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Bust the filibuster, pass the PRO-union Act!

By Martha Grevatt

On March 9 the House of Representatives passed the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, the most sweeping amendment to the 1935 National Labor Relations Act since the notorious, union-busting Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. Unions are now demanding the Senate pass the PRO Act, which undoes parts of Taft-Hartley and strengthens the legal right to unionize.

The legislation is comprehensive compared to the more narrowly focused 1995 “anti-scab” bill, or the 2007 Employee Free Choice Act, both of which Congress failed to pass.

The PRO Act includes a ban on permanently replacing strikers. The fear that someone who crosses your picket line will be hired in your place, leaving you without employment, is a major deterrent to utilizing the strike weapon when bosses demand concessions. Current labor law only outlaws permanent replacements when the strike is called over an Unfair Labor Practice.

The most important provision of the EFCA was that it allowed unions to win recognition through “card check” — meaning if a majority of workers at a given workplace (or unit within it) sign cards authorizing a union to represent them, they don’t have to go through

a National Labor Relations Board-supervised election.

PRO takes a step back from EFCA in this regard. But PRO stipulates if a union loses an election due to proven company interference, and a majority of workers have signed cards, the union wins on the basis of a card check.

This is huge! If the PRO Act were to be passed before voting at the Alabama Amazon warehouse ended, and Amazon’s proven illegal union-busting tactics caused the union to lose the vote, the company would still have to recognize the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union!

Filibustering away workers’ rights

There are many strengths and weaknesses in PRO, but a review of both the highlights and lowlights makes it clear that its passage would be a big win for the labor movement. Union membership could shoot upward from its current historic low point of just over 10% of the U.S. working class. This happened in the 1930s after the 1935 National Labor Relations Act — the Wagner Act — codified the legal right of workers to organize and bargain collectively.

Right now PRO’s chance of passing in the Senate seems slim to none. This is because of an enshrined anti-democratic practice known as the filibuster. It basically allows the minority party — in this case the Republicans,

none of whom voted for the inadequate “stimulus” bill even with the minimum wage hike yanked out — to block passage of progressive legislation that can’t get a super-majority of 60 votes in favor.

The Senate is often referred to as a “millionaires club”; senators’ class allegiance is to capital, not labor.

Now a much needed bill — one President Joe Biden has pledged to sign and that, as its name says, protects the right to organize — faces defeat if the Democrats cannot get enough Republican senators to vote with them. Essentially, the First Amendment rights of organized labor are being trampled — you could say Trumped — by way of the Senate’s standard operating procedure.

Devil in the details



“Captive audience” meetings — where workers are forced to listen to anti-union propaganda, as they have had to do at Amazon and previously at Walmart, Volkswagen, Nissan and other corporations too numerous to mention — are explicitly banned by the PRO Act. “Offensive lockouts,” imposed when workers won’t agree to concessionary contracts, are illegal. For the first time since 1935, there would be actual financial penalties for egregious union-busting acts, such as firing or disciplining workers for organizing.

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FOR #WORLD AGAINST RACISM DAY

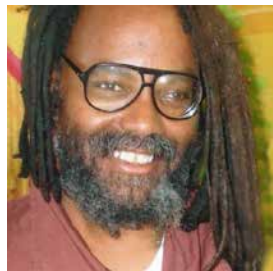
MARCH 20

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST AMAZON UNION BUSTING




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March 8, Manila, Philippines.
PHOTO: GABRIELA ALLIANCE

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‘The only acceptable treatment for Mumia Abu-Jamal is his freedom!’

By Betsey Piette

Organized in less than 24 hours, around 50 supporters of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal rallied outside Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner’s office March 12. They demanded Krasner immediately release 66-year-old Abu-Jamal, who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Abu-Jamal, hospitalized March 3 to remove excessive fluid from his lungs, was diagnosed with congestive heart disease. During this treatment, his legs and arms were inhumanely shackled to the hospital bed for four days, creating additional and unnecessary suffering. Abu-Jamal described his body as “being on fire.” His supporters call this “medical torture.”

Pam Africa, with International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia, compared Mumia’s current skin condition to a few years ago. Suffering from COVID-19, with cirrhosis of the liver due to the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections’ denial of hepatitis C drugs, his entire body is covered with a severe skin ailment obvious from the two contrasting photos shown to the demonstrators.

Africa denounced National Public Radio for hiring media consultant Annette John Hall, who cruelly called Abu-Jamal supporters earlier in the day to gather information in preparation “for writing his obituary.” Abu-Jamal was a journalist for NPR from 1979 to 1981, before management asked him to resign after his outspoken defense of the MOVE organization. NPR has only recently given coverage to his current appeal and health crisis.

Released in 2019 after 41 years of incarceration, MOVE 9 members Janet and Janine Africa described the impact a lengthy prison term can have on one’s body. They raised concerns that the state is now trying to kill Mumia the same way MOVE 9 members Phil and Merle Africa suddenly died in prison.

Like many incarcerated people, Abu-Jamal’s health crisis can be linked directly to years of medical neglect. Dr. Ricardo Alvarez, Abu-Jamal’s medical consultant, says, “50% of people diagnosed with congestive heart disease do not live past five years. A patient’s survival requires proper meds, physical therapy and other life-altering changes.”

At a protest outside DA Larry Krasner’s office, Pam Africa compares photos of Mumia a few years back to last week.

The PA DOC’s inhumane policies make it impossible for anyone to change their diet, get more exercise or fresh air, reduce stress or receive proper medicines. This is the reason why Abu-Jamal, and other incarcerated people suffering from similar life-threatening ailments, must be released. Alvarez stated, “The only acceptable treatment for Mumia Abu-Jamal is his freedom.”

Abu-Jamal is one of thousands of elderly prisoners with ailing health due to inhumane prison conditions that include lack of proper food, decades of bad water, medical neglect, the year-long stress of 23-hour-per-day lockdown because of COVID-19 and the elimination of contact visits.

Under PA DOC policies, incarcerated people bear the brunt of the pandemic. Prison guards and staff — the virus carriers — can travel freely from outside the walls into multiple prison units. Over 2,000 Pennsylvania prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19. More than 110 have died.

At the end of the rally, protesters took to the streets, marching against traffic and blocking busy South Broad Street for about 20 minutes.

Mumia is innocent. He is in the middle of legal challenges that could finally prove his innocence and win his freedom, but Krasner and the FOP have purposely contested and delayed the process. Justice delayed is justice denied! □



At a protest outside DA Larry Krasner’s office, Pam Africa compares photos of Mumia a few years back to last week.

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

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MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

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

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

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

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

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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. □

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Interview with Dr. Ricardo Alvarez

Mumia Abu-Jamal’s health emergency

Mumia Abu-Jamal, the internationally renowned journalist, Pennsylvania prison inmate and former Black Panther widely considered to be a political prisoner, is now experiencing a health emergency. A Feb. 27 call from Mumia alerted supporters who immediately began a campaign to telephone Pennsylvania Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel, Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner and Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf. This succeeded in having Abu-Jamal taken to an outside hospital where he received four days of treatment.

The following interview with Abu-Jamal’s medical consultant, Dr. Ricardo Alvarez, was originally printed March 14 in *The Jamal Journal*, published by the uncompromising International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The collective call for Abu-Jamal’s release could not be more urgent. As Abu-Jamal’s physician consultant, Dr. Ricardo Alvarez says: “The only treatment is freedom.” More information at www.JamalJournal.com.

Jamal Journal: Mumia Abu-Jamal is now suffering from COVID-19, congestive heart failure, liver cirrhosis and a severe worsening of his chronic debilitating skin condition. As a consultant physician, please tell us about his current condition. What does Abu-Jamal need that he is not getting from the prison authorities?

Dr. Ricardo Alvarez: The first thing I should note is that in discussing Mumia’s health, it is important for his supporters to understand that he has sacrificed some measure of privacy. This sacrifice has been necessary at times so that supporters can be vigilant of his health. I believe Mumia seeks to help improve the conditions of ALL prisoners. We saw this with the example of [Mumia’s fight for] the legal precedent set to access hepatitis C medications. In this regard it is particularly important that Mumia supporters continue to link with and support all political prisoners and all prisoners.

JJ: Can you please tell us about Mumia’s COVID diagnosis?

RA: Mumia needs freedom for his COVID. He can get that from prison authorities. There is a compassionate release program, which cruelly is used to release prisoners on their deathbed and then only in limited cases. It doesn’t have to be that way. COVID is an extraordinary circumstance and a compelling basis for decarceration of our elderly. It won’t happen until

we demand action.

In fact, Dr. Brie Williams, Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, director of the Amend: Changing Correctional Culture Program and one of the nation’s experts on care of the elderly incarcerated, has written an affidavit for release based on COVID. Dr. Williams writes: “I submit this affidavit in support of any defendant seeking release from custody during the COVID-19 pandemic; so long as such release does not jeopardize public safety, and the inmate can be released to a residence in which the inmate can comply with CDC social distancing guidelines. The statements in this affidavit are based only on the current state of emergency. . . .”

According to Dr. Williams, because of the COVID pandemic, the entire community is at risk if prison populations are not reduced. Prisons are ill-equipped to humanely stop the spread of infection. Correctional officers bring COVID into and out of prisons.

Furthermore, inmates have the highest risk of acute illness and poor health outcomes if infected with COVID. There are more than 2.3 million people incarcerated in the United States, approximately 16% of whom are age 50 or older. The risk of coronavirus to incarcerated seniors is high. Their advanced age, coupled with the challenges of practicing even the most basic disease prevention measures in prison, is a potentially lethal combination. To make matters worse, correctional facilities are often ill equipped to care for aging prisoners, who are more likely to suffer from chronic health conditions than the general public. Of older people, at least 70% have one chronic disease.

So the most important point of advocacy is for the release of all our elders in COVID prisons. Prisons are becoming a death sentence. Some prisoners have feared sharing their symptoms for fear of isolation in barbaric conditions.

There is good data to show that releasing our elders is not a significant public safety risk.

JJ: Then there is Mumia’s congestive heart failure.

RA: Yes, Mumia needs freedom for his congestive heart failure. We don’t fully know what he needs medically inside prison, because we do not yet have all the records. From what we have, it is clear he needs regular monitoring.

Congestive heart failure is a serious disease with 50% mortality in five years in the

best of circumstances. There is data to show that the physiological age of prisoners averages 10 to 15 years older than their chronological age, which means that their physical bodies literally age faster. It makes sense when you consider the enormously stressful conditions and the constant threat of violence. But it also makes sense when you consider that prisoners are denied physical contact and loving connection.

Patients in the general population with congestive heart failure often have to check their weight daily and eat well with low-salt diets. Mumia’s diet will always be limited by the poor quality of prison food that is contracted out to major food service corporations.

Those with congestive heart failure may be prone to frequent hospitalizations, due to the delicacy of the heart’s inability to adequately pump blood. But just as prisoners may fear declaring their symptoms of COVID for fear of isolation, so too Mumia and other prisoners may fear declaring symptoms that would lead to hospitalization because of fear of the barbaric “four-point restraint.” [Limbs of a person in a four-point restraint are chained to the four corners of a bed frame, with the person fixed in a spread-eagle position, unable to move.]

Prisoners are going to think twice about what threshold they will use to seek medical care when they are denied compassionate conditions of hospitalization.

JJ: The liver cirrhosis?

RA: Mumia needs freedom for his liver cirrhosis. Again, we do not have the full records to determine if he is getting the highest standard of care to monitor for cancer, which would require ultrasounds every six months and checking for certain markers.

We do know that his cirrhosis was caused by the unnecessary delay in treatment that resulted from [inadequate prison] hep C treatment protocols. That has been proven in the courts. Mumia’s legal case to force the PA DOC to give him treatment consistent with current [medical] guidelines has paved the way for other inmates to get effective but expensive antiviral medications.

Just as Mumia may fear hospitalization, so too he may reasonably fear care in the prison infirmary where in 2015 he was repeatedly given courses of steroids for his skin condition, even when there was clear documentation of a grossly elevated blood sugar level. Steroids are known to elevate blood glucose. He eventually needed to be admitted to the ICU in diabetic ketoacidosis as result of this negligence. And yet Mumia



Mumia Abu-Jamal

The collective call for Abu-Jamal’s release could not be more urgent. As Abu-Jamal’s physician consultant, Dr. Ricardo Alvarez says: ‘The only treatment is freedom.’

is dependent on these facilities for his care.

JJ: What about his skin condition?
RA: Mumia needs freedom for his severe debilitating skin condition. It makes sense that Mumia’s skin condition is exacerbated in the stressful conditions of imprisonment. Unfortunately, the number of medications and treatments are limited. We already know the dangers of steroids. Mumia has a deep understanding of his own health and makes clear that he believes in natural remedies when possible.

Release from prison will not only help his skin condition because he can be in a loving and supportive community with human touch, but also because he will have access to a variety of balms and other healing products that are denied in prison. Only FDA-approved medications or simple emollients such as Eucerin or Vaseline will be administered in prison.

If the severity of his skin condition is exacerbated, and hospitalization might be needed, then he must suffer the concern of being chained during his entire hospital stay. What he needs now is assurance that he will not be in four-point restraints when hospitalized and to have access to healing balms from traditional healers consistent with his medicinal beliefs.

Please sign the petition demanding Abu-Jamal’s release due to overwhelming evidence of police, prosecutorial and judicial misconduct that has forever destroyed the legitimacy of Abu-Jamal’s 1982 conviction: tinyurl.com/3bnnpsnu.

Philadelphia

Community demands sanctuary schools in ‘sanctuary city’

“Philadelphia has declared itself a ‘sanctuary city,’ but how can it be a sanctuary city without its schools being sanctuaries for all students?” asked Erika Guadalupe Nuñez of Juntos at a well-attended March 1 press conference outside the School District of Philadelphia headquarters.

A major demand being directed at school officials is to set clear rules and better train staff and teachers on restrictions against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) involvement in city schools.

City Council members Helen Gym and Kendra Brooks spoke in support of the campaign, which began after ICE officers detained a pregnant mother over a year ago. She had just dropped off her child at Eliza B. Kirkbride Elementary School

in February 2020 in the Passyunk Square neighborhood of Philadelphia. The action caused ripples of fear through immigrant and refugee communities.

The recent press conference launched the Sanctuary Schools campaign, whose brochure points out: “Sanctuary Schools can and should be utilized as a vessel towards healing the traumatic impact of a global pandemic, racist government administration and long-term effects of heightened immigration enforcement. [W]hat we are asking for is not new. Schools have been used for too long as colonial tools to assimilate and criminalize youth and their families. We say no more!”

Juntos, a community-led Latinx immigrant organization, is promoting the five-point campaign for increased reinvestment in education, schools free of

criminalization, culturally appropriate and responsive teaching curricula, accessible schools and representative teachers, and trauma-informed schools that

practice justice and develop social and emotional learning spaces.

—Report and photo by Joe Piette



Erika Guadalupe Nuñez speaking, March 1.

California rally ‘Union busting is disgusting!’

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

March 12 — Labor union and community members rallied today in front of the offices of Morgan Lewis, a law firm with offices in 31 cities around the world with a sordid history of union busting. Morgan Lewis was recently hired by Amazon to sabotage efforts by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) to organize Amazon workers in Bessemer, Ala.

Morgan Lewis has blocked union efforts by Amazon technicians since 2014 and has defended the company against lawsuits over unsafe working conditions

during the COVID pandemic.

For six decades, Morgan Lewis has strategized to defeat union organizing efforts. Best known for its end run against the 1981 strike of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) during President Ronald Reagan’s administration, most recently the firm has been hired to derail the Fight for \$15 and a union effort.

A militant picket line organized by Support Alabama Amazon Workers-Bay Area chanted at the base of Market Street, “Union busting is disgusting!” Protesters took out their phones and called Morgan Lewis directly to demand the company end its attack on the RWDSU and Alabama Amazon workers.

Speakers at the picket line included representatives of the Oakland Education Association, the San Francisco Labor Council, Western Movement Assembly, East Bay Democratic Socialists of America and United Front Committee for a Mass Labor Party. A contingent of electricians from the International Brotherhood of Electricians joined the picket line.

As part of a national Day of Solidarity with the 85% Black workforce at the Alabama warehouse, the Support Alabama Amazon Workers-Bay Area committee is planning a car and bike caravan for 1 p.m., Saturday, March 20, through Oakland.

Other San Francisco Bay Area events that day include a 9:30 a.m. rally at



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

San Francisco, March 12.

the Brisbane Amazon facility and a 10 a.m. press conference at 7th and Berry streets. in San Francisco — a site bought by Amazon for a future “logistics facility.” All events are listed at supportamazonworkers.org/march20. □

Global labor federation backs #BAmazon union

The World Federation of Trade Unions issued the following statement on March 3.



USA: WFTU in solidarity with Amazon warehouse workers in Alabama

The World Federation of Trade Unions, which is the militant voice of 105 million workers from 132 countries around the globe, extends its internationalist solidarity with Amazon warehouse workers in Bessemer, Alabama, who are trying to get organized and develop trade union action in defense of their working rights. The world’s militant trade union movement demands full trade union and democratic liberties and freedom of participation in their trade union for the Amazon warehouse workers in Alabama, which is a right established by international conventions and no employer or government can prevent workers from [exercising] that [right.]

WFTU members and friends all over the world stand by the side of Amazon workers for the fulfilment of their fair demands.

The Secretariat □

Ohio solidarity

By Martha Grevatt
University Heights, Ohio

A demonstration outside a Whole Foods store March 13 brought out supporters for the Amazon union drive taking place in Bessemer, Ala. They came to this Cleveland suburb from throughout Northeast Ohio and from as far away as Columbus.

Our Revolution Ohio, an outgrowth of Bernie Sanders’ presidential campaign, called the rally along with Single Payer Action Network. In addition to voicing support for the Bessemer workers, people held signs backing “Medicare for All” and called for passage of the Protect the Right to Organize Act by Congress.

Speakers included United Auto Workers Local 1112 activist Chuckie Denison, University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan and Kahlil Seren, the first African American Vice Mayor of adjoining Cleveland Heights. Two members of Kenyon Student Workers Organizing Committee talked

about their strike at Kenyon College. The featured speaker was State Senator Nina Turner, Sanders’ 2020 campaign co-chair currently running to replace U.S. Rep. Marcia Fudge, who has accepted a Biden administration appointment.

Participants were excited to receive leaflets about the March 20 Support Alabama Amazon Union demonstration, slated to take place outside a nearby Amazon facility. (supportamazonworkers.org) □



Outside Whole Foods, University Hts., Ohio, March 13.

Boston school bus drivers blast reopening schemes

By Steve Gillis,
Executive Board, USW Local 8751

In direct confrontation with the U.S. ruling class’ monolithic drive to “reopen” schools and businesses, even as the pandemic continues to rage, Boston School Bus Drivers picketed their employer, Transdev, March 9. They gave voice to the outrage of frontline workers over this dangerous gamble with the lives of both the school children and the workers.

The school bus drivers are members of the 1,000-strong United Steelworkers Local 8751. Along with USW monitors and leaders of Boston’s labor movement, they shut down deliveries and normal operations at the headquarters of Transdev, the international corporation that manages the school buses. At their morning break, hundreds of drivers converged from their three bus yards with picket signs demanding, “Worksite COVID-19 testing & vaccines for school bus workers NOW!” and “Transdevil’s \$billions: stolen from workers!”



WW PHOTO: MAUREEN SKEHAN

Nora Braggs and Steve Smith of Local 8751’s ‘Team Solidarity’ leadership.

Television, press and radio reporters jammed the scene, drawn by a rapid-response press release from Local 8751, which alone among Boston unions has called out Boston’s mayor and President Joe Biden’s pick for Secretary of Labor. The release explained: “On March 1st Mayor [Marty] Walsh has ordered a reopening of K-3rd grade, in addition to the current 7,000 [High In-Person Priority] students, with over 10,000 workers forced into all buses and buildings under threat of our jobs. At the same time, on Feb. 1st Transdev/BPS unilaterally implemented across-the-board pay, benefit and budget cuts on school bus drivers already facing severe pay cuts and dangerous working conditions.”

Local 8751 President André François fired up the physically distanced, masked-up crowd, blasting Transdev and BPS management with the warning, “Union busting’s

got to go!” The Dorchester Art Project pumped people up from their sound truck with Rebel Diaz’s “Which Side Are You On?” and Haitian, Cabo Verdean, Chilean, Irish and Black liberation songs of workers’ struggles.

Jessica Tang, president of the 8,000-member Boston Teachers Union and education advisor to incoming interim Mayor Kim Janey — the historic first Black mayor of a city long known as the “Selma of the North” — demanded immediate enforcement of COVID-19 vaccinations and emergency protocols, such as a monitor on every bus. Tang slammed state government officials for their rushed, discriminatory orders: “We are all one network, one community. If one of us is not safe, then none of us are safe!”

Darlene Lombos, executive secretary-treasurer of the Greater Boston Labor Council, two days earlier had voted “Hell No,” along with parent and student reps, to giving state authorities punitive powers to fully reopen all Massachusetts schools. “It’s unions who have the solutions and a plan for vaccinating all essential workers. We demand the governor listen to the teachers, the bus drivers, the fire fighters, now!”

Al Vega, president of USW Local 9358 and the decades-long leader of the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health, demanded “immediate Transdev compliance with health and safety guidelines and worksite testing and vaccinations programs.”

John Buonopane, International USW District 4 staff representative and president of a fighting local of gas workers, put Transdev and the city on notice that they’re going to pay for their unfair labor practices and neglect of drivers’ health and safety. “We’re showing Transdev in the street today that you don’t mess with Local 8751!”

Last March, Local 8751 was instrumental in forcing the city to close in-person learning as the initial wave of COVID-19 killed five school bus workers and sickened dozens more, sweeping through the bus yards and extended families of the largely Haitian, African American, Latinx

and African workforce. Local 8751 won precedent-setting, consecutive agreements from Mayor Walsh providing pay, full benefits and paid COVID-19 leave from Transdev during the shutdown and remote learning.

Last October, Walsh had reopened schools to a limited number of students whom the district termed “High In-Person Priority.” The mayor then shut down, reopened, shut down again, and in February suddenly announced a full reopening of the schools in the spring. Meanwhile, school bus workers have suffered more than 40 positive cases, with dozens of quarantines, but the authorities have refused to publicize this. They scoff when their actions are described as a “cover-up,” then send late-night, obscure email notices about the latest infections, to fulfill their legal liability.

In just a few days, the bosses’ forced economic “reopening” has resulted in a virus increase in greater Boston — buried in articles headlined about shortages of Big Pharma’s vaccines for school staff. This fourth surge had been predicted by President Biden’s own director of the Centers for Disease Control, Dr. Rochelle Walensky of Massachusetts General Hospital, but was ill-advisedly ignored by his own Acting Secretary of Labor, Al Stewart.

In the midst of pandemic-era budget cuts — which have seen the take-home pay of Boston school bus drivers hammered by a gross \$400,000 per week due to the bosses’ contrived “hybrid” transportation schedules — Local 8751 is preparing for potentially brutal contract negotiations.

Combined with Transdev’s “efficiency” and “profit” motivations, the city budget is now whacked into deficit spending by the capitalist economic crises of mass unemployment — officially 8% in Massachusetts — and the bankruptcy of its tax base: small businesses, nonprofits, and educational, arts and cultural employers.

The Biden administration’s “rescue” package relies on forcing labor back to work on its concessionary terms — which include miserly checks for workers but billions to bail out Wall Street.

In this context, the Union Power picket March 9 was a successful dress rehearsal for the life-or-death struggles coming for workers this spring.

Powerful photos and livestream highlights of the March 9 action are posted at BostonSchoolBusUnion.org/UnionPowerPicket. □

Philippine activists demand: ‘Stop the killings and arrests!’

By Kathy Durkin

“Kill them all!” ordered Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, addressing the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines on March 5. Two days later, state forces following the dictator’s edict carried out a deadly attack on progressive activists in the Southern Tagalog region.

On the day now known as “Bloody Sunday,” March 7, police and military troops killed nine unarmed activists and arrested seven others. They targeted labor unionists, peasant leaders, mass organizers and human rights advocates, with the goal of eradicating the opposition to Duterte and the ruling class he represents.

Among those executed was Manny Asuncion, Cavite chapter secretary-general of BAYAN, an alliance of progressive Filipino organizations, following a raid at the Workers’ Assistance Center. Also slain were Dumagat tribe members and Indigenous activists Randy de la Cruz and Pury de la Cruz, as well as housing rights advocates Michael Dasigao, Mark Lee “Makmak” Bacasno, Abner Esto and Edward Esto.

The 10-year-old son of “fisherfolk” organizers Chai Lemita-Evangelista and Ariel Evangelista witnessed the horror of his parents’ murder.

Taken into police custody were Steve

Mendoza, executive vice president of OLALIA; Elizabeth Camoral of BAYAN, grabbed at a Defend Yulo Farmers headquarters; Nimfa Lanzas of Kapatid — Families and Friends of Political Prisoners; Tatay Moises and Dodong Bagsik, peasant leaders; Eugene Eugenio of COURAGE; and Lino Baez of BAYAN.

Cristina Palaby, secretary-general of KARAPATAN, an alliance of Philippine human rights groups, denounced “the Duterte regime unleashing the unbridled horrors of fascism and the crackdown on dissenters.” (karapatan.org, March 7)

‘True power remains in the people’

Gabriela, a grassroots alliance of Filipino women’s groups, condemned the surge in state killings and arrests on Facebook on March 7: “The intensified crackdown follows the same old pattern of attacks against unionists, peasant leaders and activists, who are facing trumped-up charges and planting of evidence. Recently, Ramir Corcolon and Arnedo Lagunias, union leaders, were illegally arrested in Cabuyao Laguna. Military and police conduct synchronized illegal arrests and extrajudicial killings of progressive leaders, combing through ... Southern Tagalog.”

The coalition stressed: “Now, a day before International Working Women’s Day, the combined forces of military and police have conducted a series of bloody

crackdowns on the working class.” As they prepared to commemorate IWWD, they “remain vigilant [to] Duterte’s brutal and outright disregard of our rights. It is evident that Duterte is afraid of the growing strength of our resistance.

“On [March 8], united as one, women, farmers, trade unionists, youth, health care workers and toiling masses will lead the march to show Duterte that true power remains in the people.”

‘We demand justice!’

The U.S. chapter of BAYAN and the Malaya Movement Southern California held an online emergency rally March 11, followed by a demonstration outside the Philippines Consulate in downtown Los Angeles on March 13. They demanded justice for those slain and imprisoned and the ouster of fascist Duterte. They vowed to “resolutely continue the fight of our most recent martyrs who offered their lives for a country that is genuinely free!”

These organizations ask that supporters call and email Ambassador Jose Manuel Romualdez at the Philippine Embassy in Washington to condemn the massacre, insist on punishment for the killers and press for the release of all political detainees. They demand the Philippine Supreme Court end the “weaponization of search warrants meant



Protest against the massacre on March 7 in Southern Tagalog.

PHOTO: PHILSTAR.COM

to silence activists, political dissenters and government critics.” The draconian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 must be revoked, they say, as it allows legally sanctioned state violence. (See BAYAN-USA Facebook for contact information.)

Philippine organizers ask their allies in the U.S. to pressure Congress to end all security assistance to Manila, which funds police and military operations against people’s organizations and political opponents. And they seek an end to the Visiting Forces Agreement, which provides U.S. “counterinsurgency” training to Philippine repressive forces.

The reign of terror is not over!

See Defend Southern Tagalog’s Facebook page for updates.

Statement by New York Boricua Resistance ‘No International Working Women’s Day without trans women’

This statement was co-written by Alicia Rodriguez and Gabriela Malespin of New York Boricua Resistance and presented by Malespin during the March 13



Gabriela Malespin

webinar sponsored by New York City-based International Working Women’s Day Coalition.

The webinar was entitled “Women and gender-oppressed workers rise up: The real pandemic is capitalism. The cure is global solidarity and resistance.” Many speakers focused on building solidarity with the 5,800 Amazon workers—almost one-half Black women, in Bessemer, Ala.—organizing for a union.

For this International Working Women’s Day, we want to highlight the epidemic of violence against women in Puerto Rico. When we say women, it’s important for people to know that means both trans and cis women. Femicides and transfemicides in Puerto Rico remain a social and public health crisis. According to a 2019 report

from Puerto Rican feminist groups such as Proyecto Matria and Kilometro Cero, one woman is killed every seven days in Puerto Rico. Violence against women, femmes and nonbinary folks is further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As people are required to stay home, and incomes and access to safe spaces have been reduced, victims of domestic and gender-based violence have found it harder to seek recourse.

After years of constant protest and demands by feminist organizations, the governor of Puerto Rico finally declared a state of emergency over gender violence. The state of emergency provides additional funding to tackle this issue and includes measures such as public school curriculums aimed at promoting gender equality and updated guidelines for tackling gender violence.

However, while these measures represent a start, they fail to tackle some of the root causes of gender-based violence, such as poverty and lack of access to resources. In order to truly tackle this crisis, we must call for measures such as housing for all, investment in communities and a move away from mass incarceration. We must provide universal health care and fund spaces where victims of gender-based violence can seek safety. We must tackle imperialism on the island and examine the connections between modern-day colonialism in Puerto Rico and the oppression of working women. We must recognize how capitalism is a force that exploits and abuses working women and abolish it.

Furthermore, we must emphasize how there is no working women’s day without

Continued on page 9

Commemorate Women’s History Month! Build Workers World

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

Today, Black women and their co-workers are leading the fight for unionization at Amazon’s warehouse in Bessemer, Ala., where 85% of the workforce is African American. 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 inspiring 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 still exists, with African American, Latinx, Indigenous and immigrant women earning the lowest salaries. It’s no wonder that they are leading the “Fight for \$15 and a union.”

During the pandemic, nurses and other health care workers, especially women, have organized — even gone on

strike — to demand adequate staffing, safe working conditions and protective 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 proclaimed March as Women’s History Month in 1987. People of all genders mark IWWD worldwide.

Socialists have long recognized struggle as the only way to improve women’s lives. Like the Black Lives Matter movement, 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 the government release all im/migrant women and children from detention and reunify families. We support gender-nonconforming and trans people, who constantly risk physical attack.

If you appreciate WW’s extensive coverage of the struggles of women and gender-oppressed people, join the WW Supporter Program. During the pandemic, articles are posted daily at workers.org, and one issue a month is 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 (respectively), for friends. Supporters can receive the “What Road to Socialism?” book upon request. (Or read it at workers.org/books)

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

We appreciate your help in building Workers World! □

March 7, 1970 Historic International Working Women’s Day march to House of Detention



By Naomi Cohen

The following excerpt is from an article originally printed in the March 25, 1970, Workers World newspaper entitled, “A day of struggle in New York City — Militant demonstration marks International Women’s Day” written by Naomi Cohen.

The occasion was March 7, the first International Women’s Day rally in this country in many years. In this city and around the country, women took this day to revive the revolutionary traditions of a day that is truly for women in struggle.

1,000 rally in New York City

The day was marked here by over 1,000 women and male supporters with a rally in Union Square and a militant march to New York’s Bastille — the Women’s House of Detention. The action was organized by the Women’s Caucus of Youth Against War and Fascism and included representatives from many women’s organizations. So that women with children could attend, men from YAWF staffed a childcare center at a nearby church during the rally.

When the rally ended, women poured out of Union Square Park and began a spirited march to the infamous Women’s House of Detention. They carried banners demanding equal pay for equal work, free and legal abortions, no job discrimination and freedom for Geraldine Robinson, a Black mother of five from Buffalo, who was framed up along with Martin Sostre for running a revolutionary bookstore in the Black community there.

Marching along the crowded streets, the women chanted, “Women, let’s unite and fight,” “Out of the

house, out of the jails, out from under, women unite,” and “Free our sisters, free ourselves. Free Joan Bird, free Erica Huggins.”

Speaking with jailed sisters

The march grew as it went, so that when it reached the prison, the demonstrators completely circled the building. Women prisoners waved and shouted out of the windows: “Free us,” “Power to the people” and “We want food.” The demonstrators stopped at the back of the prison, where they could hear the women best, and shouted up to their imprisoned sisters. “Hey, hey, ho,



YAWF banner leads march to Women’s House of Detention, 1970.

ho, The House of D has got to go” was picked up by the crowd. “Free Joan Bird” was raised again and again to demand freedom for the Panther woman now imprisoned there for almost a year on \$100,000 ransom as a result of the frame-up of the New York Panther 21.

The cops were ominously moving in, harassing the demonstrators, but no one was moving. The women stood with fists raised and shouted up to the prisoners. It was finally suggested that the demonstrators

demand their right to see prison authorities with a list of demands. As the women marched on the front of the prison, police moved in to block their way.

The women refused to give way and stood at the entrance of the prison chanting, “Free our sisters, free ourselves.” A handful of cops were nervously backed up against the prison wall, confronted by an angry crowd of determined women.

Finally, a squad of cops charged the demonstrators, pushing them away from the prison. Clubs started swinging, and the people were brutally manhandled. In the process, three women and three male supporters were arrested. The three women are Sharon Eolis, a leader in YAWF, and Rita Freed and Pam Kirkland, long-time activists in Youth Against War and Fascism and well-known to New York’s secret police. Three men, Mike Friedman, Steve Cagan and Jamie Fryer were also arrested.

Framed-up women and supporters

It took the cops two hours to decide to frame-up the demonstrators on very heavy charges. Sharon Eolis, Pam Kirkland and Steve Cagan are being charged with felonious assault on a cop, in addition to first-degree riot, also a felony. The defendants are also being charged with resisting arrest, harassment, obstruction of government administration and disorderly conduct.

The stiff charges make it clear that the women’s liberation movement can now expect the same kind of repression that the government has brought down on the Black Liberation and antiwar movements. Women’s liberation is spoken of as a joke in the capitalist press, but the moment women begin to struggle in militant actions, the repression comes down. □

Outrage over reopening Child detention center on toxic dump

By Mirinda Crissman

Plans to reopen a migrant detention facility on top of toxic military waste in Homestead, Fla., have sparked anger. Located just south of Miami, the closed facility was the largest center for unaccompanied migrant children — with 3,200 beds — before it was shut down in 2019 due to national outrage and community organizing against it.

As of Feb. 22, the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services (HHS) under the Biden Administration plan to reopen the temporary “shelter” built to detain migrant children, this time under the name “Biscayne Influx Care Facility.”

The facility sits near Homestead Air Reserve Base. According to a report by Earthjustice and the American Friends Service Committee, its location poses serious health and safety threats to children, including exposure to toxic chemicals. The site is less than a mile from eight hot spots with 16 different sources of contamination. Lead, mercury, arsenic, pesticides and volatile compounds — many of which are carcinogenic and can cause chronic health issues — have been found in the soil and groundwater. (tinyurl.com/5vcd3h8k)

Not only is it near the site of toxic military waste, but Earthjustice and AFSC found that its proximity to the military base “violates federal and county noise restrictions. Detained kids are exposed to noise from F-16 jets at levels that can cause memory loss and cognitive stunting.”

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki tried to spin the deliberate decision to open these “overflow care facilities” as a response to coronavirus. HHS has 13,200 beds for children, having added over 80 facilities in the last four years for a total of 200. Because of cramped,

unsanitary conditions, with little ability to social distance during a pandemic, only half of these beds are usable. Influx centers like the one in Homestead or one that was recently reopened in Carrizo Springs, Texas, cost \$775 a day per child. (Washington Post, Feb. 22)

Detention for profit

These overflow facilities for migrants have very little to do with caring for children and everything to do with profits. Until late 2019, the Homestead detention center was run by Comprehensive Health Services, Inc., a subsidiary of the HHS operator Caliburn International Corp.

Under their ownership, children were packed like sardines into cold rooms that hold 70 to 250 kids. Many were detained

for more than six months, according to interviews done by five legal and child psychology experts in February 2019. There were multiple cases of sexual abuse by staff.

“These children are in perhaps the most restrictive and least family-like setting possible,” said Neha Desai, director of immigration at the National Center for Youth Law. “I spoke with youth that slept in rooms with 100 other kids at night. Some of them have been there for months on end, with no freedom of movement, no privacy, no human contact.” (Huffington Post, Feb. 12, 2019)

New contractors looking to profit are already circling the proposed reopening of the Homestead facility. Serco, Inc. — a British contractor that has faced allegations of abuse and sexual assault in Britain and Australia — advertised “an exciting new career opportunity supporting direct care services and supervision of Biscayne Influx Facility.” Serco’s job posting has a disclaimer: “pending contract award.” (Miami Herald, March 7)

Because we have been forced to organize our societies around profit for a few, we see the U.S. capitalist government torturing children in toxic conditions and calling it “care.” These kids were forced into these cages because U.S. imperialism has made conditions in the countries they came from so unstable.

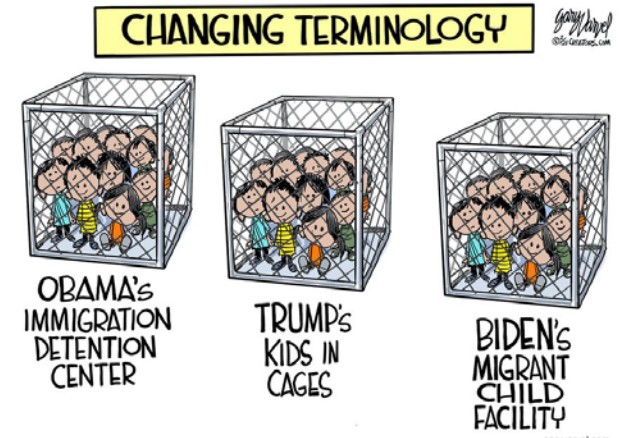
Whether it’s migrant children in what the powers that be call “influx” or “overflow” facilities, or the 48,000 children held everyday in juvenile jails (Prison Policy Initiative, Dec. 19, 2019) — placing human children in cages is an everyday fact of U.S. empire. A government that is willing to do this to children is not the friend of the people and never has been. The facility in Homestead needs to be shut down again, and for good.

Abolish all forms of human caging! Tear down the walls! □



WW PHOTO: MIRINDA CRISSMAN

Im/migrants in detention are often given aluminum blankets, like the repurposed one shown here.



GARY VARVEL FOR CREATORS SYNDICATE

Pennsylvania interview

Part 2

Incarcerated worker fights for medical rights

By Joe Piette

On Feb. 3, Joe Piette of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party interviewed Bryant Arroyo, imprisoned at State Correctional Institute Frackville. Part 1 of this interview appeared in the Feb. 18 issue of Workers World. A previous Dec. 21, 2020, interview can be read at workers.org/2020/12/53514/.

Workers World: You’ve mentioned that SCI Frackville is changing how they allow prisoners to have visitors.

Bryant Arroyo: Instead of conducting video calls in the visitors room, SCI Frackville is now conducting videoconference calls inside our housing units, surrounded by other prisoners on nearby phones or in the showers — at the same time you are conducting a virtual visit with your loved ones, including children. Young family members shouldn’t be forced to see the prisoner on the wing or block where they are housed. It’s dehumanizing and unconscionable. We have a visiting room. There is no need to conduct visits under the despicable and inhumane circumstances we are presently challenged with every waking day and night of our lives.

WW: What is the videoconference setup?

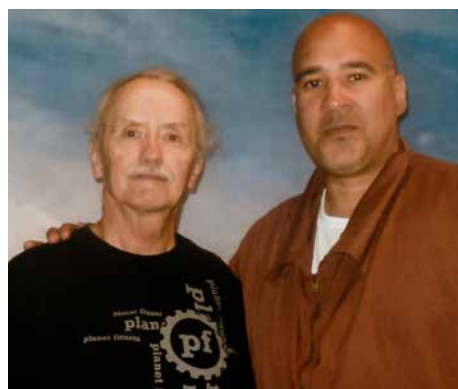
BA: As soon as you come into the block, it’s to the right of where all the phones are hooked up, and they got the showers close by. Behind it, there’s windows and bars in the hallway. It’s in the wing where we reside, so when a visitor sees you [by videoconference], the background is the cellblock and whatever is happening on the wing.

We’re basically objecting to the [video conferencing unit] being built there, instead of utilizing the five monitors in the visiting room, where they constructed the actual format for the virtual visitations.

There is only one virtual visit monitor for the entire wing. So if four people unbeknownst to each other schedule a visit for four o’clock with family members, the person who calls first gets the

visit. The other three visits are canceled immediately, because you can’t have four [visits] on one monitor.

On top of that, even with the little barrier they set up, when you’re [sitting], people are walking at a different elevation [behind you]. So, let’s just say you have a virtual visit with your grandkids or your daughter. Then a particular individual



Joe Piette (left), Bryant Arroyo, SCI Frackville, 2018.

who just wants to be nosy looks in. And next thing you know, he says “Hey, man, you know, I like the girl that you were talking to.” And then you turn around and say, “Hey, man, why you disrespected me like that? Because that’s my daughter. That was my grandkids. What are you doing? You know, prying into my visit?”

There’s no privacy. You got eight people on the phone, talking at boisterous levels. You have people walk out of the showers just in their boxers. They’re talking back and forth. Then you have the people outside of their cells on their rec hour.

Well, you just hooked up the right mix and the right alchemy to create a volatile situation.

I’m in B block. The A block and C block already have [videoconference] functioning. Hundreds of prisoners have filed grievances against it, because they understand that this is an issue that will potentially create a hostile and volatile environment. But you know, [they say] since I’ve given you an ice cream, you can’t call it hell. But, at the end of the day, you’re not going to be comfortable with those 45-minute video calls.

WW: Have prisoners received the CARES Act funds they qualified for?

IRS denying funds

BA: It is noteworthy that all the prisoners whose family members used the IRS government tools via computer have automatically received both \$1,200 and \$600 stimulus checks. [But] as of today, none of the prisoners who mailed their 1040-EZ tax forms addressed to the IRS in Utah have received the Economic Impact Payments from 2019-2020.

I’m encouraging all prisoners who filed their EIP 1040-EZ tax form by mail to go to the law library and request a “Durable Power of Attorney” form to be notarized and sent to their family members or trusted friend(s). Have them perform the task of refiling their EIP taxes on the prisoner’s behalf via H&R Block’s platform to get a rapid refund and successfully obtain what the IRS owes prisoners.

Another issue: Back when I was in the Restricted Housing Unit [RHU], I made it known they needed to distribute pillows. In response they were ordered, and [supposedly] they were in the warehouse.

WW: Is the RHU still without pillows? Why?

BA: The entire facility is supposed to have pillows. One of the things they’ve purchased for the population is a blue mattress, with a little lump that goes up [for your head], it’s formed that way. They say that is the pillow. But every time they give you the setup to put your sheets on, they give you a pillow case even though you can’t put a pillowcase over it. So why give you the pillowcase? Now the problem is the mattress that Benthier Michael and I and a few others had in RHU were brown flat mattresses which have no lump. As of today, they still need pillows.

COVID and retaliation

WW: Any other ramifications from your time in the RHU?

BA: Because I tested COVID positive on Jan. 7, I was transferred to the RHU in the early morning hours. The following day, Benthier Michael arrived as another positive COVID case from another block. He

was distraught and worried. They placed him in four cell and I was in five cell.

I had him do me a favor, to follow up with a call to Carol Seligman, who is like a mother to me. She was worried about me, and I wanted to let her know my COVID status. The hours they were giving me, for time out of the cell, [started] about seven in the morning, which creates a conflict for me being able to call the West Coast. Because of the three-hour difference it’s 4 a.m. there. I couldn’t make that call.

So I inquired with Mr. Michael to do me a favor, to use my PIN and call her and let her know that I’m not in the hospital, not under a ventilation machine or anything of that nature, and I will call her when I would be given a different time slot.

As a result of that, we ended up being reprimanded because he made a phone call with my particular PIN number. That’s a code for you to have access to people on your list. It would be like putting in a code to do a zoom visit. If I don’t have the code, I can’t do the zoom visit. Same principle. Therefore we both received a misconduct.

WW: So a misconduct is now on your record?

BA: A Class 2. We pleaded guilty to it. Ms. Styka wanted to give us 14 days. I said why don’t you give seven days, no kiosk or a reprimanded warning. We ain’t gonna do it again. She said I’ll give you seven days, no phone.

WW: Is that on your permanent record now? Can they use that against you, like in a parole hearing?

BA: It can come up because it’s part of the file. They don’t use it against you because it’s a Class 2, but they can. So we were incommunicado with our family members during the duration of our time with COVID and in the RHU.

WW: Out of touch at a time you were COVID positive and your family was worried?

BA: Amen! You understand but she didn’t, when she could have given us any other sanction and said, (slapping his hand) “Don’t do that again.” We’re grown men; we’re mature; we pleaded guilty. It was punitive. □

Palestine liberation leader sentenced by Israeli military tribunal

By Mayana Ashley-Carter

Khalida Jarrar is a Palestinian politician, elected representative to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), and a member of the Marxist-Leninist organization Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The Israeli government has been holding her in “administrative detention” since October 2019. Recently, she was sentenced to two years in prison by an Israeli military court, meaning she’ll be in prison during the May 2021 Palestinian general election.

The court claimed the sentence was incurred by Jarrar’s “inciting violence” and being part of a so-called banned organization. But these charges are just a way for the Israeli government to suppress Palestinian self-determination.

The PLC, the unicameral legislature of the Palestinian Authority, has suspended the PFLP’s official activities since 2007. That a group like the PFLP, fighting to represent and liberate Palestinians, was banned shows how insistent the Israeli



Khalida Jarrar

government is that Palestinians’ rights be restricted. Jarrar is an important part of this group. Her arrest and sentencing are not only repressive to her, but are meant to put a damper on any Palestinian resistance to Zionist occupation.

A similar suppression of resistance to violence by a colonial government exists in the city where I live, Philadelphia. In October of 2020, a well-known organizer

and teacher, Anthony Smith, was arrested by the FBI on charges similar to Jarrar’s: the authorities claimed he had incited violence — for which there was no evidence.

The arrests of both Jarrar and Smith were motivated by an urgency to suppress the kind of organizing that threatens violent governments — like those of the United States and Israel.

In October of 2020, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers published several demands for the release of political prisoners in Palestine. These read in part: “Formed in 1946, two years before the creation of the so-called state of Israel, the IADL is a coalition of lawyers who consult with UNESCO with the stated mission of upholding international law and human rights. Released Oct. 25, the resolution identifies Israel as an ‘occupying power’ that does not have the right to defend itself from Palestinians.” (tinyurl.com/y5892gma)

Workers World Party has signed on to a campaign launched by Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Ant Smith speaking during a march for police abolition in Philadelphia, June 28, 2016.

this month, “in a global call to urge the immediate freedom of imprisoned Palestinian students and the protection of Palestinian students’ right to education, right to political expression and involvement and right to determine their own futures. The Israeli occupation has targeted Palestinian students and, specifically, the Palestinian student movement and Palestinian student organizations for harsh repression and political detention and imprisonment.” For more, go to samidoun.net/freepalestinianstudents. □

Sharpeville massacre

A turning point in the anti-apartheid struggle

The following article first appeared on the front page of the April 1, 1960, issue of Workers World. The original headline was “South African revolution has begun! General strike wins first victory! The mass murder of Africans was a boomerang; South African dictatorship faces abyss!” The article was written by V. Grey, aka Vince Copeland, a founding member of Workers World Party.

“Mass murder” was a reference to the infamous Sharpeville massacre of people protesting the pass law system on March 21, 1960, near a police station in the Black township of Sharpeville. The majority of those killed in the massacre were shot in the back while trying to flee the police terror.

The pass laws — implemented by the racist apartheid white regime — denied the Indigenous-majority Black population in South Africa access to any part of their country, except certain impoverished townships. A Black person caught without a pass, unless given permission by a white authority, would be arrested.

The Sharpeville incident was the largest single-day massacre in apartheid South Africa up until the Soweto Youth uprising and massacre on June 16, 1976.

Following the Sharpeville massacre, the African National Congress, mentioned in Copeland’s article, helped form an armed liberation movement, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Finally in 1994 the legal apartheid system was dismantled when ANC leader, Nelson Mandela, was voted president of South Africa in the first democratic election in that country.

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was first declared by the United Nations on March 21, 1979, to commemorate the significance of the Sharpeville Massacre and the forceful response which helped elevate the mass struggle, including the rise of a powerful workers’ movement.

— Monica Moorehead

By Vince Copeland

The world imperialist press has not admitted it yet. But the South Africa Revolution has already begun. The destruction of the oppressive pass law system after 153 years (although announced as a temporary concession) is a monumental victory from which the African people will not retreat. The revolution is surging ahead.

Under the pass system, hundreds and even thousands of Africans were rounded up at a time to do hard labor on Europeans’ plantations for any “irregularity” with their passes. (The Europeans have private prisons on their land where they obligingly keep the pass violators, while they exploit them unmercifully without pay.)

The great demonstration of March 21 wherein 72 Africans were admitted to have been killed by police has shaken the most hated, dictatorial, Jim Crow government in the world.

The mass slaughter, instead of terrorizing the Africans, was followed by a nationwide general strike which terrorized the reactionary government! The driving force of this struggle has split the South African ruling class wide open — a sure sign of a classical revolution situation.

A strong minority of the ruling class — represented by the United Party — favors an approach to the more moderate element in the African leadership, that is, the leaders of the African National Congress who stood aside from the great demonstration. (It was the Pan-Africanist Congress that called the demonstration and initiated the present struggle — not the “moderates.”)

The ruling National Party has the more vicious and extreme position and is the author of the “apartheid” policy. The United Party is already somewhat defeatist.



South African women protest pass laws Aug. 9, 1956.

It is already willing to surrender some real gains to the Africans because it fears that the African masses may otherwise take everything. But it hopes to use the moderates, the right wing of the revolution, in a way that will paralyze the effectiveness of the left wing and put the revolution back into safe channels.

The exact lineup of forces in the camp of the African leadership is not too clear yet. But it is obvious that there are two currents. One favors immediate and unconditional independence. The other favors compromises and “emancipation by stages.”

The second current is already weakening. The call for freedom will no longer be denied. The South African people are determined to win their country back.

The reactionary Nationalist Party has temporarily agreed with the “liberal” United Party and given in to the slavish pass system. But from this time onward, the crumbs of compromise will be as great a goad to the masses as the whip of counterrevolution. The South African revolution is on! □

Apache Stronghold forces U.S. government retreat

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 5, 2021

<http://apache-stronghold.com/press-releases.html>

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APACHE STRONGHOLD MAKES U.S. GOVERNMENT RETREAT CAUSING 9th CIRCUIT DENIAL OF EMERGENCY INJUNCTION

CASE STILL PROCEEDS ON EXPEDITED BASIS

OAK FLAT, ARIZ. — This afternoon [March 5] the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals denied Apache Stronghold’s appeal of U.S. District Court Judge Steven Logan’s Feb. 12, 2021, ruling. The Appellate Court refused to grant Apache Stronghold’s request on a 2-1 vote because of the Forest Service’s last-minute March 1, 2021, withdrawal of the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Prior to this withdrawal, the giveaway of Oak Flat would have happened by March 11, 2021. The Appellate Court fell for this Forest Service ploy although Appellate Judge Bumatay observed, “The Supreme Court recently suggested we do not acquiesce to such tactics.”

Nonetheless, the Appellate Court ruled that because, “[t]he Government has also stated, under penalty of perjury, that USFS ‘will provide 30-days advance notice’ to Apache Stronghold prior to the publication of a new FEIS. These representations mean that Apache Stronghold has not shown that it ‘needs relief within 21 days to avoid irreparable harm’ pursuant to its request for an emergency stay.”

But they added, “[a]n examination of the merits of Apache Stronghold’s request for a preliminary injunction — denied by the district court and currently pending on appeal — is therefore premature. We express no view on the merits. The previously established briefing schedule remains in effect.”

“The Apache Stronghold makes the United States retreat on the giveaway of our sacred Chi’chil



Wendsler Nosie Sr., leader of Apache Stronghold, addresses supporters of Oak Flat, who participated in a protest run near Superior, Ariz., Feb. 27.

Bildagoteel. This ruling was not unexpected,” said former Chairman of the San Carlos Apache Tribe and Apache Stronghold leader Dr. Wendsler Nosie, Sr. “We are greatly encouraged by the fact that the Appellate Court is moving ahead to listen to our concerns on an accelerated timetable ending by May 6. It’s been nothing but a nightmare from day one.”

“While the denial of emergency relief is disappointing, there are strong indications Apache Stronghold will ultimately win this case,” said Becket Law attorney Luke Goodrich, who represents Apache Stronghold in the appeal.

Appellate Judge Bumatay wrote in the Order: “For a great many people, religious and spiritual tradition is among their most precious inheritances. The Western Apaches are no different. For hundreds of years, they have worshipped at a location in Arizona’s Tonto National Forest believed to be the most sacred of grounds — Oak Flat. ... It is no overestimation to say that Oak Flat is the spiritual lifeblood of the Western Apache peoples, connecting them to the Creator since before the founding of the Nation. ... Congress has commanded in no uncertain terms that the government may not substantially burden religious exercise but for a compelling reason and with the narrowest of means. See 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb-1(a). ... This is an obvious substantial burden on their religious exercise, and one

that the Government has not attempted to justify. And the Government’s eleventh-hour promises of delay and consultation with the Western Apaches are not enough to allay the threat of irreparable harm. The law affords the Western Apaches more than promises. ... Apache Stronghold has established a strong likelihood of success on the merits.”

And further, Judge Bumatay said, “Judge Gorsuch wrote, a substantial burden exists when the government ‘prevents the plaintiff from participating in an activity motivated by a sincerely held religious belief.’ ... With that in mind, this is not a difficult case. ... Resolution Copper’s mining activities won’t just temporarily exclude the Western Apaches from Oak Flat, or merely interrupt the worship conducted there. Instead, Resolution Copper will turn Oak Flat into a crater approximately 2 miles across and 1,100 feet deep. ... The Western Apaches’ exercise of religion at Oak Flat will not be burdened — it will be obliterated. Simply, the conveyance of the land will render the core religious practices of the Western Apaches impossible and their primary method of experiencing the divine nonexistent. ... Our Constitution and laws have made the protection of religious liberty fundamental. Apache Stronghold has clearly established that the religious exercise of the Western Apaches will be substantially burdened by the Government’s actions here.”

“The U.S. Government’s last-minute pickup of its dirty dealing at Oak Flat just temporarily paused the emergency before the 9th Circuit Court,” said Apache Stronghold attorney Michael Nixon. “While the Government reshuffles, we look ahead to a straighter deal in court, both for the Apaches’ religious freedom and for their 1852 Treaty rights to the land at Oak Flat.”

Please note that the Apache Stronghold’s Lis Pendens, or lien, on the Pinal County Oak Flat property title in the Pinal County Courthouse in Florence is still in effect.

For more information see: apache-stronghold.com/about-us.html, as well as Instagram: @protectoakflat and Twitter: @ProtectOakFlat, @BECKETlaw. □

\$1.9 trillion stimulus bill—relief or ripoff?

These slightly edited remarks were made during Workers World Party's March 11 webinar, "Stimulus Bill — Relief or Ripoff?" moderated by Ted Kelly, WWP-Philadelphia.

Ted Kelly: The U.S. Congress passed a bipartisan stimulus bill on March 6. Tonight's roundtable with young revolutionary workers from Workers World Party will discuss what that means for poor, working and oppressed people.

Biden's campaign promise for the \$15 an hour minimum wage was taken out. Extended unemployment benefits in the bill fell from \$400 to \$300. Two-thirds of U.S. workers report living paycheck-to-paycheck since COVID-19 hit. Nearly half were in that predicament already, due to low wages combined with exorbitant costs of housing and other necessities.

But U.S. billionaire wealth increased by \$1.3 trillion after the pandemic began. Millions of people lost their jobs, but the superrich increased their wealth by over 40%. Let's turn to our panelists. What do you think about the stimulus bill?

Megan Murray, WWP—Philadelphia: The stimulus bill does not constitute a break from neoliberal logic. What neoliberal has meant is government intervention in a submerged or backhanded way



Ted Kelly (left) and Megan Murray.

WW PHOTO

for the market.

For instance, the Affordable Care Act requires an expenditure of government funding, but not in a direct way like food stamps. With the ACA, people are dying because they can't afford insulin; people are in hundreds of thousands of dollars of medical debt. The ACA has helped some workers gain access to health care, but by tinkering with the market rate. It hasn't changed the fact that our health care and our well-being is commodified. So insurance companies, health care businesses, pharmaceutical companies have continually increased their profits.

Neoliberal governments intervene to allow the market to sustain itself when certain companies become unprofitable or temporarily unprofitable, but also to ensure that people are getting the bare minimum in order to survive and keep working — without that costing any company its profits.

We can see the stimulus bill has that same kind of model.

Ezra Echo, WWP—Buffalo: Wages at \$15 an hour — Congress could have done that to improve the standard of life for so many workers. Because they didn't, we still see subminimum wages for service industry workers like myself. We still see disabled workers paid sub-minimum wages.

That could have been rectified in this bill, but they chose not to do that. We have a Democratically controlled White House; we have a Democratically controlled Senate and House. So what exactly is stopping them?

This is proof that capitalist "democracy" will always find a way to push back what we really need. Now I think instead of \$15, we should demand \$25 be the minimum wage — just to scare them!

Devin Cole, WWP—Central Gulf Coast: Simply put, it's not enough — \$1,400 in a lot of big cities is not enough to even cover a month's rent!

Some people have been out of work for a year. I lost my job as a result of COVID. It's not enough to give people money for one, two, even three months of rent — and

that's all they can spend it on. When millions of people are unemployed right now, there's no kind of safety net.

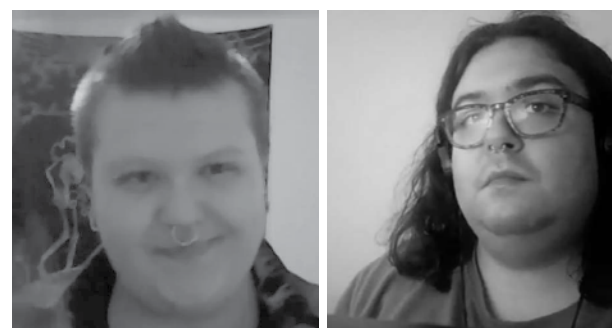
I'm in northwest Florida; down here we have Gulf Power, and they're overcharging people for electricity. I know people whose power bills are more than \$1,400 right now, and they have no way to pay that off because they've been unemployed for six or seven or eight months.

There are water shutoffs. Evictions have resumed again. There is no safety net.

This is as if someone was drowning, and you threw an inner tube out to them, and it had a hole in it, and it was rapidly losing air pressure. That's going to help them for about 30 seconds, and then they're going to be back in trouble again.

The right wing hates the stimulus because the right wing will hate, if even so much as a dollar is taken from their profits.

Revolutionary socialists hate this bill because it doesn't go far enough! □



Ezra Echo (left) and Devin Cole.

WW PHOTO

Bust the filibuster, pass the PRO-union Act!

Continued from page 1

These fines amount to pocket change for huge corporations like Amazon. But they might deter union busting at a small upstart auto parts company, or at a private liberal arts college like Kenyon College where student workers are currently on strike.

There is also an important provision that applies the law's protections regardless of a worker's immigration status.

With the passage of PRO, Taft-Hartley would be undermined, including its blessing of the so-called "right-to-work" laws that spread like wildfire throughout the Jim Crow South. These state laws weaken unions by making it illegal to have a closed shop, where every worker under union contract must be a union member. They prohibit "fair share" fees charged to nonmembers, who the union is still legally required to represent and who benefit from what the union negotiates.

PRO restores the right to charge fair share fees in states unions call "right-to-work-for-less," which now number 28. Many nonunion workers will join the union once they have to pay for representation. But an open shop is still permissible.

"Secondary" strikes and boycotts are again legal under PRO. For over six decades, Taft-Hartley has hamstrung unions by banning these tactics — such as boycotting a store that sells strikebreaker-produced merchandise, or a strike by workers in a plant to keep out parts made at a strikebound factory.

However, Taft-Hartley language and state laws used to block mass picketing, and allow court injunctions limiting the number of picketers during a strike, are left intact. That makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to stop someone from crossing a picket line — moral appeals are often inadequate! Nor does PRO return

to workers the right to engage in sit-down strikes, even when the boss deliberately engages in illegal union busting.

Racism and U.S. labor law

One of the most important deficiencies of the Wagner Act was who it excluded: agricultural workers, domestic workers, public sector workers and others, many of whom are workers of color. This historic and racist denial of rights to oppressed workers remains undressed in the PRO Act — which also leaves many gig workers unprotected.

Nevertheless, the PRO Act could stimulate a resurgence in militant, anti-racist unionism, especially where it is most needed: in the South, where union density is the lowest and where white supremacy is used to keep Black workers down and the whole working class divided. This is where, historically, "right-to-work" was

used as a club against unions that fought racist segregation on and off the job; the laws' early proponents made open appeals to backward racist attitudes.

"Unions benefit all workers, but especially women and workers of color," said Rep. Nikema Williams, a Georgia Democrat who cosponsored the PRO Act. (Portside, March 11)

Now Black workers in Bessemer, Ala., are showing the way forward with their drive for union recognition. Their fight has inspired workers all over the world, with demonstrations and other expressions of solidarity springing up across the country and outside the U.S. With or without Congressional action, a win in Bessemer would be a huge boost to class struggles everywhere.

Class solidarity vs. the filibuster

It's certainly possible for Senate Democrats to introduce motions to do away with the antidemocratic filibuster that now stands in the way of the fundamental human right to have a union. But what will it take to force the senators' hands?

There is a lesson from the 1930s. Then a big section of the ruling class wanted to overturn the Wagner Act. The case of National Labor Relations Board v. Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation made it all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. This court was so conservative that President Franklin D. Roosevelt was considering increasing the number of justices to create a more liberal majority.

But the year was 1937, the year when the Detroit News moaned that sit-down strikes were "replacing baseball as the national pastime." There were over 500 workplace occupations. Cooler heads within the ruling class knew they had to make some concessions to buy class peace. The Supreme Court upheld the Wagner Act.

It is only by escalating the class struggle that working-class and oppressed people can break the capitalist filibuster and force the Senate to pass the PRO act.

Whatever Congress does, the workers, who want and need unions, will ultimately be the force that protects the right to organize. □



Int'l Working Women's Day statement

Continued from page 5

trans women. During a global pandemic, we must continue to condemn the epidemic of violence against trans people in Puerto Rico, in the United States and across the globe.

Let us take time to remember trans lives taken this last year in Puerto Rico and to name and bring forward trans women taken:

Michelle Ramos Vargas, 33-year-old trans woman who worked as a bartender and was studying nursing;

Alexa Negrón Luciano, 29-year-old trans woman who was experiencing homelessness at the time of her death;

Serena Angelique Velázquez, a 32-year-old trans woman, and Layla Pelaez, 21-year-old trans woman, who were

visiting Puerto Rico from Queens and the Bronx; [and]

Penélope Díaz Ramírez, who was killed at the Bayamón correctional complex.

Presente.

Trans women are at a much higher risk of experiencing violence due to homelessness, incarceration, housing and workplace discrimination, misogyny, misogynoir and other examples of racial and gendered violence.

As we remember our trans sisters and siblings in their passing, it is so important to remember their lives as well. Though I have not had the privilege or opportunity to know these individuals, I send out so much love to the families and friends of those lost. To remember and cherish the lives, the dreams, the hopes and desires, let us take time to remember

this. Let us not just remember our trans siblings in their passing, but also for the lives that they lived and for the lives trans people are currently living.

Let us give roses to trans people today and every day, to love and value and respect trans people in the lives they are living today. There is no woman's history without trans women.

For this International Working Women's Day, let us remember our commitment to working women, femmes and nonbinary folks. We must continue to fight alongside them, to dismantle capitalism, racism, imperialism, LGBTQ-phobia and other oppressive forces. Let us recognize that a world without these oppressive forces is both possible and necessary. Let us continue to fight for that world, now, and always. □

Defend voting rights!

The former Republican president may be absent from the corporate media these days, but his racist and pro-rich ideas live on in all reactionary political institutions and organizations. This ideology flourishes in the Republican Party’s current assault on the universal right to vote.

We are well aware of the limitations of elections in capitalist society. In the United States, election winners, even locally, are nearly always from the two major capitalist parties. Big money dominates. The billionaire-owned corporate media enforce pro-capitalist ideology and trash anyone promising even mild social reforms.

The U.S. Constitution itself imposes inequality by disproportionately empowering states with small populations. It traps the presidential contest in the Electoral College. It fills Senate seats with the rich and reactionary.

Despite these already existing biases, this 2021 Republican-led assault on the right to vote aims to take inequality to a new level. Or better said, to a time before the 1965 Voting Rights Act, when not only all the states in the former Confederacy but many others prevented African

Americans from voting. To revert to that period, Republicans have introduced 250 measures in 43 states that target Black people and all people of color by placing a minefield between them and the voting booth.

These rights, won in struggle from the post-Civil War era to the Civil Rights Movement, must never be surrendered.

We must combat this offensive to deny voting rights by fighting to expand the right to vote. This includes rights for incarcerated workers and released workers with felony records, who are disproportionately Black and have been denied their right to vote for years — sometimes for their entire lives. Migrant workers denied citizenship are also barred from voting.

The Republican pretext for these anti-voting maneuvers is the Big Lie that electoral fraud cost the last president his reelection. The truth is that Trump was so despised that it was possible to mobilize a greater number of voters to vote against him, even if they mistrusted his opponent. Trump was loathed — with good reason — especially in big cities, especially by Black voters and other voters of color, especially by young people, and in general by people

disgusted with his open racism, xenophobia, misogyny and bigotry.

The mobilization of anti-Trump voters flipped states he and the rest of the Republican leadership thought he would win, like Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Arizona and Georgia, where Republicans narrowly lost both Senate seats in run-off votes.

The Republican leadership, even those who saw no electoral fraud and fought Trump’s Big Lie — like the Georgia Republicans — concluded that their party could only win elections by suppressing votes of Black and Brown people.

Michael A. Carvin, the lawyer representing the Republican Party of Arizona in its attempt to curtail voting in that state, admitted that voting rights for all “puts us at a competitive disadvantage relative to Democrats. ... It’s the difference between winning an election 50-49 and losing.” (New York Times, March 3)

Those 250 bills contain various measures to disenfranchise oppressed communities. They limit early voting, restrict voting on Sundays because Black churches often organize the congregation to go vote together, restrict the number of voting centers to make it inconvenient in cities with

large Black communities, impose a modern version of the “literacy test” that rejected Black voters in the pre-1965 South, forbid voting centers on college campuses, etc.

It is uncertain what energy the Democratic Party leadership, including Joe Biden, will invest to prevent this Republican assault. Democrats have introduced a new voting rights bill in Congress, but Republicans promise to block it in the Senate with a filibuster. In the past, the Democrats who control the party have avoided waging an all-out struggle to extend voting rights to the most oppressed — because that would strengthen the left wing of their own party.

Unlike the Democratic Party, working-class and revolutionary organizations have a duty to defend the rights of the most oppressed and exploited sectors of the population, whether it’s the right to organize unions, to form tenant organizations, to support movements to defend civil rights, or to mobilize the vote. This duty amounts to significant anti-racist solidarity to help strengthen class unity.

Smash the attack on voting rights!
Extend the right to vote to all!! □

Georgia

The mysterious death of Kendrick Johnson

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

A videotape shows 17-year-old Kendrick Johnson walking down a hallway and entering the gym in the Lowndes County High School in Valdosta, Ga., eight years ago on Jan. 10, 2013. That night his mother, Jacquelyn Johnson, called the emergency number 911 to report that her son had not come home from school.

On Jan. 11, Kendrick’s lifeless body was discovered, head down inside an upright 6-foot-high, rolled-up gym mat. His body was wedged in tightly, and his face was swollen beyond recognition.

The local preliminary investigation and autopsy concluded Kendrick’s death



Kendrick Johnson.

was accidental due to positional asphyxia. His upside-down position caused his lungs to fill with fluid, so he wouldn’t have been able to breathe. The officials theorized that the African American youth had been trying to retrieve his sneakers that somehow had fallen into the mat opening, and that he had squeezed into the narrow space and couldn’t get out.

Jacquelyn Johnson and Kenneth Johnson, Kendrick’s father, rejected that conclusion. They knew their son had been repeatedly attacked and harassed by known white students and that the school had not taken action despite the Johnsons’ complaints.

Many members of Valdosta’s Black community shared the Johnsons’ doubts about the local investigation and joined

in multiple demonstrations and rallies, demanding “Justice for KJ.” The movement spread across the state and beyond.

The Johnsons suspected their son had been murdered. Their suspicions gained traction when a second autopsy paid for by the family found indications of “a non-accidental blunt force trauma on his neck near his carotid artery.” The autopsy made another shocking discovery — Kendrick’s body had been stuffed with newspapers. All the internal organs from his pelvis to his skull were missing.

CNN reported on Oct. 10, 2013, that the funeral director said the internal organs had been “discarded by the prosecutor before the body was sent back to Valdosta.”

But the Johnsons persisted in demanding answers. Two years later, the Department of Justice launched a federal investigation to determine if Kendrick’s civil rights had

been violated. However, in June 2016 the DOJ stated that their investigation did not have sufficient evidence “beyond a reasonable doubt” to charge anyone with a federal crime. But it must be noted that murder and manslaughter are not federal crimes.

The DOJ collected 17 boxes of documents, videotapes, crime scene photos and more evidence, which have been released to Lowndes County Sheriff Ashley Paulk, who announced on March 10 that he was reopening the case. Paulk had not been involved in the original investigation and has publicly said the community has questions about Kendrick’s death that deserve to be answered.

The Johnson family is hopeful that after eight long years they might find out the truth about how their son, Kendrick Johnson, died.

Justice for Kendrick Johnson! □

Trial of cop who murdered George Floyd

Day one protest demands conviction

By Linden Gawboy
Minneapolis

Reprinted from FightBack! News.

More than 1,000 protested March 8 outside the Hennepin County Government Center in downtown Minneapolis, as the trial of Derek Chauvin, the disgraced ex-police officer who murdered George Floyd on May 25, 2020, started at 8:00 a.m.

The Twin Cities Coalition 4 Justice 4 Jamar (TCC4J) spearheaded the day one demonstration, which was supported by over 30 local activist organizations.

The early morning protest started on the city streets outside of the Government Center plaza, because the “public plaza” was surrounded and intersected with heavy fencing and razor wire, leaving a tiny cage for the general public.

At 5:00 a.m., it was still unclear if the scheduled jury selection and trial would go forward, due to a Friday appeals court ruling to allow a third degree murder charge in the case. The coalition statement on this legal issue declared, “The monster Derek Chauvin inflicted nine slow minutes of intentional torture, causing death. The world watched a lynching — murder in every degree.”

After the opening rally, the crowd marched through the streets, stopping to hear speeches along the way.

Longtime activists gave shout-outs to the many students who skipped school to attend. New activists gave props to folks who were fighting back in the 1960s.

At the trial, Judge Peter Cahill ordered that jury selection would go on, but there were so many motions that jury selection is paused. The organizers’ statement noted: “We will protest on key dates of the trial — including opening arguments, closing arguments and, of course, on verdict day.” They also said they will fight for convictions against the other three former officers, who “held down Mr. Floyd as he died and stopped others from rescuing him.”

Many of the groups organizing the March 8 rally are also involved in efforts to stop the systems that gave rise to killer cops like Derek Chauvin. In Minneapolis, TCC4J plans to release a charter amendment for community control of the Minneapolis police. At the state capitol, activists are outraged at how state legislators of both parties are “putting their knee on the neck” of bills to stop our family members from being murdered with impunity.

Key demands of the coalition included: “Justice for George Floyd! Convict Derek Chauvin — give him the longest possible sentence. Justice for all stolen lives! Community control of the police — CPAC now! Drop the charges against the MN646+ and all protesters. Convict all killer cops!”

TCC4J and all the following groups plan protests at



Large protest March 8 demands justice for George Floyd, conviction of killer cop. PHOTO: DESTINY FRANKS

key points in the upcoming trial. Black Lives Matter MN, Black Lives Matter Twin Cities, CAIR-MN, Communities United Against Police Brutality, Families Supporting Families Against Police Violence, NAACP-Minneapolis, Native Lives Matter and the Racial Justice Network. Others include the Anti-War Committee, Bikers Riding Against Police Brutality, Climate Justice Committee, Freedom Road Socialist Organization-Twin Cities, Good Trouble for Justice, MN Immigrant Rights Action Committee, MN Uprising Arrestee Support, MN Workers United, MN Youth for Justice, National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, On Site Public Media, Student Movement Activists at South High (SMASH), Students for Democratic Society at UMN, Women Against Military Madness (WAMM). □

Greek unions say ‘No!’ to police violence

By G. Dunkel

Behind the union banner of the Federation of Construction Workers of Greece bearing the slogan “Money for health and education! No to repression and intimidation!” 5,000 people — by police count — marched in Nea Smyrni on Tuesday, March 9. Nea Smyrni is a small suburb south of Athens.

Other banners read: “Cops out of our neighborhoods!” and “Parks are for laughing, not for hearing the words ‘I’m in pain.’”

A vicious March 7 beating that police inflicted on a young man who protested cops harassing families at Nea Smyrni’s town plaza went viral on social media. There were recordings of cops threatening to kill protesters, and a number of those altercations, some very intense, were posted on Twitter.

A major slogan in the March 9 protest was: “Intimidation will not work; the workers’ struggle will break it.”

Over the past months there have been many marches and protests in Greece, mainly by youth and students against police violence and repression. Prime



The banner of the Federation of Construction Workers (member of the All Workers Militant Front -- PAME) at an anti-police violence march in Greece, March 9.

Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis called for calm on “both sides” Tuesday, but then, as social media posts showed cops acting with open viciousness, apologized to protesters in Parliament Friday and announced that all cops would be given body cameras. (tinyurl.com/3stej285)

Both the Greek Communist Party and SYRIZA, a center-left party that previously

led the government, have members in Parliament. They are making reining in police violence a major political issue.

Greek economy

As part of a COVID-19 control program, the government requires anyone who wants to leave home during lockdown to get permission from police through a

text message. This procedure hasn’t prevented COVID from currently spiking in Greece. (tinyurl.com/48kwc8c8)

The pandemic has completely disrupted Greece’s tourism, a major component of its economy. Greece has to control the pandemic inside the country to have any chance of recovering this sector.

But controlling COVID in Greece is not sufficient to boost the Greek economy. Since the 2008-09 worldwide financial crisis, Greece has been in a serious depression, the longest lasting of any developed economy. Under heavy pressure from the International Monetary Fund, big German and French banks and the European Central Bank, Greek governments of various political shades have imposed a series of harsh austerity measures on Greek workers, farmers and fishers.

Workers have fought back with a number of one-day strikes and occasionally with longer general strikes, which blunted some of the harshest austerity measures. The All Workers Militant Front (PAME), the union confederation that had a major role in the Nea Smyrni march, has been one of the workers’ organizations leading in the struggle against austerity. □

How Milošević trial exposed U.S.-NATO aggression

By John Catalinotto

Few people in the United States, even those in the movement that opposes U.S. imperialist aggression, remember that March 11 is the 15th anniversary of the death of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević. He had been unjustly incarcerated in Scheveningen Prison in The Hague, Netherlands.

For movement activists, a review of the attempt to demonize Milošević should illuminate yet another effort by the oppressor class to weaken and divide resistance against its rule. The imperialists have applied similar demonization campaigns against Libya’s Moammar Gaddafi, Cuba’s Fidel Castro, Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe and others. And they continue today against Venezuela’s Nicolás Maduro, Syria’s Bashar al-Assad and other leaders of whichever country they aim to crush.

A contemporary development proves how important is this struggle for truth: In Serbia, those forces that collaborate with imperialism are still trying to demonize the Yugoslav leader.

At the time of his death in 2006, Milošević was winning his defense against charges that the combined U.S.-NATO powers brought against him under cover of a United Nations-sponsored court – the International Criminal Tribunal on the Former Yugoslavia.

The NATO powers used the U.N. to set up the ICTY as a political instrument to punish anyone in the Balkans who resisted an imperialist takeover of the region. It brought charges against Milošević in the midst of the U.S./NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in May of 1999, obviously to bring additional pressure on the Yugoslav leadership to submit.

NATO waged 10-year war on Yugoslavia

From 1990 to 1999, the NATO powers — with German and U.S. imperialism in the lead — took every step to weaken and destroy Yugoslavia.

From the start, the West German government in Berlin, which had just annexed the socialist German Democratic Republic, aided reactionary separatist forces in each republic of the multinational socialist federation of Yugoslavia. This gave rise to wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, along with separating Slovenia and Macedonia from the rest of Yugoslavia.

Since Germany had the closest contacts with the Croatian and Bosnian reactionaries and the largest economic interests in the region, this initiative put German imperialism in the lead of seizing influence in the Balkans.

Washington, wanting to regain hegemony over Berlin and the other NATO powers, then pushed the conflict toward open war, where the Pentagon’s preeminent place in destructive power would predominate. As a pretext, the U.S. used a battle provoked by the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army in the town of Račak in the Kosovo province of Serbia on Jan. 15, 1999. Claiming it

was a massacre, the Bill Clinton administration played up the need for “humanitarian intervention.”

The U.S. and NATO powers thereby succeeded, with guns and money, in breaking up the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into a half-dozen weak ministates, thus overthrowing the last independent government in Eastern Europe. They succeeded even in confusing many progressives in the West — the imperialist countries — with a well-planned and executed offensive of lies that blamed every problem in the Balkans on Serbia and on Milošević himself.

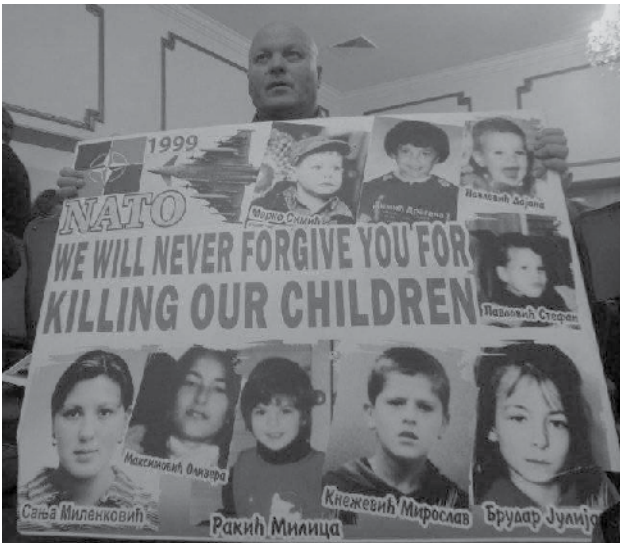
Their propaganda offensive obscured the interference, subversion and “divide and conquer” tactics practiced by German and U.S. imperialism, in connivance with neo-fascist groupings in the republics of Croatia and Bosnia and in Serbia’s Kosovo province.

The prosecution fails

The ICTY failed miserably when it tried to prove to the world that Slobodan Milošević was guilty of any of the crimes committed against the people of the Balkans in the 1990s.

Milošević put forward thousands of pages of text to answer the 500,000 pages of so-called evidence against him. Failing to prove their case, the ICTY’s attempt would have ended in defeat and disgrace for the imperialists had Milošević not died.

The International Committee to Defend Slobodan Milošević was established in Belgrade and Berlin on March 25, 2001. In honor of the 80th anniversary of his birth, the committee intends to resist the continuing attempt to demonize the late Yugoslav leader. Co-chairpersons Klaus Hartmann and Vladimir Kršljanin invite “each of its members to take the initiative, and at least



Conference in Belgrade, March 2019, exposes NATO’s bombing of Yugoslav children.

send us their text, commentary, memoir and/or video on Milošević’s activities or the relevance and historical meaning of his and our struggle.” Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, now 93, had been an active co-chairperson when the defense committee was formed.

See milosevic.co for more information. □

Catalinotto, a managing editor of Workers World newspaper, co-edited the 2001 book “Hidden Agenda: U.S./NATO Takeover of Yugoslavia” with Sara Flounders of the International Action Center. The first chapter, written by Milošević, summarizes the defense of his country.

¡Los trabajadores no son robots!

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introducción de la línea de montaje móvil.

Ahora, los trabajadores de Bessemer, algunos de ellos hijos y nietos de trabajadores mineros y siderúrgicos sindicalizados, están en una lucha contra la explotación de su trabajo, luchando contra los mismos principios de “acelerar y morir para obtener ganancias” del siglo XIX. Cuando los trabajadores de Amazon recogen, empaquetan y almacenan pedidos en segundos y se toman un tiempo libre mínimo para un descanso, le da al gigante tecnológico una ventaja sobre los competidores en línea, generando miles de millones de ganancias.

Amazon se jacta de pagar a los trabajadores 15 dólares la hora, pero durante la pandemia, la riqueza de su propietario, Jeff Bezos, aumentó en \$72.000 millones de dólares. Las ganancias para ese megacapitalista

provinieron directamente del sudor y la sangre de cada trabajador de Amazon. (tinyurl.com/kpset8w)

La ganancia es lo que una empresa se embolsa después de restar los costos de mano de obra y los gastos generales de los ingresos por ventas. En términos marxistas, la ganancia es el valor que los trabajadores producen, pero no se les paga con salarios: nuestro trabajo no remunerado. Cuanto más bajos son los salarios de los trabajadores, más beneficios se quedan los capitalistas. La injusticia es obvia. Los trabajadores de Bessemer se levantan para recuperar su salud, fruto de su trabajo y su dignidad. ¡Únete a ellos!

El 20 de marzo es un Día Mundial de Solidaridad con la Unión BAmazon. Para más información visite www.supportamazonworkers.org.



FOTO: CUBA DEBATE

A la izquierda, Vilma Espín, revolucionaria, Heroína de la República de Cuba y presidenta fundadora de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas.

¡Los trabajadores no son robots!

Racismo, aceleración de la alta tecnología y la campaña sindical de la Amazonía

Por Minnie Bruce Pratt

Una campaña de organización histórica está en marcha en Bessemer, Alabama, en el almacén de Amazon BHM1. Casi 6.000 trabajadores, en su mayoría negros, casi la mitad mujeres, están decidiendo si unirse al Sindicato de Minoristas, Mayoristas y Grandes Tiendas (RWDSU siglas en ingles). La votación continúa hasta el 29 de marzo. Si los trabajadores tienen éxito, formarán el primer sindicato dentro de Amazon en los Estados Unidos, una gran victoria contra el gigante capitalista internacional.

Según BAmazonUnion.org, los trabajadores luchan por “dignidad y el respeto” junto con condiciones laborales más seguras. La suya es una lucha tanto por los derechos civiles como laboral. Son parte de la orgullosa historia de la comunidad negra del área de Bessemer-Birmingham, desde el sindicalismo interracial e independiente del Sindicato Internacional de Trabajadores Mineros, Molinos y Fundidores en las décadas de 1930 y 1940 hasta la Marcha de los Niños de 1963 contra la segregación racista.

El sistema de Amazon está arraigado en el racismo, como lo reveló Vox/Recode el 26 de febrero. La revisión de datos internos y entrevistas con trabajadores y gerentes de diversidad mostró que lxs empleadxs afroamericanxs de Amazon están sub-representados en los equipos de decisión, ascendieron con menos frecuencia y fueron evaluados con mayor dureza que sus pares no negros. (tinyurl.com/kjuvs9k6)

Con la historia de esclavización de los negros en



FOTO: BILL MOORE

Manifestación del Movimiento 12 de diciembre en Harlem's Whole Foods el 28 de febrero.

Alabama y la segregación legal como un recuerdo vivo, está garantizado que la discriminación racista está presente dentro del almacén BHM1 de Amazon. El almacén abrió en marzo de 2020; en mayo, los trabajadores estaban tan indignados por el trato que recibieron que buscaron a RWDSU, comenzando la lucha por la representación sindical.

Cuotas implacables que mutilan a los empleados

Como en todos los “centros logísticos” de Amazon, las condiciones de trabajo de BHM1 son brutales, con aceleraciones, programación arbitraria, tiempos de descanso inadecuados, prácticamente sin adaptaciones

por embarazo, discapacidad o lesión, y más. El Consejo Nacional para la Seguridad y Salud Ocupacional ha incluido a Amazon en su lista de empleadores de la “Docena Sucia” dos veces. La revista Atlantic incluso tituló: “Cuotas implacables en Amazon están mutilando a los empleados”. (tinyurl.com/4zneyh8c)

Amazon afirma que una mayor robotización y vigilancia del movimiento y la ubicación de los trabajadores crea un “lugar de trabajo más seguro”. Desde 2012, cuando el gigante minorista compró Kiva Systems, una empresa de robótica, Amazon ha agregado más automatización a algunos almacenes nuevos y existentes, incluido BHM1. (tinyurl.com/arjnnxnd)

Pero los registros internos muestran el engaño de Amazon sobre el aumento de las tasas de lesiones. De hecho, la automatización ha hecho que los trabajos sean más estresantes y peligrosos. Reveal, una publicación del Center for Investigative Reporting, encontró que los datos internos de Amazon mostraban que las tasas de lesiones de los trabajadores desde 2016 a menudo eran peores en los almacenes robóticos de Amazon. (Reveal, 29 de septiembre de 2020)

Amazon sigue una tradición que se remonta a la “reorganización” de los puestos de trabajo en Bethlehem Steel en Pensilvania, introducida en 1898. Fue entonces cuando Frederick Taylor utilizó un cronómetro, estudios de tiempo y sus “Principios de gestión científica” para “mejorar la eficiencia” y aumentar control sobre los trabajadores. Henry Ford mejoró el taylorismo con la

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¡Que se abran las fronteras!

No tenía por qué suceder. Pero, trágicamente, así pasó. Y lo más probable es que no sea la última vez. El 2 de marzo, 12 personas murieron instantáneamente cuando la camioneta en la que viajaban fue golpeada de costado por un camión con remolque en una carretera de California. El accidente ocurrió en las afueras de Holtville, a unas 40 millas al oeste de la frontera de Arizona y a 12 millas de la frontera con México.

Trece personas murieron, uno de los viajeros sucumbió más tarde a causa de las heridas. La mayoría de los muertos eran de México, mientras que otros eran de Guatemala. Las edades de los muertos oscilaron entre los 20 y los 55 años, y los heridos más jóvenes tenían 15 años.

Un SUV normalmente tiene capacidad para un máximo de siete personas, ipero este SUV transportaba a unas asombrosas 25 personas! La pregunta principal no es cómo sucedió esto, sino por qué.

Los informes noticiosos indicaron que no es inusual que a los contrabandistas se les pague decenas de miles de dólares para transportar a los trabajadores, obligados a abandonar sus países de origen debido a las dificultades económicas y la represión política, a través de la frontera. Uno de los muertos era una joven guatemalteca que esperaba ir a la universidad.

Pero este accidente no es un incidente aislado. Acaba de ser noticia importante debido a la impactante pérdida de vidas. Según los informes, los accidentes automovilísticos son comunes en este cruce fronterizo cerca del Valle Imperial. Esta es una rica zona agrícola de California donde miles de migrantes trabajan por

bajos salarios, en pésimas condiciones de trabajo, recogiendo lechugas, verduras de hoja verde y melones.

Muchos, muchos inmigrantes/migrantes continúan intentando cruzar a los EE.UU. En busca de supervivencia. Según el el periodico Texas Tribune

del 14 de octubre, durante el año fiscal de 2020 que finalizó el 30 de septiembre, la notoria Patrulla Fronteriza

de Estados Unidos detuvo a más de 400.000 personas en la frontera suroeste de Estados Unidos y México. Cerca de 58.000 personas latinx adicionales fueron rechazadas en los puntos de entrada.

A lo largo de la frontera de Laredo en Texas, hubo un aumento en el número de menores no acompañados detenidos, de 2.521 en 2019 a 2.641 en 2020, un aumento del 5%. (tinyurl.com/k73myj9c) Miles de migrantes y sus hijos han sido detenidos durante meses en los Estados Unidos en condiciones insalubres e inhumanas. El diario The Washington Post informa que el número de niños migrantes detenidos se ha triplicado en las últimas dos semanas a 3.250. (8 de marzo de 2020)

Entonces, el trágico accidente automovilístico cerca de Holtville no fue un incidente aislado. Como dijo una declaración de 2018 por la organización Fight for Im /migration and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE): “Para luchar por los inmigrantes/migrantes, debemos deshacernos de ICE por completo. Esto significa dismantelar los campos de concentración para inmigrantes y derribar cualquier muro fronterizo racista. Luchar por los refugiados significa comprender que muchos inmigrantes/migrantes están huyendo de las condiciones domésticas

creadas por los EE. UU. Y debemos comprender el carácter global de esta crisis.

“La causa fundamental de la migración en esta época es el imperialismo, la etapa más alta del desarrollo capitalista. Ya sea a través de guerras y golpes militares en el Medio Oriente, golpes de extrema derecha en Honduras en 2009 y Brasil en 2016, o agotando la riqueza de los países para que no puedan responder a desastres naturales como el terremoto en Haití, el imperialismo crea las condiciones por las que inmigrantes/migrantes y los refugiados están huyendo”. (tinyurl.com/5vjetu9x)

Si el muro a lo largo de la frontera entre

Estados Unidos y México o la Patrulla Fronteriza racista que lo protege no existiera, 25 personas no habrían tomado la decisión de meterse en una camioneta y hacer ese peligroso viaje.

No importa quién ocupe la Casa Blanca, la política de inmigración de Estados Unidos no cambiará fundamentalmente mientras el imperialismo estadounidense exista para sobreexplotar a los pueblos del mundo y sus recursos. Este sistema asesino se cobró la vida de quienes murieron en una carretera de California el 2 de marzo y está cobrando la vida de miles más.

¡Que se abran las fronteras! □

Federación mundial del trabajo respalda a sindicato #BAmazon

La Federación Sindical Mundial (FSM) emitió el siguiente comunicado el 3 de marzo.

EE.UU.: FSM en solidaridad con los trabajadores de almacén de Amazon en Alabama La Federación Sindical Mundial, que es la voz militante de 105 millones de trabajadores de 132 países de todo el mundo, extiende su solidaridad internacionalista con los trabajadores de almacén de Amazon en Bessemer, Alabama, que están tratando de organizarse y desarrollar la acción sindical en defensa de sus derechos laborales.

El movimiento sindical militante mundial exige plenas libertades sindicales y democráticas y la libertad de participación en su sindicato para los trabajadores del almacén de Amazon



en Alabama, que es un derecho establecido por convenciones internacionales y ningún empleador o gobierno puede impedir que los trabajadores [ejercen] ese [derecho.] Los miembros y amigos de la FSM de todo el mundo están al lado de los trabajadores de Amazon para el cumplimiento de sus justas demandas.

La Secretaria. □