Mandates alone can’t stop COVID

By Betsey Piette

With pandemic rates surging, President Joe Biden on Sept. 9 announced plans to mandate vaccinations for tens of millions of U.S. workers against COVID, including in the private sector, health care and federally funded programs. He also announced plans to encourage K-12 schools to mandate masks for all, require vaccines for workers and increase COVID testing. His plan would restore funding to districts risking funding cuts for violating their state’s anti-mask restrictions.

Under Biden’s executive order, all businesses with more than 100 employees must require workers to be immunized or submit to weekly testing. Around 50,000 health care facilities that accept Medicare or Medicaid funding would be required to vaccinate workers. Federal employees will be required to get vaccinated or lose their jobs, without the option to be tested.

Biden’s order, which still must be written, will impact an estimated 80 million workers—two-thirds of the U.S. workforce. Businesses would be required to give workers paid time off to get vaccinated. Bosses who ignore the mandate could face a fine of $14,000 per violation. Workers face even more—the loss of their jobs.

150,000 cases and 1,500 deaths per day

The pronouncement comes while new U.S. infections have surged to over 150,000 a day, with daily deaths rising to 1,500, largely due to the delta variant. Despite these new COVID numbers—the highest since early this year—there is already widespread opposition to Biden’s plan, particularly in states where governors have already restricted mask mandates and vaccine requirements.

But not all the opposition is coming from the usual suspects. Politically, the anti-vaxxers and anti-mask movements have polarized the population, confusing many by making the issues “individual rights” vs. “authoritarian” governments. While “populist/fascist” types aggressively defend the right to refuse vaccines, not everyone opposed to vaccine mandates is a right-winger. Many in communities of color are leery of government-backed medical campaigns. Racist, often dangerous health policies and clinical experiments have historically targeted Black and Brown communities. One of the most infamous was the Tuskegee syphilis study (1932-1972), a study of Black men, many of whom had the disease. They were left untreated, even after penicillin was found to be an effective cure. Also, women in Puerto Rico were subjected to widespread forced sterilization from the 1930s to 1970s.

Some people with disabilities are unable to wear masks for health reasons, while others with compromised immune systems are unable to be vaccinated. U.S. corporations, eager to force workers to return to their jobs, regardless of safety issues, may be more inclined to support Biden’s plan. Several large companies already mandate vaccinations or regular testing. However, a meatpacking trade group voiced opposition to the vaccine mandates, citing fear of losing workers—although they seemed less concerned when their unprotected workers were dying from COVID.

The labor movement is also torn over vaccine requirements. It is no surprise that both the National Nurses United and the American Federation of Teachers support the call, given the particularly deadly impact of COVID on their members. But others, including the United Auto Workers and some public employee unions, see the mandate as government trampling on workers’ rights and opening the door to having other concessions imposed.

The American Federation of Government Employees challenged the implementation of the policy as not giving workers a voice in their working conditions.
Nabisco strikers say, ‘No contract, no snacks!’

By Lyn Nesley
Portland, Ore.

It’s Day 32 of the Nabisco strike in Portland. Picket lines swell every Saturday, when members of unions, groups and the community join together in a support rally for the striking Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Union Local 352. The message is clear from rally speakers, picketers’ placards and chants: “We are in it to win it!” and “Don’t buy Nabisco products.”

The picket line is four blocks long, along a highway with a constant stream of drivers honking in support as they pass by.

During this Saturday’s Sept. 11 rally, a huge semitruck was prevented from turning in to the plant, as picketers gathered together to block the driveway. The driver was stalled in the turning lane for over five minutes, until an unrelenting crowd forced him to drive away.

Doug, retired Nabisco worker, said, “Our goal is to get the word out that every crafter that sticks on the shelf is a loss for Nabisco’s owner, Mondelēz International.” He said some of the flour they are using is stale, because supplied by the company when I first started.”

Doug reported that Nabisco guards tried to intimidate protesters by showing them and getting up close in their face, as they blocked scabs from getting to the plant. Scab-carrying buses and vans were pushed back into the neighborhood, and the strikebreakers were forced to walk to the plant through the “walk of shame.”

BCTWGM Vice President Mike Burlingham said at today’s rally: “Today is a personal milestone for me, as this is the official 14-year anniversary of my employment at Nabisco. That used to mean something; but now, it’s just a number. It means nothing, because I am no longer going to be able to plan with the retirement I was promised by the company when I first started.”

Rebecca Cooper, second from the right, strategic campaign manager of the Oregon Nurses Association, stands with four members of their union. ONA union members have supported the Nabisco strike since the beginning.

Donna Marks, center, a spokesperson for the BCTWGM union, will be speaking about the Nabisco strike at a Sept. 30 WWF webinar, “Signs of Struggle and the Road Ahead: Workers Fight Back.”

Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinationals, multigender 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 never-ending quest for ever-greater profits.

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

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

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

WWF 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.

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

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Mexican top court says abortion not a crime

By Monica Moorehead

Mexico’s Supreme Court voted unani-
mously 10-0 to decriminalize abortion on Sept. 7, a major victory for women and others who have the ability to become pregnant. The 11th judge was absent during the vote. Abortion has been legal in Mexico City since 2007.

The 10 judges made the decision when they ruled a law unconstitutional in Mexico’s northern Coahuila state that imposed up to three years of prison time for women who underwent illegal abor-
tions and the people who aided them. It is estimated that hundreds of Mexican women have faced false criminal charges of homicide for the “crime” of seeking an abortion from 2007 to 2016.

Paula Avila-Guillen, executive direc-
tor of the New York-based Women’s Equality Center, states, “Abortion has been severely criminalized in Mexico. And every woman currently imprisoned in the country for abortion can use this precedent to be freed.” (Washington Post, Sept. 7)

This overturned law is very similar to the Texas anti-abortion law, which the U.S. Supreme Court upheld, that criminalizes anyone who gets an abortion beyond the first six-week term of preg-
nancy. The law lets anyone sue for a “bounty” of $10,000 against those who “aid and abet” pregnant people to get an abortion after that time period, although not the pregnant person, who would not face a lawsuit or a financial penalty.

These reactionary laws are likened to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 that placed bounds on enslaved Black people who dared to escape north to freedom, and on the abolitionists who helped them. While the Sept. 7 ruling does not automatically legalizes abortions throughout Mexico, it does lay the legal basis for those who have been imprisoned for either hav-
ing abortions or aiding others in getting the procedures to be released in all 32 federal entities that make up Mexico.

Only Oaxaca, Hidalgo and Veracruz have taken Mexico City’s lead for the past two years in decriminalizing abortions. Two medical services have been established due to the religious influence of the Catholic Church. Mexico may very soon join Argentina, Cuba, Guyana and Uruguay as the fifth country in Latin America and the Caribbean to legalize abortion. This will be a historic development, since Mexico has the second largest Catholic population of Catholic followers in the region after Brazil.

Melissa Ayala, speaking on behalf of the Mexican feminist organization GIBER, commented on the ruling, “This will not only have an impact in Mexico; it will set the agenda for the entire Latin American region.” (Washington Post, Sept. 7)

The ruling which decriminalizes abor-
tion is rooted in the growing women’s movement throughout Mexico, which also leads the struggle against gender-based violence. An average of 10 women a day are murdered in Mexico; 2,000 women were murdered during the first seven months of this year.

International Working Women’s Day 2020

On March 8, 2020, International Working Women’s Day, the country’s National Palace in Mexico City was stormed by tens of thousands of people, the majority of them women. They were armed with bats, blowtorches and hammers, demanding the government end gender-based violence, known as femi-
cide. Thousands of women followed up on that demand the following day, by carry-
ning out a one-day national strike.

The right to an abortion and the
right to live free from male-dominated violence are very much tied to women’s and others’ peoples’ right to control their own bodies.

While the Mexico ruling is a big step forward in making abortions legal, the Texas abortion law is one big step back—wards and an effort to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortions for women in 1973.

Activists in Texas, which is stolen from Mexico, will no doubt take part in the Oct. 2 demonstrations scheduled to take place in every U.S. state and Washington, D.C., to demand abortion access for all.

The victory in Mexico will no doubt be a big inspiration for others who have the ability to become pregnant.

Evictions threaten millions of U.S. workers

By G. Dunkel

Between 2 and 4 million households, out of 80 million rental households, will lose their homes due to evictions in the next two months, according to a survey by the U.S. Census Bureau. This is four times as many as would typ-
ically occur nationwide throughout an entire calendar year. (Washington Post, Sept. 4)

The Census report notes that nearly 40% of those at risk have an income of less than $25,000 a year. (tinyurl.com/3umvf7fx)

How many households are disposessed, and how quickly the process will go, will depend on how quickly local eviction courts work and how many landlords practice “private” evictions with hired thugs. Neither the courts nor the landlords are known for paying any attention to tenants’ rights, especially since the legal framework around property developed centuries ago from feudal courts designed to protect landlords.

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision on Aug. 26 to cancel the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ban on evictions—a decision SCOTUS based on the CDC’s “lack of authority” to make such a ban. Research published by the National Institutes of Health has argued that evictions can hinder the spread of COVID-19.

While some NIH conclusions are based on models, there is research that supports the conclusion, such as a paper examining the spread of SARS-COV-2 in Philadelphia. (tinyurl.com/eqian2a)

Resistance to evictions is growing stronger. In acknowledgement of this mounting socially disruptive pressure, two newspapers—New York Post and the Washington Post—featured the same picture of a Sept. 4 protest in New York City where the Workers Assembly Against Racism called for “No evictions. Cancel rent!” (tinyurl.com/eqian2a)

Failure of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Responding to the economic crisis caused by COVID-19, Congress passed a series of emergency rental assistance packages beginning in 2020 that reached a total of $46.5 billion.

The amount allocated to the Rental Assistance Program is about 90% of the total rental arrears by some measures. While the money comes from the federal gov-
ernment, some states and some cities that already have rental assistance programs can apply for this aid and set up programs to disburse it. The response from states that lack existing programs is slower, because they have to set them up themselves.

It appears that only 7% of the money allocated to rental assistance has been disbursed.

The program has been beset by strict requirements—such as requiring landlord-tenant leases, onerous appli-
cations and problems in making information available to communities. The program has been met with signif-
ificant landlord resistance, especially since rents in many areas of the U.S. are spiking, and owners see eviction as a chance to get higher rents.

Millions of renters don’t have leases, especially when they are living in illegal apartments. Los Angeles is esti-
imated to have 200,000 illegal apartments. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio recently claimed that the city has 100,000 illegal basement apartments. In rural areas, people rent rooms or sheds. LGBTQ+ renters are facing even worse than the gen-
eral population. About 1 in 5 of LGBTQ+ renters are behind on rent, according to an August brief from the Williams Institute. Of that number, nearly half fear they will soon be displaced. (tinyurl.com/2vzmjhn)

The pressure to disburse more rent assistance more quickly is growing intense, especially with the economy stuttering in reaction to the delta variant.

The CDC eviction moratorium, which ran between Sept. 4, 2020, and July 31, 2021, helped to prevent at least 1.5 million eviction filings across the U.S. That was less than half as many cases as are usually filed over a similar period. (evictionlab.org/eleven-months-edc)

From mid-March 2020 up until Sept. 4, landlords have filed for 504,892 evictions in six states—Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri and New Mexico. The filing was allowable under the CDC ban, which only prohibited actual evictions. Now that the ban is off, these filings can be turned into actual evictions quickly.

Evictions will be a problem for workers in the U.S. as long as workers don’t have the right to a liveable wage, health care and housing. Organizing against evictions now is part of the struggle to gain those rights.
Throughout West Virginia, mine workers, activists and workers from around the world commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Blair Mountain over the Labor Day weekend. There were over 20 activities held in the northernmost part of the state close to Pittsburgh to the southernmost part of the state in Mingo and McDowell Counties.

The battle of Blair Mountain was the longest and most violent clash between two armed forces within the U.S. aside from the Civil War against the slavery. As a result of this battle, the miners at Blair Mountain developed through a dialectical process.

In 1920, thousands of coal miners of many nationalities in Mingo County were organizing and went on strike against very exploitative conditions. At that time, 90% of the coal miners in the state were forced to live in company houses inside company towns that were operated by coal bosses. Mine workers were limited to shopping and company-owned stores with company-issued money known as “scrip,” and they were forced to send their children to coal company schools.

In some instances, women were subjected to sexual abuse by company town officials, in exchange for scrip. (Appalachianhistory.net, Nov. 6, 2013) According to Dr. Chuck Keeney, quite the “grandson of Frank Keeney,” a socialist labor leader and a key figure in the Blair Mountain Battle, “West Virginia had the highest percentage of company towns compared to any other state.” (The Valley Labor Report, April 3)

After miners began to organize, they were kicked out of the company houses and forced to form tent colonies along the Tug River. In June 1921, coal bosses hired 700 armed men to cover the miners who were planning to go on strike. The Cold-Blooded murder of 33 miners at Matewan, just a few miles away from Blair Mountain, is fairly depicted in the movie “Matewan.”

In some cases, armed miners formed the Red Neck Army, thousands of Black miners formed an encampment in Kanawha Valley. Armed miners form the Red Neck Army and they were forced to form tent colonies along the Tug River. In June 1921, coal bosses hired 700 armed men to cover the miners who were planning to go on strike. The Cold-Blooded murder of 33 miners at Matewan, just a few miles away from Blair Mountain, is fairly depicted in the movie “Matewan.”

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At a partisan pro-worker newspaper Red Bandanna was presented by various union pride— and those who express a willingness to fight for their rights.

The real International Workers Day is May 1, not the first Monday in September. The struggle continues, with all workers who take this occasion to celebrate union pride — and those who express a readiness to fight for their rights.

Since Works World’s first issue in 1977, the newspaper has covered class struggles with a slant. WW is unapologetically committed to a politics of labor, oppression and struggle, and to the development of workers’ organizations. Since then, workers have fought fiercely against concessions in union contracts, including the hundreds of work stoppages demanding COVID protection and sick pay, walkouts at McDonald’s and Google opposing sexual harassment, and work and hunger strikes by incarcerated workers. Many articles have supported the Fight for $15/hour (at least) and a union.

This year’s front pages have focused on the Amazon union drive, led by Black Workers United, the importance of passing the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and more pro-labor stories. WW issues include at least one page devoted to workers’ struggles. Our weekly show on the Picket Line column contains timely news of organized and unorganized workers in motion.

Your donations matter!

Workers World depends on your support. The WW Supporter Program was founded 44 years ago to help build this revolutionary socialist paper. Since the early 1990s, the fund has supported the WW’s newspapers business, where WW articles are put up daily and the PDF file of the weekly issue is posted. The newspaper is now being printed and mailed out once a month.

For donations of $60 or a year $120 or $300 or more you can, members receive a year’s subscription, letters about timely issues and one, two or three free subscriptions, respectively, to give friends. Supporters can receive the book, “What road to socialism?” (Notify us). Or read it for free at workers.org/books.

Write checks, either monthly or once a year, to Workers World. Mail them with your name and address to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at workers.org.

Workers World commemorates centennial

The Battle of Blair Mountain

By Otis Grotewohl

West Virginia

By Otis Grotewohl

By Otis Grotewohl

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By Otis Grotewohl

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Alabama coal miners on strike, nurses and students walk out

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Centreville, Ala.

Sept. 12 — At the beginning of July, Alabama’s vaccination rate was the lowest among U.S. states, with only 34% of its people fully vaxxed. Now the state has been hit by the most contagious delta variant. Hospitalizations have risen fivefold in the last two months.

On Sept. 6, the evening of Labor Day, over two dozen emergency room nurses and hospital workers refused to clock into their night shift at UAB Hospital in Birmingham to protest working conditions and unfair pay during the pandemic. The hospital is the state’s largest single-site employer.

When a local WTVM 13 reporter conducted a live interview with the three spokeswomen for the multigenerational, multinational group, one made this statement: “We all came into nursing because we have a compassionate heart, and we want to care for people. But going through such COVID surges and being understaffed, it’s taken a toll on all of us. Obviously we want to continue to do what we love. But it’s time we get the equal pay that we deserve.”

“We’re not just fighting for our night-shift team, we are fighting for the ER department as a whole, day-shift and night-shift. And that goes for the whole hospital. We want to thank our day-shift team, because they are in there supporting us by staying overtime, caring for the patients coming into the ER now. Nobody is being denied care, and no care is being delayed.”

Lindsey Harris, president of the Alabama State Nurses Association, spoke after the workers later entered the hospital to clock in. Harris said Alabama nurses are paid 8% less on average than their counterparts in neighboring states.

In a protest of COVID conditions in the public schools, students at Bessemer City High School walked out Sept. 2. The city of Bessemer adjoins Birmingham and is the site of the historic 2020 union drive by majority-Black workers at the local Amazon warehouse to affiliate with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

A ruling on whether workers will revote on union membership is still awaited from the National Labor Relations Board. The Marysville plant signed union authorization cards. If a majority of workers in the United Auto Workers (UMWA) have travelled twice to New York to demonstrate on Wall Street against BlackRock, the mega-budge fund that’s the main shareholder of Warrior Met. The union workers say the financial giant is blocking progress toward a fair contract.

In 2016, when the miners accepted a drastic $6-an-hour wage cut and sacriﬁced health beneﬁts to bring the company out of bankruptcy, management promised the cuts would be restored once the business was solvent. A 2020 year-end statement showed the business is back in good shape. But the company is refusing worker demands for pay increases, an end to unfair disciplinary and ﬁring policies, and improvements in working conditions.

Warrior Met mines are life-threatening workplaces — sunk 1,400 to 2,100 feet underground, these are some of the deepest vertical-shaft coal mines in North America. In 2001 methane gas explosions killed 12 workers there.

While local cops have pulled up over UMWA strikers to allow strikebreaker buses into the mines, community support for the miners is strong on the ground. This includes the union Strike Pantry, headed up by UMWA Auxiliary Locals 2360 and 2245. Auxiliary President Haeden Wright said in a tweet: “The pantry was formed at the start of the strike to help provide mutual aid to the 1,000 families on strike. Most of us have young children. We believe we are teaching them through our actions the importance of union, solidarity, and ﬁghting for a better future.”

Minnie Bruce Pratt dedicates this article to Dennis Mobley, her former classmate at Bibb County High School, who died in the 2001 methane gas explosion.

Strike mood growing

UAW members tired of concessions

By Martha Grevatt

Several hundred workers at a local Amazon warehouse in Montevallo refused to clock in last week, beginning a strike that has lasted six days. The workers are organizing with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

In the plant, a weekly solidarity rally at nearby Tannehill State Park. The mining companies have been hit hard by the pandemic, which also caused a dramatic drop in coal demand.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Arizona has a union membership rate of 11.5% — the highest of the coking coal states. A recent study found that the closing of the Phoenix plant could result in a loss of up to 10,000 jobs in the region.

Coal miners on strike stay strong

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Alabama has a union membership rate of 8% — the highest of any Southern state except Maryland. The 2020 U.S. union membership average is 18.5% of employed wage and salary workers.

Here in Central Alabama, mine worker union organizing in defiance of state segregation dates back 100 years. Brookwood coal miners at Warrior Met are entering their sixth month on strike against that international coal company. The miners are hanging tough on the picket lines, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and hold a weekly solidarity rally at nearby Tannehill State Park.

The miners of Local 2245, United Mine Workers (UMWA) have travelled twice to New York to demonstrate on Wall Street against BlackRock, the mega-budge fund that’s the main shareholder of Warrior Met. The union workers say the financial giant is blocking progress toward a fair contract.

In 2016, when the miners accepted a drastic $6-an-hour wage cut and sacriﬁced health beneﬁts to bring the company out of bankruptcy, management promised the cuts would be restored once the business was solvent. A 2020 year-end statement showed the business is back in good shape. But the company is refusing worker demands for pay increases, an end to unfair disciplinary and ﬁring policies, and improvements in working conditions.

Warrior Met mines are life-threatening workplaces — sunk 1,400 to 2,100 feet underground, these are some of the deepest vertical-shaft coal mines in North America. In 2001 methane gas explosions killed 12 workers there.

While local cops have pulled up over UMWA strikers to allow strikebreaker buses into the mines, community support for the miners is strong on the ground. This includes the union Strike Pantry, headed up by UMWA Auxiliary Locals 2360 and 2245. Auxiliary President Haeden Wright said in a tweet: “The pantry was formed at the start of the strike to help provide mutual aid to the 1,000 families on strike. Most of us have young children. We believe we are teaching them through our actions the importance of union, solidarity, and ﬁghting for a better future.”

Minnie Bruce Pratt dedicates this article to Dennis Mobley, her former classmate at Bibb County High School, who died in the 2001 methane gas explosion.
Mandates alone can't stop COVID

Continued from page 1

several states have mandated that incarcerated workers either be vaccinated or remain in solitary cells, guard and other prison employees have remained exempt from mandatory testing and vaccines.

How should a workers' party view this? How do we promote intelligent public health measures while defending workers' and union rights? Where have there been successful vaccination campaigns, and why did they work?

Vacine mandate history

Mandatory vaccines are not new in the U.S. But the extreme circumstances, smallpox outbreaks triggered the establishment of vaccination mandates, so that smallpox was eventually eliminated. The growth of public schools led to vaccine mandates for diseases, including measles, mumps, and others. In 2007, Texas, under Gov. Rick Perry, became the first state to mandate that all girls entering sixth grade receive the human papillomavirus (HPV) to prevent infections that can cause cancer.

On Feb. 20, 1905, the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of Jacobson v. Massachusetts upheld the constitutionality of local health authorities' efforts to vaccinate the general population. By requiring smallpox vaccinations, the court ruled, the states were acting to protect the public interest. The Jacobson decision involved the constitutionality of a law, while Biden's mandate came via executive order.

Successes and failures of vaccine programs

Beyond the issues of mandates and anti-vaxxer opposition, other conditions make it difficult to expand the population receiving vaccine in the U.S. From the beginning, even regulations regarding mask wearing and COVID testing were left up to local politicians and officials to decide. Testing supplies were initially flawed and later limited. Many still question the accuracy of COVID cases and death counts reported in the U.S.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has often issued contradic- tory, confusing, and conflicting guidance. Especially concerning was their May 2021 recommendation that vaccinated people did not need to wear masks, including indoors. By May 2022, the CDC, which has since retreated on the policy, let unvaccinated people, often with chronic underlying conditions, go out in public without them.

Even COVID vaccination programs were flawed from the start, again left up to states and localities to set guidelines on who was eligible. Access to vaccines was essentially determined by one's zip code, with no centralized programs for vaccination distribution.

Lack of access to medical facilities and vaccination distribution centers continues to impact poor areas, both rural and urban. The requirement to produce an ID has restricted access for undocumented immigrants.

Alabama woman achieves 94% vaccination for community

Residents in the isolated rural commu- nity of Panola, Ala., population of 400, began dying from COVID early on. The closest health clinic was over 30 miles away. Longtime African American resi- dent Dorothy Oliver decided to try to reverse this. She launched a very grass- roots campaign to educate her neighbors about COVID, have them tested and get them to sign up for vaccinations.

Oliver went door-to-door to talk to everyone. At first, she did not encourage people to get a vaccine. But in late 2020, she decided to strongly encourage the vaccine clinic—30 miles away. After she con- vinced nearly the entire population to sign up for vaccines, she was able to arrange drive-through clinics of COVID vaccines. Her efforts resulted in 94% of her town being fully vaccinated—while less than 4% of the rest of Alabama is fully vaccinated.

Oliver’s story, the subject of a mini-doc- umentary, could be replicated by orga- nized labor. What if unions encouraged shop stewards, usually the most active organized labor. What if unions encouraged shop stewards, usually the most active

available as a free download at workers.org/books

9/11 commemorations should be seen for what they are: an opportunity for the U.S. ruling class to use a collective trauma — the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City — to whip up jingoist and superpatriotic sentiment.

Recall the official public details of the September 2001 attacks. Saudi citizens in Al Qaeda, allegedly angry over the U.S. occupation of their country since 1990, tar- geted Wall Street financial capital, the Pentagon war machine and probably the U.S. Capitol. Biden just visited the World Trade Center memorial, the site of a plane crash in Pennsylvania con- nected to September 11 attacks, and the Pentagon in Arlington.

Bush’s gang punished none of its Saudi allies. Instead, they welded the popular trauma like a club. They first invaded Afghanistan, then invaded and occupied oil-rich Iraq. In the name of defending U.S. interests in the Middle East, the Empire has been waging war to replace its own puppet regimes and superpatriotic sentiment. The goal of this whipping up of panic and jingoism is to convince much of the population to rally around the U.S. flag and support Pentagon military intervention anywhere in the world.

In this 20th anniversary year, the propaganda onslaught is coated with the balm of an appeal to national unity. In 2001, the ruling group in George W. Bush’s White House used the trauma to declare a “War on Terror” — as a pretext to unleash wars of terror on the people of the world.

That’s no exaggeration. According to the latest 2021 figures, issued by the prestigious Watson Institute of Brown University, since Sept. 11, 2001, the U.S. has killed a minimum of 929,000 people in battle, with multiples of that number dying from conditions created by the wars. They have transformed a minimum of 38 million people into refugees, driving them from their homes with only their clothes, starving them and their children. The numbers include victims in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, the Philippines, China, and Syria, for which both Republican and Democratic administrations can be blamed. (tinyurl.com/yjgt908j)

The Bush administration’s U.S. and their semi-czars in the Democratic administration had a goal. The goal was to reconcile, for imperialist domination, parts of the world that had achieved a certain amount of sovereignty.

The existence of the Soviet Union until 1991 had in most cases, defended that sovereignty from direct

imperialist intervention. With that defense now removed, the Empire has the excuse to use a collective trauma — the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City — to whip up jingoist and superpatriotic sentiment. With that defense now removed, the Empire has the excuse to use a collective trauma — the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City — to whip up jingoist and superpatriotic sentiment.

The 9/11 commemorations should be seen for what they are: an opportunity for the U.S. ruling class to use a collective trauma — the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City — to whip up jingoist and superpatriotic sentiment.

The 9/11 attack on symbols of U.S. oppression also had humanitarian victims — a real cross section of the U.S. population worked in the World Trade Center, includ- ing all types of essential workers who maintain build- ings, and clean up food, as well as every type of office worker, of all beliefs and from all parts of the world involved in the wars. They were killed — able-bodied and disabled. People who wrote then and continue to write for this newspaper worked at the WTC on that day. Enough to share the risks and the trauma, and we mourn the victims.

These losses make us even angrier at U.S. strategists who use the anniversary to again manipulate the feel- ing of unity to push a more imperialist national identity to build toward the next imperialist war.

 Moved by the death of his own sister in this imperialist war, Mexico’s national president, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, has mobilized his government to undertake the most significant peace-building project in Mexico’s history. In September 2021, Biden was finally withdrawn all U.S. troops from Afghanistan, a war the U.S. started in 2001 to attack the Taliban and al-Qaeda groups, and to remove the threat that those groups posed to U.S. interests in the region. However, the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan has not ended the violent conflict in that country. Indeed, it has only accelerated the violence, as the Taliban and other extremist groups have intensified their attacks on civilians and military personnel.

The withdrawal of U.S. forces has also had significant consequences for the global economy. The U.S. military presence in Afghanistan was the largest in the world, and its withdrawal has contributed to a sharp decline in global economic growth. The withdrawal has also had a negative impact on the U.S. economy, as the country has lost a significant number of jobs in the military sector.

The end of the war in Afghanistan has also had implications for the environment. The war has had a significant impact on the environment, as the U.S. military has been a major contributor to pollution in the region. The withdrawal of U.S. forces has also contributed to a decrease in pollution in the area.

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**Rally outside Attica prison commemorates 1971 uprising**

By Arjae Red

Attica, N.Y.

Prison abolitionists from all across the country came together in the New York cities of Attica and Buffalo on Sept. 9 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the uprising at Attica prison, where prisoners stood up in 1971 to demand political rights and better conditions for living and working. The Attica Uprising ended with many prisoners and even guards being slaughtered by the state, under orders of then-Gov. Nelson Rockefeller.

These recent events paid respects to those who had been killed and the families behind bars. They held the calls for the abolition of prisons, police and ICE. Both events were in solidarity with the organization Jailhouse Lawyers Speak, a collective of radical incarcerated activists who made a call to action for nationwide prison abolition demonstrations on Aug. 21 and Sept. 9.

The first event was a demonstration outside Attica prison. A group gathered to read the original demands made by the Attica prisoners 50 years ago. They used a loudspeaker for those inside the facility to hear. After the demands were read, demonstrators took turns reading the names of those who had been killed. Demonstrators held a banner reading: "Attica is all of us! Abolish ICE and prisons!"

An event later in the evening took place at MLK Park, on the east side of Buffalo. Attended by about 75 people, it featured speakers from many organizations across the country, other longtime activists and family members of those who had been involved in the Attica Uprising.

Speakers included: Lion Blyden, son of Herbert Blyden, chief negotiator for the Attica prisoners during the uprising; Good Leaf, brother of Dacajewiath/John Hill, a leader in the Attica Uprising and member of the American Indian Movement; Ramadan Abdullah, former Black Panther and former resident chaplain in Attica prison; BaBa Eng, restorative justice advocate and director of programs for Prisoners Are People Too.

A major theme of today’s rally was “In the spirit of abolition: End gang affiliation.” Family members, activist attorneys and incarcerated activists spoke out against the campaign to label prisoner activists “gang members” for their work on behalf of the incarcerated. Speaker after speaker not only condemned last year’s rapid removal of prisoners from their cells, they described the continuing harassment and criminalization of the organizing efforts of Black and Latinx prisoners inside.

In a recorded statement, Talib Williams — a prisoner inside who bravely exposed last year’s racist attack on prisoners — drew the connection between the racist attacks on Black people in the streets with the violence against the same community in the prisons.

“We are in a time where it is important for us to imagine a world without prisons. ... While this may be hard, we have to remember that there was once a time when people could not imagine a world without slavery,” Williams emphasized, “There is an alternative to prisons.”

Today’s event, which was part of national “Shut ‘Em Down” actions held Aug. 21 to Sept. 12, was organized and supported by the National Lawyers Guild-SF Bay Area, California Families Against Solitary Confinement, No Justice Under Capitalism, Anti-Police-Terror Project, Oakland Abolition and Solidarity, and Workers World Party.

**Soledad rally supports prisoner lawsuit against racist brutality**

By Judy Greenspan

Soledad, Calif.

Sept. 12 — Activists held a press conference and rally today outside Soledad Prison, California Training Facility (CTF) to support a legal complaint by prisoners inside. Prisoners filed the lawsuit to expose the racist “cell extraction” of 200 Black prisoners last July and the subsequent criminalization of the victims of guard violence.

In the middle of the night of July 20, 2020, guards targeted 200 Black prisoners and violently forced them from their cells. The guards’ official excuse was that they were investigating possible gang affiliations of the prisoners involved. The official “evidence” for gang affiliation was possession of radical prisoner writings and books by George Jackson.

After the racist assault was over, the attack sparked an outbreak of COVID at the prison.

The guards called the Black prisoners the “N” word and shouted “Black lives don’t matter” during the raid. These facts divide incarcerated activists, jeopardize their parole dates and sentence them to indefinite solitary confinement in security housing units.

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**Running Down the Walls raises up Mumia**

By Betsy Piette

Philadelphia

The fourth annual Running Down the Walls (RDTW) event took place at FDR Park in south Philadelphia Sept. 12, starting with a yoga-activated charity event, a revolutionary 5k walk/run. The day of solidarity amplified the voices of comrades behind bars, lifting them up in their struggles and maintaining material support. Over 200 people participated.

This year’s event honored political prisoners – and long-time Black Liberation activist Mumia Abu-Jamal. This year marks the 40th year that Mumia has been behind bars as a voice for the voiceless. Due to multiples health issues from medical neglect, he needs our support now more than ever. The message of the event was, “We freed the MOVE 9 after 40 years – let’s do the same for Mumia!” A huge portion of Mumia was on hand for the event.

Participants and speakers included many former political prisoners and exonerated juvenile incarcerates. Former Black Panther Albert Woodfox, freed after over 43 plus years, mostly in solitary confinement at Angola, Louisiana’s notorious state penitentiary, was on hand for the event.

Many speakers called out the historic 50th anniversary of the Attica prison uprising and urged participants to make 2021 the year to free all political prisoners. RDTW events have been held across the U.S. since 1999 to raise funds for numerous political prisoners. Each year, incarcerated comrades participate in the 5k event by running inside prison walls.
Workers World/Mundo Obrero condena la ley antiaborto de Texas

La semana pasada final de la ocupación estadounidense de Afganistán está restringiendo los crímenes de Washington de los últimos 20 años. Una guerra cuyo pretexto era combatir el “terror” está terminando, en medio del terror que han generado los asesinatos masivos de Estados Unidos.

La culpa de la matanza, durante los últimos 20 años, se cubrió con una lluvia de mentiras. En la acelerada línea de tiempo de la inminente salida de Estados Unidos, se expuso parte de la verdad.

Un atentado suicida en el aeropuerto de Kabul dejó casi 200 muertos, entre ellos 140 civiles afganos, 30 diplomáticos y 13 soldados estadounidenses. En medio del luto por las víctimas y preguntándonos cómo un explosivo de 25 libras produjo tantas víctimas —nos enteramos de que fue un dispositivo de 5 kg que ellos mismos habían construido por tropas estadounidenses que dispaban rifles automáticos.

El Pentágono, Rambo, prometió una rápida venganza por el atentado. El ejército estadounidense no tardó en declarar que un ataque con drones habría matado al líder del grupo ISIS-K, que había asumido la responsabilidad del atentado.

Otro ataque con drones hizo estallar un coche, mostrando cómo el Pentágono “localiza” los objetivos terroristas. Luego nos enteramos de que las verdaderas víctimas de los ataques con drones eran civiles afganos, entre ellos siete niños. Menores de cinco años. No se trata de un error, es exactamente como el imperialismo estadounidense libra una guerra contra el pueblo afgano durante 20 años. Cada ataque con drones y cohetes, cada incursión nocturna en los hogares afganos, produjo víctimas civiles. Creó enemigos que, al tener pocas opciones, decidieron que incluso los talibanes eran preferibles a las tropas estadounidenses.

En 2009, personas de todo el mundo se manifestaron para encubrir los motivos de Washington y de los fanáticos antiabortistas. La resistencia, sin embargo, no tuvo éxito.

Hoy en día, debido a los avances tecnológicos, el derecho al aborto se extiende tanto a las personas como a las propiedades. En el mundo de hoy, los derechos de los ciudadanos y las mujeres se están extendiendo por el mundo.

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