riot. Victor Silverman and Stryker documented this history in “Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria.” (imdb.com/title/tt0464189/) Strayer added, “We are here today, because Malik was standing up for the people.”

Jeremy Miller said, “We are here today, because Malik was standing up for the people,” ending with the chant, “Free Malik, but that’s not all! Keep on pushing! Free them all!”

A letter of support from San Francisco District Attorney, Chesa Boudin, was read: “It is deeply concerning when people like Malik Washington, who are devoted to truth telling, are targeted precisely for trying to ensure that critical information is made public. We must ensure that the truth be told to protect the vulnerable.”

Editor Nube Brown, who is also a leader of California Prison Focus, urged that the fight continue for Washington, and for the closure of companies like GEO. She asked everyone to virtually pack the courtroom for Washington at the March 10 hearing on his case. To give support, go to linktr.ee/freemalik.

Prisons for profit
Malik Washington filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and GEO Group for the role played on him by the BOP. The activist journalist was the first person to expose GEO’s cover-up of COVID. The company’s mishandling of the virus has become public knowledge and the subject of a short video produced by the San Francisco Public Defender’s Office, “111 Taylor (During a Pandemic).” (wearedefender.com/111-taylor)

GEO Group is one of the largest managers of private prisons in the U.S., and it controls a number of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) detention centers. Multiple lawsuits have been filed against the company for inhumane treatment. ICE prisoners have organized hunger strikes and other actions to protest dangerous conditions faced in its facilities during the pandemic.

Though President Biden issued an executive order that the federal government will stop using private prisons, that order did not include privately held ICE detention centers like those run by GEO. (US News and World Report, Jan. 26) At the rally many speakers from immigrant rights groups exposed the atrocities suffered by incarcerated migrants in GEO-run ICE detention centers. ☑️

Rally demands: ‘Prison profiteers out of California!’

Jailed Lawyers Speak: ‘Shut ‘em down!’

Jailhouse Lawyers Speak is a collective of radical incarcerated activists. In a March 1 press release, they have called for national demonstrations to shut down jails, prisons and ICE detention centers on Aug. 21 and Sept. 9 (#ShutThemDown2021). These dates were selected to commemorate the 50th anniversaries of the assassinations of imprisoned Black revolutionary George Jackson and the Attica prison uprising.

In a March 1 press release, JLS announced “In the spirit of Abolition, let’s shut ‘em down!” or that the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party proudly endorses:

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, incarcerated people across the U.S. have been holding long and spontaneous demonstrations to respond to COVID-19 in the prisons. With at least 300,000 and possibly as many as 800,000 people in prison infected by COVID, prisoners have demanded basic human rights protections.

These demonstrations have been largely ignored by the public as incarcerated people and supporters have demanded COVID safety precautions be enacted in prisons. In a number of states, these ongoing demonstrations have turned into widespread and hard-fought successful court battles to accomplish release of some prisoners.

North Carolina is set to release approximately 3,500 prisoners during the next six months due to a COVID lawsuit settlement.

Even as releases and policy changes won, the U.S. cannot make up for the hundreds of thousands who have become ill or the thousands killed by COVID. Incarcerated people know that every time a prison official comes to work, our lives are in jeopardy because they may be infected. The same is true regarding prisoner deaths: We attribute every death to prison officials infecting the prison population.

Take a moment to think on how over capacity U.S. prisons and jails are. People are stacked on top of each other.

Lives could have been saved if the U.S. was on the path of Abolition. We must struggle harder to close prisons and jails and to free people from the grips of prison slavery. This is stated while recognizing we must develop effective strategies to have the billions of taxpayer dollars used to grow the prison-industrial slave complex (FISIC) redirected to the communities.

Without going into recent political presidential acrobatics, we do want to acknowledge we feel a stronger need than ever to make it known that the struggles of people in prison will not be pushed to the back burner or lost in the muddy water of trying to make people feel good about their party politics.

In the spirit of Abolition, on the historical dates of Aug. 21 and Sept. 9, 2021, incarcerated people must highlight prisoners historic struggles and the current political struggles to dismantle the prison-industrial slave complex.

Jailhouse Lawyers Speak is calling for mass outside demonstrations. Specific locations: ICE, jails, prisons and higher learning institutions. With regards to higher learning institutions, we are pointing towards learning institutions with connections to prison labor.

A few states may already have specific ongoing campaigns that directly speak to decarceration or closing down a prison or jail. Efforts should be made to network to boost those campaigns on these dates at the recommended locations.

With everyone working across the U.S. on the same days, this will magnify our struggle for humanity and highlight specific state-related campaigns. These Shut ‘em Down demonstrations should serve as a wake-up call to every person in the U.S. that the current jailing path does not work. It’s time to end it!

In the days leading up to the Shut ‘em Down demonstrations, we will post locations of planned Abolition demonstrations and endorsements of these events on our website: iamweubuntu.com/ shutemdown. ☑️
Mental health effects of COVID lockdown in prison: Interview from inside SCI Albion

By Joe Piette

This Part 2 of a telephone interview with Demetrius Grant, imprisoned at SCI Albion near Erie, Pa., was conducted by Joe Piette, former Workers World newspaper on Feb. 16.

Interviewer: How is the prison life? With the COVID lockdowns, not knowing when it will end. It just drives you crazy.

Demetrius Grant: I just can’t hug your loved ones. Officials are now trying to lock our families in one-, two- or nine-cells, so you only come in contact with seven other guys you don’t know. You can’t even talk to them or like. But you can’t come into contact with your friends, who are on the block with you a couple of cells down. You’re not even allowed to stand at their cell doors to talk to them. It’s maddening.

WW: About phone calls and video conference calls?

DJ: Don’t get me wrong. Talking on the phone with family or friends is okay, but there is nothing like human contact.

WW: When COVID-19 started, you were allowed free video conferencing and phone calls. Is that not happening anymore?

DJ: No. They gave you free emails, and they brought video games to us, which we had games and puzzles on the TVs from the Activity Department. Maybe some had games and puzzles on the TVs from the Activities Department. Maybe some had video games to us, which we didn’t have anymore. They brought video games to us, which we didn’t have anymore.

WW: People on the outside have to learn all this. We have to expose these conditions.

DJ: The conditions are horrible. People think there are COVID-19 restrictions on the outside, but it’s nothing like those in here. They have been getting away with this since last March. They started out as some random stuff. They tried to make it tolerable, but as time went on they just implemented some really draconian stuff.

Build a campaign against lockdowns!

And the DOC knows this. They’re going to keep on doing it until they stop doing what they’re doing. It has to be a national campaign, not just in Pennsylvania. I wouldn’t be surprised if all these DOCs have gotten together and collaborated and come up with the approach to use COVID-19 as a means to keep these control lockdowns in place. It is despite their knowing how this situation affects mental and physical health.

A lot of these prisoners are not going to be locked up in prison for the rest of their lives. They’re going to go home, but they’re psychologically and physically damaged. They will be a neighborhood problem. It’s not just a jail issue, but it’s society’s problem. A guy who’s in jail—physically and psychologically damaged—will be a problem on the system, because they need medical and mental health care.

WW: Instead of having someone spend time behind bars, giving them skills and training and helping them to get better, they’re doing the opposite and harming the person.

DJ: When the person gets out, their chances of being successful are slim-to-none. This is not just a police issue, but they’re worse now. People are having a harder time. People who have worked to get off the street, people that they’ve had to endure is something society will have to deal with. It’s not just a jail issue, but it’s society’s problem. A guy who’s in jail—physically and psychologically damaged—will be a problem on the system.

One of my buddies left last week. He was snapping at the slightest thing. He wasn’t always like this, but then locking him in a cell and not letting him speak to anyone, with no one addressing his problems and concerns—means he’s been marginalized. They’re being radicalized in a different way, and then some come home and harm someone. Then what?

Empathetic treatment needed

WW: We don’t want that. We need compassionate treatment—not only on the inside, but afterwards when they return to society.

DJ: It’s just a matter of piecing it together. I have to go to hardball with these mental health people, because they only understand if you go after their license, their livelihood. Otherwise, we’re just complaining, and they’re just saying things like they really don’t care.

I try to keep myself mentally and physically sound, because I’ve found myself tettering on the edge. They have guards nitpicking. I ask: Why are you nitpicking? We’re in a bad situation already. Why are you constantly trying to create a situation that doesn’t have to be there? What is your indignity?

It’s an abuse of power. When you abuse people needlessly, it causes a worse situation. I don’t want to be here, but I’m thankful that I can point towards a mother to stand up for what’s right. As long as I’m alive, I’m going to do that.

WW: Your voice can play an important role. Why do you say to other incarcerated people who read this interview? What would your message be to them?

DJ: Together we can get things done. My message would be: Don’t give up hope, because if you give up hope that means you’ve given up on yourself. You have to find something outside of yourself to keep hopeful — to see a family member, to talk to a friend, to reach out. Instead of looking at the dire situation that I’m in, try to look at other people’s problems, and try to help them out. That way I’m helping myself. So they have to try to look beyond their own issues to look at other people to get the strength to go on.

Unity and solidarity are key!

WW: So solidarity is the answer — and not just for people behind the bars, but in society in general?

DJ: Unity and solidarity! That’s what I preach to this youngin’. We must come together. We must stay strong regardless of our petty differences. Whatever the situation is, we’re all in the same circumstances. We suffer the same things. The only way we’re going to deal with this is if we stick together. Some people think this way. I choose to speak to the people who think this way. I show others by example what I think and I encourage them. There are people on the street who want to help, but we have to help ourselves. We are fighting a battle, but it’s harder to battle alone. Either people will succumb to the situation, or together we’ll overcome it.

Even though I have my moments, I overcome the situation because I have a sense of purpose. The spirit of all of you, and the people helping us, I realize by helping others, I help myself.

One’s actions speak louder than any-thing one says. ☑

International solidarity in fight to free Palestinian students

By Mirinda Crissman

Over 320 organizations have signed onto the international Palestinian students Solidarity Campaign to free Palestinian students. Hundreds of universities and high school students are routinely abducted, detained or denied indefinitely on political grounds for cognitively speaking out against Israel’s brutal occupation and theft of land in Palestine.

They are held in horrid and torturous conditions and put through courts with no legal protection and prosecution rate against Palestinians, who fight for their self-determination and right to live.

The organizations in support of these political-prisoner students are specifically calling for the boycott of, divestment from and sanctions against Israel, including Israeli academic institutions. They call for the end of all military and economic aid, military transactions, joint projects and direct funding to the occupying regime of Israel.

The solidarity movement is challenging programs that aim to justify or normalize Israeli occupation, which essentially criminalizes the work of student organizing. The movement is organizing direct links of solidarity with Palestinian students and their movement, so that they will not be isolated from their global community of support.

The solidarity movement is challenging programs that aim to justify or normalize Israeli occupation, which essentially criminalizes the work of student organizing. The movement is organizing direct links of solidarity with Palestinian students and their movement, so that they will not be isolated from their global community of support.

Whether it’s fighting the capitalist-imposed isolation or imprisonment—international solidarity can be the best weapon to break down those barriers. As people are increasingly coming to recognize brutal settler-colonial regimes like Israel and the settler-colonial allies like the U.S. and Canada, they are coming to understand how our enemies use similar tactics against us.

Whether those oppressive tactics include charges, harassment, surveillance or isolation from other anti-racist, anti-colonial struggles — it is powerful to see growing international fightback.

Taking the lead from these courageous Palestinian students, over 900 active divestment campaigns on U.S. campuses and a growing number of community groups and unions, including the University of California Student Worker Union and International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, have shown that solidarity. International solidarity is inspired by the Palestinian student resistance and it will not stop until they are free and have the right to determine the conditions of their own lives.

Israel detains these colonized students with aid from countries like the U.S., with its own long history of repression against anti-racist and anti-colonial movements. The International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network states: “Since the late 1960s, U.S.-based Zionist institutions have collaborated in attacks on movements for justice, because they have seen a direct threat to their own interests. Those of the U.S. Zionist institutions have played a prominent role in supporting Israel’s campaigns to undermine and discredit radical Black, Chicano and Indigenous people’s movements.”

Daring to imagine and fight for a world free from destructive col- onization, apartheid and oc cupation — we will not stop in our fight to free Palestinian students and to free all political prisoners! ☑
By Sara Flounders

Stopping Amazon censorship is news. Good news.

The Amazon corporate conglomerate is notorious for using its power to surveil and suppress workers' voices, to dominate labor rates, control local govern-
ments and demand huge tax rebates. Its targets: autonomous organizations to cater facili-
ties if its demands remain unmet.

Amazon is arrogantly determined to decide what information we hear, what discussions are allowed. As big as it is, Amazon is afraid. Right now its management fears its U.S. work-
force is organizing. It fears challenges to its censorship and control. And it has retreated before one challenge to its power to censor.

In question is Amazon's attempt to ban the book, "Capitalism on a Ventilator," a book of essays by prominent anti-impedi-
mentists, as investigative journalist Max Blumenthal and others pointed out. Blumenthal added, "The book surveyed the role of cap-
italism in exacerbating the pandemic and contained a direct effective response with the U.S. failure — too much for Amazon, apparently."

The tweet linked to a Nov. 2 article on workers.org said: "A message on Mumia's health condition and the book's contribution: "I sent out health alerts yesterday to the IOM and our elderly political prisoners. A mem-
er of the Rapporteur's staff responded to say that the state of Pennsylvania had released Mumia Abu-Jamal, said, "Racism has been identified as a public health crisis. Prisons are the physical manifestation of racism. Not only Mumia, but all impris-
oned elders are endangered by COVID. His treatment must be his freedom."

Pastor Keith Collin, a minister, said: "Workers of the World, unite!" Community leaders and Black and Latinx communi-
ities after industries abandoned working-class cities like Philadelphia. The low wages, pervasive poverty and lack of health insurance have been amplified by the pandemic.

Parents of the world, unite!" Prisoners of mass incarceration are risk category patients for complications of COVID. His age, his underlying liver disease, his hypertension and now his congestive heart failure require constant medical care.

Mumia is suffering from multiple diseases of the stress of incarceration. The only treatment for Mumia now is FREEDOM. He is precisely the high-
risk category patient for complications of COVID. His age, his underlying liver damage, his hypertension and now his congestive heart failure require constant medical care.

Mumia is suffering from the strain of the State's relentless efforts to kill him. We must not forget that Mumia has suffered from a skin condition that has never been resolved and causes great suffering. Mumia's body is com-
pletely covered with lesions and has been treated by CDC.

Mumia can't get access to the loving care he needs, even with the newest and fan-
est forms of assistance to countries across Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. The U.S. received generous donations of medical equipment from China during the first wave of the pandemic. China was also the first country to declare that its COVID-19 vaccine would be a public good."

"I sent out health alerts yesterday to the PA., the U.N. Human Rights Council and the U.N. Special Rapporteur Against Racism, follow-
ing developments including Aramark, SecureWatch, Smart Communications, Global Powerlink and Polycom. We all know these conditions — poverty, lack of access to health, poor education, and the largest number of deaths of any country in the world and has unrolled a chaotic, uncoordinated vaccination program. In this atmosphere, the book raises the sharp challenge: "It doesn't have to be this way."

"Workers of the world, unite! We call on the governments of the world to launch an international campaign to end mass incarceration. We call on all people to join us in this struggle."

Cindy Miller with Food Not Bombs

Solidarity described Pennsylvania's pris-
sions as a cash cow for private corpora-
tions including Aramark, SecureWatch, Smart Communications, Global Powerlink and Polycom. Miller called on the government to end mass incarceration.

"I sent out health alerts yesterday to the U.N. Human Rights Council and the U.N. Special Rapporteur Against Racism, follow-
ing developments including Aramark, SecureWatch, Smart Communications, Global Powerlink and Polycom. We all know these conditions — poverty, lack of access to health, poor education, and the largest number of deaths of any country in the world and has unrolled a chaotic, uncoordinated vaccination program. In this atmosphere, the book raises the sharp challenge: "It doesn't have to be this way."

"Workers of the world, unite! We call on the governments of the world to launch an international campaign to end mass incarceration. We call on all people to join us in this struggle."

Cindy Miller with Food Not Bombs
Remembrances of a warehouse order picker

By Deirdre Griswold

Think 1956. That’s 65 years ago — the year this writer dropped out of college and took a full-time job in a warehouse to get a more important education — learning what it was to be a worker.

In these intervening years, millions have gone on to become multimillionaires to now become centibillionaires. Many warehouse workers still barely survive on the minimum wage. Learning about the struggles of today’s Amazon workers for better wages and working conditions brings up dusty memories of those days.

I worked as an order picker in a drug warehouse in Buffalo, N.Y. Anything that could be sold in a drugstore was kept there. It was a huge place, the ceiling way above the cold concrete floor where we filled the orders. That allowed the foremen and the superintendent to keep an eye on us from their heated offices high above the cold concrete floor where we worked. It was a huge place, the ceiling way above the cold concrete floor where we filled the orders. That allowed the foremen and the superintendent to keep an eye on us from their heated offices high up at one end.

On the warehouse floor there were rows and rows of steel shelving where the merchandise — ranging from heavy cartons of gallon jugs to tiny, pill bottles — was housed. In the center of this huge space was an oval moving track on which carts carried the orders. The whole area was divided into ten sections, A to J. A team of workers examined the orders for each cart and flipped down the letters of the sections where the items could be found. This team of workers had a nice sitting job. But it also required an encyclopedic knowledge of the warehouse, knowing the proper section letters for 10,000 different stocked items.

Order pickers never got to sit. We looked for carts showing our section (I still remember; ours was section H), pulled the cart off the moving track and walked through the shelving to fill our part of the order. It just so happened that I had been put in a section that had more tiny, pill bottles in it than any other, so remember where they were was mind-racking. I had anxiety dreams for weeks about looking for items. But my fellow workers kindly helped me out.

It wasn’t as dangerous as working in a steel mill or a chemical plant, but we had casualties — heavy carts tipping over or straining our abdominal muscles lifting heavy boxes off high shelves. Almost all the order pickers were women, and we felt it especially on days we had our period.

We wore pants, not skirts. I liked that, because the reason we were ordered not to wear skirts was so we wouldn’t accidentally knock a little bottle off a shelf. When we went to union meetings, all the women dressed to the nines.

A bad flu epidemic started in the fall of 1957. For months, we worked our ass off trying to fill all the orders before going home. The workers started talking about how we would certainly get a Christmas bonus. (Starting pay was just a dollar an hour.) I knew the company was rolling in dough, because of the extra business due to the flu.

In that period, we got only two hours of overtime. And there was no bonus — just a tender thank-you card from the management. It was this insult that pilloring started. (We all knew that one of the foremen wore elastic stockings so he could stuff expensive pill bottles into them. If you looked down the rows of shelves, you’d often see him stooped over, “adjusting” his socks. He had a buyer somewhere on the outside.)

What really enraged the workers was when, a year later, a problem developed in the roof, damaging the packaging on many items. The items the women managed to buy some of the expensive beauty items at cost, but the bosses had all the jars and tubes destroyed.

All this happened even in a place where we had a union. Nonunion workplaces were much worse.

The class war will continue until this rotten capitalist system is brought down. In the meantime, fight to get a union — and if you already have one, fight to make it fight!

Workers are not robots

Continued from page 1

With Alabama’s history of enslavement of Black people, and legal segregation a living memory, it’s guaranteed that racist discrimination is present inside Amazon’s BHMI warehouse. The warehouse opened in March 2020; by May, workers were so outraged at their treatment they sought out RWDSU, beginning the fight for union representation.

‘Ruthless quotas maiming employers’

As at all Amazon “fulfillment centers,” BHMI’s working conditions are brutal — with speedups, arbitrary scheduling, inadequate break times, virtually no accommodation for pregnancy, disability or injury, and more. The National Council for Occupational Safety and Health has named Amazon on its list of “Dirty Dozen” employers twice. The Atlantic magazine even headlined: “Ruthless quotas at Amazon are maiming employees.” (tinyurl.com/aznkhldc)

Amazon claims that increased robotization and surveillance of workers’ motion and location make for a “safer workplace.” Since 2012, when the retail giant bought Kiva Systems, a robotics company, Amazon has added more automation to some existing and all new warehouses, including BHMI. (tinyurl.com/ajrnmmd)

But internal records show how Amazon’s deception about rising injury rates. In fact, automation has made jobs more stressful and dangerous. Report by The Center for Investigative Reporting, found Amazon internal data showed that worker injury rates since 2016 were often worse in Amazon’s robotic warehouses. (Reveal, Sept. 29, 2020)

Amazon is following a tradition going back to the “reorganization” of worker jobs at Bethlehem Steel in Pennsylvania, introduced in 1898. That’s when Frederick Taylor used a stopwatch, time studies and his “Principles of Scientific Management” to “improve efficiency” and increase control over workers. Henry Ford improved on Taylorism with the introduction of the moving assembly line.

Now Bessemer workers — some of them children and grandchildren of unionized steel and mine workers — are in a struggle against the exploitation of their labor, fighting the same “speedup-and-die-for profit” principles from the 19th century.

When Amazon workers pick, pack and stow orders in seconds and take minimal Time Off Task for a break, it gives the tech giant an edge over online competitors — generating trillions in profits.

Amazon boasts it pays workers $15 an hour — but during the pandemic the wealth of its owner, Jeff Bezos, has increased by $72 billion. The profits for that megacapitalist came directly out of the sweat and blood of every Amazon worker. (tinyurl.com/kpset8w)

Profit is what a company pockets after costs of labor and overhead are subtracted from sales revenue. In Marxist terms, profit is the value that workers produce, but are not paid for in wages — our unpaid labor. The lower the workers’ wages, the higher the profit capitalists keep for themselves.

The injustice is obvious. The Bessemer workers are rising up to take back their voice in determining their working conditions in a company whose value has risen to $1.6 trillion in recent years, due in large part to a dedicated workforce that has helped it become the world’s leading retailer.

Collective bargaining results in improved levels of pay, benefits and workplace gains that we can never achieve negotiating individually.

The MLSPA encourages you to vote “YES” and work together in a union to create better lives for yourselves, your families, your co-workers and future generations of workers.

Workers support Amazon workers voting union “YES”

The following statement was issued by the Major League Baseball Players Association on their Twitter feed, March 2. (tinyurl.com/af3xduz) There are 1,200 members of the MLSPA, with only 7.7% African American. In late January, the National Football League Players Association — with over 20,000 members and 76% Black — released a statement in solidarity with the Amazon workers.

The vast majority of the 5,800 Bessemer Amazon workers are Black.

Amazon workers in Bessemer, Ala., and across America deserve a meaningful voice in determining their working conditions in a company whose value has risen to $1.6 trillion in recent years, due in large part to a dedicated workforce that has helped it become the world’s leading retailer.

Collective bargaining results in improved levels of pay, benefits and workplace gains that we can never achieve negotiating individually.

The MLSPA encourages you to vote “YES” and work together in a union to create better lives for yourselves, your families, your co-workers and future generations of workers.

Protest outside Bezos-owned Whole Foods

Demonstrators supporting union rights for workers at the Bessemer, Ala., Amazon warehouse picketed outside the South Street Whole Foods market in Philadelphia March 5. They greeted workers and shoppers with flyers, banners and chants including “Union busting is disgusting” — indicating Amazon and Whole Foods are not welcome in our city, a union town.

The protesters brought a 10-foot puppet of Amazon owner Jeff Bezos, courtesy of Spiral Q puppet theater. Speakers commented that Bezos, a centibillionaire, is spending millions of dollars to counter the union drive of workers who are simply seeking humane working conditions and benefits.

For over an hour, speakers described Bezos’ efforts to prevent workers from unionizing, including employing the multibillion dollar legal firm Morgan Lewis, headquartered in Center City Philadelphia.

Many customers waiting to get into Whole Foods welcomed the flyers. A few commented that they would shop elsewhere, except that COVID had limited their other access options. One woman ran up to ask for multiple flyers. Her sister, employed at an Amazon warehouse in New Jersey, was dealing with company harassment because of her disabilities.

Report by Betsy Piette, Photo by Joe Piette

MLSPA supports Amazon workers voting union “YES”
We are now at a point in the COVID-19 pandemic where countries are ordering the vaccines. The overwhelming majority (approximately 85 countries/regions) ordered Western-made vaccines (Oxford/AstraZeneca, Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna). Approximately 16 countries were ordering Chinese vaccines (Sinopharm/Bij Gel, Sinopharm/Wuhan, Sinovac) while nine countries were ordering a Russian vaccine (Sputnik V).

However, “ordered” doesn’t mean they have received any doses, or even will receive them soon. At the Feb. 19 meeting, the U.S. and China have already administrated 40.52 million doses and the U.S. has given 22.9 million doses.

How wealthy nations stockpile life-saving vaccines while poor countries and people within these countries are ignored

How Western countries criticize China, despite China’s success in containing the virus and providing vaccines to the world.

Vaccine community distribution racism in the U.S.

As of mid-February, the U.S. has been administering far more vaccine doses each day, yet vaccine distribution inequality is very much in evidence. Why are Western countries hoarding vaccines and not sharing with the rest of the world?

● The European Union with a population of 44.5 million, has ordered 2.2 billion doses, barely enough for everyone to be vaccinated four times.

● The United States with a population of 331 million, has ordered 1.2 billion doses, enough for everyone to be vaccinated four times.

● Australia, population of 25.5 million, has ordered 115 million doses, enough for everyone to be vaccinated 4.5 times.

● An extreme example is Canada, with a population of 37.7 million people. Canada has ordered 362 million doses, a whopping big number enabling everyone to be vaccinated nine times!

By comparison, the vaccine “have-nots” of the Global South are in a dire situation:

● El Salvador, with 6.5 million people, has ordered 2 million doses, only enough to vaccinate one out of every three people.

● The African Union, with 1.32 billion people, has ordered 370 million doses; just enough to vaccinate one out of every five people, or 20 percent of the population.

● In a population of 40 million, has ordered 1.5 million doses, sadly only enough for 4 percent of the Iraqi population to get a jab.

Why are Western countries overbuying vaccines? Some activists suggest they’re running a vaccine market monopoly scheme — where they control the market, so they control the price. As with the futures trading market, they can sell their “excess” vaccines to poor countries for political ransom or a higher price.

Besides vaccine nationalism, there is also vaccine blockade, where Western economies prevent countries without U.S. dollars or bank wire transfer power from buying vaccines. This has become the new imperialist weapon against other countries.

Illegal U.S. sanctions against Iran have prevented the Iranians from purchasing life-saving PPE, medical equipment and now vaccines, because they do not have access to U.S. dollars (the common currency for international trade) or national wire transfer service. Basically, imperialist sanctions have become a form of the SMTF code, which is controlled by the U.S.

Israel has much-hyped that it fully vaccinated its citizens in a very short time, but in Palestine, across the nearby apartheid wall, people are not getting life-saving vaccines.

Are we at the end of the pandemic yet? Or is the pandemic continuing to our way of life, and vaccine distribution is the key to our survival?
Israel’s denial of vaccines to Palestinians = genocide

By Betsey Piette

Matthias Kennes is a registered nurse who works with Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). He documented how the COVID-19 response in Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, has failed those in need. Kennes wrote on Feb. 22: “The internationally acclaimed COVID-19 vaccination success of Israel has a dark side: the consequences of which are being felt cruelly in the West Bank Palestinian territory where I work and the blocked Gaza Strip where my MSF colleagues work.” (tinyurl.com/yy7jvxyj)

As of the date of Kennes’ statement, Israel had administered the first vaccine dose to nearly 4.2 million people, some 50% of its population, and had given first and second doses to 2.8 million people, about 30% of its population. This includes 450,000 Israelis living in illegal settlements in the West Bank.

According to Kennes, about 35,000 doses of Sputnik V and Moderna vaccines have been made available to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. There aren’t even enough doses in the West Bank for health care workers, the elderly and people with serious medical conditions. Kennes says a person is “over 60 times more likely to have a vaccination in Israel than in Palestine.”

Article 56 of the Fourth Geneva Convention requires Israel, as the occupying power in the Palestinian territories, to provide medical supplies, including preventative measures, to stop the spread of contagious epidemics. The Zionist state is overtly violating this protocol.

On March 6, one week after COGAT, which is Israel’s military branch that oversees the Palestinian territories, agreed to vaccinate 100,000 workers, officials announced they were postponing the vaccinations until further notice. They were intended for Palestinian residents of the West Bank who work inside the Zionist state. Due to this callous decision, these unvaccinated workers are prohibited from entering Israel to go to their workplaces. (Al Jazeera, March 6)

Israel sabotages health care

Israel has blocked delivery of Russian Sputnik V vaccines, which were designated for prisoners in Gaza. Five million Palestinians live in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel’s denial of lifesaving vaccines to the vast majority will result in endless and uncountable deaths. Currently, new COVID infections and death counts are on the rise in Palestine. (Worldometer, March 8)

Even before the pandemic, health care was scarce in occupied Palestinian areas. Palestinians living in the West Bank must obtain travel permits to enter Israel for medical care, but they are frequently turned down. And the Israeli military bars Gaza’s Palestinian residents from leaving for any reason. Testing for the Borgon Project’s website, 300,000 Palestinians lack access to adequate health care in the West Bank.

To treat their residents, Gaza and the West Bank together have only 275 ICU beds and 295 ventilators. Further, Israel has denied construction permits needed to build medical facilities in Gaza.

Not only is the Israeli state denying vaccines to Palestinians, its forces are deliberately sabotaging testing and treat programs for those forces destroyed a Palestinian COVID testing center in April of last year. Testing was halted in June due to lack of test kits. A month later, Israeli forces destroyed a quarantine facility in the West Bank.

All supporters of the Palestinian people and those opposing Israel’s denial of lifesaving health care to this besieged people must raise their voices in a loud outcry!

Kathy Durkin contributed to this article.

Vaccines: China vs. Western imperialism

Continued from page 8

vaccination sites, the inner-city communities of the poor and people of color will definitely be losers in the vaccine fight.

China global vaccine solidarity

While China was not on the initial COVAX vaccine list, it has sent and/or donated millions of vaccine doses around the world—especially to the Global South.

According to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, by mid-February China had donated vaccines to 53 developing countries, including Somalia, Iraq, South Sudan and Ethiopia. By this time, China had also exported vaccines to 22 countries. In addition, it launched research and development cooperation projects with more than ten countries. Also at the WHO’s request, China will contribute 10 million doses of vaccines to COVAX.

As of Feb. 14, according to China Global Times, at least 40 countries had ordered or donated at least 561 million doses of Chinese vaccines; some of the main buyers include Peru (73.6 million), Mexico (35 million), Indonesia (122.8 million), Philippines (25 million doses with an additional 0.6 million donation), Turkey (50 million), Brazil (240 million) and Chile (60 million). Other buyers include Colombia, Uruguay, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand and Laos—and Morocco, Egypt, Seychelles, Zimbabwe, Senegal and Equatorial Guinea in Africa.

In Europe, Serbia received Chinese vaccines, making that country the second most vaccinated in Europe, following the U.K. Hungary became the first EU member state to receive Chinese vaccines (which are not yet EU-approved for use).

China’s vaccine success across the world shows the true meaning of global solidarity. Not surprisingly, the Western countries are responding with non-sense skepticism and jealous rage. They are spreading unfounded rumors about Chinese vaccine safety (just as the U.S. did last year, when it spread the so-called “Wuhan military lab leaked virus” hoax).

However, for the past two months a dozen global leaders have taken the Chinese jab in front of cameras to show their support for Chinese vaccines, including:

- Seychelles President Wavel Ramkalawan
- Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan
- Indonesian President Joko Widodo
- Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Prime Minister of United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- Equatorial Guinea President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo
- Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić
- Jordanian Prime Minister Bisher Al-Khasawneh
- Chilean President Sebastián Piñera and many other global leaders and top government officials.

Why? In addition to many countries resisting Western vaccine imperialism, experts say Chinese vaccines are better suited for the Global South. Chinese vaccine costs less and have easier logistical requirements, considering that Pfizer’s mRNA vaccine needs ultra-cold freezers, a technology and cost which many developing countries cannot afford.

Western countries’ vaccine racism, imperialism and mismanagement have caused massive and chaotic vaccine development and distribution drama and a vaccination logistics mess.

While pushing unfounded claims about Chinese vaccine safety, Western mainstream media have mentioned little about the deaths of 23 elderly Norwegians after they took the Pfizer vaccine.

Nor are the media reporting critical scientific analyses. As of Feb. 12, with approximately 45 million people vaccinated, there have been nearly 16,000 cases of adverse effects (or 3 out of 10,000) reported after receiving the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines. There have been 249 deaths in the U.S. of people who have taken the vaccines, some of which could possibly be attributed to the vaccines. Whatever their reasons, the silence of the Western media and the corporate science community leaves a lot of room for right-wing anti-vaccine movements to use the data to support their wild vaccine conspiracy theories.

So, what should we do?

Progressive activists from anti-racist, community, peace and social justice movements around the world are increasingly critical of the giant corporate pharmaceutical companies in Western countries for engaging in racism and vaccine imperialism against communities of color within their countries and poor countries around the globe.

Many are calling for a broad-based vaccine justice campaign to hold wealthy Western nations and their transnational pharmaceutical companies accountable and for inviting communities, countries from the Global South, and China to actively participate in coming up with a solution. DIVIDED WE FALL, UNITED WE WIN! Together we build global solidarity for faster, more affordable and more equitable distribution of vaccines to all communities and around the world.

Lee Siu Hin, a national coordinator of the National Immigrant Solidarity Network; the China-U.S. Solidarity Network (CUSN); and e-Medical Alliance, a network of academia and community activists for both countries committed to global vaccine justice campaign.

Buffalo Activists chant: ‘No war on Syria or Iran!’

Despite frigid temperatures, determined activists here in Buffalo came out late Monday afternoon March 1 at a busy intersection with demands aimed at the Biden administration: U.S. Out of the Middle East! Stop Bombing Syria! U.S. Out of Iraq and Syria! No War on Syria or Iran!

The action was called by Workers World Party-Buffalo branch and supported by several organizations including the Western New York Peace Center. Many passing cars honked in agreement with the banner and signs.

— Report and photo by Ezra Echo

COVID-19 awareness mural in Palestine.

By Lee Siu Hin

Equatorial Guinea President

Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid

Indonesian President Joko Widodo

Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Al Maktoum, Prime Minister of

North Africa

Lee Siu Hin is a national coordinator of the National Immigrant Solidarity Network; the China-U.S. Solidarity Network (CUSN); and e-Medical Alliance, a network of academia and community activists for both countries committed to a global vaccine justice campaign.
International Working Women's Day 2021
The true Amazons of the working class

Today the name Amazon is synonymous with capitalist greed and exploitation. Outside Amazon facilities and Whole Foods stores across the country, activists are striking to ask: “What’s disgusting? Union busting!” Their words are directed at Jeff Bezos, owner of the Seattle-based company and supermarket chain, who is the richest person in the world.

When Amazon first started out, the obscenely wealthy company co-opted a name that refers to women and gender-nonconforming people across the world. Said to be skilled archers, horse riders and fighters, the Amazons were depicted on pottery fighting soldiers of the Greek state.

Today’s Amazons are the working-class militants—women, nonbinary, trans—gender, agender, gender queer, gender fluid, gender-nonconforming, queer, Indigenous Two Spirits, and other identities of all nationalities, disabilities and ages. Organized in solidarity at the richest corporations in human history.

Women, mostly from Black, comprise almost half of the 5,800-person workforce trying to win a union at Amazon in Bessemer, Ala. Their struggle is inspirational to all women!

Women — Black, Latinx, Indigenous, im/migrants and trans — are leading the movement for $15 and a union and an end to sexual harassment. They are fighting to strike and carried out other job actions against multibillion dollar fast-food corporations, such as McDonald’s, Wendy’s and Taco Bell. Other essential workers have struck for better wages and benefits and safe working conditions during the pandemic.

In India, women are leaders in the historic and prolonged farmers strike. These struggles carry on the 110-year-old tradition of International Working Women’s Day. This special day was established in 1910 at the Second International Congress of Socialist Women in Copenhagen. Today, this day has honored the women of production. This system of exploitation still imposes additional burdens of imperialism, patriarchy, racism, ableism, ageism, anti-LGBTIQ+ and gender oppression, xenophobia, Islamophobia and more — on the most oppressed members of the working class and the nations of the Global South.

But as Marxists have recognized for over 160 years, capitalism creates its own gravediggers. The masses of workers and oppressed people have no stake in the perpetuity of wage slavery. Women and gender-oppressed workers are unaccompanied minors apprehended, from 2,921 in 2019 to 5,643 in 2020, a 55% jump. (tinyurl.com/k73ymjc) Thousands of migrants and their children have been detained for months in the U.S. under unsanitary, inhumane conditions. The Washington Post reports that the number of detained migrant children has tripled over the past two weeks to 2,750. (March 8, 2020)

So the tragic car accident near Holtville was not an isolated incident. As a 2018 statement by Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE) said: “To fight for Im/migrants and refugees we must get rid of ICE entirely. It means dismantling the detention system, ending deportations, providing a path to citizenship for all. For women she stressed: “we who must shoulder more than their share in the class struggles bursting forth throughout the world.” Zetkin wrote in 1921: “Even the most downtrodden of the downtrodden, women who have lived for centuries and millen- nia under the spell of age-old religious and social beliefs, rules, customs, and practices, are entering the revolutionary struggle.”

For women she stressed: “we who must surely harbor the strongest and most implacable hatred for capitalism, we must strive to combine sober assessment of the situation before us with a bold wager on the great goal of victory.” (Report on Communist Women’s Movement, July 8, 1921)

Today Bessemer is Ground Zero in the class struggle. While they may not be saying it explicitly, Black women there have begun digging the graves of Bezos and his whole greedy capitalist class.

Let the spiritual of International Working Women’s Day!

Migrant deaths: Who’s the REAL culprit?
It didn’t have to happen. But, logically, it did. And most likely, it may not be the last time. On March 2, 12 people were killed instantly when the SUV they were riding in was hit by a sen- tor–tractor trailer on a California highway.

The accident happened on the outskirts of Holtville, about 40 miles west of the Arizona border and 12 miles from the bor- der with Mexico.

Thirteen people died — one of the trav- elers succumbed later from injuries. The majority of those killed were from Mexico, while others were from Guatemala. The ages of the dead ranged from 20 to 55, with the largest group being 25 years old.

A SUV normally seats a maximum of seven people but this SUV carried an astounding 25 people! The main question is not how this happened but why?

News reports stated that it is not unusual for smugglers to be paid tens of thousands of dollars to transport work- ers — forced to leave their homelands due to economic hardship and political repres- sion — across the border. One of the dead was a young Guatemalan woman hoping to go to college.

But this incident is not an isolated inci- dent. It just made the major news due to the shocking loss of life. Car accidents are reportedly commonplace at this bor- der crossing near the Imperial Valley.

This is a rich California agricultural area where thousands of migrants work for low wages, under terrible working conditions, picking lettuce, leafy greens and melons.

Many, many im/migrants continue to try to cross into the U.S., seeking survival. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, during the fiscal year of 2020 that ended Sept. 30, the notorious U.S. Border Patrol apprehended over 400,000 people at the southwest border of the U.S. and Mexico. Close to 58,000 additional Latinx people were turned away at points of entry there.

Along the Laredo, Texas, border, there was an increase in the number of unaccompanied minors apprehended, from 2,241 in 2019 to 2,643 in 2020, a 55% jump. (tinyurl.com/k73ymjc) Thousands of migrants and their children have been detained for months in the U.S. under unsanitary, inhumane conditions. The Washington Post reports that the number of detained migrant children has tripled over the past two weeks to 2,750. (March 8, 2020)

So the tragic car accident near Holtville was not an isolated incident. As a 2018 statement by Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE) said: “To fight for im/migrants and refugees, we must get rid of ICE entirely. It means dismantling the detention system for immigrants and tearing down any racist border wall. Fighting for refugees means understanding that im/migrants and refugees are fleeing for their lives. For women she stressed: “we who must shoulder more than their share in the class struggles bursting forth throughout the world.” Zetkin wrote in 1921: “Even the most downtrodden of the downtrodden, women who have lived for centuries and millen- nia under the spell of age-old religious and social beliefs, rules, customs, and practices, are entering the revolutionary struggle.”

For women she stressed: “we who must surely harbor the strongest and most implacable hatred for capitalism, we must strive to combine sober assessment of the situation before us with a bold wager on the great goal of victory.” (Report on Communist Women’s Movement, July 8, 1921)

Today Bessemer is Ground Zero in the class struggle. While they may not be saying it explicitly, Black women there have begun digging the graves of Bezos and his whole greedy capitalist class.

Let the spiritual of International Working Women’s Day!

The governor of Texas, Neanderthals and COVID-19
By G. Dunkel

The governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, made a surprise announcement March 2 in Lubbock, a city of 200,000 people in West Texas. All state mandates to com- bat the spread of COVID-19 were being lifted. Counties and municipalities cannot make basic public health decisions to limit the spread of disease after March 10.

They can’t require masks, social distance- ing, limitations on the size of gatherings and other restrictions.

Abbott’s position is that individ- ual Texans have the ability to make the decisions that will limit the spread of COVID. Texas will be the largest state in the country without a mask mandate. About 30 states still have some form of a mask mandate and other restrictions.

Tate Reeves, the governor of Mississippi, made a similar announcement later in the afternoon of March 2.

In Idaho, which has never had a mask mandate, there were a number of mass burnings March 5 and 6 throughout the state, apparently coordinated by groups of Republican lawmakers. Children and teenagers threw masks into bonfires, cry- ing “Liberty” and “Freedom.”

President Biden sharply criticized the actions of Abbott and Reeves the next day, calling the plans “a big mistake” which reflected “Neanderthal thinking.”

Biden mischaracterized Neanderthals, a hominid species of hunters and gather- ers who became extinct around 32,000 years ago after surviving for hundreds of thousands of years. Whatever tools they developed — and theirs was indeed a tool- making culture — they used to help them- selves survive. They certainly didn’t reject tools that improved chances of survival. Engineers and doctors have irrefutably demonstrated that wearing masks is very effective in limiting the spread of COVID. A mandate to wear one is no more a limitation on your individual freedom than being forbidden to urinate on a public sidewalk.

It’s clear reading the statements of Abbott and Reeves that a major motive in their decisions was increasing busi- ness profits — a concept totally foreign to Neanderthals.

Sign outside store in Texas.
Haitian community denounces murderous coup regime

By Dave Welsh
San Francisco

By G. Dunkel

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians took to the streets of Port-au-Prince Sunday, March 7, to demand the depar- ture of President Jovenel Moïse, whose term of office has expired. The protest- ers raised the corruption under Moïse’s PHTK (Haitian Party of Tet Kale), which has stolen or squandered billions of dol- lars of oil aid provided by Venezuela.

According to a leaflet posted online by organizers, there were at least six gatherings for protests in Port- au-Prince. Tweets also came from other Haitian cities such as Cap-Haitien, Jeremie and Gonaves.

Another issue sharply raised at the protest was that the Haitian government has failed to confront the lawlessness of gangs who engage in massive kidnapping, often with the connivance of the cops. Health care workers took the lead on this because Dr. Ernst Paddy, a pediatrician, was killed Feb. 28 in front of his hospital as he and his family were being kidnapped. A few days later a nurse was kidnapped leaving a bank.

As Marxists, we strive not just to honor history, but to make it — to pro- mote change that puts workers and oppressed peoples first, and to recognize their leadership.

Today, Black women and their male co-workers, 85% of the workforce, are fighting for unionization at Amazon’s warehouse in Bessemer, Ala. If they win, it would be the first union drive to score a victory against this corporate behemoth in the U.S. Their struggle is inspir- ing workers everywhere.

Women comprise two-thirds of the 20 million workers who are paid $10.10 per hour or less; half are women of color. The gender pay gap exists, with African American, Latinx, Indigenous and immi- grant women earning the lowest salaries. It’s no wonder that they are leading the “Fight for $15” hourly wage and a union movement!

During the pandemic, nurses and other health care workers, especially women, have organized — even gone on strike to demand adequate staff- ing, safe working conditions and pro- tectionary equipment. Teachers and other essential workers have pressed their demands, too.

To honor women workers, the 1910 International Socialist Women’s Conference in Copenhagen declared March 8 to be International Working Women’s Day. On that date in 1908, 15,000 women immigrant garment workers and socialists marched for better working conditions. Congress pro- claimed March as Women’s History Month in 1987. People of all genders mark IWW Worldwide.

Socialists have long recognized struggle as the only way to improve women’s lives. Like the Black Lives Matter move- ment, started by women and LGBTQ+ activists, which boldly fights racism and police violence. Like the McDonald’s workers who led a 10-city walkout to protest sexual abuse, boosted by the #MeToo Movement.

Workers World expresses solidarity with women who are exploited on the job, those subjected to racism, misogyny, bigotry, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia. We demand ICE release im/migrant women and children from detention, and the reunification of fami- lies. We support gender-nonconforming and transgender people, who constantly risk physical attack.

If you appreciate WW’s extensive coverage of women’s struggles, join the WW Supporter Program. During the pandemic, articles are posted daily at workers.org. One issue a month is being printed and mailed. For donations of $75, $100, $300—or more, members receive a year’s subscription, a regular letter about timely issues and one, two or three free subscriptions (respec- tively), for friends. Supporters can receive the “What Road to Socialism?” book upon request. (Or read it at workers.org/books)

Write checks to Workers World. Mail them (monthly or annually), with your name and address, to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. (Or contribute at workers. org/donate)

We appreciate your help in building Workers World! ☑


By G. Dunkel

As Marxists, we strive not just to honor history, but to make it — to pro- mote change that puts workers and oppressed peoples first, and to recognize their leadership.

Today, Black women and their male co-workers, 85% of the workforce, are fighting for unionization at Amazon’s warehouse in Bessemer, Ala. If they win, it would be the first union drive to score a victory against this corporate behemoth in the U.S. Their struggle is inspir- ing workers everywhere.

Women comprise two-thirds of the 20 million workers who are paid $10.10 per hour or less; half are women of color. The gender pay gap exists, with African American, Latinx, Indigenous and immi- grant women earning the lowest salaries. It’s no wonder that they are leading the “Fight for $15” hourly wage and a union movement!

During the pandemic, nurses and other health care workers, especially women, have organized — even gone on strike to demand adequate staff- ing, safe working conditions and pro- tectionary equipment. Teachers and other essential workers have pressed their demands, too.

To honor women workers, the 1910 International Socialist Women’s Conference in Copenhagen declared March 8 to be International Working Women’s Day. On that date in 1908, 15,000 women immigrant garment workers and socialists marched for better working conditions. Congress pro- claimed March as Women’s History Month in 1987. People of all genders mark IWW Worldwide.

Socialists have long recognized struggle as the only way to improve women’s lives. Like the Black Lives Matter move- ment, started by women and LGBTQ+ activists, which boldly fights racism and police violence. Like the McDonald’s workers who led a 10-city walkout to protest sexual abuse, boosted by the #MeToo Movement.

Workers World expresses solidarity with women who are exploited on the job, those subjected to racism, misogyny, bigotry, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia. We demand ICE release im/migrant women and children from detention, and the reunification of fami- lies. We support gender-nonconforming and transgender people, who constantly risk physical attack.

If you appreciate WW’s extensive coverage of women’s struggles, join the WW Supporter Program. During the pandemic, articles are posted daily at workers.org. One issue a month is being printed and mailed. For donations of $75, $100, $300—or more, members receive a year’s subscription, a regular letter about timely issues and one, two or three free subscriptions (respec- tively), for friends. Supporters can receive the “What Road to Socialism?” book upon request. (Or read it at workers.org/books)

Write checks to Workers World. Mail them (monthly or annually), with your name and address, to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. (Or contribute at workers. org/donate)

We appreciate your help in building Workers World! ☑

Commemorate Women's History Month! Build Workers World!

As Marxists, we strive not just to honor history, but to make it — to pro- mote change that puts workers and oppressed peoples first, and to recognize their leadership.

Today, Black women and their male co-workers, 85% of the workforce, are fighting for unionization at Amazon’s warehouse in Bessemer, Ala. If they win, it would be the first union drive to score a victory against this corporate behemoth in the U.S. Their struggle is inspir- ing workers everywhere.

Women comprise two-thirds of the 20 million workers who are paid $10.10 per hour or less; half are women of color. The gender pay gap exists, with African American, Latinx, Indigenous and immi- grant women earning the lowest salaries. It’s no wonder that they are leading the “Fight for $15” hourly wage and a union movement!

During the pandemic, nurses and other health care workers, especially women, have organized — even gone on strike to demand adequate staff- ing, safe working conditions and pro- tectionary equipment. Teachers and other essential workers have pressed their demands, too.

To honor women workers, the 1910 International Socialist Women’s Conference in Copenhagen declared March 8 to be International Working Women’s Day. On that date in 1908, 15,000 women immigrant garment workers and socialists marched for better working conditions. Congress pro- claimed March as Women’s History Month in 1987. People of all genders mark IWW Worldwide.

Socialists have long recognized struggle as the only way to improve women’s lives. Like the Black Lives Matter move- ment, started by women and LGBTQ+ activists, which boldly fights racism and police violence. Like the McDonald’s workers who led a 10-city walkout to protest sexual abuse, boosted by the #MeToo Movement.

Workers World expresses solidarity with women who are exploited on the job, those subjected to racism, misogyny, bigotry, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia. We demand ICE release im/migrant women and children from detention, and the reunification of fami- lies. We support gender-nonconforming and transgender people, who constantly risk physical attack.

If you appreciate WW’s extensive coverage of women’s struggles, join the WW Supporter Program. During the pandemic, articles are posted daily at workers.org. One issue a month is being printed and mailed. For donations of $75, $100, $300—or more, members receive a year’s subscription, a regular letter about timely issues and one, two or three free subscriptions (respec- tively), for friends. Supporters can receive the “What Road to Socialism?” book upon request. (Or read it at workers.org/books)

Write checks to Workers World. Mail them (monthly or annually), with your name and address, to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. (Or contribute at workers. org/donate)

We appreciate your help in building Workers World! ☑
Un salario mínimo de $15 por hora no puede incluirse en el proyecto de ley de ayuda COVID-19 de $1,900 billones propuesto de los Senadores Demócratas del Congreso. Así dictaminó la parlamentaria del Senado, Elizabeth McDonough, el 25 de febrero. Este funcionario no electo lo calificó de “irrelevante para la legislación presupuestaria”. Este edicto es un golpe brutal para millones de trabajado- dores que luchan diario por subsistir. Sin embargo, la Cámara de Representantes aprobó el pro- yecto de ley 219 a 212 el 27 de febrero con el aumento del salario mínimo intacto. Ahora pasará al Senado, pero probable- mente sin el aumento de sueldo por hora, debido a la decisión del parlamentario. Todos los republicanos en la Cámara y el Senado, más dos senadores demócratas conservadores, se oponen a este aumento salarial. Entonces, a pesar de que el Partido Demócrata tiene una mayoría en el Senado, podría no haber sido aprobado allí, incluso si estuviera incluido en el proyec- to de ley de ayuda. Detrás de escena hay poderosos magnates corporativos y financieros de Wall Street que se oponen veheientemente a este aumento del sala- rio mínimo.

Existen medios de procedimiento para eludir o anular el fallo del parlamentario. Detrás de escena, hay, incluso si estuviera incluido en el proyecto de ley de ayuda. Detrás de escena hay poderosos magnates corporativos y financieros de Wall Street que se oponen veheientemente a este aumento del salario mínimo.

Todo el mundo está mirando

“Un ataque contra uno es un ataque contra todos.” Este famoso lema labo- ral, popularizado por los Trabajadores Industriales del Mundo hace más de un siglo, es más significativo hoy que nunca. Pero tiene un doble sig- nificado para los trabajadores de Amazon, donde sus salarios en el lugar de trabajo es excepcionalmente alta debido a la inflación, ahora sería de $12 por hora. Pero $15 es una meta, que los principales demócratas le dieron la espalda a esta idea, informó el Washington Post del 28 de febrero. ¡Esta falta de acción prolonga una emergencia para los trabajadores con salarios bajos! Desastre para millones Dos tercios de los trabajadores infor- man que han estado viviendo de sueldo a sueldo desde que COVID-19 llegó a las costas de EE.UU. Cur y respondió que trabaja por la situación inmediata, hasta que sea incluido en la ley de ayuda. Esto se debe a los salarios extremadamente bajos, combinados con los costos exorbitantes de la vivienda y otras necesidades. Las votaciones se elevarán a toda costa a esa línea. El resultado, que podría condu-cir a la primera instalación sindicalizada de Amazon en los EE.UU, se anunciaría después de todas las votaciones se cuentan. Cada trabajador con conciencia de clase está apoyando al sindicato: el Sindicato de Minoristas, Mayores y Grandes Tiendas. Los valor- ados trabajadores del sur profundo, que están expulsando de la vivienda y enfrentan la crisis, esto debe a los trabajadores negros, latinos, indígenas e inmigrantes, de la población estadounidense, especial- mente los trabajadores negros, latinos, indígenas, mujeres y jóvenes. Es por eso que el lema “Lucha por $15” resuena con tanta fuerza de costa a costa. ¡La lucha continúa!

Un capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes del capitalismo de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un paro de inflación.

Para más información: LowWageCapitalism.com

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Aumentar el salario mínimo a $15, ¡al menos! 

Todo el mundo está mirando

Un salario mínimo de $15 por hora no puede incluirse en el proyecto de ley de ayuda COVID-19 de $1,900 billones propuesto de los Senadores Demócratas del Congreso. Así dictaminó la parlamentaria del Senado, Elizabeth McDonough, el 25 de febrero. Este funcionario no electo lo calificó de “irrelevante para la legislación presupuestaria”. Este edicto es un golpe brutal para millones de trabajado- dores que luchan diario por subsistir. Sin embargo, la Cámara de Representantes aprobó el proy-ecto de ley 219 a 212 el 27 de febrero con el aumento del salario mínimo intacto. Ahora pasará al Senado, pero probablemente sin el aumento de sueldo por hora, debido a la decisión del parlamentario. Todos los republicanos en la Cámara y el Senado, más dos senadores demócratas conservadores, se oponen a este aumento salarial. Entonces, a pesar de que el Partido Demócrata tiene una mayoría en el Senado, podría no haber sido aprobado allí, incluso si estuviera incluido en el proyecto de ley de ayuda. Detrás de escena hay poderosos magnates corporativos y financieros de Wall Street que se oponen veheientemente a este aumento del salario mínimo.

Existen medios de procedimiento para eludir o anular el fallo del parlamentario. Detrás de escena, hay, incluso si estuviera incluido en el proyecto de ley de ayuda. Detrás de escena hay poderosos magnates corporativos y financieros de Wall Street que se oponen veheientemente a este aumento del salario mínimo.

Todo el mundo está mirando

“Un ataque contra uno es un ataque contra todos.” Este famoso lema laboral, popularizado por los Trabajadores Industriales del Mundo hace más de un siglo, es más significativo hoy que nunca. Pero tiene un doble signi- nificado para los trabajadores de Amazon, donde sus salarios en el lugar de trabajo es excepcionalmente alta debido a la inflación, ahora sería de $12 por hora. Pero $15 es una meta, que los principales demócratas le dieron la espalda a esta idea, informó el Washington Post del 28 de febrero. ¡Esta falta de acción prolonga una emergencia para los trabajadores con salarios bajos! Desastre para millones Dos tercios de los trabajadores informan que han estado viviendo de sueldo a sueldo desde que COVID-19 llegó a las costas de EE.UU. Cur y respondió que trabaja por la situación inmediata, hasta que sea incluido en la ley de ayuda. Esto se debe a los salarios extremadamente bajos, combinados con los costos exorbitantes de la vivienda y otras necesidades. Muchas familias están a un cheque de pago de la ruina económica y enfrentan los costos exorbitantes de la vivienda y otras necesidades. Las votaciones se elevarán a toda costa a esa línea. El resultado, que podría conducir a la primera instalación sindicalizada de Amazon en los EE.UU, se anunciaría después de todas las votaciones se cuentan. Cada trabajador con conciencia de clase está apoyando al sindicato: el Sindicato de Minoristas, Mayores y Grandes Tiendas. Los valorados trabajadores del sur profundo, que están expulsando de la vivienda y enfrentan la crisis, esto debe a los trabajadores negros, latinos, indígenas e inmigrantes, de la población estadounidense, especialmente los trabajadores negros, latinos, indígenas, mujeres y jóvenes. Es por eso que el lema “Lucha por $15” resuena con tanta fuerza de costa a costa. ¡La lucha continúa!

Un capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes del capitalismo de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un paro de inflación.

Para más información: LowWageCapitalism.com

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida