

Rally for peace in Europe

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

Cleveland antiwar activists gathered at a city park April 2 for a “Rally for peace in Europe.” Speakers represented Cleveland Peace Action, Black Women’s Center, All-African People’s Revolutionary Party, Cleveland Nonviolence Network, Cleveland Club of Communist Party USA, Move to Amend, Huey P. Newton Gun Club and Workers World Cleveland. Cleveland Peace Action pulled together the broad coalition of forces to say “No war!” This was the first antiwar protest in Cleveland since the war between Ukraine and Russia began. □



WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

Counter the Big Lie! Support Workers World!

When the corporate media delivers a single position 24/7, focusing on an enemy, when they demonize that country’s leader, when opposing voices are buried in an avalanche of distortions and outright lies, where can political people find the antidote to the Big Lie?

They can turn to Workers World, the newspaper and e-zine with six decades of experience resisting a ruling-class propaganda machine that is as well-oiled and well-funded as its military machine. The U.S.-NATO offensive in Eastern Europe and the ensuing war in Ukraine has confronted us with another such challenge.

With our own articles and analyses—and by making the positions taken by working-class leaders and Marxist analysts from communist parties and liberated governments from around the world easily found on the workers.org website—WW has published in one web section a wealth of in-depth coverage unavailable at few

other websites.

These articles explain the historical background and present a class context of U.S. and NATO intervention in Ukraine and conflict with Russia. Find this coverage in the right-hand column of WW newspaper’s home page at workers.org.

Our resistance is the class truth that tears down the Big Lie, and the strength of that truth depends on the support it can win from our readers.

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If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program or renew your membership. The program was established 45 years ago so readers could help WW publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to fight for revolutionary change leading to socialism.

Since the early 1990s, the fund has helped sponsor the workers.org website. Throughout the pandemic when fewer print issues have

been published due to staff health concerns, new articles have been posted daily, and the PDF of the weekly newspaper has been posted at workers.org. Not one online issue has been skipped throughout this two-year health crisis.

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We are grateful for your help in building Workers World! □

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 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 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. □

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

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Defying bigots

Trans Day of Visibility celebrated

By Betsey Piette and Minnie Bruce Pratt

To mark Transgender Day of Visibility — celebrated internationally on March 31 — activists gathered for a small rally outside City Hall in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, April 2.

Organizers with U.D.T.J. (Understanding, Devotion, Take Action, Justice) brought colorful LGBTQ+ rainbow flags. These included a “Progress Pride” flag, which carries additional black and brown stripes to represent marginalized LGBTQ+ communities of color, and a transgender flag, which carries a light blue, pink and white pentacolor.

U.D.T.J. arranged to have the transgender flag raised on the flagpole atop City Hall. Members of Philadelphia Workers Solidarity Network turned out to support the event with signs protesting transphobia, racism and other forms of bigotry.

U.D.T.J. organizer Kyle McIntyre, who organized the first George Floyd protests in Upper Darby in 2020, chaired the rally and led the group in chants including “Transwomen are women,” and “Trans rights are human rights!”

Upper Darby is a large, very diverse suburb west of Philadelphia. The event was held in a plaza sandwiched between two major streets, and there was steady car traffic, with some drivers honking in support.

‘Trans rights are human rights’

In the first months of 2022, over 151 pieces of anti-LGBTQ+ measures were introduced in U.S. state legislatures, to make a total of over 300 measures currently



Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, April 2 WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

being considered. Attacks on young trans people were particularly aggressive and hateful.

A weekly ACLU update on this reactionary trend notes: “These measures target transgender and nonbinary people for discrimination, such as by barring or criminalizing health care for trans youth, barring access to the use of appropriate facilities like restrooms, restricting trans students’ ability to fully participate in school and sports, allowing religiously-motivated discrimination against trans people or making it more difficult for them to get identification documents with their name and gender.” (Anti-LGBTQ Bills, aclu.org)

In February Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued a directive to mandate state investigation of parents as “child abusers” if they provide their children with gender-affirming medical and mental health care. On March 11, Texas District Judge Amy Clark Meachum blocked the



St. Petersburg, Florida, March 12

investigations, calling Abbott’s actions unconstitutional.

The Idaho House of Representatives passed a bill March 8 to criminalize gender-affirming medical procedures for transgender youth. If the bill becomes law, anyone “convicted” of helping a child travel across state lines to access such health care could be sentenced to life in prison.

Ohio’s “SAFE” bill “prohibits specific medical coverage for LGBTQ+ youth, specifically trans or nonbinary people,” according to Ohio Capitol Journal.

On March 23, Florida’s Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into law the infamous “Don’t Say Gay” bill that allows parents to sue teachers and school systems in the state who provide a curriculum including LGBTQ+ sexuality and gender issues.

Pushback to these bigoted bills has been energetic and widespread. Young people in Florida arranged militant walkouts from their schools to protest the “Don’t Say Gay” bill. (See ‘Save our children’ — from bigotry and hatred!’ Workers World, March 16).

Activists demonstrate to legalize rent control

By James Raynor
Atlanta

About 200 people marched to support legalization of rent control and to protest rapidly rising rental costs. As landlords continue to buy up all available housing, they have raised prices faster than almost anywhere else. The march, sponsored by the Atlanta Housing Justice League, brought together many tenant activists along with individuals fighting evictions and gentrification. The march started from a fenced off park in the middle of the city to a fenced off state capitol building in downtown Atlanta. □



Rally opening at Troy Davis Park. WW PHOTO: JAMES RAYNOR

Trans lawyer Sydney Duncan in Alabama states emphatically that the boilerplate anti-trans bills, promoted for political gain, will ultimately be struck down because there is no evidence for the state-specific legislative claims that trans people or trans issues cause harm.

Instead, Duncan says, “In each case, [there] is a groundswell of support for trans people. Corporations and universities have been cowardly; but in every state, allies and parents and doctors and trans kids have stepped up, with a wave of folks who do care, standing behind them. The [bigots] are loud, but they are small. We are many, and we are right.” (Twitter @sydneyvduncan, March 9) □

Meow Wolf Workers Collective wins first contract

By Stephanie Hedgecock
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Santa Fe’s own Meow Wolf Workers Collective CWA 7055 won its first union contract March 18, after over two years of fighting for their right to organize and one final week of work-site activities including desktop picket signs and workers wearing yellow to support their bargaining team.

Over 170 working artists in creative studios, operations staff and other workers at the “House of Eternal Return” won a \$60,000 minimum starting wage, stated CWA representative Milagro Padilla. “We have an agreement that we’re really proud of. What we’re hearing back from the union at this point is that people are happy. I’m so proud of the work these folks have put in. [Meow Wolf] really does employ some of the brightest and most creative people I’ve ever met, and I’m so proud of the work we’ve been able to do together over the last two and a half years.” (Santa Fe Reporter, March 18)



Desktop picket sign.

Contract gains include job security protections, overtime pay, doubled parental leave, a minimum wage of \$18 an hour to increase to \$20 by 2025, and \$1 million to be spent on raises across the board. (Santa Fe New Mexican, March 23)

Over the last two years, MWWC artists faced a mass layoff of 200 workers at the outset of the pandemic, and 56 more in April 2020, with 39 later recalled. The CWA-affiliated MWWC filed unfair labor practice charges in December over management changing holiday and time-off policies, requiring new hires to sign anti-union agreements (known as “direct dealing”) and refusing to provide critical information to the bargaining team.

In a March 9 letter to SFReporter.com, MWWC organizer Bill Rodgers, Meow Wolf Story Lead, wrote, “Meow Wolf is well on its way to becoming a national success, a multimillion-dollar entertainment studio known the world over. Surely its workers have earned security by now. Surely, they have earned a wage increase that can keep

their families housed in their hometown.”

The internationally renowned art installation created by local artists has made millions for investors. As reported by the Santa Fe New Mexican, “Meow Wolf has evolved exponentially in five years, from a scrappy group of anti-establishment artists to an entertainment juggernaut with new interactive installations in the works in Las Vegas, Nevada; Denver; Phoenix; and Washington, D.C.” (Nov. 14, 2021)

Initially faced with management opposition, MWWC, backed by the Communications Workers and the New Mexico Federation of Labor, bargained with management last year and obtained agreement that Meow Wolf would immediately recognize the bargaining unit, if a majority voted yes in a non-National Labor Relations Board-conducted election. A majority of the workers voted yes in an Oct. 19, 2021, election.

In 2019, the Santa Fe New Mexican



Meow Wolf workers wearing yellow to support the Collective’s bargaining team.

covered two separate worker-filed lawsuits “against unfair pay and discrimination based on gender and sex.” About three months after the lawsuits were filed, Meow Wolf had raised its minimum starting pay, from \$11.80 to \$17 an hour, and later settled the lawsuits out of court.

After the contract victory, MWWC CWA 7055 artists turned out to support Activision Workers now fighting for a contract with CWA support, co-creating a pro-union arcade game, “Super Anti-Union Campaign Simulator,” unveiled at the March Game Developers Conference in San Francisco. □

WWP Prisoners Solidarity Committee demands

Ban shackling!

By Marie Kelly

Members of the Prisoner Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party investigated the use of shackles on prisoners while hospitalized and concluded this inhumane practice is widespread in hospitals across the United States. The PSC of WWP is calling on health care workers to support a ban on this practice, as it flies in the face of ethical patient care.

To that end, the PSC created a list of demands around the proper treatment of incarcerated sick, elderly or pregnant people. These demands only address the tip of the iceberg of the appalling conditions that exist behind the walls of the U.S. carceral system at the local, state and federal level.

The United Nations Human Rights Council issued a strong statement in 2021 against shackling of incarcerated persons when they are sick and/or hospitalized. This was in response to the shackling of political prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal, while he was hospitalized with heart failure and a COVID-19 infection.

The statement read in part: “The use of shackles during his hospital stays is deplorable and causes Mr. Abu-Jamal additional and unnecessary suffering.” Citing international standards on the treatment of prisoners, the U.N. human rights experts added that “instruments of restraint are to be imposed only when no lesser form of control would be effective to address the risks posed by unrestricted movement.

“We are concerned that the medical condition of Mr. Abu-Jamal (who also suffers from a severe skin condition and hepatitis C) could be linked to years of medical neglect by the Department of Corrections of the state of Pennsylvania,” the experts said.

The prisoners’ rights movement has made little progress since the 1971 Attica prison rebellion, when imprisoned organizers penned the powerful statement read by L.D. Barkley: “We are men! We are not beasts, and we do not intend to be beaten or driven as such. The entire prison populace . . . has set forth to change forever the ruthless brutalization and disregard for the lives of the prisoners here [at Attica] and throughout the United States.”

Firsthand accounts from incarcerated people describe rampant medical neglect by for-profit health care contractors hired by prisons across the country. The harshness and apathetic treatment that incarcerated people routinely endure flies in the face of every ethical standard this health care worker has held for my entire professional life

as a Registered Nurse. Compassionate release of elderly or terminally ill persons rarely takes place. When it does, it is often too late to provide any true quality of life.

Last week, the PSC had the opportunity to present the Ban Shackling demands at a national conference of Healthcare-Now, a group of labor activists and health care workers who are campaigning for the enactment of single payer universal health care in the U.S. We are raising awareness among health care workers of the dire health conditions of incarcerated people and connecting with allies to grow a campaign that will empower physicians, nurses, and other healthcare workers to resist the status quo, insist on delivering quality care to incarcerated patients and ultimately work with us to abolish the carceral system. □



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WORKERS WORLD PARTY

BAN THE SHACKLING OF INCARCERATED PEOPLE RECEIVING MEDICAL CARE

1) Ban the practice of shackling the incarcerated when hospitalized.

Shackling of chronically ill and elderly incarcerated people has many negative impacts: difficulty by healthcare workers to properly assess and treat a patient's condition, risk of falls and deep venous thrombosis, damage to skin integrity, and increased pain from poor mobility and positioning. Escape is not a legitimate concern. An incarcerated person must be very sick before the prison administration will allow them to go to an outside hospital. On top of that standard protocol has an armed guard stationed with an incarcerated person 24 hours a day. U.N. human rights experts issued a statement April 20, 2021 saying “...International standards on the treatment of prisoners clearly stipulate that instruments of restraint are to be imposed only when no lesser form of control would be effective to address the risks posed by unrestricted movement.”



2) Healthcare professionals must advocate for the release of incarcerated persons who are ill or aged.

Carceral institutions are not equipped to provide timely proper treatment for either acute or chronic medical conditions. Prisons and jails have not protected the incarcerated during the COVID pandemic resulting in death by incarceration. Many have comorbidities that put them at great risk of succumbing to infectious outbreaks such as influenza or coronavirus. The aged incarcerated population must be guaranteed Medicare and the quality of care it could provide. “From forced sterilization to ‘food deserts’ and chemical contamination, from toxic stress based on the environment in which one lives to the criminalization of mental illness, Black, Brown, and Indigenous people are neglected and left out of any illusion of the human right to health...” “Spirit of Mandela Tribunal 2021. Health care is a human right.

3) Restraints should NEVER be used for staff convenience or client punishment.

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) regulations for not using physical restraints must apply to incarcerated persons who are admitted to a hospital. The healthcare team is responsible for practicing situational awareness, evaluating and initiating other therapeutic measures to adequately provide treatment, before resorting to using restraints. A complete doctor's order is needed to initiate the use of restraints. Restraints without a valid and complete order are considered false imprisonment and hospitals are liable for any injury to patients caused by restraints and jeopardize the hospital's accreditation status.

4) Incarcerated pregnant persons will have their privacy safeguarded at all times and will remain unshackled during labor, childbirth, and postpartum recovery.

The United Nations, Amnesty International, and other prisoner advocacy groups condemn the practice of shackling during childbirth. Kimberly Mays, who was shackled during childbirth in 2000 likened it to giving birth in front of “human masters”. The American Nurses Association and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists are against the practice citing the risk of harm to both the mother and fetus. The American Psychological Association takes a stand against the practice because of the emotional trauma it causes especially since many incarcerated women have been the victim of sexual or physical abuse. After delivery, shackles interfere with the bonding process between mother and child since the mother has a hard time safely handling her baby and breastfeeding. In 2018, the First Step Act became a federal law banning shackling of imprisoned individuals during childbirth labor in federal prisons. As of 2020, 27 states ban shackling of pregnant prisoners. In practice, these laws are frequently ignored and not enforced. The shackling of patients during childbirth should be banned unconditionally at all levels of the carceral system. Anything less than a total ban will allow this dehumanizing practice to continue.



“I’m a human being. And I deserve to be treated as a human being. I want you all to know that there are things going on behind closed doors. People like me are not being treated as human beings. We’re being treated like cattle... And we need help; it’s as simple as that. We need help.”
- Bradford Gamble, freed from imprisonment after 46 years

Prison ‘health care’ system is broken

By Sam Smith

Note: This writer is incarcerated at Old Colony Correctional Center in Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

I feel like in today’s society, where we are all supposed to be more focused and open to new ideas, creativity and innovative expansions within science and medicine, we could and would see that elected officials are not only abandoning us, they are robbing us at the same time.

They robbed us of our communities when they stole our family and friends away from us. They robbed us of our right to equality and equal protection with these laws that only seem to focus on what they see is a roadblock or what they need removed in order to further the goals and interests of their families and friends.

Their system is broken, in every section of their government, and that’s a fact. There is overwhelming evidence to support that conclusion beyond a shadow of a doubt.

We’re being treated less than human, trapped behind these walls in these cages called cells, suffering with no voice. Very few staff members are willing to buck the

system, acknowledge they can hear our moans and provide the care that we need. But let’s take a quick look at their medical system which the public is paying for.

It’s built as a pay-to-play system where the privatized company comes in with a ‘cost containment’ system. They promise to reduce prisoner transfers to any outside hospitals for actual treatment by 27%, allegedly to save around \$140,000 annually.

This money isn’t given back. There’s no after school programs, there’s no extra funds for school books or lunches. Nothing goes to the taxpayers, and no one’s taxes are being lowered. What these savings really means is that by optimizing the delivery of medical care onsite, prisoners’ medical needs are being ignored.

The fallout is that state and federal governments will foot the bill if the prisoner makes it out alive, with their mental and physical health worse than it could and would have been if they were never in their custody.

While the company heads give themselves bonuses, prisoners like myself are left suffering in pain for days, weeks, months and years. Told to fill out sick call slip after sick call slip, I was given the run

around and had to explain the same thing over and over again. There needs to be outside independent oversight on what, when and how, the state’s monies should be spent, there needs to be an audit.

I sat in this institution with a third-degree burn on my lower right leg caused by a defective band aid they gave me to cover up an open wound they were trying to prevent from getting infected. I sat here for close to 90 days with an open wound which ended up getting infected.

They refused to get me treatment, they refused to cover it up, they refused to acknowledge that I contracted an infection only making matters worse. Some nurses found a way to get me medication to treat the infection but it was too late. It wouldn’t work so I was taken to an outside hospital where the nurse practitioner refused to sign a no shackle order. She said, “Take him however you want, I don’t care.”

Upon arriving at the hospital, I find out that this same person sent me out to check for blood clots, not to address the infection which has my leg looking like a burned balloon. The hospital checks me out and says to the correctional officer: “You can take him back. There’s nothing wrong with him.”



The correctional officer actually defended me and said no. He then said to the doctor to check him for an infection, which they did. I ended up being hospitalized for 30 days, and told that if I wasn’t admitted I could have died, best case was amputation of my leg.

I tell you this story to show that when a stray animal is found and saved on the street, they receive better care and treatment than any prisoner inside these institutions. They receive a full physical and if any abnormalities are discovered, they are addressed. And they can’t speak for themselves and they’re never ignored.

We speak and we’re constantly ignored. I can honestly say that nearly every man and woman behind these walls are doomed to lose, not just a piece of their lives, but a piece of their mental and physical health. This is not because of the [medical] cost from natural causes of growing old but because of the cost containment policies that help the rich get richer and their co-defendants get to live comfortably as long as they keep their mouth shut!

As I write this, I learned that Wellpath Founder and CEO Francis (Jerry) Boyle, whose company is tasked with providing health care for over 300,000 prisoners in 40 states, earning \$1.6 billion in annual revenue, just pleaded guilty to federal bribery charges. □

BAN THE SHACKLING OF INCARCERATED PEOPLE RECEIVING MEDICAL CARE

5) Healthcare institutions must have the incarcerated patient verify the family or loved ones they designate as eligible to receive updates on their medical condition and treatment.

Hospitals must establish a protocol to make every effort to ask the patient who is eligible, under the Health Insurance and Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy rule, to be notified of the patient’s condition and treatment and display this person(s) contact information prominently in the patient’s record. A member of the patient’s care team should communicate regularly on the patient’s condition and treatment with the individual(s) who the patient designated.

6) Hospitals can adopt policies and staff educational programs on caring for incarcerated admitted patients.

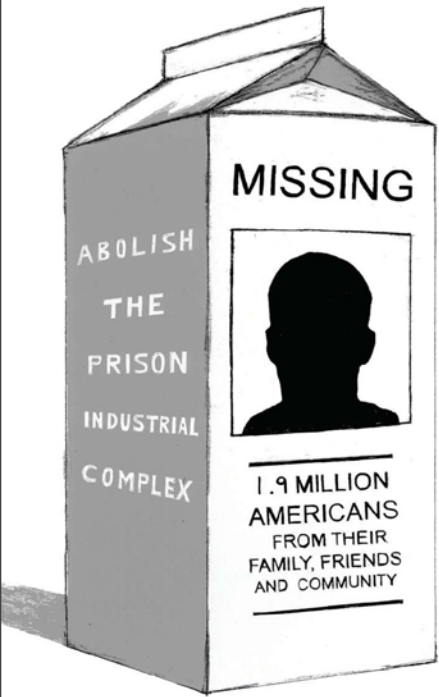
The focus of such programs should be on compassionate not punitive care and follow ethical standards of practice outlined by the **American Medical Association (AMA) in their code of ethics:** “All individuals have a fundamental right to be free from unreasonable bodily restraint...Except in emergencies, patients should be restrained only on a physician’s explicit order. Patients should never be restrained punitively, for convenience, or as an alternative to reasonable staffing...Physicians who order chemical or physical restraints should: 1) Use best professional judgment to determine whether restraint is clinically indicated for the individual patient 2) Obtain the patient’s informed consent to the use of restraint...” <https://tinyurl.com/3yzuec84>

and in the **American Nurses Association (ANA) code of ethics,** specifically:

“Provision 1: The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person. Provision 3: The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient. Provision 4: The nurse has authority, accountability and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to provide optimal patient care.” <https://tinyurl.com/2p8s56n8>

7. Healthcare professionals should support prison abolition efforts.

The carceral system is physically, emotionally, and psychologically inhumane. Solitary confinement, overcrowded living conditions, inadequate nutrition and healthcare, meager wages (if any) for work, a judicial system which is disproportionately incarcerating people of color are all factors in the disintegration of families and communities. The only credible solution to this public health and humanitarian catastrophe is prison abolition. **“Loud and clear are the echoes of chattel slavery in the Americas, that developed handcuffs, shackles and fetters to control the enslaved population...”** Dr. Johanna Fernandez.



Questions? Contact us:
Email prisonerssolidarity@workers.org



“You might say it’s not your problem. But if you had a loved one who was in the same position that I’m in, that I was in, and that people are in jails and prisons all over, you’d think different. So think different now. Don’t wait. Let us know that you love us, that you care about us.”
The word ‘care’ in your job description — health care — should mean a lot.
- Bradford Gamble, freed from imprisonment after 46 years

Support readers behind the walls

Workers World is an independent, revolutionary communist newspaper circulated for over 60 years. We are committed to building solidarity among workers and oppressed peoples around the globe. For that reason Workers World has always provided FREE subscriptions and other radical printed materials to prisoners in the U.S. One in three subscribers to Workers World is a person who is currently behind bars — in hundreds of prisons across dozens of states. We need your help to provide even more prisoners with FREE subscriptions to Workers World!

We receive hundreds of phone calls, letters and subscription requests from prisoners. In addition to the work we do fighting racism, imperialism, gender oppression and labor exploitation every day, we need the resources to keep operating. These resources also allow us to continue our daily work of organizing defense committees, coordinating prison visits, planning demonstrations and mass mobilizations for prisoners, and shedding light on prison conditions. Donating now is an immediate way you can help fight this racist, capitalist system and empower our readers to tear down the walls once and for all. Donate today at patreon.com/wwp.

No justice, no coffee!

Starbucks workers’ ongoing fight against union busting

By Arjae Red
Buffalo, New York

Starbucks workers in Buffalo, N.Y., called a boycott April 2 to protest the unjust firing of Angel Krempa and Nate Tarnowski. Both workers were well known union supporters, terminated for bogus violations. Starbucks workers and community members held a picket at the store the workers were fired from and distributed fliers explaining the situation to customers.

Many organizations came out to support us including Cincinnati Socialist Workers Organization, Queen City Workers’ Center, Buffalo Democratic Socialists of America, Nickel City Ultras, members of International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 10, and Workers World Party Buffalo branch.

The union statement describes the circumstances of Angel’s firing as follows: “Starbucks claims they fired Angel because of two days where she was late to the store, but Starbucks policy only requires that Angel call the store ahead of time to notify her team she would be late, which she did. She has the call logs and the files to prove it. The real reason Starbucks fired Angel is the same reason she has been targeted for months, because she is a union leader who is unafraid to stand up to the company.”

Situations like this are becoming more common in stores across the country, like in Memphis, Tennessee, where Starbucks fired an entire organizing committee led by Black and Brown workers, many of them women.

Other workers in Buffalo were unjustly fired in previous weeks such as Cassie

Fleischer and Danny Rojas. Starbucks is waging a war against its workers that extends far beyond simply union busting. Workers have faced vicious intimidation, threats and relentless harassment. This is on top of having transfer requests denied, hours slashed, and other examples of economic retaliation.

One Starbucks worker this writer spoke to, Colin Cochran, who works at the Walden Andersen store, said, “They closed my store for two months in the middle of our union campaign, but we won anyway. We are gonna keep winning across the country. We’re not gonna be afraid of Starbucks’ despicable union busting tactics. It’s personally-targeted disgusting behavior from Starbucks corporate and we’re gonna make them pay for it!”

Strike wave grows

About halfway through the picket, police were called on the workers, allowing them the opportunity to fill their historic role as strikebreakers. Starbucks management claimed they did not call them and it was instead the property owner who called, but Starbucks also falsely claims it does not bust unions either. Whether they were called by the boss or landlord, the police eventually left without incident and the picket continued strong.

This picket in Buffalo follows three strikes at other Starbucks locations in Kansas City, Missouri; Denver, Colorado and Olympia, Washington, also protesting union busting and retaliation against workers. Among the growing resistance from workers are also some major victories. The day before on

April 1, the Starbucks roastery in New York City became the newest store to officially unionize. The roasteries are massive compared to cafes. The New York City one has approximately 100 workers — a major win for the union, and a huge blow to Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz’s swollen ego.

One worker at the roastery, Ashley Carrigan, said in a public facebook post, “While we are paid almost bare minimum, our CEO [Kevin Johnson] was given a \$60 million ‘golden goodbye’. We deserve more.”

This is a sentiment shared by many Starbucks workers, who do not fail to see the hypocrisy in the company’s “we’re all partners” attitude. When some “partners” make off with millions of dollars, others struggle to pay their rent and medical bills.

Impact of Amazon workers victory

On the same day as the NYC roastery victory, there was an enormous union victory of Amazon workers on Staten Island, New York. This is a major development for the whole working class and signals a reemergence of a militant organized labor movement that has been long overdue in this country.

Despite having two almost opposite strategies in organizing, workers in Starbucks Workers United and Amazon Labor Union have one thing in common — the fact that their campaigns are both entirely worker-led.



PHOTO: CASEY MOORE

Workers and community allies picket in front of the Buffalo Starbucks where the recent firings occurred.

Starbucks Workers United is affiliated with the union Workers United, under the parent-union SEIU; however, the role of union staff is minimal and serves to support worker leadership. Organizing committees made up of rank-and-file workers are responsible for developing strategy, bargaining with the company, and everything in between.

ALU built its infrastructure from the ground up, not affiliated to any other larger entities. This makes the victory against Amazon all the more impressive. Chris Smalls, president of the ALU, said in a now infamous quote, “We would like to thank Jeff Bezos for going to space because while we were here, we were signing people up.”

As the class struggle intensifies, workers across industries are showing that we aren’t going down without a fight.

The author is a contributor to Workers World newspaper and a union committee organizer with Starbucks Workers United in Buffalo.

ALU historic victory

Continued from page 1

in what would be a killer for many union campaigns: an annual workplace turnover rate of 150%. The Staten Island warehouse in particular has an injury rate three times the national average. Many workers who had signed cards either were fired, went on disability due to injury, or quit just to protect their health.

And finally, Staten Island was typical of many Amazon locations: in hard-to-reach, out-of-the-way places that make it difficult to hold protests and solidarity actions in support of the workers. Most Manhattan, Brooklyn or Bronx residents who don’t have cars have to take a ferry to Staten Island — then a bus trip to reach the Amazon warehouse.

Key role of working class solidarity

That all these barriers were overcome is a testament to the rank-and-file, worker-to-worker organizing carried out by the ALU leadership. The twenty core leaders read labor history on the basics of deep organizing, and patiently won over their co-workers. ALU leader Derrick Palmer described how he even came into work to organize on his days off.

It’s also a testament to rising class consciousness in the working class as a whole, a phenomenon rooted in workers’ experience of the pandemic, coinciding with tens of millions of people in the streets fighting racist police violence. The inspiring street movement had a radicalizing effect, while frontline workers — pushed to endanger their lives for the sake of profits — were compelled to fight back.

Workers overcame the bosses’ divide-and-conquer use of racism, a feature in this struggle since the walkout Smalls led

in March 2020. Amazon managers were caught plotting to discredit any organizing efforts with racist smear tactics directed at Smalls. This continued throughout, with the most recent example being the February arrest of Smalls for delivering food to workers during their break. During that incident, the New York Police Department arrested two other ALU workers — one white, one Latinx — but only Smalls was frisked for possible weapons.

Another part of the victory was solidarity, mostly from socialists who prioritized the Amazon union fight as a do-or-die struggle. Critical to the campaign’s success, some very effectively “salted” in Staten Island. Others, including Support Amazon Workers Network (SAWN) and Workers Assembly Against Racism (WAAR), built solidarity actions that raised the profile of the struggle and pressured organized labor to support it.

Even before the Staten Island campaign launched, activists with SAWN held a series of national demonstrations in early 2021 supporting the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union’s first attempt to unionize Amazon in Bessemer, Alabama.

This included protests at one of Amazon’s union-busting law firms Morgan Lewis in Philadelphia and other cities. New York City was the site of protests in Union Square, Harlem and Brooklyn. The point was to build classwide solidarity — to convince the average worker why it was in their interest to support unionization at Amazon.

WAAR for Amazon workers

Activists with WAAR were there when Smalls launched the Staten Island warehouse union campaign March 31, 2021. Over the next year they continued to prioritize the Amazon union fight in

assemblies attended by activists involved in multiple New York struggles.

WAAR activists made frequent trips to Staten Island to the ALU tent stationed across from the Staten Island warehouse, signing up workers on cards and putting up pro-union artwork on the chainlink fence. WAAR leaders also purposely organized protests centrally in Manhattan, to break the struggle out of its physical and political isolation.

Between May 2021 and February 2022, WAAR brought together students, migrant workers, Black Lives Matter activists, housing activists and trade unionists in a series of street actions that rarely featured less than ten ALU members as the main speakers.

Many of these actions ended with marches led by Chris Smalls to Jeff Bezos’ luxury Manhattan penthouse. On Black Friday, which has become a day of global anti-Amazon protest, Smalls led a march from Bezos’ residence to the penthouse of Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz. The next day, the protest was covered in USA TODAY’s roundup of global anti-Amazon protests.

When ALU first filed for a union election in November, WAAR held a picketline outside the NLRB. They organized banner drops, and visibility campaigns that plastered subways with stickers demanding that Amazon recognize the ALU. WAAR put out a series of bilingual zines promoting the Staten Island campaign. Zines with pro-worker, pro-union cartoons were passed out to workers in the warehouse, and featured



Banner drop near Staten Island warehouse.

QR codes to the online union card site. In the union election home stretch, socialists, anarchists, workers rights activists, and union members made thousands of calls to Amazon workers, urging them to vote yes for the union. This was organized virtually, with people making calls from home, and from the offices of UNITE HERE Local 100, and WAAR.

Solidarity was crucial in the Amazon union victory, making sure the brave ALU activists weren’t fighting on their own.

This year’s May Day rally in New York — set for 1:00 p.m. at Union Square — will add a main demand to the international socialist and workers’ holiday: Stop union-busting! Along with the union victories at Amazon and Starbucks,

the union-busting will continue. Already, workers at Starbucks stores were fired, their hours and benefits cut.

The Amazon Labor Union victory has given a powerful boost to the workers’ movement. Building solidarity and increasing collaboration among struggles will be critical for defending the gains of that movement. □



WW PHOTO: TONY MURPHY

Flower workers win strike

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

On March 22, over 70 tulip, daffodil and iris harvest workers in Mount Vernon walked out of the fields for three days, striking against terrible labor conditions. The strike was against the Washington Bulb Company, which is owned by Roozengaarde Flowers and Bulbs, the largest tulip bulb grower in the country with 2,000 acres of flowers locally.

The strike broke out just a week before the month-long Skagit Valley Festival in Washington state. Drove of tourists and shoppers flock onto the flower farms, bringing revenue for the whole valley.

The workers mass picketed with their families outside the company on the main road. The workers strike came at a very

strategic time to pressure the bosses.

Many of the workers are Indigenous from southern Mexico, and their first language is often Mixteco. They had many grievances working in the mud for demanding and intimidating bosses. Workers demanded an increase in pay, guaranteed eight-hour work days, improved sick leave and a better calculation of bonuses paid for the picking of flowers.

The farmworkers demanded access for hydrocortisone cream, to deal with the sap from cut daffodils which causes painful skin lesions. The workers won access to the cream and gloves and other protective equipment, along with better access to four portable toilets.

They also won an increase in pay and a guarantee against retaliation, according to Edgar Franks of Familias Unidas por

la Justicia (Families United for Justice), an independent farmworker union.

Based in the Skagit Valley, Familias Unidas supported the tulip workers with the strike and negotiations. The independent farmworker organization originally established their union among berry field workers with a very progressive contract after years of struggle, including a boycott of Sakuma Bros. Berry Farm, in Burlington.

The tulip workers established a seven-worker committee to negotiate with the Washington Bulb Company. Washington Bulb signed an agreement with the committee addressing



Workers harvest tulips at Washington Bulb Company.

the workers demands. Ninety-five tulip workers signed cards to join the Familias Unidas por la Justicia union.

They are now joining thousands of Amazon and Starbucks workers as well as other sectors of workers across the country to win the fruits of their labor. □

Historic one-day strike at Maximus call centers

By Betsey Piette

Workers at two Maximus federal call centers in the U.S. South held a one-day strike March 23 to demand better treatment from the company, better health care coverage and higher wages. The walkouts, involving Black women and other people of color — the majority of call center workers — took place in Bogalusa, Louisiana and Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

The call centers are in “right-to-work” states, where workers legally cannot be required through a union contract clause to join or pay dues or representation fees to a union.

Maximus has around 10,000 workers at 11 call centers in nine states. For 2021 the company reported profits of \$4.25 billion — an increase of 22.8% over the previous year. Last year Maximus CEO and President Bruce L. Caswell received \$7.9 million in total compensation.

If you have recently called 800-Medicare or an Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace line, the person answering your call was probably not a federal employee but a



Maximus workers organizing with CWA on strike for justice.

Maximus worker. Around 80% of federal government call center work is contracted out to nonunion private corporations that do not have to abide by federal standards for pay and benefits.

Maximus manages call centers for state and federal programs including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Federal Student Aid, the ACA and all things Medicare-related. A global company, Maximus provides military support services.

Call Center Workers United led the walk-out — the first in company history — on the 12th anniversary of the passage of the ACA. While not a recognized union, CCWU has engaged in organizing efforts with Communications Workers of America (CWA). While previous efforts to unionize Maximus workers have fizzled, CCWU hopes to win recognition to bargain with Maximus.

As a way to participate in the strike action, several workers held a virtual town hall, hosted by CWA local 3509, discussing the company’s practices and steps needed to win justice and fairness for its workforce. (tinyurl.com/392h86d6)

Sheree Collier, 59, who has worked for the company since 2017, makes the same per hour wage as new hires. Speaking at the virtual town hall, Collier, who works at the Hattiesburg facility, stated “While security guards average \$55,000 per year,

call center workers average \$35,000. Maximus recently sent out an email that ‘as incentive’ they would continue to pay \$15 per hour [a recent bump up from the average \$11.25].

“What Maximus has done is manipulate workers to think they are doing us a favor. But President [Joe] Biden recently announced an executive order that requires all federal contractors to pay their workers at least \$15 per hour. We are not asking for anything for free.” Collier said.

Employee co-pays for health care insurance deductibles are another key issue. Worker pressure forced Maximus to drop the individual employee’s deductible of \$4,500 to \$2,500, still \$831 more than the national average of \$1,669 for single coverage.

Maximus workers perform essential services that we all benefit from. “As long as I do my job, [Maximus] should pay me for what I’m worth. We don’t want Maximus to silence us any longer. We have a right to organize a union,” Collier said. She led the group in chants: “More dignity, more respect — more money in our checks.” □

Philadelphia Art Museum workers rally for ‘CONTRACT NOW!’

By Joe Piette

In the face of an intransigent management, who have refused to settle on a contract with workers for almost two years, over 200 Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) staff workers and their supporters rallied and marched on April 1. The museum workers won a historic victory Aug. 6, 2020, with 89% voting to unionize as the Philadelphia Museum of Art Union (PMA Union), in affiliation with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 47.

Outstanding issues involve wages, benefits and workplace initiatives, such as implementation of worker protections of job security and safety from harassment, for transfer and promotion opportunities, and for more affordable health insurance.

The energetic rally took place the same day Amazon workers in Staten Island, New York, won their historic union-recognition vote. Several speakers mentioned this union victory, which was reflected on several signs. As with workers at Starbucks and Amazon, solidarity from other workers can be critical at times when powerful capitalist institutions refuse to give workers what they need and demand.

PMA worker Lav said, “I work front-of-house as a member of the Visitor

Services Assistants team. I’ve worked at the museum for less than a year; but because turnover is so high, I’m already the second most senior person on that team. Many [workers] have left because of how management has responded to COVID-19. People are also leaving because there are so few career opportunities for Visitor Service Assistants here.”

Adam Rizzo, PMA Union President told the crowd: “It is shameful that a museum with a \$60 million [annual] budget has staff working multiple jobs to get by. The PMA prioritizes spending \$233 million on new spaces, while employees who work in those spaces haven’t received a raise in years.”

Muralist and street artist Symone Salib said, “Some of my first experiences with art came at the PMA. Workers make lasting memories, like the ones that I have, possible. But they are overworked and underpaid.”

Cathy Scott, President of AFSCME District Council 47 stated: “No employer should get away with stonewalling a fair union contract. It’s union busting, pure



Participants in PMA job action Philadelphia, April 1.



WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE

and simple. PMA has a responsibility to the community as a civic institution.”

Among largest U.S. museum staff unions

Pennsylvania State Senator Niki Saval said, “The Art Museum is wealthy, powerful and resourced. But it does not exist without its workers. Your labor opens up the world. It is cruel that you are being undervalued. Enough is enough.”

The PMA Union is one of several unionized workforces at cultural institutions in Philadelphia, including the Free Library of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Zoo. The PMA Union joins a fast-growing list of major art museums with unionized staff, including the New York Museum of Modern Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the

Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art and Seattle’s Frye Art Museum.

With their union recognition victory, the PMA became the first major U.S. museum to be organized in a “wall-to-wall” union, where all staff legally eligible for collective bargaining are represented by a single union. It made them among the largest museum staff unions in the U.S. and part of a rising tide of unionization across U.S. cultural institutions and industries.

PMA Union members are asking supporters to express solidarity by sending a letter to members of the Art Museum Board of Trustees. Tell them PMA workers need a fair contract NOW! (t.co/uTWRWSm46W) □

NATO’s global history of reaction

By Sara Flounders

The U.S.-commanded military alliance called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization — NATO, was founded April 4, 1949. Its initials describe its early geographic reach but obscure NATO’s intent, and how NATO has acted, first from 1949 to 1991, and later from 1991 to the present.

From its founding moment, NATO was an aggressive military apparatus to coordinate the police and military and intelligence apparati among the ten founding West European member countries (plus U.S. and Canada) under U.S. command. NATO’s past 30 years of steady expansion is tied to its original purpose as an imperialist weapon against the working class.

The 1991 broken promise by Secretary of State James Baker, echoed by many other Western politicians, to Soviet Prime Minister Mikhail Gorbachev that if the reunification of Germany went forward “NATO would expand not one inch to the East” is often quoted today in discussing the encirclement of Russia and the root of the war in Ukraine.

What needs to be understood is why did NATO expand? Why was NATO’s expansion inevitable?

NATO expanded because the capitalist markets expanded. The defeat of socialism in Eastern Europe and the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the auctioning off of formerly nationalized public property and industries was only possible with an enforcement organization.

Just as the U.S., as the center of finance capital, is held together by the largest repressive state apparatus, the largest internal police force, and the largest prison system in the world.

NATO’s founding principle was to ensure a strong U.S. military, political and economic presence in Europe. There was no plan to end the U.S. military occupation of Europe. Its stated purpose from its inception was a military alliance against the Soviet Union.

NATO claimed to be a collective security arrangement against Soviet expansion, even though the Soviet Union was hardly expanding. It was devastated by World War II and had suffered the overwhelming majority of the losses in human life (27 million) and in industrial capacity. Over 700 cities and towns lay in total ruin. Refugee camps and rationing dominated daily life.

The border between two social systems

But the fact that the Soviet Union had survived was threatening to the capitalist class.

In all the countries liberated by the Red Army from Nazi Germany’s occupation in Eastern Europe, workers organizations were attempting to reorganize society. Only by organizing on a non-capitalist basis could they defend their countries from absorption by Western imperialism.

Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had spoken in Missouri in 1946

denouncing this development and labeling it an Iron Curtain dividing Europe. His speech was a rallying cry to wall off all economic trade and technological assistance to the entire region the Red Army had liberated.

Socialism in Western Europe?

Capitalist domination of Western Europe was in question. What was labeled as Soviet expansion, imminent Soviet invasion, the Red Scare (with a media frenzy that matches today’s against Russia), was the growing influence of workers’ movements in Western Europe.

The organized power of the working class and of Communist parties was rapidly growing in national parliaments, city councils and powerful unions in war-torn Western Europe, especially in Italy and France. Communists had been the largest force in resistance to the Nazis during the years of German occupation.

In Greece the Communist Party, who had led the anti-fascist resistance, was openly contending for state power. From 1945 to 1949, U.S. and British active intervention in the Civil War in Greece, equipping and helping to coordinate the weak rightwing and monarchist forces, was crucial for defeating the Greek workers’ movement.

This Civil War helped convince the West European ruling class to follow the U.S. into a continent-wide military organization of the capitalist class.

A security umbrella for capitalism

NATO was understood as a security umbrella of Western European imperialist countries. It had, from its founding, a consolidated command structure, with the U.S. military on top.

U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the first Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), was the commander of this new military alliance. U.S.-commanded NATO and the Marshall Plan of U.S. loans and investment funds together stabilized capitalism in Western Europe and assured U.S. corporate domination.

The pre-World War II industrial capacity of much of the world was in ruins. Military security was the essential glue in Western Europe, binding the economic and political dominance of capitalist rule.

For decades NATO and the CIA operated throughout Western Europe, in tandem with the U.S. State Department, disrupting communist-led unions, financing interventions in elections and even using terror attacks against communists and socialist organizations and against the masses.

Operation Gladio was the code name for this ruthless capitalist subversion in Italy, some of which was revealed by Christian Democrat Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti in October 1990.

Impact of nuclear stalemate

The second event in 1949 that consolidated the NATO military alliance was the Soviet Union’s detonation of an atomic bomb on Aug. 29, years ahead of what U.S. intelligence predicted. President Harry Truman immediately called for a re-evaluation of U.S. policies, as the U.S. could no longer simply threaten to wipe out Soviet cities without consequences.

NATO absorbed Greece and Turkey in 1952. Turkey’s membership in NATO meant that NATO had military control of the

Bosporus Straits — the essential navigational waterway from the Mediterranean Sea into the Black Sea — a choke point for the Soviet ports of Odessa and Sevastopol.

It was only after West Germany’s acceptance into NATO that the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries formed the Warsaw Pact in 1955 in self-defense. The Soviet leaders viewed West Germany’s military and industrial leaders as a continuation of the ruling class that backed the Nazis.

World’s largest military

Although the mass U.S. military during World War II had demobilized by 1949, with NATO U.S. troop presence in Europe tripled by 1950 and reached over 450,000 in 1957. In 1987 U.S. troops surged again to 340,000. (Stars and Stripes, March 15)

Today there are 100,000 U.S. troops in Europe. They are less than 3% of the 3.5 million NATO military force, among its 30 members, with another 2 million reservists and paramilitary forces. But U.S. officers still command this alliance — the largest military force in the world under a single command.

NATO has a permanent, integrated military command structure, composed of both military and civilian personnel from all member states. These forces are trained to follow a strict command structure, use the same equipment and deploy to whatever battlefield the U.S. commanders order them to, including Iraq, and Afghanistan. Each country is forced to pay for the maintenance of their own forces. (shape.nato.int)

Cold War leads to bankruptcy

The Cold War was a relentless war of military expenditures calculated to bankrupt the Soviet Union, which had less wealth and which did not exploit subject nations in the Global South.

According to a NATO report, “The Soviet Union was spending three times as much as the United States on defense with an economy that was one-third the size.” (nato.int) This policy of expanding military costs was enormously profitable to U.S. military industries.

The Soviet Union had to match each U.S./NATO escalation. The 1980 U.S. strategy to deploy nuclear-capable Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe aimed at bankrupting the Soviets.

Reagan’s 1983 Strategic Defense Initiative known as “Star Wars,” called for enormous new military expansion. The Soviet Union, starting in the mid-1980s, devoted 15-17% of its gross national product to military spending.

Enacted with great U.S. and Western applause, concessions by Mikhail, who became the Soviet leader in 1985, led to the complete unraveling and dismemberment of the Soviet Union by 1991.

U.S. victory opens endless war

Instead of the Cold War’s end ushering in the promised era of peace and stability, U.S. imperialism, now dominant, opened a new era of endless war and colonial reconquest. The targets were in Eastern Europe and a collapsed Russia, and in the energy-rich southwestern Asia and North Africa.

The Federal Republic of Germany annexed the German Democratic Republic in 1990 and both populations were absorbed into the NATO Alliance. A new era of open capitalist markets meant that

major Western corporations seized control of socially owned industries and resources in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Any country resisting complete takeover was targeted. Iraq in 1991 and then Yugoslavia in 1995 and 1999 were early victims of colonial style reconquest.

The corporate media bragged about the level of destruction of these modern, developed countries that had high levels of education, health care and infrastructure. But since they were countries that had no weapons capable of matching U.S. bombers they were destroyed with impunity. They were to serve as an example to others.

Pentagon document for world domination

What was in store for the world was discussed at the highest levels of the U.S. establishment.

In a 1992 article in Workers World newspaper, then WWP chairperson Sam Marcy wrote: “On March 8, 1992, the New York Times published excerpts from a 46-page secret Pentagon draft document, (written by Paul D. Wolfowitz), that it said was leaked by Pentagon officials. This document is truly extraordinary.

“It asserts complete U.S. world domination in both political and military terms, and threatens any other countries that even ‘aspire’ to a greater role. In other words, the U.S. is to be the sole and exclusive superpower on the face of the planet. It is to exercise its power not only in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, but also on the territory of the former Soviet Union....

“‘Our first objective,’ it states, ‘is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union. It is of fundamental importance to preserve NATO as the primary instrument of Western defense and security, as well as the channel for U.S. influence and participation in European security affairs.’

“But then it adds: ‘While the United States supports the goal of European integration, we must seek to prevent the emergence of European-only security arrangements which would undermine NATO, particularly the alliance’s integrated command structure.’ The latter, of course, is led by the U.S.” <https://www.workers.org/marcy/cd/sam92/1992html/s920319.htm>

April 4 is a day to remember not only because of the founding of NATO but the famous condemnation of the Vietnam War made by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1967: “The greatest purveyor of violence in the world is my own government. I cannot be silent.”

NATO is the greatest purveyor of violence and we cannot be silent. □

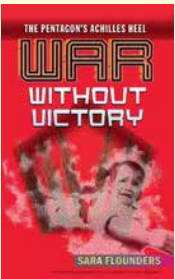
WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

“By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”

– Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009; Foreign Minister of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

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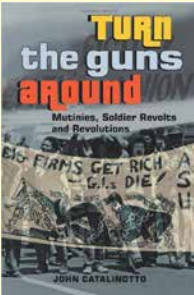


Turn the Guns Around

By John Catalinotto

Draftees and enlistees — eighteen-year-olds from the South Bronx, factory workers from Buffalo, miners’ sons from Kentucky, unemployed youth from Watts — hate the military and the Vietnam War. They throw a wrench into the Pentagon’s war machine, becoming leaders of the anti-war movement and organizing a union in the conscript military to battle war, racism and their officers.

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Western imperialism faces its weaknesses

By Manuel Raposo

The author is editor of the Portuguese web magazine, jornalmudardevida.net. Translation: John Catalinotto.

March 28 — The G7 is united. The rest of the world is trying to avoid being towed behind them.

A key element of the West's propaganda war against Russia is the argument that what is at stake is a confrontation between Democracy and Autocracy. The argument, extending beyond the Ukraine conflict, includes China and tries to convince people that there is a conspiracy of dictatorships and autocracies around the world with the goal of undermining and overthrowing Western democratic regimes.

This supposed battle for democracy and freedom is a facade covering up what has happened in Ukraine and what is happening there now. At the same time, it is an inversion of the facts of the last 30 years: In reality, it was the Western powers — invoking a moral superiority that no one else recognizes — that carried out aggressions all over the world, violating the sovereign rights of nations, trampling on the freedom of others and flouting what they call international law.

An evil that comes from within

It is clear that the aim of this propaganda is to mobilize public opinion in the Western world. To do this, it hides the concrete origins of the Ukrainian conflict and the role played by the enlargement of NATO, obscures Washington's expansionist policy and masks the hitherto unquestioned domination by the imperialist powers over the rest of the world.

Also clear is the Western rulers' aim to obtain, from the European and U.S. populations, a carte blanche for all the actions to stimulate war that they promote under the pretext of defending freedom and democracy — or, as the crudest propagandists put it, “our way of life.”

In some ways, this insistence reveals how weak the democratic cement of the West is. What undermines Western democratic regimes are not attacks from outside. It is instead the material decay, the deepening social divide, the rotting institutions, the emptying of democratic life that strikes them from within. The examples are clear for all to see.

The end of progress

Today's Western democracies were established in a small number of developed countries and in a historically recent period of time. They were founded on continuous economic growth (itself based on the exploitation of other peoples) that allowed their ruling classes to buy the silence and accommodation of the middle classes and to stifle the complaints of the most exploited popular classes.

The crisis resulting from this growth — that is, the economic stagnation in place since 2008 — is the first factor that undermines the political foundations of the governments and thus leads to the regimes' growing inability to respond to the demands for social progress and to their tendency to impose ever greater restrictions on public freedoms.

The rebirth of fascism

The growth of right-wing extremist forces, from Europe to the U.S., is a consequence of the social crisis that has taken hold in the capitalist West and a sample of how democratic institutions fail to protect the working classes (both native-born and even less so immigrant)



The Azov Battalion is a hardcore far-right unit of the National Guard of Ukraine. In 2015, an Azov spokesperson confirmed that as much as 20% of unit soldiers are dedicated Nazis. Their emblem is a Norse symbol appropriated by neo-Nazis. (USA Today)

from the onslaughts of fascism. On the contrary, they support these forces and even see in them a weapon of last resort for the defense of the power of the dominant classes.

The tolerance with which the European Union regards the semi-dictatorships implanted in member states, such as Hungary or Poland, shows how permeable the border is between the so-called “liberal” democracies and the so-called “illiberal democracies.” This latter term is what the thinking leaders of the EU had to use in order to be able to include in the same political union one thing and its opposite.

Donald Trump's rise to the presidency of the most powerful and developed country in the world, which boasts the most elaborate democracy on the planet, cannot be seen as a mere extravagant episode but as a latent trend in all imperialist countries. The replacement of Trump by President Joe Biden, presented as his opposite, shows the rest of the world more continuity than rupture, and in many ways even an accentuation of U.S. aggressiveness.

What freedom and what democracy?

The peoples of the West have become so accustomed to judging their freedom and democratic regimes by the ritual of elections that they no longer ask themselves if they have any real democracy and enjoy any real freedom.

They only know that their personal and collective needs are increasingly eroded, that the politicians elected to govern always represent the same ruling forces and that democratic power is ultimately the monopoly of an all-powerful bourgeoisie that will not relinquish its privileges.

And they know that economic development (or the lack of it) leads to greater social inequalities from year to year. For this very reason, a huge percentage of citizens turn their backs on elections, seeing in them no chance to express their will.

What democratic legitimacy can an elected power arrogate to itself under these conditions, other than the “legitimacy” that results from the power it holds?

A ‘free choice’ ... manipulated

The manipulation of public opinion by democratic regimes does not always make use of the crude repressive methods of a dictatorship, but it is certainly more effective in collectively conditioning mentalities.

ensure that the voters of the U.S. or Europe periodically approve a permanent policy of subjugation of peoples and countries?

For the populations of the rest of the world, this evidence counts for more in the rejection of the West and its preached moral and political values than the accusations about the “imperial” ambitions of Vladimir Putin or Xi Jinping.

Interests, not ideals

The West — which basically created the conditions for the outbreak of the war and is doing its utmost to prolong it at the expense of the Ukrainians — wants to give an idealistic slant to the conflict: democrats versus autocrats, civilization versus barbarism, good people versus criminals. This attempt to give ideological cover to its own actions is intended to hide the interests at play in the conflict.

Military aid to the Ukrainian regime does not aim to defend any of these values. By avoiding a direct entry into the war, the U.S. and the EU have taken a defensive military stance, leaving it up to them to try to get the Russian Federation into a quagmire and wear it down as much as possible. In this sense, the conflict is, on the part of the U.S. and the cowed Europeans, yet another proxy war, now no longer in faraway places, but on European soil and with the Ukrainians as cannon fodder.

Turning the page

It is true that the Russian invasion was condemned by a large majority in the U.N. General Assembly. But to see this as a victory of the “free world” against “tyranny” would require too much optimism on the part of the West. In fact, this formal condemnation cannot be seen separately from another fact: Countries representing the overwhelming majority of the world's population refused to go along with the sanctions against Russia decreed by the Americans and Europeans. This means that formal condemnation is not matched by the practical condemnation sought by the U.S. and the EU.

If the values preached by Western democracies were at stake in Ukraine and were seen by the rest of the world as universal values, certainly the countries of the so-called Global South would react differently. Yet more than half of the world did not support sanctions, because it saw no reason in principle or interest in siding with the U.S. and the EU.

This more-than-half world, in its diversity, realizes the essence of the matter: The hitherto irresistible power of the imperialist powers is being called into question, as much by China's economic enormity as by Russia's military capacity and political decisiveness. And it is on this turning of the page that the majority of the peoples of the world tended to bet. □

This was proven in the 2016 U.S. elections and in the Brexit referendum that same year, with the intervention of experts in the manipulation of public opinion, making use of personal data provided by social networks, namely Facebook.

The idea of the voter's free choice, in the secrecy of the ballot box, has never had much contact with reality, given the inequalities that condition the options of each voter and the narrow alternatives that are placed before them. But with such sophisticated interventions of “modern life,” a new era in the technique of shaping public opinion has surely been inaugurated. It provides everything but the individual freedom that so-called liberal democracy wields as its emblem.

Neither law nor justice, only force

Whenever they face serious resistance to their interests, the ruling classes in Western democracies do not fight it out based on law or justice — they try to crush it with all the economic, political and military force they possess.

Invasions of sovereign countries, coups d'état, deadly economic sanctions, illegal prison systems like the U.S.'s in Guantánamo, legalization of torture, persecution of those who dare to denounce state crimes, like Julian Assange, and exceptional laws under the pretext of fighting terrorism are weapons that such democracies do not hesitate to use to impose their will.

The natural revulsion at these methods brings with it, on the part of the affected populations, a rejection of those particular democracies, their leaders, and in many cases even their peoples, who are seen as accomplices to the barbarities committed by the leaders they have elected or accepted.

The proof of the facts

How can North American or European democracies be an attraction to people in the rest of the world, if they only serve to



Ukraine

U.S./NATO-backed fascist coup & a growing people's resistance

From the pages of Workers World, 2014. Covers the Maidan, the coup that put a Western-friendly government in Kiev, the role of right-wing and fascist forces, and the efforts of leftist and progressive to resist the new regime.

Free PDF version available at www.workers.org/books

Amazon workers win with solidarity

The historic victory of Amazon Labor Union workers in Staten Island, New York — announced on April 1 — is now news worldwide. Their win is being celebrated in the mainstream press as an astounding defeat of corporate Goliath by an unknown and puny David.

But no deity-enhanced hero beat the second biggest corporation in the world. The workers won through worker power, worker organizing, worker knowledge and ingenuity — and worker solidarity, solidarity, solidarity.

As Angelika Maldonado, chair of ALU's Workers Committee, said: "Everybody was talking to everybody!" (Jacobin, April 2)

Before the victory, capitalist commentators dismissed ALU power and the company tried to discredit ALU President Chris Smalls with racist smears. Amazon poured anti-union lies like rat poison into the Staten Island warehouses. Roaming "consultants" intimidated workers and managers trumpeted fear in "captive audience meetings" of workers.

In 2021 Amazon spent around \$4.3 million on companies and law firms who specialize in "union avoidance" — i.e., union-busting. Some consultants were paid \$3,200 an hour! (engadget.com, April 1)

The average hourly wage for an Amazon warehouse worker or delivery driver is \$15-16 an hour. (payscale.com)

The company millions were soundly defeated by tenacious, imaginative and unrelenting worker "deep organizing." The union grew in strength as the 20-person Workers Committee identified and mentored others to become organizers. Every worker who wanted to be an organizer could be an organizer. Those new organizers talked indefatigably to others, most effectively within their nationality, community or language groups.

ALU received organizational support from established unions and left, socialist and communist groups. Workers



World Party is proud to say it supported the ALU from Day One. (See "Interview: Amazon worker battles billionaire Bezos," Workers World, April 7, 2020)

The result? Victory. And now that there has been undeniable victory, what is the response of the capitalist class?

There were hand-wringing diatribes that listed the terrible things that will happen. Jim Cramer of CNBC "Squawk on the Street" said: "The unions will be in charge of the time that you need to work, and that would be dreadful! One reason why Amazon works so well is that people must work when Amazon says you must work." (tinyurl.com/mufjhc3)

This Wall Street maven actually told a truth that motivates why workers should want unions!

Big business media has turned to bad-mouthing traditional labor unions in relation to "upstart" independent worker organizing, like the ALU. This is simply a variation on the "labor unions are bad for you" lies of the mandatory worker meetings.

It's the old familiar ploy of pitting workers against each other. The ruling class will use racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ+, anti-immigrant, or anti-disability

prejudice — anything to keep workers from building solidarity.

This time they are trying to split the newer "independent" unions and the older "traditional" unions.

And of course this is more disinformation. Many, if not most, of the independent unions now forming are getting some kind of support and information from established unions. For instance, the UNITE HERE Local 100 office in Manhattan was the center of phone banking for the successful ALU campaign.

Anti-union commentators are pointing an accusing finger at the recent vote at the Bessemer, Alabama, Amazon warehouse as a "failure" by the established Retail, Warehouse and Department Store Union (RWDSU).

The outcome of that BAmazon vote, which ended March 25, has yet to be decided. Objectively, the ballots show a clear and dramatic gain for the union in this second election attempt in one year. Last year's tally was a dismal 2 to 1 against the union.

This year — with increased support from their community and other local unions and a re-invigorated person-to-person campaign — the workers'

vote bounced back to a so-far-counted 993 "against" to 875 "in favor" — a difference of only 118 votes! And there are 416 contested ballots.

Victory is still possible in Bessemer. The turnaround in "yes" votes in one year is already the equivalent of an organizing triumph. Even if the contested votes are not ruled for the union, there will surely be another drive, and then another, until there is victory.

Capitalist bosses are going to use every possible tool to try to wreck the worker organizing in their factories, warehouses, schools, hospitals — everywhere.

But the ongoing Starbucks surge is now being amplified by the valiant Amazon worker victory. Already in North Carolina the formation of CAUSE has been announced — Carolina Amazonians United for Solidarity and Empowerment. African American leader Mary Hill, an Amazon worker in Raleigh, said: "We're tired of the divisions inside, that's why we decided to organize." (Southern Workers Assembly @SWA_solidarity, April 2)

Expect more campaigns to emerge immediately. Get ready to jump in and lend a hand. Worker solidarity wins! □

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Mumia and his mighty pebbles

Dear Editor:

Some years back Prison Radio quoted a progressive judge as saying that we had reached: "the twilight of evil." Half a century ago, George Jackson told us: "Fascism is here." We were devastated by his murder, but did we really heed his words? Because heeding them would have involved making radical choices, and those choices — as clinical and sobering as they are — are still to be made today.

For today the police are not defunded but refunded to the hilt, and the Pentagon to boot with the pretext of invoked "foreign" wars.

Today we live in a society where the 8 minutes and 29 seconds of George Floyd's high-tech lynching can no longer compete with the 15 seconds of one single nonlethal Hollywoodized slap that has gone internationally viral. However we must remember that films are the number two U.S. export after weapons.

Today, an Emmett Till Anti-Lynching Bill was signed in the Rose Garden and Ahmaud Arbery's name raised several times during the ceremony, but where is his mother, Wanda Cooper Jones? Where is Samaria Rice [mother of Tamir Rice]? Where is Julia Wright, whose father Richard Wright, author of "Black Boy," had an uncle lynched in Elaine, Arkansas, in 1916? Would the aforementioned have

accepted an invitation?

You tell me.

Today, we live in a nation where "the underneath of the underneath," to quote Mario Benedetti, are the political prisoners whose status remains unrecognized, because recognizing the status of political prisoners would be to concede that there is a war for liberation going on within.

Never forget that Mumia Abu-Jamal has bestowed on us that honor: We are global freedom-fighters. Never forget that Mumia, alongside many others in the Black Panther Party, took the struggle for freedom to the international level.

Never forget that on that account, freedom fighters from the world over have adopted him as the "voice of the voiceless." And that they stand ready today to place their newly found voices at his service as political character witnesses.

Never forget that his commentaries from prison are dipped in the ink of internationalism and in the mud of the "Damned of the Earth." An earth now so prevalently poisoned.

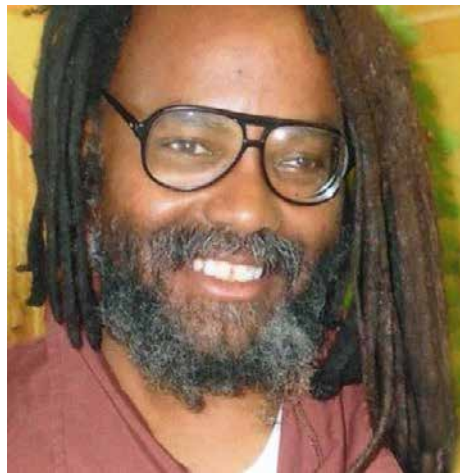
Beyond his 13 books, brilliantly deconstructing the strategy and tactics of U.S. imperialism since slavery, Mumia throws out the pebbles of his commentaries to teach us that the Empire needs two legs to stand on. There is the Prison Industrial Complex within — to warehouse the economically, racially and politically

expendable. And outside — the far-flung worldwide agro-industries, minerals and fossil oil resources that white supremacy and its neoliberal allies monopolize through imposed political and military hegemony. The peoples to whom the wealth belongs are either considered expendable like the incarcerated within — or trapped in a neocolonial pact.

So, Mumia tells us, if the U.S. chooses to play on an international chessboard — so must we. The expendables within have a lot in common with the expendables without. We must keep that inside/outside link alive. The damned all over the earth have heard this message.

A magnificent instance of such political character-witnessing is the appeal launched by NUMSA (The South African Union of Metal Workers) in April 2021, when Mumia needed open heart surgery and his prognosis was very poor. NUMSA, the greatest trade union in South Africa, gave a press conference and launched an appeal to all trade unions in Africa and the world to call for Mumia's immediate release, as well as for the release of all elderly incarcerated prisoners in Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the U.S.

The "across-the-ponders," the Mumia committees beyond the Middle Passage, in Europe, South America, Asia, Africa, the Black Diaspora and elsewhere, may appear secondary, but their eyes are on



Mumia with love, and there is both history and strategy to that love. Please allow me to send my tribute and encouragement to the Mumia Committees in Omicron-invaded and war-torn Europe (France, Germany, Great Britain, Austria, the Basque Country etc. . . .) for their long haul, discreet mobilization for him against so many odds.

As long as Mumia's words will continue to cause ripples like mighty pebbles cast from the ground zero of his prison to spread through the world, he stands an infinity of chances.

Julia Wright
March 31, 2022

Unions in India stage two-day countrywide strike

By Martha Grevatt

A gigantic countrywide general strike over political demands — known in India as a “bharat bandh” — brought out workers, students and farmers March 28-29. Media reports claim at least 50 million workers participated. Amarjeet Kaur, General Secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress, put the number closer to the 200 million that unions had predicted ahead of the strike. She said more joined the second day.

Nearly all of India’s 28 states and eight “union territories” (under federal governance) were impacted. Ten of the 11 labor federations came together around a program of demands, targeting new antilabor laws, privatization, precarious work,

low agricultural wages, rising fuel prices, growing poverty and other concerns. They have formed the “Platform of Central Trade Unions and Sectoral Federations and Associations.”

Only the labor federation allied with Bharatiya Janata Party, the party of far-right Prime Minister Narendra Modi, did not participate.

Some unions raised additional demands specific to their sector. The All India Bank Employees’ Association, for example, opposed the privatization of state-run banks and called for lower service fees and higher interest rates for customers. The strike halted or curtailed banking operations in much of the country.

Workers in a wide range of industries, including mining, manufacturing, transport

and agriculture, participated in the bandh. Students joined workers in blocking roads, even engaging in a playful game of cricket in the middle of the road in West Bengal. Farmers associations, who pushed back anti-farmer legislation last year after a one-year militant struggle, supported the two-day strike and are planning a new wave of demonstrations this month.

Since the election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, there has been mass resistance to his xenophobic, Islamophobic and anti-worker policies. There have been several “All-India bharat bandhs,” most recently the strike of 2020 that brought out 250 million workers and allies. Millions of unorganized, unemployed and “informal” workers have taken part in these general strikes, including the most recent.



Millions participated in an “All-India Bharat Bandh,” a general strike held March 28-29.

In a country of over 1.4 billion people, with 560 million categorized as workers, even the low estimate of 50 million represents a huge expression of working-class power. □

World hunger and the war in Ukraine

By Vijay Prashad

During this war on Ukraine, No Cold War launched a new publication called Briefings, which will be factual texts on matters of global concern. Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research shared this first briefing:

The war in Ukraine, along with sanctions imposed by the United States and Western countries against Russia, have caused global food, fertilizer and fuel prices to skyrocket and endanger the world food supply. This conflict is exacerbating the existing crisis of global hunger and imperils the living standards and well-being of billions of people — particularly in the Global South.

War in the 'breadbasket of the world'

Russia and Ukraine together produce nearly 30% of the world’s wheat and roughly 12% of its total calories. Over the past five years, they have accounted for 17% of the world’s corn, 32% of barley (a critical source of animal feed) and 75% of

sunflower oil (an important cooking oil in many countries). On top of this, Russia is the world’s largest supplier of fertilizers and natural gas (a key component in fertilizer production), accounting for 15% of the global trade of nitrogenous fertilizers, 17% of potash fertilizers, 20% of natural gas. (tinyurl.com/t55eefmw)

The current crisis threatens to cause a global food shortage. The United Nations has estimated that up to 30% of Ukrainian farmland could become a warzone; in addition, due to sanctions, Russia has been severely restricted in exporting food, fertilizer and fuel. This has caused global prices to surge. Since the war began, wheat prices have increased by 21%, barley by 33% and some fertilizers by 40%. (tinyurl.com/t55eefmw)

The Global South is 'getting pummelled'

The painful impact of this shock is being felt by people around the world, but most sharply in the Global South. “In a word, developing countries are getting pummelled,” United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres recently

remarked. (tinyurl.com/2p98skfb)

According to the U.N., 45 African and “least developed” countries import at least a third of their wheat from these two, Russia or Ukraine — 18 of those countries import at least 50%. Egypt, the world’s largest wheat importer, obtains over 70% of its imports from Russia and Ukraine, while Turkey obtains over 80%.

Countries of the Global South are already facing severe price shocks and shortages, impacting both consumption and production. In Kenya, bread prices have risen by 40% in some areas and, in Lebanon, by 70%. Meanwhile, Brazil, the world’s largest producer of soybeans, is facing a major reduction in crop yields. The country purchases close to half of its potash fertilizer from Russia and neighboring Belarus (which is also being sanctioned)—it has only a three-month supply remaining, with farmers being instructed to ration.

'The United States has sanctioned the whole world'

The situation is being directly exacerbated by U.S. and Western sanctions

against Russia. Although sanctions have been justified as targeting Russian government leaders and elites, such measures hurt all people, particularly vulnerable groups, and are having global ramifications. (U.N. News, Dec. 8, 2021)

Nooruddin Zaker Ahmadi, director of an Afghan import company, made the following diagnosis: “The United States thinks it has only sanctioned Russia and its banks. But the United States has sanctioned the whole world.” (tinyurl.com/t55eefmw)

'A catastrophe on top of a catastrophe'

The war in Ukraine and associated sanctions are exacerbating the already existing crisis of world hunger. The U.N.’s Food and Agriculture Organization found that “nearly one in three people in the world (2.37 billion) did not have access to adequate food in 2020.” (tinyurl.com/3r325ej5) In recent years, the situation has worsened as food prices have risen due largely to the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and related disruptions.

“Ukraine has only compounded a catastrophe on top of a catastrophe,” said David M. Beasley, the executive director of the U.N. World Food Program. “There is no precedent even close to this since World War II.” (tinyurl.com/t55eefmw)

“If you think we’ve got hell on earth now, you just get ready,” Beasley warned.

Regardless of the different opinions on Ukraine, it is clear that billions of people around the world will suffer from this hunger crisis until the war and sanctions come to an end.

In 1962, the Polish poet Wisława Szymborska wrote “Starvation Camp Near Jasło.” Located in southeast Poland not far from the Ukraine-Poland border, Jasło was the site of a Nazi death camp, where thousands of people — mainly Jews — were caged and left to die of starvation. How does one write about such immense violence? Szymborska offered the following reflection:

“Write it down. Write it. With ordinary ink on ordinary paper; they weren’t given food, they all died of hunger. All. How many?

“It’s a large meadow. How much grass per head? Write down: I don’t know.

“History rounds off skeletons to zero. A thousand and one is still only a thousand.

“That one seems never to have existed: a fictitious fetus, an empty cradle, a primer opened for no one, air that laughs, cries, and grows, stairs for a void bounding out to the garden, no one’s spot in the ranks ... Each death is an abomination, including the 300 children who die of malnutrition every hour of every day.” □



Demonstrators protesting increasing violence at the Antoine Simon Des Cayes airport in Les Cayes, Haiti, March 29.

kidnappings increased 58% over last year, with 225 cases already reported in 2022. Kidnapping criminal gangs have blocked road access to Port-au-Prince from Jacmel, Les Cayes and Jérémie, major cities in Haiti’s southwest.

A pastor conducting a televised service was kidnapped. There are anecdotal reports of people in police uniforms participating in kidnappings. The jet burned at the Les Cayes airport allowed the U.S. missionaries to overfly this blockade and bring in supplies without paying the gangs.

U.S. deportations of 20,000 Haitians caused considerable suffering. An additional 150,000 to 250,000 Haitians, still in Latin America without jobs and unable to send money home, are trying to get into the U.S. Their remittances made up nearly a third of Haiti’s GDP (gross domestic product). This is another hidden, but real, strain on Haiti’s economy. □

Haitians say: We want justice and our constitution!

By G. Dunkel

Tens of thousands of Haitians surged through the streets of Port-au-Prince and smaller cities Les Cayes, Jacmel and Carrefour March 29, demanding respect for the Constitution adopted 35 years ago March 29, 1987.

While protests in Port-au-Prince were nonviolent, in Les Cayes protesters invaded the airport and burned a small airplane belonging to U.S. missionaries. They fought with police, who shot and killed one protester, and seriously injured others.

Besides demanding the Constitution be followed, placards in Port-au-Prince read “If you Ariel Henry don’t leave, we are going to die,” “Down with Ariel! Down with kidnapping! Down with high prices!” Henry is the acting prime minister without parliamentary approval.

Since Jean-Bertrand Aristide received 67.5% of the vote Dec. 16, 1990, running against the U.S. candidate Marc Bazin, who received only 14.2%, the Haitian people have viewed voting and elections as part of their class struggle and part of their opposition to the oppressive system that exploits them. Elections are seen as a tool to oppose neocolonialists U.S. and

France that use the local bourgeoisie to work their will.

The U.S. twice organized coups against Aristide after he was elected, because he had popular support and would have led Haiti in a progressive direction.

At times the manipulations and maneuvers, the coalitions and neocolonialist interventions over elections are complicated and hard to disentangle. But one thing is clear: Voting in Haiti often is not choosing the “lesser of two evils.”

How Haiti’s next presidential election will be conducted still has not been settled.

Current situation

Since previous Haitian president Jovenel Moïse, with firm U.S. support, chose not to organize elections and ruled by decree, no official in Haiti has an electoral mandate. Moïse was assassinated last July. De facto acting Prime Minister Ariel Henry, perhaps implicated in the assassination plot, runs the country because government officials take his direction without parliament getting in the way.

Lawlessness and criminal activity, including kidnappings, have spread throughout Haiti. According to police,

MUNDO OBRERO

editorial

Traduciendo ‘zona de exclusión aérea’

¿Cómo traducir el eslogan “No fly zone!” (izona de exclusión aérea!) que algunos congresistas han aplicado a la crisis de Ucrania a un inglés comprensible desde el washingtoniano?

Otro conjunto de tres palabras de una sílaba da en el clavo: “Tercera Guerra Mundial”.

El senador republicano Roger Wicker de Mississippi y el senador demócrata Joe Manchin, entre otros congresistas, han

insistido en que el ejército estadounidense imponga una “zona de exclusión aérea” sobre Ucrania. La gente debería oír o leer: “Tercera Guerra Mundial”.

Manchin no financiará la construcción de infraestructuras, pero está dispuesto a financiar la destrucción del mundo.

Workers World/Mundo Obrero rara vez cita al senador Marco Rubio, un reaccionario enemigo de Cuba y Venezuela, pero Rubio debe haber tenido un momento de

claridad cuando dijo esto sobre una zona de exclusión aérea: “Eso significa la voluntad de derribar y enfrentarse a los aviones rusos en el cielo, [para] derribar los sistemas antiaéreos que los rusos han desplegado y no sólo en Ucrania sino [en] Rusia... [Esto] significa comenzar la Tercera Guerra Mundial”. (Rollcall.com, 8 de marzo)

La clase obrera de Estados Unidos y del resto del mundo no tiene interés en acelerar el camino hacia la Tercera Guerra Mundial.

En cambio, debemos acelerar la oposición a los pasos que el gobierno de Estados Unidos, utilizando la OTAN, ha dado para provocar el conflicto en Ucrania.

Sí, como WW/MO ha mostrado en su amplia cobertura de la crisis de Ucrania, es esta alianza militar de la OTAN que Estados Unidos domina la que ha utilizado al pueblo de Ucrania como ariete contra Rusia y ha provocado la batalla allí. Ahora los medios corporativos han llevado a cabo un bombardeo de propaganda para mostrar las horribles consecuencias de esta agresión de Estados Unidos y la OTAN, sin revelar sus raíces en la estrategia imperialista de Estados Unidos para hacer que Rusia se someta a su agenda hegemónica.

Algunos belicistas de Washington pueden haber convencido a algunos líderes ucranianos de que deben exigir una “zona de exclusión aérea”. El gobierno de Biden, aunque públicamente ha descartado la exigencia de una “zona de exclusión aérea”, se está moviendo en la misma peligrosa dirección. El titular de la página uno del New York Times del 13 de marzo exponía los planes de Biden: “Estados Unidos enviará más armas, desafiando a Moscú”.

Estas armas pueden matar a más rusos. No ayudarán a la gente en Ucrania, y también pueden llevar a la Tercera Guerra Mundial.

Corresponde al movimiento antiguerra en Estados Unidos y en todos los países de la OTAN combatir la continua agresión y lucha de la OTAN, oponerse a una “zona de exclusión aérea” y disolver por completo la agresiva alianza militar de la OTAN. □

El mundo quiere la paz, Biden amenaza con la guerra

Por John Catalinotto

29 de marzo — Encuestas recientes muestran que la mayoría de la gente en Estados Unidos teme que la crisis actual pueda escalar a una guerra con Rusia, una guerra de la que no quieren formar parte. (cbs42.com, 28 de marzo)

Los comentarios del presidente Joe Biden realizados el 26 de marzo en Varsovia -amenazando con un cambio de régimen en Moscú- ciertamente no aliviaron esos temores. El sabor del peligro permaneció incluso después de que sus cohortes retiraran inmediatamente el comentario de Biden. Biden se excusó más tarde diciendo que se trataba de una “indignación moral” y no de un cambio en la política de Estados Unidos.

Moscú reaccionó con hostilidad, lo cual es fácil de entender. Washington ha llevado a cabo pólizas destinadas a derrocar a otros

gobiernos en todo el mundo, teniendo éxito en las últimas tres décadas en Panamá, Yugoslavia, Irak, Afganistán, Honduras, Libia y Ucrania, entre otros. Estos derrocamientos condujeron al encarcelamiento y/o ejecución de los jefes de Estado en Panamá, Yugoslavia, Irak y Libia.

Más peligroso aún que las palabras de Biden son los miles de millones de dólares en armas que Washington está enviando a Ucrania para utilizar al pueblo ucraniano como carne de cañón contra Rusia. La propia OTAN está aumentando constantemente su fuerza militar en los países de Europa del Este que rodean a Rusia y Ucrania.

La “indignación moral” es una afirmación impropia e hipócrita por parte de Biden. Biden es el jefe de Estado del imperio que primero libró 20 años de guerra y ocupación de Afganistán y luego, tras admitir finalmente su derrota, impuso

sanciones fatales al gobierno de Kabul.

USA Today informó: “Como resultado de todo este trastorno económico [en Afganistán], incluida la pérdida de miles de millones de dólares de ayuda, 22,8 millones de personas -más de la mitad de la población- se enfrentan a una aguda inseguridad alimentaria. Entre ellos hay un millón de niños menores de 5 años “en riesgo de morir por desnutrición aguda severa”, según UNICEF”. (10 de marzo)

Gran parte del mundo siente indignación moral contra Biden y el gobierno de Estados Unidos.

Aquellos en Estados Unidos que quieran evitar una guerra más amplia deben movilizarse para protestar tanto por las palabras como por los hechos del gobierno de Biden. Washington es la principal fuerza responsable del sufrimiento en Ucrania, por no mencionar a gran parte del resto del mundo. □

El ominoso ómnibus

El Pentágono gana, los trabajadores pierden

El 10 de marzo se aprobó en la Cámara de Representantes y en el Senado un proyecto de ley “ómnibus” de gastos por valor de \$1,5 billones de dólares, que se espera que firme el presidente Joe Biden.

Más de la mitad del dinero de la Ley de Asignaciones Consolidadas -\$782.000 millones de dólares, un aumento de \$42.000 millones de dólares respecto al año fiscal 2021- se destina al gasto del Pentágono. Por supuesto, la OTAN, el representante del Pentágono en Europa, se lleva una parte del pastel.

Además, \$13.600 millones de dólares se destinan a Ucrania, y no sólo para las armas propagandísticas de alimentos y otras ayudas “humanitarias”. Estados Unidos está proporcionando “asistencia a las fuerzas de seguridad”. Además, se reservan casi \$7.000 millones de dólares para que varias ramas del gobierno estadounidense -sobre todo el Ejército, la Marina, la Fuerza Aérea y los Marines, pero también su brazo ideológico internacional, Voice of America- “respondan a la situación de Ucrania.” (rules.house.gov)

Y no es que el resto del dinero vaya a programas que benefician a la clase trabajadora y a los oprimidos. Decenas de miles de millones de dólares se destinarán a la vigilancia policial: desde la Patrulla

de Aduanas y Fronteras y el Servicio de Inmigración y Aduanas, hasta el FBI y la CIA, pasando por la policía del capitolio y los departamentos de policía locales. Para estos últimos, las reformas

policiales estipuladas en la Ley George Floyd, aprobada por la Cámara, fueron desechadas.

Recorte de los fondos de COVID-19

Los demócratas del Congreso habían propuesto \$30.000 millones de dólares para continuar la lucha contra el COVID-19, pero luego recortaron la cantidad a más de la mitad bajo la presión de sus homólogos republicanos. Después de que los demócratas más progresistas se quejaron de la reducción de la cantidad, los demócratas convencionales eliminaron los \$14.000 millones restantes del presupuesto, con la dudosa promesa de recuperarlos en un proyecto de ley distinto.

Lo que se había destinado al desarrollo y distribución de vacunas junto con las pruebas masivas es casi igual a lo que el Senado, en una votación bipartidista de 68-31, aprobó para el régimen golpista de derecha en Ucrania.

Otros miles de millones de dólares se destinan a los llamados “programas de democracia”, supuestamente para

“contrarrestar la desinformación propagada por actores malignos, incluyendo la República Popular China y la Federación Rusa”. De hecho, son las entidades financiadas por Estados Unidos, como la Fundación Nacional para la Democracia, las que han difundido la desinformación y fomentado la disidencia durante décadas contra los gobiernos que no están al servicio de los objetivos capitalistas de Estados Unidos. Se han reservado otros 40 millones de dólares para atacar a Venezuela.

El Director de Inteligencia Nacional debe informar sobre la industria biotecnológica de China y la iniciativa Belt and Road -qué países y entidades hacen negocios con China-, así como sobre los “derechos humanos” en Hong Kong y la eficacia de las sanciones de Estados Unidos a países seleccionados.

El Estado del apartheid israelí, por su parte, está en la línea de recibir al menos \$3.300 millones de dólares de ayuda estadounidense en el actual año fiscal.

Los barones del Capitolio

Del dinero restante deben salir las ayudas a la alimentación y a la vivienda, Medicare y Medicaid, la financiación de la educación, la planificación familiar (isin que el proyecto de ley permita destinar dinero federal a los abortos!), la prevención del abuso de sustancias, la ayuda en caso de catástrofes, los organismos de

aplicación de los derechos laborales y civiles, el transporte público y todos los programas sociales de los que dependen las masas.

Se trata de una transferencia masiva de riqueza -valor creado por la clase trabajadora- que se aleja de los servicios humanos y va a parar a las arcas del complejo militar-industrial. Este robo de la clase dominante se produce en un momento en que los trabajadores y los pobres están luchando con la inflación en un máximo de 40 años y ahora los precios extorsivos, impulsados por la guerra para llenar sus tanques de gas y calentar sus hogares. El proyecto de ley perjudica más a las comunidades de color, a las mujeres, a las personas oprimidas por su género y al colectivo LGBTQ2S+, a los jóvenes, a los ancianos y a las personas con discapacidad.

El líder de la mayoría del Senado, Chuck Schumer, demócrata de Nueva York, calificó la ley como “el paquete de financiación gubernamental más fuerte, audaz y significativo que hemos visto en mucho tiempo”. (New York Times, 10 de marzo)

El comentario de Schumer debería echar por tierra cualquier ilusión de que el Partido Demócrata es el partido de los derechos laborales y civiles.

Una guerra masiva y de clase -no contra Rusia o China, sino contra el sistema capitalista- es la única guerra que merece la pena pelear. O financiar. □