

Repression and resistance in South America



Strike in Colombia enters second week, May 5, Bogotá.

Colombia State terror won't stop the struggle

By Martha Grevatt

Since April 28, workers in Colombia have been waging a general strike. The strike was provoked by the third of three recent tax “reforms” imposed by the right-wing government of President Iván Duque. The new taxes squeeze workers at both ends, by raising taxes on personal income and charging sales taxes on basic food items.

This creates tremendous hardship for Colombian workers, whose average monthly pay is equal to around \$310 — well below the worldwide average and less than typical monthly rent for a three-room apartment in the capital of Bogotá. (quora.com) While workers will see their taxes go up by as much as 500%, Duque has cut taxes for transnational corporations and plans to spend billions of workers’ tax money on new jet fighters.

While fruit and other necessities are taxed,

Coca-Cola products are tax exempt. Coke is notorious for engaging right-wing death squads to assassinate union leaders in its Colombian bottling plants. (killercoke.org)

The human rights organization Temblores has documented at least 1,173 incidents of police violence aimed at suppressing the general strike between April 28 and May 7. “The organization states that the data results from rigorous work of verification and triangulation of the complaints registered since April 28 by citizens through the different channels of communication established for that purpose,” Telesur reported May 7.

Temblores said: “For nine consecutive days, and despite the violence with which the State has repressed the social protests, citizens have come out en masse to demonstrate and claim their rights in the streets.” (Telesur, May 7)

Police have committed sexual assault,

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Brazilians tell police: ‘Stop killing us!’

By Monica Moorehead

The police invaded the Jacarezinho favela (slum) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, at dawn May 6, armed to the teeth with bulletproof helicopters, armored tanks and machine guns to confront what they claimed were suspected drug traffickers.

When the smoke cleared after what seemed like hours of shooting, 27 young men from ages 18 to 34 had lost their lives. One police officer was among the dead. The community resembled a war zone.

Following the bloody invasion that terrified the entire community, a spontaneous protest of 100 residents took to the streets to demand: “Stop killing us.” This protest, despite small numbers, was heroic due to the rampant pandemic taking a heavy toll in the favelas and the real threat of

reprisal from the police who, in reality, are death squads. The Jacarezinho community is demanding an independent probe of this bloody raid.

While the police tried to demonize the dead as drug traffickers, eyewitness reports stated that when the unarmed suspects tried to negotiate their surrender to the police, they were summarily executed on the spot or taken to family homes and killed in front of loved ones.

In the last couple of decades, at least six major police massacres have occurred in state of Rio communities, most notably the 2007 Complexo do Alemão invasion, which left 19 dead, and the 2003 massacre in Senador Camará, which resulted in the murder of 15 people. The May 6 killings were the most lethal to date.

Even before the fascistic Jair

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Defiant young people in Jacarezinho, Rio de Janeiro.

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Russell Maroon Shoatz
Northwest Detention Camp
George Stinney Jr, executed at 14
DANGER: unvaccinated staff
Being yourself is radical

Hail the workers of the world!

Support Workers World!

May Day. Workers. Resistance. Solidarity.

May 1 is International Workers’ Day, officially commemorated in over 80 countries, but not in the U.S., where it originated in 1886 in Chicago as part of the struggle for the eight-hour workday. Its militant legacy is marked by strong protests by the global working class. It’s a day of solidarity. The class struggle is alive, as shown by worker actions against corporate giants and governments, with many focused on the current pandemic crisis.

Workers World newspaper is partisan. Our coverage lauds struggles by the global working class against capitalist exploiters. Our newspaper sides with the multinational, multigender, multigenerational working class, organized and unorganized, those fighting for a livable wage, benefits and unionization.

WW lauds the courageous workers and organizers who took on Amazon, the corporate behemoth, in Bessemer, Ala. We support all those employed by avaricious profiteers. WW honors and thanks health care and other essential workers who risked their health to keep society running during the pandemic.

Our pages express solidarity with the millions of workers, especially Black, Latinx, Indigenous, immigrants, women and other gender oppressed people, disabled, all who were impacted by the pandemic downturn, and those still jobless, without health care, childcare, sufficient food and housing. Our Tear Down the Walls section shows our heartfelt support of incarcerated workers.

Socialists and communists fought successfully for International Workers’ Day to be an official holiday worldwide to honor workers’ struggles. But the U.S. ruling class tried to erase this workers’ holiday and bury its origins in the militant strikes of the late 1800s. Washington instead established Labor Day, which is devoid of the workers’ struggle history embodied in May Day.

May Day was reignited in the U.S. in 2006. Millions of immigrants, the majority from Latin America, organized a countrywide general strike to protest racist, anti-immigrant legislation, repression and deportations.

On this May Day, WW says it is imperative to call for



May Day, New York City, 2017.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

jobs and government programs to provide life’s necessities to all workers and their families, and to demand an end to all forms of bigotry, inequality and police terror.

WW promotes the message of May Day’s socialist and communist founders: End capitalism! Fight for socialism!

The 44-year-long WW Supporter Program was created so readers could support publication of working-class truth needed for revolutionary change. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a regular letter about timely issues and one, two or three (respectively) free subscriptions for friends for a donation of \$75, \$100, \$300 — or more. Members can receive the book: “What Road to Socialism?” upon request. (Or read it at workers.org/books/.)

WW articles are posted daily at workers.org. During the pandemic, printed copies are being mailed monthly. Issues will be printed and sent out more frequently when the crisis lifts.

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

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

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

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

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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. □

MUNDO OBRERO

WORKERS WORLD

this week

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Evictions, hunger, wage theft

Pandemic triple threat to workers

By G. Dunkel

It's hard to put food on the table when you don't have a home where you can put the table. The poorest workers in the United States — disproportionately people of color — rent their homes. During the current COVID pandemic, millions of them are at risk of losing their housing.

Estimates on the amount of back rent currently owed range from \$8.4 billion owed by 1.4 million households, from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia; to \$24.4 billion owed by 14.2 million households, from the U.S. Census Bureau; to \$52.6 billion owed by 9.4 million households, from Moody's Analytics.

Hard to say which estimate is accurate — but all indicate that millions of people are at risk of losing their housing.

There are a plethora of programs designed to protect tenants from eviction, from the ban to ensure public health placed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — just declared illegal by a district court judge — to a ban on evicting people from federally assisted public housing, as well as various bans by states, counties and cities.

Both the Cares Act that Trump signed in March of 2020 and the recent American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provide funds for communities and states to create rental assistance programs to forestall evictions.

Even with these programs — which have intricate application processes, exemptions and income requirements — evictions still took place. Some evictions were unofficial — landlord thugs removing a tenant by force — and some took place legally when tenants could not vigorously defend their rights.

Hunger — aka 'food insecurity'

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, more than 42 million people in the U.S. may experience food insecurity in 2021. Food insecurity is defined as “a lack of consistent access to enough food for every



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

On May Day, the Laundry Workers Center protests wage theft, New York City.

person in a household to live an active, healthy life.” This may be a temporary situation or last a long time. Food insecurity — one way to measure how many people cannot afford food — is especially prevalent in the U.S. among children and older people. (tinyurl.com/j5kkvd3j)

From 1969 through the early 1970s, the Black Panthers' Free Breakfast for School Children Program fed tens of thousands of hungry kids, enabling them to deal with their education on a full stomach. This program was the impetus to the widespread free breakfast and lunch programs that most U.S. schools offered before the pandemic.

Approximately 1.65 billion fewer school-based breakfasts and lunches were served in the U.S. between March and November 2020 than in the same 2019 time period — a decrease of 30%. There were numerous attempts, some successful, to maintain school-based hunger prevention.

Feeding America, a network of some of the largest U.S. food banks, expects to collectively distribute the equivalent of

6 billion meals in 2021, about the same amount as in 2020 and far above the 4.2 billion meals given out in 2019. This is a positive side of the response to hunger in the U.S.

But the Census Bureau has been conducting surveys about hunger — defined as not having enough to eat sometimes or often during the previous week. Between 19% and 29% of Black households with children have experienced hunger over the course of the pandemic. This compares with 7% to 14% of white U.S. families, and 16% to 25% of Latinx families. (tinyurl.com/vfhktpf4)

Because it provides support as a percent of income, the food assistance portion of the COVID relief bill will give less help to Black and Latinx families, who are further down the economic ladder.

Jobs and wage theft

U.S. workers — especially women — have lost jobs at a historic and catastrophic rate during the pandemic — a loss exacerbated for some workers by the outright theft of

their wages by bosses. A 2016 Economic Policy Report defines wage theft as “the failure to pay workers the full wages to which they are legally entitled ... which can take many forms, including but not limited to minimum wage violations, overtime violations, meal break violations, pay-stub and illegal deductions or misclassification.” (tinyurl.com/apkx8e7r)

The issue of wage theft has been urgently raised by the Laundry Workers Center, a New York/New Jersey community-led grassroots group organizing in small businesses which mainly employ immigrants. On May Day, LWC protesters marched against the owner of Wash Supply, who had refused to pay his workers overtime. The laundry workers had been fired after voting to form an independent union to defend their rights. (Workers World, Feb. 2)

This is just one example of wage theft. The Center for Public Integrity has examined information on minimum wage and overtime violations from the U.S. Department of Labor. In 2019 alone, the agency cited about 8,500 employers for taking about \$287 million in wages away from workers. Big companies such as Halliburton in fossil fuels or Circle-K convenience stores find it easy to stiff their lower-paid workers. These two companies, along with the security giant G4S Wackenhut, have taken more than \$22 million from their employees since 2005. (tinyurl.com/ztwrf4ft)

But the Department of Labor only handles a small fraction of wage-theft cases — not included are cases under state law or where the employees sue, where the employees are afraid to complain or where a union is involved. Some economists estimate that U.S. wage thefts total \$15 billion a year.

Having an extra \$15 billion in their pockets every year would be a big step forward for workers to meet their need to pay for a roof over their head and food to put on the table. □

‘We are workers and we have power’

The following talk was given at the May Day Union Square rally in New York City on May 1.

Hi! My name is Clarissa and I'm with the Workers Assembly Against Racism, WAAR.

I want to thank our comrades in Bessemer, Alabama, who worked tirelessly to begin a union drive at their Amazon warehouse, a victory in itself.



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOURNDERS

Clarissa, WAAR speaker.

Although the vote was a “no,” this does not mean we have lost against [Jeff] Bezos and his empire — willing to spend \$10,000 a DAY to union bust.

It simply means what we already knew: that our capitalist oppressors will stop at nothing to try and snuff out the revolution. The capitalists and gatekeepers of our happiness and security are terrified. What these pigs don't realize, however, is that their fear is like oxygen to our collective fire — it makes our power grow and we become stronger!

I would next like to thank the Congress of Essential Workers who have picked up the torch, reignited it and just last week began a union drive at our very own Staten Island Amazon Warehouse, JFK 8!

Right now only 22 percent of workers in New York City are unionized and organizing the Staten Island warehouse would pave the way for every warehouse in the city to unionize.

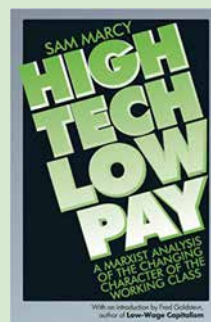
Today is International Workers Day, born of the struggle for the eight-hour workday back in the late 1800s, and revitalized here in NYC in 2006 by migrant workers. You might be wondering, what exactly is a worker? Or “am I a worker?”

If you're asking these questions and you're not a cop or landlord or a politician

like Chuck Schumer, the answer is probably yes! Home health aides working exploitative 24-hour shifts are workers, cab drivers paying off \$800,000 loans for their medallions are workers, adjunct faculty providing labor that keeps universities profitable are workers, Uber and Lyft drivers are workers, sex workers are workers, homeless and unemployed people are workers, incarcerated people subjugated

under the prison-industrial complex are workers!

We are workers and we have power! None of us are expendable, unlike what capitalism and white supremacy want us to think. We all deserve to have a good, safe, healthy life. And each and every one of us carries a spark that can burn this whole racist, sexist, exploitative, capitalist system down! □



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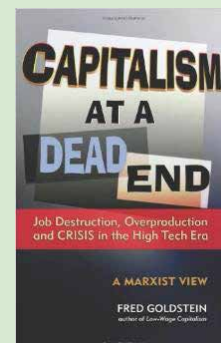
Or read it at workers.org/marcy/cd/samtech/index.htm

Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

By Fred Goldstein

For more information on this book and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to LowWageCapitalism.com



On the picket line

By Marie Kelly

Nurses organize

National Nurses United reported the nurses at Maine Medical Center successfully voted to unionize. The 2,000 nurses will be represented by Maine State Nurses Association (MSNU) and NNU. Maine Medical Center is the largest health care facility in the state.

Meanwhile, St. Vincent nurses in Worcester, Mass., are still on the picket line. The nurses’ strike began March 8 and is presently the longest strike in the country. The top demand of the nurses is safer staffing.

The current staffing ratio at St. Vincent is often 1 nurse to 5 patients or (1-5). The patient load is above the NNU recommended staffing ratio and would be deemed unsafe by current best practice standards. For example, a nurse should only be caring for one critical care patient (1-1), while a nurse can be assigned multiple patients who are less acutely ill.

Representatives from both sides were at the bargaining table on March 5, and the union reports they are examining a proposal from hospital administration that includes a concession on staffing ratios.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) states: “Inadequate nurse staffing

levels by experienced RNs are linked to higher rates of patient falls, infections, medication errors and even death.” (nurse.org, Nov. 1, 2017) It also causes an ethical dilemma and moral distress on the part of the nurse. Nursing shortages result as RNs opt out of direct patient care jobs rather than risk harming a patient.

The Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act would mandate safe nurse-to-patient staffing ratios, but so far only California has passed legislation. The bill was introduced in the New York State Legislature and is moving through various committees before it can be brought to the full body for a vote.

Students strike

New York University graduate students are on strike. United Automobile Workers Local 2110 represents more than 1,000 grad student workers at NYU. Their main demand is a wage increase but, in response to police violence against Black and Brown people, the students are calling on the university to limit police presence on campus. (tinyurl.com/yh6oml7b)

Graduate students won their first higher education union contract in 1970 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The Kenyon Student Worker Organizing Committee (K-SWOC) continues their battle with Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, to allow undergraduate student workers to vote for a union. Two months ago, the K-SWOC staged the first undergraduate student-worker strike in the country. The student group called another strike in late April, when the college refused to recognize the student-workers’ union. (tinyurl.com/yzm94x2l)

So far 165 student-workers have signed a commitment to the current strike. The group rallied on campus in early May to gain more college community support. At one point, the group occupied the college president’s office but left of their own accord after about one hour. College administration called campus security, who proceeded to harass and threaten the students as they marched through campus.

In response to the harassment, K-SWOC has filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge (ULP) with the NLRB, accusing the college of violating the National Labor Relations Act provision that guarantees workers the right to self-organization and to form, join or assist labor organizations. K-SWOC also filed an unpaid wages complaint with the Ohio Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Wage and Hour Administration because the college is withholding overtime pay.

Coal miners rally

The United Mine Workers (UMWA) hosted a Unity Rally for the 1,100 coal miners striking at Warrior Met Coal in Brookwood, Ala. The strike began on April 1 after the workers’ contracts expired, and negotiations for a new contract failed. UMWA President Cecil Roberts urged striking workers to stand firm and pledged over \$1 million from union funds to support them. (tinyurl.com/yz6r5g6u)

Roberts reflected on the April 28 Workers Memorial Day: “Today, before you get home tonight and put your head on your pillow, another worker somewhere in this country will be killed on the job. Fourteen workers every single day in the United States, but that’s not all. I want you to listen to this number every

year; somewhere between 50,000 and 60,000 workers die from occupational illnesses like black lung, brown lung, white lung, cancer. They’re dying because they went to work . . . (Warrior Met Coal) is a dangerous company to work for.”

The Brookwood, Ala., mine was the site of the 2001 tragedy when methane explosions killed 13 miners. Survivors of the explosions blamed dangerous conditions that the mine owner and the Mine Safety and Health Administration covered up. (tinyurl.com/yhomjr5q)

At the rally, Alabama AFL-CIO President Bren Riley chastised Warrior Met Coal for recently paying out bonuses to the bosses, while miners accepted pay cuts in 2016 to keep the company afloat. He also denounced the company for bringing in strikebreakers during the strike.

The strikebreakers appear to be responsible for recent complaints filed with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management. Two Tuscaloosa streams have been contaminated with thick wastewater runoff, since the strike began. (tinyurl.com/yffjog2h)

Nelson Brooke works for the Waterkeeper Alliance. He is the riverkeeper for the Black Warrior River, which both creeks flow into. After investigating, he is sure he knows where the pollution is coming from: “It’s 100% coming from Warrior Met Coal’s number seven underground mine,” where the mining waste slurry is pumped to the surface, contaminating the waterways.

UMWA Communications Director, Phil Smith has commented that such environmental catastrophes caused by poor work practices “don’t happen so much when the UMWA workforce is in these mines.” □

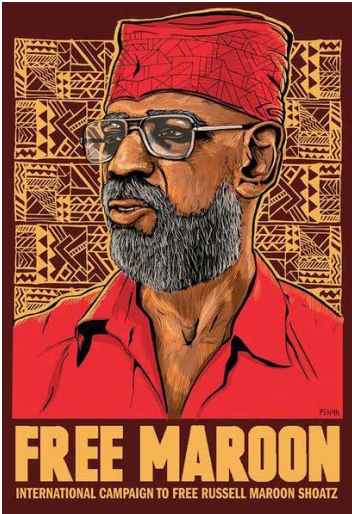
At Pennsylvania governor’s home

Release Russell Maroon Shoatz! Now!

By Joe Piette
Mt. Wolf, Pa.

Activists converged on Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf’s home in Mount Wolf, Pa., May 2 to demand the medical release of political prisoner Russell Maroon Shoatz and all ill and elderly prisoners. The action began with a “caravan of love” from nearby York to Mt. Wolf, where the sign-bearing vehicles encircled the block three times before participants held an in-person rally along the sidewalk in front of his home.

In addition to the colorful banners and



placards, a scroll bearing the names of 145 organizations — including the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party, that had signed a letter demanding Shoatz’ immediate release — was unfurled and laid out on the sidewalk.

The caravan was organized by The Coalition to Free Russell ‘Maroon’ Shoatz Now! Participants came from Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York City, New Jersey, Los Angeles and New Orleans. For more information on the political prisoners, see workers.org/2020/12/53426/. □



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Caravans protest immigrant detention

By Jim McMahan
Tacoma, Wash.

Im/migrant-led caravans from the Pacific Northwest region came to protest the Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) in Tacoma, Wash., May 8. The Mothers Day action, held the day before, brought families from Portland and Salem, Ore., Seattle and other cities. Their cars were decked with “Free Them All” flags for their family members and others behind bars.

This caravan was part of nationally coordinated actions by the American Friends Service Committee. Along with several immigrant rights organizations,

women’s, labor and various progressive organizations supported the Tacoma action.

The NWDC is the largest immigration prison on the West Coast and is run by the for-profit GEO Group. Prisoners are held under torturous conditions, and legal assistance is rare. This year the Washington State Legislature banned private prisons, but not until NWDC’s contract expires in 2025! But solidarity groups want it shut down now!

The COVID-19 pandemic only increases the crisis for those incarcerated, including 64 prisoners seeking refugee status who were just flown here from the

Mexican border.

As drivers arrived at the prison, the caravan was greeted by Aztec Dancers. Dakota Case, a representative of the Puyallup Nation, on whose land the prison sits, welcomed the people to Puyallup territory. Caravan leaders displayed large bags stuffed with 500 letters and solidarity messages from 10 states for the people inside.

The cause of mothers, both inside and outside the prison, who are separated from their families was highlighted. La Resistencia, an immigrant detention solidarity organization, helped coordinate the rally. □



PHOTO: CHERYL MCARTHUR

Stop legal lynchings!

Remember George Stinney Jr.

By Monica Moorehead

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled April 22 that juveniles — those under the age of 18 — are not exempt from spending the rest of their lives in prison with no hope of parole. (See WW article, workers.org/2021/05/56175/) This once again exposes the hypocrisy of the U.S. claiming to be the most democratic country in the world. But this ruling is just the tip of the iceberg in understanding the sordid, racist history of the U.S., much of it still hidden from the majority of the masses. This ruling is an extension of the ongoing war against youth, especially youth of color, including where courts and prisons are involved.

Take the case of George Stinney Jr. — a name and face that should never, ever be forgotten. The 14-year-old African American youth, barely five feet tall and weighing less than 100 pounds, became the youngest known person in the U.S. to be executed by the state in the 20th century. This atrocity took place on June 16, 1944, at the South Carolina Penitentiary in Columbia, where this terrified youth had to sit on a stack of books to be tortured to



George Stinney Jr.

death in the electric chair.

Stinney Jr. was sentenced to die a mere 84 days after he was falsely accused of murdering two young white girls. His entire trial took just two hours with the defense attorney calling no witnesses. An all-white male jury

took just 10 minutes to convict him.

Seventy years after his execution, in December 2014 Circuit Judge Carmen Mullen vacated the teenager's sentence, exonerating him on two murder charges during a new hearing demanded by Stinney's surviving family.

Stinney's former cellmate, Wilford Hunter issued a statement for the hearing, testifying that the 14-year-old told him: "I didn't, didn't do it. Why would they kill me for something I didn't do?" (Washington Post, Dec. 18, 2014)

Amanda Sales, a child forensic psychiatrist, testified at the hearing: "It is my professional opinion, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty, that the confession given by George Stinney Jr. on or about March 24, 1944, is best characterized as a coerced, compliant, false confession. It is not reliable." (NBC News)

This legal lynching of an innocent child 77 years ago is part and parcel of the system that allows state-sanctioned lynchings of Black and Brown teenagers and young people, which are still carried out by police and upheld by biased courts today. In memory of Stinney, and all who have lost their lives due to the color of their skin, young people are justified in demanding "Black Lives Matter," "Abolish the police" and "Abolish capitalism." □



Unvaccinated prison staff are a danger

By Betsey Piette



Workers World has received letter after letter from workers incarcerated in Pennsylvania prisons expressing a common concern:

"We are at risk of dying from COVID-19, and the only way the pandemic is getting into prisons is from the staff!"

Our incarcerated sisters, brothers and siblings describe a shared crisis: They are subject to 23-hour lockdown, denied visitations and isolated in cells without access to fresh air, exercise or even law library visits. Many who report COVID-19 symptoms are placed in restricted housing units, reviled as "the hole."

Prisoners threatened with the psychological torture of solitary confinement are

much less likely to report when they are sick, causing further spread of COVID-19. Yet prison staff can move unencumbered, unit to unit, block to block.

While case numbers in Pennsylvania prisons remained relatively low during 2020, in December more incarcerated people became infected and died at higher rates than outside populations. This trend continued into 2021.

In January, Pennsylvania held public hearings on the crisis. Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel was on the hot seat to explain what his department was doing to curb the pandemic's spread.

A report on COVID-19 in the state prisons came Feb. 10, when the department reported 4,048 total COVID-19 positive staff cases with four staff deaths and 9,661 positive cases with 101 deaths among incarcerated workers.

Most likely these numbers were an undercount. After February, the DOC statistics became harder to find, even while anecdotal reports from individual incarcerated workers suggested higher numbers of positive tests and deaths. The DOC's data then went off-line. Though relaunched in April, navigation of the site is still difficult.

Within Pennsylvania prisons, there are 37,245 incarcerated workers and 15,852 staffers. According to state data released April 21, only 3,133 staff were fully or partially vaccinated — less than 20%.

In some facilities — Albion, Fayette, Pine Grove and Smithfield — 90% or more of staff remain unvaccinated. Positive tests among staff are currently higher than among incarcerated people. (Inquirer.com, April 22)

As of that date, roughly half of incarcerated workers in Pennsylvania have

been vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccine is currently available to any adult in the state.

California, Massachusetts, Michigan and North Carolina legally require COVID-19 testing for prison staff. While the Pennsylvania DOC claims it can't legally force staff to be tested, Philadelphia-based labor lawyer Ryan Hancock said that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has guidelines that waive the prohibition against mandatory employer testing during a pandemic, especially when necessary for public health. (Inquirer.com, Dec. 8, 2020)

If Pennsylvania prison staff continue to refuse to protect the health of incarcerated workers by getting vaccinated, then the state must begin a massive decarceration program to save the lives of incarcerated people. □

When just being yourself is a radical act

By Miley Fletcher

For hundreds of years, racism, bigotry and discrimination have existed in society but especially within prison complexes. Black men, women and transgender people have been murdered, assaulted, placed in solitary confinement, restraint chairs and psychological observation cells — humiliated and abused by officers and staff alike.

The corruption begins at the head of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) when someone challenges higher ups. They say: "we'll check into it," or "well, you know so-and-so is not 'all there.'" Meanwhile, the incarcerated person who complained gets a backlash of retaliation.

Case in point is Bryant Arroyo, who was exposing conditions at SCI Frackville until they transferred him to SCI Coal Township. Unfortunately, Frackville won't change what they've been doing.

Unlike on the street where people have cell phone cameras, we inside are not allowed recording devices. If incarcerated people had such devices, many prison staff would be out of jobs. We could catch them and be heard.

I have been incarcerated for 29 years. If you point out what the Pennsylvania DOC is doing wrong, you're seen as a thorn in their side. I was at SCI Coal Township from 2005-2010, until they transferred me because of "paperwork I filed against the institution." The prison claimed the transfer was due to "a separation from another inmate" but gave no details.

I reported seeing six guards attack a Black male inmate. I gave him my statement and wrote to the DOC about it. This "infraction" still appears whenever I get transferred to a new institution.

The guards and staff know they will get away with their abuse. Their superiors will back them up. They go home and brag about it.

The guards can assault us, but if an incarcerated person does it to them, we are criminally charged or transferred. Guards and staff are never moved or fired. The administration does nothing to change conditions.

In prison, "George Floyds" are a daily occurrence. In prison, if you complain, you are given false misconducts, threatened with the Restrictive Housing Unit (the hole) and threatened with "lock down" — restrictive release list.

Lying, denying and cover-ups have gone on for years in this prison complex. What the Pennsylvania DOC dislikes is being exposed on their daily abuses, racist bigotry and discrimination. What they fear is someone speaking out against their regime, their monopoly — so on your file, you are "problematic."

I love Workers World. You express the truth.

Incarcerated workers should be allowed to speak out. It is our constitutional right. Remember that what they are doing outside of these prison complexes is being done to us here. If they move a prisoner to another block or transfer them to another institution, it is because the prisoner is right. They transfer us to silence us.

Sometimes just being yourself is the radical act. When you occupy space in systems not built for you, your authenticity is your activism. To change the stories, you must change the storytellers. Racism and discrimination are part of the abuse, when someone gains power over another person.

Like Dorothy Kilgallen [who threatened to blow the lid off the Kennedy assassination, and who was found dead

in Dallas during her investigation], I am a journalist, and I speak about what I see and hear until something is done or they transfer me because I keep writing.

It is not just in the prisons. Racism, bigotry and discrimination are everywhere.

Fletcher is a trans woman currently incarcerated at SCI Forest, Manerville, Pa.



Georgia: Black Lives Matter

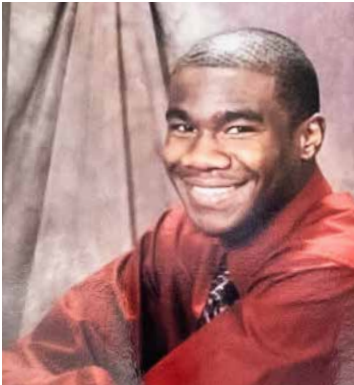
By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Police agents killed all four of these young Black men in Georgia, and the struggle to prosecute and convict their murderers is ongoing.

Jamarion Robinson was killed Aug. 5, 2016, at the East Point apartment of his partner, by a heavily armed force from seven police agencies under the direction of the U.S. Marshals. Carrying submachine guns in addition to usual police handguns, more than 90 shots were fired with 76 bullets hitting Jamarion. What brought on this massive firepower to arrest this former college athlete who was getting ready to return to school in a few days? They were looking for someone who had allegedly displayed a gun a few days earlier. No body cameras were worn by any of the police to verify their claims that they were fired upon first. Yet, all the bullet holes in the apartment door come from outside.

The U.S. Marshals Service refused to allow their agents to be questioned by Fulton County investigators or to turn over any documents or reports.

Jamarion’s family has continued to fight for answers and justice in his brutal murder. There are multiple murals of



Jamarion Robinson



Jimmy Atchison



Ahmaud Arbery



Rayshard Brooks

Jamarion on buildings across Atlanta, and public protests at local and federal offices take place regularly.

Jimmy Atchison was just 21 when he was killed in yet another U.S. Marshals-led task force in January 2019. The warrant was for a stolen cell phone. Atchison fled the apartment and hid in a neighbor’s closet. Several officers, including then-Atlanta policeman Sung Kim, discovered him. Witnesses say he had his hands up when he was shot in the face by Kim. There is no camera footage.

At a rally and march May 8 in a downtown Atlanta park, a spirited crowd chanted his name repeatedly and pledged to keep on until all those responsible for Atchison’s murder are held accountable.

The death of **Ahmaud Arbery** at the hands of three white vigilantes Feb. 23, 2020, near Brunswick in Glynn County, Ga., gained national attention once the video was released May 5. Travis McMichael, his father Gregory and their friend William “Roddie” Bryan pursued the jogging Arbery in their pickup trucks. Both McMichaels were armed, and Bryan videoed the chase and its deadly conclusion. All three have been charged with multiple counts including felony murder. On April 28, a federal grand jury handed down hate crime indictments. Their state trial is set for Oct. 18.

On May 8, Arbery’s 27th birthday, a large rally was held at a DeKalb County church, where the crowd assured his

mother that they would keep up the struggle with her for justice.

Garrett Rolfe, the Atlanta policeman who fatally shot **Rayshard Brooks** in the back twice June 12, 2020, was reinstated to his job. Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottom had ordered him fired one day after the shooting. On May 5, the Atlanta Civil Service Board determined that Rolfe’s due process rights had been violated. The terms of his bond release will not allow him to return to active duty.

Bottom’s announcement that she would not seek reelection this November may push the question of Rolfe’s prosecution to the winner of the mayoral race. □

Philadelphia supports Anishinaabe resistance to Enbridge Line 3 pipeline

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

People marched from Philadelphia’s City Hall to a Wells Fargo Bank office May 7 to demand the bank stop funding Enbridge Corporation Line 3. The Line 3 tar sands oil pipeline would bring 760,000 barrels a day of tar sands oil per day from Alberta, Canada, to Superior, Wis.

A 35-foot-long black paper scroll was carried by participants symbolizing the oil pipeline. At the end of the demonstration, participants tore it up, “killing the corporate snake!”

Since 2014, thousands of people have organized in their communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin and shown up at hearings to oppose Line 3. All pipelines

spill, often at great cost to the surrounding environment and community.

Enbridge was responsible for the July 2010 Kalamazoo River oil spill when the company’s Line 6B pipeline burst and flowed into Talmadge Creek, a tributary of the Kalamazoo River. A six-foot break in the pipeline produced one of the largest inland oil spills in U.S. history.

Opponents on the Stop Line 3 website say: “Line 3 would contribute more to climate change than Minnesota’s entire economy. Minnesota’s own Department of Commerce found our local market does not need Line 3 oil. We need to decommission the old Line 3 and justly transition to a renewable, sustainable economy. Line 3 would violate the treaty rights of Anishinaabe peoples and nations in its path — wild rice is a centerpiece of



Philadelphia, May 7.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Anishinaabe culture; it grows in numerous watersheds Line 3 seeks to cross.” (stopline3.org)

According to treaties between the Anishinaabe and the U.S. in 1854 and 1855, which are federal law under the Constitution, the Anishinaabe people retain the rights to hunt, fish, gather medicines and harvest wild rice on marked territories. The pipeline crosses them without permission. The impact of construction — or worse, an oil spill — would permanently damage the Anishinaabe’s ability to exercise these rights, and an oil spill would permanently damage their historic wild rice beds.

The proposed route for Line 3 crosses 227 lakes and rivers, including the Mississippi River and rivers that feed directly into Lake Superior, also putting those waterways at risk of a spill from the 760,000 barrels of tar sands oil that would flow through Line 3 every day.

Prominent Anishinaabe and other Native activists have described the pipeline as “cultural genocide,” and Indigenous activists in northern Minnesota are leading direct actions on the ground to stop its construction.

If built, Line 3 would release as much

greenhouse gas into the atmosphere as 50 new coal-fired power plants—as much greenhouse gas as produced by the entire rest of the state of Minnesota. Tar sands oil is the filthiest type of heavy crude oil to extract and process. In Alberta, Canada, its extraction has contaminated the watershed—the drinking water impacting all species. This contamination has resulted in heavy loads of arsenic in moose meat—a dietary staple for the First Nations people. (ran.org/what-are-tar-sands/)

Big banks, including Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Scotiabank, TD and Mizuho, have loaned more than \$11 billion to Enbridge. Without that money, Enbridge would be unable to build the massive new tar sands pipeline. Global protests against the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline took place May 7 in eight countries on four continents, including 50 U.S. cities, against the 20 banks funding this pipeline. (tinyurl.com/yf2oj637)

The fight to stop this pipeline is part of the fight to stop the use of the fossil fuels that have brought our Earth to the brink of climate disaster. Support Indigenous rights and the Indigenous-led struggles to eliminate fossil fuel pipelines. □



Philadelphia, May 7.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Seeking justice for Mikayla Miller, Black lesbian teen

By **Gery Armsby**
Hopkinton, Mass.

May 6 — The death of 16-year-old Black lesbian Mikayla Miller under mysterious circumstances in mid-April has ignited an outcry from a broad front of anti-racism forces.

Black and LGBTQ2S+ organizers from the Greater Boston area joined with Mikayla’s grieving community to lead a vigil today that drew thousands from around the state.

Details available about Mikayla Miller’s final hours — and the way her body was discovered — are chilling. On April 17, Mikayla’s mother called local police to report that Mikayla had been jumped in her apartment complex by several white youths whom she knew. Police came to the apartment, where Mikayla gave a statement that she had been assaulted. Less than 12 hours later, a jogger found Mikayla dead in the woods near her home, tied to a tree with a leather belt.

Mikayla’s family was notified that first-responder and police agencies were treating the death as a suicide despite glaring signs of foul play that clearly warranted a homicide investigation. This aroused concern that racism of police and other officials had impacted decisions about how the state was handling Mikayla’s death. Those decisions irreparably delayed a timely, unbiased investigation. This would have been the best chance to confirm or rule out any theory of what occurred in the hours, minutes and moments before Mikayla’s life ended forever.

When the family examined police records, they noted that official logs were missing for both the April 17 assault and the April 18 discovery of Mikayla’s body. They challenged investigators to be transparent about the status of the case. In response, police threatened the family with publicizing Makayla’s sexual orientation if they went public with their concerns.

Grief over losing Mikayla turned into outrage over these threats. Mikayla’s



Mikayla Miller

mother, Calvin Strothers, began posting about Mikayla’s death and the lack of investigation on social media, where the story spread quickly and resonated deeply with many, especially Black, Indigenous and queer high school youth.

Racist response from district attorney

As news spread, Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan came under fire both for mishandling the investigation and for her office’s anti-Black, anti-LGBTQ2S+ insensitivity and lack of accountability.

Under mounting public pressure, DA Ryan finally appeared before the media and admitted her office had indeed determined that Mikayla was the victim of a crime, promising information would be released “as soon as legally feasible.”

But the DA’s mealy-mouthed statements only added insult to injury, because the community’s complaints that the investigation was tainted by racism were brushed off as “patently false.” The DA defended the gross negligence and misconduct of racist cops who mishandled the investigation — and repeatedly subjected Mikayla and those who advocated for her to racist, sexist, homophobic treatment and character assassinations.

All information coming out of the DA’s office has bolstered the racist status quo of the injustice system and amounts to an admission that the whole system is designed to fail Black people, who are victims of deadly white-supremacist violence — especially in an affluent suburban community. Prosecutors often demand airtight evidence before charging or arresting white suspects, as the DA’s office maneuvers to avoid a loss in its prosecution “score,” when going up against a well-funded defense.

Black community organizers advocating for Mikayla and her family have pointed out the history of racist policing. They emphasize that if roles were reversed — with a high profile white victim — Black people would already be in custody named as suspects, subjected to coercive interrogations and heavy charges, their mugshots all over the news, with a full-court press mounted to obtain a confession (plea bargain).

Multinational, queer-straight solidarity

At today’s vigil, a wave of multinational, queer-straight solidarity surrounded Mikayla’s family, her loved ones and every young person of color who

this incident has forced to ponder: “What if that was me?”

Justice can only be won in the streets, fighting against every case of police and prosecutorial racism and bigotry. In the streets, anti-racist youth — even in suburban towns like Hopkinton, Mass. — can gain experience in having each other’s back. Only in the streets can the people mount an effective campaign for nothing short of the abolition of the rotten system that allows police harm, oppression and murder to continue unchecked.

Black and Indigenous women and girls are discarded, disappeared and murdered every day in this capitalist society built on settler colonialism and patriarchy. Every day homophobia, gender binarism and transphobia is used to bully and traumatize queer youth, and many are pushed to the edge of suicide.

Every year, dozens of queer youth of color are murdered by people they know. The facts in Mikayla’s death are glaringly conclusive. There should have been zero questions that foul play was the first and most likely thing to consider, when a Black queer teenager is found dead in the manner that Mikayla Miller was.

The police and the DA’s office have proven time and again that all the diversity and “cultural competence” training in the world are incapable of reforming law enforcement into a system that will treat oppressed communities with respect and dignity.

Mikayla Miller’s case is raising an outcry not because it is unusual. Her death and the criminal lack of response by the state resonates with people, because they see again what has been wrong here in Massachusetts for centuries: the utter incapacity of the state to respect the humanity of Black and Brown and queer folks. The whole damn system needs to go!

A rally calling for the ouster of DA Marian Ryan is set for May 21. □

Lawyer fights for Indigenous people, against Big Oil

By **WW staff**

Activists and allies turned out May 10 for a rally at Federal Court in New York City to support Steven Donziger, a lawyer and champion for environmental justice and human rights. Donziger led the team that won a historic \$9.5 billion lawsuit against Chevron for pollution crimes in Ecuador.

In 1993 Donziger sued Texaco, Inc., on behalf of Indigenous Ecuadorians sickened by the company’s oil operations in the Lago Agrio region of the Amazon. The lawsuit eventually included Chevron, which had acquired Texaco. In 2011 it finally succeeded in holding Chevron liable for water and soil contamination in Ecuador between 1964 and 1992.

Ten years later, the company still refuses to pay and start the cleanup.

Instead, Chevron has hounded Donziger, resulting in a misdemeanor contempt charge for which the lawyer has endured over 600 days of house arrest. Donziger is currently being tried in Manhattan, where the rally was organized by Acción Revolución, “the largest group of revolutionary Ecuadorians in the United States, fighting for a better future.” (accionrevolucion.org)

Donziger’s real “crime” was taking on Big Oil and winning a billion-dollar judgment for Indigenous people in Ecuador whose lives and lands have been destroyed by Chevron. □



May 10, New York City.

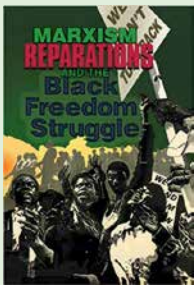
PHOTO: ACCIÓN REVOLUCIÓN

Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from **Workers World newspaper.**

Edited by **Monica Moorehead.**

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination • Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery • Black Youth: Repression & Resistance • The Struggle for Socialism Is Key • Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights • Black & Brown Unity • Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior • Racism & Poverty in the Delta • Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions • Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation • Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion



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The Klan & the Government Foes or Allies?

By **Sam Marcy**

Examines the special relationship with the state that has allowed the Ku Klux Klan to exist for over a century despite its criminal history of lynchings, murders, and intimidation. Published in 1983.



Read it free at **www.workers.org/marcy/klan/**

Defend the freedom of the press! Break the silence about Iraq!

By Swedish Iraq Solidarity Association

The following is an appeal by the Swedish Iraq Solidarity Association on occasion of the World Press Freedom Day, May 3.

Eighteen years have passed since Iraq was invaded and occupied in 2003 by the United States, supported mainly by Britain. The coverage by Western media — not least the Swedish media — of developments in the country has been extremely deficient and often directly misleading.

The Australian journalist Julian Assange, who through WikiLeaks revealed to the world the war crimes of the invading forces, is being held without trial in a British high-security prison under poor sanitation and in total isolation, which equals mental torture. His case is not only a mockery of the rule of law but also an attack on international press freedom, intended as a warning to the media worldwide. Whoever reveals war crimes will be severely punished; whoever commits them goes free.

Iraq, which before the invasion was a rich and successful country with a high standard of living for the population, has been destroyed by the invasion. Over one and a half million people have been killed, even more injured or displaced from their homes or subjected to arbitrary violence and abuse.

Large cities such as Mosul and Fallujah have been repeatedly subjected to terror bombing and mass destruction. The country's infrastructure, including the water and electricity supply and sewage treatment plants, has been smashed to pieces. Extensive corruption prevents reconstruction. Politically, the United States has imposed on Iraq a sectarian system to divide its people.

Destruction of Iraq environment

The weapons used by the United States have caused lasting damage to the



Stockholm, Sweden, May 3.

PHOTO: SIGYN MEDER

environment and to its people. Depleted uranium, white phosphorus and other chemical toxins were used in its warfare.

Many children are still [being] born severely malformed due to radioactivity and other environmental degradation. President Joe Biden recently made a big deal out of the fact that the United States is now joining the Paris Agreement. He made no mention of the [U.S.] American war machine's deliberate environmental destruction and poisoning, not only in Iraq.

Officially, the U.S. role today is said to be to fight terrorism, although terrorism was a direct creation of the U.S. war, as even President Barack Obama noted. In reality the role of the United States includes massive bombings of civilians, drone strikes on Iraqi territory, such as the one that resulted in the assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani on Jan. 3, 2020, and the deployment of special forces, contract staff and intelligence agents.

There is strong pressure for U.S. troops to leave Iraq. Major demonstrations call for national independence. On Oct. 1, 2019, a series of extensive demonstrations began,

the so-called October Uprising. More than 700 protesters have been killed and thousands injured. No one has been held responsible for these abuses. Media reporting has been almost nonexistent.

The Pentagon plans to stay

The Iraqi Parliament has called on the United States to withdraw from the country, and talks have been held with the government on the withdrawal of U.S. military units. But the commander of the U.S. Central Command, Kenneth McKenzie, says: "I do not see us completely withdrawing from Iraq in the future."

The U.S. military is clinging to Iraq, but with a less conspicuous role, mainly as "advisers" and for military training and exercise. Combat units are transferred to Kuwait, Jordan or other areas, from where they can intervene again when they deem it appropriate.

At the same time, the U.S.-led military alliance NATO is increasing its strength in Iraq from 400 troops to 4,000. Formally, that force is currently under Danish

command (formerly Canadian, next year Italian), but ultimately control lies with the United States. In addition, the United States finances private companies, which provide mercenaries.

For the United States, Iraq is a base for attacks on Syria and the encirclement of Iran; [Iraq is] a pawn in the game for control of the oil-rich and strategically important Gulf region and ultimately in the pursuit of U.S. domination over the entire Eurasian continent.

Since 2015, the Swedish military has been participating in the U.S.-led coalition Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) in Iraq, which lacks a mandate from the United Nations. Sweden has no national interests to defend in the region and contributes to violations of international law as the coalition carries out attacks in Syria. Sweden should not contribute to the occupying power's continued abuses against Iraq and its neighbors.

[Swedish] Foreign Minister Ann Linde and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have still not answered satisfactorily the questions about Sweden's treatment of Julian Assange that Nils Melzer, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture, and editor Arne Ruth asked more than a year ago.

The Iraq Solidarity Association calls on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to answer these questions and act for the immediate release of Julian Assange. The war criminals should be punished, not those who exposed the crimes.

The Association calls on the media to break the silence about the illegal abuses against Julian Assange and to stop the smearing of him, which contributes to obscuring this judicial scandal. Defend freedom of the press in the world!

The Association demands an end to Sweden's participation in the war and to all foreign interference in Iraq! The Iraqi people must be allowed to decide in their own country. USA out of Iraq!

Contact: info@iraksolidaritet.se

Brazilians tell police: 'Stop killing us!'

Continued from page 1

Bolsonaro became president of Brazil in 2018, police massacres in the favelas were commonplace, regardless of who held national office. The police and army — the state — protected the private property of the wealthy oligarchy.

Even under the social-democratic presidency of Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, and his social-democratic Workers Party from 2003-2011, police killings took place. Lula's government established or strengthened a vital social safety net including cash transfer to the poor, aid to small farmers, and labor and pension reforms, which improved conditions for the masses but did not stop police killings.

Bolsonaro is an extreme right-wing president — a Brazilian version of Trump — who has exhibited utter disdain and hatred for the Black and Indigenous population and who has boldly given carte blanche to the police to kill with impunity. He was once quoted saying, "A cop who doesn't kill isn't a cop." (Washington Post, May 6)

In 2019 alone, police killed an estimated 5,800 people throughout Brazil, which is over five times the annual rate of police killings in the U.S. According to Human Rights Watch, from 2010 to 2020, three-quarters of the 9,000 people the police killed in Rio alone were Black men. (June 3)

Robert Muggah, co-founder of the



Residents of Jacarezinho favela in Rio de Janeiro protest killer cops.

Igarapé Institute, a Rio-based research group on trends in violence, stated: "These shootings are obviously routine in Rio de Janeiro, but this is unprecedented in that it's the operation that has generated the largest number of deaths, ever." He went on to say that this is "a dangerous reminder of the persistence of police violence in Rio de Janeiro and Brazil." (Washington Post, May 6)

Legacy of slavery lives on in Brazil

According to Worldometers.info, Brazil has by far the largest population of any single country throughout Latin America with 213 million people. Out of that number,

over half consider themselves Black or Brown, making this country home to the world's second largest Black population outside of the African continent. This is rooted in the African slave trade, which cannot be discounted in terms of the conditions being faced by the most ostracized and oppressed Brazilians today.

The slave trade existed for 350 years following the attempt at enslavement and then elimination of most of the Indigenous population there, carried out by Portuguese colonialists. At the time, 40% of the 10 million enslaved Africans brought to the Americas ended up in Brazil — 4 out of 10 captured human

beings. In 1888, Brazil was the last country to abolish the slave trade.

The legacy of slavery is so deeply woven into the fabric of Brazilian society that the descendants of the colonizers were encouraged to marry and have children with Black and Indigenous people to "Europeanize or lighten" the skin color of the overall population.

It is within this historical context that the major cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, with some of the highest concentrations of people of African descent, find themselves in such desperate poverty and unspeakable repression. According to Time Magazine, while 56% of Brazilians identify as Black, they make up just 18% of Congress and 4.7% of executives in Brazil's 500 largest companies. On the flip side of the class divide, Black people make up 75% of murder victims and 75% of those killed by police. (Dec. 16, 2020)

Also Black Brazilians, who earn 57 cents on the dollar compared to whites, are dying of COVID-19 at a much higher rate than whites, due to overcrowded conditions and the lack of nutrition, sanitation and health facilities in the favelas.

This reign of police terror instigated by Bolsonaro will not intimidate but will help build resistance by the people in the streets with demands to fund decent paying jobs, housing, food and health care — demands which will take a social revolution. □

South Asia

Drive for profit fuels effort to evict poor

By Tania Siddiqi

In Pakistan, Karachi Bachao Tehreek (KBT), an alliance of local activists struggling against evictions and illegal land grabs, reported that Bahria Town personnel, the town’s private guards, and Sindh province’s police entered various Goths [small neighborhoods populated mainly by Sindhi people] May 7 with heavy machinery, intending to further encroach on poor Indigenous peoples’ lands.

Abdul Hafeez, a member of Sindh Indigenous Rights Alliance, informed the newspaper “Dawn” that guards and police attempted to destroy crops with bulldozers in Kamal Khan Jokhio Goth. Community members responded by engaging in acts of resistance against the intruders. After one person threw a stone at Bahria Town personnel, guards began shooting at the villagers.

Indigenous activist Shaukat Khaskheli was shot, yet law enforcement took him to a police station rather than a hospital. Other villagers were kidnapped and tortured by Bahria Town guards for their acts of resistance and their refusal to allow Bahria Town to rob them of their land. (Dawn, May 9)

Bahria Town’s latest barbaric attack parallels similarly horrifying capitalist endeavors taking place elsewhere in Pakistan.

The Pakistani ruling class’s ongoing war against poor workers is centered on promoting corporate marketability and modernization. One of their most blatant attacks on the working class was its 2019 campaign to remove so-called “encroachers” from occupying “illegal” structures. Around the time that the anti-encroachment program was put in place, about 30% to 40% of Karachi’s economy consisted of informal markets catering to commuters and tourists, which provided livelihoods for about 2 million people.

However, that did not stop government officials from demolishing people’s businesses and homes. At Empress Market, one of the most well-known markets in Karachi, at least 1,700 shops and stalls were destroyed during the anti-encroachment drive.



CREDIT: KARACHI BACHAO TEHREEK

Karachi residents resist ongoing illegal demolitions and forced evictions.

A March 2019 report exposed the following information: “3,575 shops have so far been demolished, directly affecting no less than 17,500 workers, if we assume on an average five people tied to each shop. The number of affected people soars to 140,000 on the assumption that each worker has seven dependents.” (Dawn, March 12, 2019)

The rampage against workers continues, even during a global pandemic.

In February, the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), the entity that oversees the anti-encroachment drives, announced it intended to begin a new drive near the Orangi Nala and Gujjar Nala — small ephemeral streams in Karachi. KMC claimed that the evictions of an estimated 14,000 homes and 3,000 commercial units were necessary to widen the drains, so that they could improve the “smooth flow of rainwater,” especially during floods. (Samaa TV, Feb. 25)

However, there were more insidious motives for removing workers from their livelihoods and homes.

People’s attorney Abira Ashfaq disclosed that forced evictions are conducted to transfer land management rights “to construction companies and the World Bank

so that they [can] profit off it.” (The News International, Mar. 22) KBT’s research advisor Fizza Qureshi discovered that the data that KMC used to justify its pursuit of robbing the working class was faulty.

In reference to the Gujjar Nala, “the recent urban floods in Karachi were not caused by Gujjar Nullah [drain], but rather due to gated communities and large plazas that had been constructed on river deltas and which catered exclusively to the elite.”

Forced evictions in India

Across the border in India, inhabitants continue to suffer from immense trauma and violence caused by legal and extralegal mechanisms used to profit off of the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with structural violence including vaccine apartheid, people in India continue to face the threat of forced evictions.

Last year, over 20,000 people were evicted between March 16 and July 31, despite court orders that banned evictions during the COVID lockdown. Currently in India, 15 million people face the possibility of getting evicted.

Under capitalism, workers will continue to suffer because this system will not and cannot provide the infrastructure necessary to ensure the well-being and safety of all workers. Capitalism kills. Its effects are clearly evident in the ruling class’s overt acts of terror against workers.

The Bahria Town’s government invading poor Indigenous peoples’ communities and inflicting violence on them mirrors Pakistan’s national government and outside forces labeling workers as “encroachers” and removing “illegal” settlements.

Forced eviction campaigns taking place in India leave people vulnerable to mandatory removal at practically any time. In each situation, the ruling class only wants one thing — profits. The pandemic and forced evictions will continue to primarily affect workers. We must build international solidarity and resistance against the ongoing attacks on our class. □

Colombia

State terror won’t stop the struggle

Continued from page 1

killed close to 40 people on demonstrations and in poor neighborhoods, and arbitrarily arrested almost 1,000 people. A large number of those killed have been youths from 14-30 years old.

Nevertheless the people remain in the streets, holding 35 separate marches in the capital, Bogotá, May 5. Cali, the country’s second-largest city, is seeing the largest protests in its history. Strikers are demanding Duque’s resignation.

Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities targeted

On a May 8 webinar hosted by United National Antiwar Coalition, Afro-Colombian human rights defender Charo Mina-Rojas spoke from Colombia about the dire situation facing Black Colombians, who are about 20% of the country’s population. Based on Colombia’s Pacific coast since the 1500s, they have resisted oppression and exploitation since their arrival during enslavement. Afro-descendant Colombians were recognized and given land in a 1991 amendment to the constitution.

However, the traditional Black communities are situated atop lands rich in resources and biodiversity. They have faced violence and land theft by wealthy international corporations. Many have been displaced, and their urban neighborhoods are now being disproportionately targeted by state forces and right-wing paramilitaries, especially in Cali.

The National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) denounced the “disproportionate actions of the National Police and in particular by the ESMAD (anti-riot squads). . . . Nor can we accept the lack of empathy of this government and its inability to understand that inequality, hunger and poverty also lead to despair and hopelessness and much less naturalize that the response to these events is state violence.” (Telesur, May 7)

About 3.5% of Colombia’s 50 million people are Indigenous, speaking 65 different languages. They face land theft by extractive industry companies, forced displacement and ongoing terror from police and paramilitaries. Many Indigenous leaders have been assassinated; the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs



Second day of general strike, Medellín, April 29.

claims since Duque’s election in 2018, there is “a clearly deteriorating humanitarian situation which, in 2020 alone, left 112 Indigenous people dead in different regions” (iwgia.org)

ONIC is participating in the general strike. On May 7 Indigenous activists tore down a statue of Spanish colonizer Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, founder of Bogotá.

The Ethnic Chapter of the Peace Agreement, signed in 2016 by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Colombian government of then-President Juan Manuel Santos, promised rights to the Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. But since his election President Duque, a protégé of ultra-rightist former president Álvaro Uribe, has essentially trashed the Peace Agreement. Some decommissioned FARC combatants are advocating a resumption of the armed liberation struggle.

Criminal role of U.S.

The U.S. is “utterly and completely complicit” in the wave of terror being visited upon the Colombian people, according to James Jordan, Colombia point person for the Alliance for Global Justice. Speaking on the UNAC webinar, Jordan explained that the hated ESMAD (Mobile Anti-Disturbances Squadron) riot police were

created in 1999 under the joint U.S.-Colombia agreement known as “Plan Colombia.” Since the strike began — and in fact since the squadron’s creation — ESMAD has committed massacres, disappearances and arrests in what Colombians are calling a “Duque coup” against the people’s movement.

Colombia is the eighth largest recipient of U.S. financial assistance and the largest in Latin America; a \$448 million aid package was passed in Congress last year with bipartisan support. The government’s role in upholding imperialist interests in Latin America and other countries has prompted comparisons to how the Israeli apartheid state functions extending imperialist interests. Colombia is the only Latin American country to be accepted by NATO in 2017 as a “global partner.”

Donald Trump, when he was president, pressured Duque to dismantle the 2016 Peace Accords. President Joe Biden has made zero effort to encourage the Colombian government to honor the accords, which were drafted with input from the Colombian masses and contain chapters on a wide range of issues including rural reform, health, education, poverty eradication, drinking water, political participation, an end to the military conflict, gender justice, illicit drugs and human rights guarantees.

In scrapping the accords, Duque is assuring that Colombia will retain its status as the most dangerous place in the world for union leaders and one of the worst human rights violators for Indigenous and Afro-descendant environmental and land rights movements.

Despite the danger, the people are still protesting and striking in mass numbers. It is imperative that activists in the U.S. and other imperialist countries demonstrate solidarity with the courageous Colombian people. So far there have been large protests in New York, Los Angeles, Portland, San Francisco, Miami, Paris, London and throughout the Spanish state.

To watch the UNAC webinar on Colombia visit tinyurl.com/c9ewykdh.

Martha Grevatt was part of a delegation in solidarity with the Colombian peace process that met with FARC negotiators in 2015 in Havana.

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Stop drug monopoly murders

Once again, capitalist greed predominates over human need — with very dire consequences.

In the world’s worst wave of coronavirus cases, which began in late March, India reported its largest daily death figure — 4,187 people as of May 8. In the third-highest global death toll, over 242,000 people have died in India from COVID. On May 9, India reported 403,738 additional positive cases, bringing reported infections to over 22 million.

These deaths occur despite the existence of ample excess doses of coronavirus vaccines across the world. Since they were cleared for emergency use in late 2020, 87% of COVID-19 vaccines have gone to the wealthiest countries. Low-income countries have received just 0.2%.

This vaccine apartheid is causing millions of avoidable cases and hundreds of thousands of deaths.

Emergency steps must be taken now to waive “intellectual property” patent

rights that give big pharmaceutical companies a stranglehold over production and distribution.

The world’s richest countries have purchased more doses than they need. Ironically, India — one of the world’s top pharmaceutical producers — cannot produce what it needs to vaccinate its 1.3 billion people without imports from the U.S.

Serum Institute of India is a biotech and pharmaceutical company responsible for 60% of the world’s vaccine supply. Yet limits imposed by the U.S. and European Union on exportation of key COVID-19 vaccine production materials have created severe vaccine shortages throughout India.

To allow pharmaceutical giant Merck to ramp up production of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in February, President Joe Biden invoked the U.S. Defense Production Act that limited export of manufacturing supplies needed for COVID-19 vaccine production. This includes bags, filters and other critical supplies manufactured in the U.S. The European Union imposed similar

export limits in late March.

This is not just a crisis for India. Billions of people in the poorest countries — in Africa, Latin America and Asia — are also impacted.

People before profits!

India was a major vaccine supplier to COVAX, an international COVID-19 manufacturing and distribution agreement created in April 2020 with the goal of delivering over 2 billion doses to the world’s 92 poorest countries by the end of 2021. But the export bans, hoarding and supply shortages threaten a catastrophe for Africa, which has expected to get its vaccine supplies through COVAX.

Due to massive global disparities in vaccine access, in October 2020 India and South Africa sought an emergency waiver at the World Trade Organization. But negotiations were blocked by the U.S. and other wealthy countries. Bowing to intense international pressure, the Biden administration recently announced support for

temporarily waiving patent and intellectual property protections for COVID vaccines and manufacturing technology.

Yet even Biden’s tentative support for lifting restrictions was met with a backlash from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, a powerful pharmaceutical industry trade group concerned that the move could threaten the profits of Big Pharma companies which control vaccine patents. To pressure Biden to reverse course, PhRMA spent record amounts of money on lobbying in the first quarter of 2021.

Pfizer, whose vaccine sales have generated \$3.5 billion in revenue, spent \$3.7 million lobbying against any patent waiver.

If vaccines and access to the technology to produce them are not shared, poorer countries may not get enough doses for their people until 2024, resulting in millions more preventable deaths and the worldwide spread of new virus variants.

Human need must be put before corporate profits. □

Good news from China

By Deirdre Griswold

As the COVID-19 epidemic continues to ravage many countries, including the United States, China has announced that it will make millions of doses of its Sinopharm vaccine available for free to the hard-hit countries in the developing world. The announcement came as the World Health Organization declared the Sinopharm vaccine safe and reliable in fighting the virus.

This is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that People’s China itself is still considered to be a developing country and that the pandemic broke out there first. Because of the virus, its economy contracted for the first time in 2020.

Since January, however, it has rebounded by 18%. It is now in the position of being able to help others combat this terrible disease.

At the beginning of April, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of WHO, revealed that while 1 in 4 people in rich countries had received a vaccine, only 1 in 500 living

in poorer countries had gotten a dose. China stepping into the breach now is a big step toward global vaccine justice.

China and India are the two most populous countries in the world. India, with more than 22 million cases, is now second only to the U.S. (33.5 million) in total numbers of coronavirus cases.

China, with almost the same number of people as India, is in the amazingly low position of 96th in the world with just 90,769 cases. (worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries)

These remarkable figures are testimony to the differences in social systems resulting from great revolutionary upheavals in the past. The success of the Chinese Revolution in 1949, under the leadership of Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party, laid the basis for the reorganization of a country that had been mired in semi-feudal relations, reinforced by Western imperialist penetration and domination.

The 1949 socialist revolution made it possible for China to not only tackle and overcome the deep poverty that once prevailed among its own people, but to now help others who



Workers check equipment at a Sinopharm vaccine production plant, Beijing, April 11.

still suffer from imperialist-imposed underdevelopment.

While such a revolution may now appear to be a distant prospect in the United States, the contradictions that make social change not only possible but inevitable are piling up here. The very fact that the U.S., long the richest large country, now leads the world in coronavirus cases is bound to raise consciousness and spur on the struggle for a society based on the needs of the many, not the greed of the few. □



PHOTO: BRIDGET

Portland protest says ‘U.S. out of Colombia!’

A militant group of demonstrators occupying a lane of traffic marched through the streets of Portland, Ore., May 8 chanting “U.S. out of Colombia” and “Israel and Colombia, U.S. puppets.” Cars driving around them honked in support of signs condemning U.S. financial and military aid to the right-wing regime in Colombia and its close ally, Israel. At a rally following the march, Lyn Neeley of Workers World Party said: “We need to put the blame for the violent repression in Colombia squarely on the shoulders of Washington.”

— Report by Workers World Portland bureau

All out for Palestine!

By WW staff

Palestinians in Jerusalem, in Gaza, throughout Palestine and in exile are fighting for their rights and their lives after 73 years of Nakba (the Catastrophe — meaning the founding of Israel).

On May 11 alone, Israeli drone warplanes killed 24 Palestinian civilians, including nine children, in Gaza. Hundreds of Palestinians were injured by Israeli occupation forces, who launched provocative attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque. Palestinians in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem fought forcible eviction and displacement by settler colonial mobs.

Join Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, and come out for Palestine now! Join these rallies and raise your voice for Palestine at this critical moment.

- Los Angeles, May 11: Emergency Rally: All Out for Palestine!
- Los Angeles, May 15: Nakba 73 — Resistance Until Liberation Rally & Protest
- San Francisco, May 15: Nakba 73 — We Will Return!
- New York/Brooklyn, May 15: Nakba 73 — Defend Palestine from the River to the Sea!



- Paterson, N.J., May 16: Nakba 73 — Defend Palestine from the River to the Sea!
- For more information on the Week of Palestinian Struggle, May 15-22, go to tinyurl.com/3xh79ctb. See an international list of events for Palestine at samidoun.net/events/list/ and tinyurl.com/smvwstkz.

Let's take to the streets for Palestine! □

Violating U.S. ‘norms’

China aids global fight vs. hunger, disease

By Sara Flounders

A document released by Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines April 9, “2021 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community,” labels China the greatest threat to the United States.

It claims China’s threat is so serious that an intensifying level of U.S. intelligence operations, cyberattacks and investment in military technology must be organized to counter it. Democrats and Republicans vie in Congress in a push of anti-China legislation requiring multibillion-dollar funding.

A hard line on China is one of the few truly bipartisan efforts occupying the divided U.S. Congress.

This includes a vast increase in funding to reactionary journalists, “human rights” organizations and social media platforms, including “alternative media,” who will toe the alarmist anti-China line.

In response, the progressive political movement in the U.S. must prepare to answer a tidal wave of well-funded, anti-China assaults in the media and from the political establishment. This toxic cloud will saturate every social and political movement. Step by step, a response must be prepared to challenge this criminal policy on every possible front.

What crime has China committed to make it the target of U.S. military encirclement, severe sanctions that mount by the day, an onerous trade war and cancellation of cultural exchanges and visas for tens of thousands of Chinese students?

Is there a basis to charges by prominent “human rights” organizations and endless hostile media condemnations? What is behind the increased surveillance of all Chinese people in the U.S. and the escalating anti-Asian violence?

Haines told members of Congress, “China increasingly is a near-peer competitor, challenging the U.S. in multiple areas — especially economically, militarily and technologically — and is pushing to change global norms.”

What global norms is China challenging?

The biggest global norm is poverty. Some 7 million people die of hunger each year; 1 billion survive on less than \$1 a day.

Capitalism is unable to end poverty or hunger within the U.S. — and certainly not globally. The “Threat Assessment” anticipates a surge in acute hunger and poverty, due to economic disruptions from the global pandemic and climate-change catastrophes. It predicts “acute hunger will rise to 330 million people this year from 135 million people.”

No recognition is given in this report to China’s historic achievements of ending extreme poverty, illiteracy and lack of potable water, while providing access to basic health care for 800 million of its 1.4 billion people.

The Intelligence Report even condemns China for “using its success in combating the coronavirus pandemic to promote the ‘superiority’ of its system.”

Vaccines confirm a superior system

China has produced millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses, sharing them with some 80 countries. The U.S. ranks second in vaccine production, but has exported very few doses. (Global Times, May 9)

The World Health Organization finally gave approval to China’s Sinopharm



China's One Belt, One Road

vaccine May 7. Results for Sinovac, another Chinese manufacturer, are to be announced by WHO next week. Previously only Western-produced vaccines from Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson and Moderna had received WHO approval.

This will accelerate global supply, as China’s overall yearly production capacity is approaching 5 billion doses. Easy storage requirements for the Sinopharm vaccine make it highly suitable for low-resource settings, WHO said May 7.

China has extensive plans to assist regions having undeveloped infrastructure with vaccine shipment, cold-chain vehicles and vaccination training for health workers. China’s technical capability and willingness to share billions of lifesaving vaccines with the world deeply threaten the U.S. ruling class, because they confirm the superiority of its system.

Xinjiang and Belt & Road

Even more threatening to the U.S.-imposed “global norm” is China’s broad infrastructure development program called the Belt and Road Initiative. This multitrillion-dollar initiative has expanded to programs in 138 countries. The U.S. shows no capacity or will to provide such desperately needed programs.

Rather, it does everything possible to sabotage these programs by funding mercenary armies and reactionary internal dissention.

Xinjiang is a less-developed region in the far west of China. U.S. claims of massive human-rights violations there against the Uyghurs, an ethnic and religious minority, expose this strategy. Xinjiang is a major logistics center for China’s ambitious Belt and Road Initiative and the gateway to Central and West Asia, as well as European markets.

Claims that China is guilty of genocide in Xinjiang come from the Washington-based and funded Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders. The World Uyghur Congress, another source of sensationalized reports, is U.S. funded.

Sensationalized claims of wanting to protect a Muslim group in Xinjiang can’t wash away 40 years of U.S. wars in primarily Muslim countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria, Sudan and Yemen. Nor will they dissolve years of attacks against Muslims in the U.S., including secret renditions, kidnappings and hundreds of frame-ups.

Some 54 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America support China against these claims, including more than a dozen members of the Organization of Islamic States. Supporting the U.S. charges are non-Muslim countries in Europe, plus Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Nevertheless, the U.S. has imposed sanctions on China.

Endless funding for war

The “Endless Frontiers Act” is a bill to spend \$112 billion over five years on countering China. Tacked onto this are 230 amendments, as various corporations lobby for a cut of the action.

Another mega bill before Congress is the “Strategic Competition Act of 2021.” Its purpose is to restrict China’s technological development with the explicit goal of slowing it or sabotaging it completely.

Countermeasures against China include \$300 million a year for four years (\$1.2 billion), called the “Countering Chinese Influence Fund.” It provides funding for charging China with “forced labor” in its Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, suppressing human rights, “unfair competition” and “intellectual theft.”

Congressional funding for mercenary operations include \$655 million in Foreign Military Financing in the Indo-Pacific region and \$75 million for an “Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network” in the Indo-Pacific to generate criticism of China’s Belt and

Road Development Initiative.

Some \$450 million for the Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative would ensure U.S. aircraft-carrier battle groups can operate freely in the region.

The Strategic Competition and Endless Frontier Acts are part of a fast-track effort promised by President Joe Biden. Both bills are accompanied by an echo chamber of unfounded charges against China.

Infrastructure collapse in the U.S.

The Intelligence Report warns that “at a minimum,” China can “cause localized, temporary disruptions to critical infrastructure within the United States.”

Disruptions of critical infrastructure are a fact of life in the U.S., without any Chinese interference. Wildfires in California in 2020, caused by electric utility companies’ lack of maintenance, torched 40 million acres. In 2018, wildfires cost \$148 billion in losses, and millions of residents were left with soaring medical bills, and polluted air, soil and waterways.

The Texas freeze and electric outage, after years of maximizing profits by privatized electric corporations which repeatedly ignored warnings to protect the power grid, meant a loss of \$200 billion and left millions without power, heat or water. All 254 counties were impacted by the power outage.

Lead-contaminated water pipes that poisoned children in Flint, Mich., and Newark N.J., were not caused by China. Nor is the inability to provide safe evacuation in hurricanes from Puerto Rico to North Carolina.

An obsolete system

Capitalism is demonstrating to the world it is incapable of solving the problems of modern society.

China, by its very existence, is violating the “global norms” of imperialism’s world order. U.S. hostility to China began with its 1949 revolution. But now, China has grown into a near peer of the U.S. in productive capability and technology and is quickly surpassing it in infrastructure.

In other words, China is guilty of solving problems that cannot be solved by a system based on ruthless competition and the private expropriation of resources, industry and labor. This is a major challenge to the “global norm.” □

Criticando a China, EE.UU. comete crímenes contra la humanidad

Continúa de la página 12

Estados Unidos tiene la mayor población encarcelada del mundo, con 2,3 millones de personas, según la Prison Policy Initiative. (24 de marzo de 2020). Muchos de estos trabajadores son esclavos modernos, cuya mano de obra es superexplotada por centavos la hora, o sin salario alguno, para obtener beneficios para las empresas estatales o privadas.

Las muertes en estos campos de concentración, donde la gente pobre y de color es encarcelada en un número desproporcionado, han aumentado dramáticamente, ya que a los guardias de las prisiones no se les exige la vacuna COVID-19 ni el uso de máscaras o la distancia social en estas instalaciones superpobladas con poca ventilación. ¿No es esto una violación de los derechos humanos?

Y luego está la continua guerra racista de terror policial contra la población negra y morena. Según el Informe de

Violencia Policial 2020, de las más de 1.100 personas asesinadas por la policía, los negros fueron el 27% de todos los asesinatos policiales, el 35% de los asesinados sin armas, y el 36% de los asesinados que estaban desarmados y no suponían una amenaza. Estas muertes son claras violaciones racistas de los derechos humanos, teniendo en cuenta que los negros son sólo el 13% de la población estadounidense.

Además, el 58% de todos los asesinatos cometidos por la policía en EE.UU. fueron paradas de tráfico, respuestas policiales a crisis de salud mental o situaciones en las que, según se informa, la persona no amenazaba a nadie con un arma. ¡Son más violaciones de los derechos humanos! (policeviolencereport.org)

Ninguna sociedad es una utopía, pero sólo con estos ejemplos, Estados Unidos ocupa el primer lugar del mundo en violaciones de derechos humanos, sin lugar a dudas. □



Cali, Colombia. La ciudad de 2,2 millones de habitantes está militarizada desde el 7 de mayo.

Criticando a China, EE.UU. comete crímenes contra la humanidad

Por Monica Moorehead

El 7 de abril se anunció que el gobierno de Biden está siendo presionado por los republicanos de derecha para que boicotee total o parcialmente los Juegos Olímpicos de Invierno de 2022 en Pekín, China, que tendrán lugar durante dos semanas en febrero. Como parte de la continua diatriba antichina que se aceleró con la pandemia del COVID-19 durante la administración Trump, estos políticos están acusando a China de violaciones de los derechos humanos, específicamente en las áreas de las protestas de Hong Kong y el “trabajo forzado” sobre los musulmanes uigures en la producción de algodón.

Por ahora, los funcionarios de Biden han declarado que no es concebible un boicot por parte de los atletas estadounidenses, principalmente debido al multimillonario patrocinio corporativo que implica la transmisión de los Juegos, especialmente por parte de Comcast. Otra consideración es la de los atletas chinos que podrían ganar medallas y que han emigrado a Estados Unidos. Un boicot no les permitiría mostrar su talento, ni ser explotados por los equipos y las empresas deportivas estadounidenses con fines de lucro.

Zhao Lijian, portavoz del Ministerio de

Asuntos Exteriores de China, rechazó las acusaciones de abusos y afirmó: “La politización del deporte dañará el espíritu de la Carta Olímpica y los intereses de los atletas de todos los países. La comunidad internacional, incluido el Comité Olímpico de Estados Unidos, no lo aceptará”.

(ESPN, 7 de abril)

Los mayores países imperialistas, como Estados Unidos, Alemania, Francia y Gran Bretaña, siguen buscando el derecho a presumir cuando se trata de ganar el mayor número posible de medallas de oro, frente a países como China, Corea del Norte (RPDC), Rusia u otros países que en su día pertenecieron al bloque de Europa Oriental pro-soviético.

Independientemente de que el gobierno de Biden ceda a la exigencia republicana, el debate sobre el boicot o no boicot seguirá discutiéndose públicamente, acaparando la atención mundial. La amenaza de boicot se ve intensificada por el retraso en la celebración de los Juegos Olímpicos de verano de 2021 en Tokio, aplazados el pasado verano debido a la pandemia.

El mayor violador de los derechos humanos

Para ser claros, el gobierno de Biden está totalmente de acuerdo con los republicanos en su opinión sobre China. Su decisión sobre cómo proceder con China se basa en la táctica, no en los principios.

Todas las administraciones estadounidenses, dirigidas por demócratas o por republicanos, han tratado de socavar, si no de derrocar, a la República Popular China debido a su economía comprometida pero todavía socialista.

Esta es la base económica sobre la que los ataques políticos anticomunistas están siendo vomitados tanto por los portavoces de la derecha como por los liberales burgueses, siendo la derecha la más agresiva.

Las protestas en Hong Kong contra China no están dirigidas de forma independiente, sino que cuentan con el apoyo de las fuerzas imperialistas, especialmente de Estados Unidos y Gran Bretaña. Esto se hace muy evidente con el ondeo de la Union Jack pro-colonialista y de las banderas de Estados Unidos en cada protesta.

Como explica en parte la declaración “El papel de Estados Unidos en las protestas de Hong Kong”, firmada por el Centro de Acción Internacional el 30 de junio de 2019: “Hong Kong es un centro del capital financiero mundial. Es profundamente hostil a las medidas sociales que han sacado a cientos de millones de personas en la China continental de la pobreza extrema y han proporcionado altos estándares de atención médica, educación e infraestructura moderna”.

“Las fuerzas del capital financiero de Hong Kong y sus aliados en Estados Unidos y Europa quieren alejar a Hong Kong de China, para que funcione como un puesto de avance económico y político en la región.

“Esto significa limitar al máximo la integración jurídica y política con China. Con este fin, Estados Unidos ha proporcionado un amplio apoyo político, financiero y mediático a las protestas.” (workers.org/2019/06/42820)

Compara estas protestas pro-imperialistas con las protestas en Estados Unidos que exigen justicia y cambio social — y que se enfrentan a la represión policial militarizada y a las brutales detenciones masivas.

¿Cómo puede una persona progresista — o alguien con algún conocimiento de la historia de Estados Unidos, tanto del pasado como del presente— tomarse en serio las reclamaciones de violaciones de los derechos humanos en cualquier país cuando Estados Unidos es realmente el mayor violador de los derechos humanos en el mundo?

La sociedad estadounidense está plagada de violencia de clase

Desde los atentados del 11 de septiembre, hace casi 20 años, los musulmanes han sido perseguidos legalmente por el gobierno de Estados Unidos y han sido objeto de ataques racistas, incluyendo asesinatos en masa en sus lugares de culto e incluso en el trabajo. Recientemente, el 15 de abril, cuatro trabajadores sijs fueron asesinados por un ex trabajador blanco de 19 años en unas instalaciones de FedEx en Indianápolis, Indiana. ¿Cuándo se ha preocupado el poder en Estados Unidos de los derechos de las religiones no cristianas, a menos que les convenga, como ahora con el ataque a China?

Los asiático-americanos, especialmente si son mujeres, han sido objetivo de los supremacistas blancos misóginos en Estados Unidos. Por ejemplo, el 16 de marzo, seis mujeres asiáticas que trabajaban en spas cerca de Atlanta, Georgia, fueron asesinadas a tiros. ¿No es esto una violación de los derechos humanos?

¿Y qué hay de los “trabajos forzados”?

Continúa en la página 11

No a la OTAN y a la Quad

Los primeros 100 días del gobierno de Joe Biden han recibido la mayor publicidad por sus \$2 billones de dólares para el alivio de COVID-19 y otra propuesta de 2 billones de dólares para infraestructura. El proyecto de ley de infraestructuras — supuestamente financiado con impuestos a los más ricos 1% — aún no ha sido aprobado. Algunos lo llaman el programa social más amplio desde la Gran Sociedad de Lyndon Baines Johnson.

LBJ, recordamos aquí, escribió su historia menos con su Gran Sociedad que con su escalada de la guerra de Estados Unidos en contra de Vietnam. Esta escalada creó miseria en Indochina, llevó a Johnson a retirarse anticipadamente y, finalmente, a una ignominiosa derrota del imperialismo estadounidense.

También Biden propone infraestructuras pero provoca conflictos en todo el mundo. Ahora mismo -primavera de 2021- las principales maniobras militares tienen como objetivo a Rusia y China.

Los aliados imperialistas europeos de

Washington dieron la bienvenida al régimen de Biden. El nuevo presidente de Estados Unidos parecía más dispuesto a dar a estos aliados de la OTAN -Gran Bretaña, Francia, Alemania, Italia, etc.- una parte más razonable de la riqueza saqueada al resto del mundo. Y menos críticas socarronas. En público, al menos.

Ahora las maniobras “Defender Europa” de la OTAN cuentan con 28.000 tropas de Estados Unidos y 25 aliados y socios de la OTAN bajo la dirección del Pentágono que extienden COVID-19 por Europa mientras amenazan a Rusia. (Véase el artículo de WW, [tinyurl.com/ysytf84](https://www.workers.org/2021/05/13/ysytf84))

Al otro lado del globo, la Marina de Estados Unidos surcará las aguas del Mar de China Meridional y Oriental a partir del 11 de mayo en alianza con sus compañeros de explotación de Australia, Japón e India -a los que se unirá este año por primera vez la Marina francesa.

Como tiene cuatro miembros, llamaron a esta alianza “el Quad”, como en

cuadrilátero. Con la incorporación de Francia, ahora la llaman Quad+1, aunque parece que la adhesión de Francia sigue siendo condicional.

La Quad dirige su energía y sus buques de guerra contra China, bajo la dirección del imperialismo estadounidense. Todos ellos tienen amplias relaciones económicas con China. Aunque la Cuarta no ha alcanzado todavía el nivel de una OTAN asiática, la participación del imperialismo francés muestra su potencial.

El colonialismo francés se adueno de Indochina durante un siglo hasta la ignominiosa derrota de los gobernantes franceses en 1954 en la batalla de Dien Bien Phu en Vietnam. Hay que preguntarse si el actual régimen francés sueña con un regreso, esta vez subordinado a Washington. Es un sueño que puede convertirse rápidamente en una pesadilla. Los estrategas del imperialismo japonés, que en su día ocupó China, Corea y, durante un periodo más breve, Filipinas y otros países del Indo-Pacífico, deberían recordarlo también.

Un diluvio mediático corporativo que demoniza a China acompaña la demostración de fuerza de los buques de guerra

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editorial