

MAY DAY!

One working class united vs. union busters

This joint call to action is signed by Starbucks Workers United and Amazon Labor Union.

In the last few months, there has been an explosion of workers across the country coming together to organize for the first time. Many other workers, who already belong to unions, have been fighting for better contracts.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen working class people on the front lines struggling to get by, while corporations make off with unprecedented profits. As corporations grow richer and the cost of everyday living rises, conditions for workers deteriorate. Many of us say enough is enough—we want better conditions, better pay and a say in our workplace.

Workers built these companies and their fortunes, and we are simply demanding to have a real voice in our workplace. However, this modest demand is met with ruthless union-busting campaigns from companies like Starbucks and Amazon. We have faced firings, threats, intimidation, lies and slander. We

have been retaliated against for doing something for which we have a basic right to do—organize.

Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz said

recently that corporations across the country are “under assault” by unions, a battle cry that is reflected in the war being waged against workers.

From Buffalo and Staten Island, New York, to Memphis, Tennessee, and Bessemer, Alabama, Seattle, Mesa, Arizona, and everywhere else, we remain persistent and determined to continue to fight for a better workplace and a better world. With many major victories, we have shown we can win. But it is only possible when we unite together in our common interests.

We are calling on our communities, friends, allies, neighbors—the whole working class—to join together in solidarity this May Day 2022 and mobilize against the union busting of Starbucks, Amazon, and every other company engaged in repressing its workers.

Whether you are attending a May Day event or hosting your own, we must be loud and clear that we will defend our right to organize without any impediments, legal or otherwise. □



WW PHOTOS: TONY MURPHY

Protest/press conference at luxury residence of Starbucks CEO, Howard Shultz, New York City, April 14. The action was called by Workers Assembly Against Racism, a main initiator of May Day at Union Square.

Stop NATO's dangerous war against Russia

By John Catalinotto

As the live battle between the U.S.-led NATO forces and Russia in Ukraine is entering its eighth week, it has revealed itself as a proxy war, one opening a potential path to a world conflict.

To confront and stop this catastrophe, antiwar, popular and working-class forces in the imperialist countries must mobilize to stop the U.S.-NATO forces from extending and expanding the war. This may lead to sharp

confrontations with the imperialist ruling class, but it is the only course possible.

This danger of a wider war has grown since Washington pressured Beijing in early March to honor sanctions against Russia or face greater U.S. hostility.

U.S. imperialism has dragged its West European allies—despite their own contradictory interests—into a confrontation with Russia. This confrontation uses Ukrainians as cannon fodder and a Ukrainian actor/comedian, Volodymyr Zelensky, as the

pretend leader in Kiev. In reality, Washington gives the orders.

The Pentagon and the U.S. military-industrial complex have already used the Ukraine conflict to twist arms throughout Western Europe and in the U.S. itself and increase military spending. Germany nearly doubled its outlay for the military. U.S. sanctions on Russia have disrupted economic plans in Western Europe, raising energy prices and increasing inflation.

NATO is sending stockpiled weapons to the Kiev puppet regime's army. Even though these weapons will likely

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May Day means internationalism

Support Workers World!

May Day. Workers. Resistance. Solidarity. Fight back. May 1 is International Workers’ Day. Although officially commemorated in 80 countries, it is not recognized in the U.S., where it originated in 1886 in Chicago during the struggle for the eight-hour workday. Its militant legacy is marked by protests by the global working class against capitalist exploiters. It is a day of solidarity with workers everywhere.

The class struggle is alive in the U.S., as shown by the hundreds of strikes in the last year. Workers are rising up in hospitals, schools, factories, coal mines, stores and eateries. Workers World applauds the successful worker-led union drives at a Staten Island Amazon facility and at over 200 Starbucks stores. These wins have spurred on more worker organizing around the country.

WW newspaper is partisan. We side with workers fighting for their rights. Their struggles are featured on our pages and in our bi-weekly column “On the Picket Line.” Not only does WW write about worker organizing, but our staff members join rallies and picket lines.

On this May Day, WW supports all workers, organized and unorganized. We express solidarity with the millions of workers, especially Black, Latinx, Indigenous, immigrants, women, LGBTQ2S+, other gender-oppressed people and those who are disabled, low-wage earners, jobless or incarcerated.

WW agrees with May Day’s socialist founders: End capitalism! Fight for socialism!

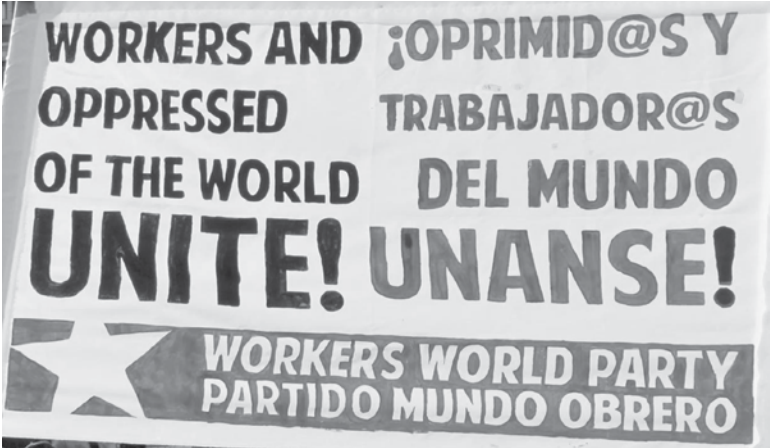
Your help is needed!

If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program or renew your membership. It 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 produced due to staff health concerns, new articles have been posted daily at workers.org, where the weekly newspaper’s PDF has been displayed. Not one online issue has been skipped throughout this two-year health crisis.

For a donation of \$60, \$120 or \$300 a year, you receive a WW newspaper subscription and one, two or three free subscriptions for friends, depending on donation. Read a free download of “What Road to Socialism?”, published in 2020, at workers.org/books. Notify us if you want a paperback book.

Write checks (either monthly or annually) to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Put “Supporter Program” in the memo line. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/. □



Workers World banner at an earlier May Day rally.



MUNDO OBRERO

WORKERS WORLD

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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

National Office
147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
PO Box 18123
Atlanta, GA 30316
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Austin
austin@workers.org

Bay Area
P.O. Box 22947
Oakland, CA 94609
510.394.2207
bayarea@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.522.6626
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
335 Richmond Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14222
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

Central Gulf Coast
(Alabama, Florida, Mississippi)
centralgulfcoast@workers.org

Cleveland
cleveland@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
919.322.9970
durham@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Minnesota
minnesota@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio
sanantonio@workers.org

West Virginia
WestVirginia@workers.org

Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org

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Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

Tear Down the Walls! Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly

Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Sasha Mazumder

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, S. Hedgecoke

Contributing Editors: LeiLani Dowell, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Sara Flounders, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Carlos Vargas

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WW COMMENTARY

The legacy of 42

By Monica Moorehead

This year marks the 75th anniversary when the great Baseball Hall of Famer, Jackie Robinson, broke the color barrier of segregated all-white Major League Baseball on April 15, 1947. This coming October also marks the 50th anniversary of Robinson's death due to a heart attack, with complications from diabetes, at the age of 53. That lethal combination of diseases is not uncommon for African American men to suffer in disproportionate numbers even today.

Robinson's number 42 was retired from all teams in the MLB on April 15, 1997. Since 2004, all National and American League teams have worn number 42 jerseys April 15 on "Jackie Robinson Day" in recognition of his historic rookie debut with the then Brooklyn Dodgers.

Robinson, like so many other great Black baseball players, played in the Negro Leagues prior to 1947. As soon as Robinson set foot on the Dodgers' Ebbets Field, he had to endure incredible racist taunts and epithets from white players, including some of his teammates, and fans. His family did not escape this horrific trauma when Robinson received letters with death threats at his home.

The white Dodgers shortstop, Pee Wee Reese, temporarily left his position during a game in Cincinnati in 1948 to put his arm around Robinson's neck. This modest show of solidarity was viewed as a revolutionary act at the time. It silenced the fans



Jackie Robinson and Pee Wee Reese.

who were taunting Robinson then, as was happening at so many away and home games.

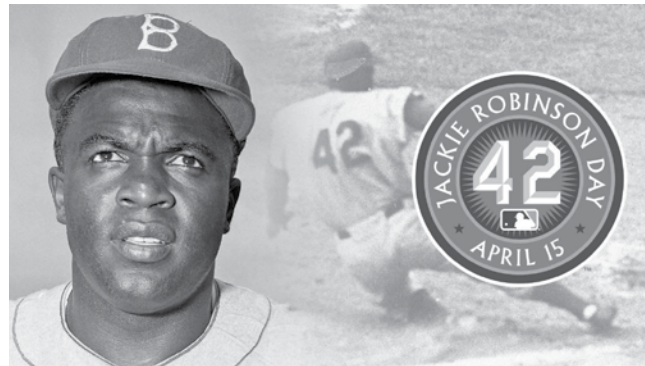
One reporter who recorded Reese's gesture was Lester Rodney, a reporter for the Communist newspaper, the Daily Worker, one of the few newspapers that consistently covered Robinson's rookie year.

Today MLB is composed of fewer than 8% African American players and has only two Black general managers out of 30—Dusty Baker with the Houston Astros and Dave Roberts with the Los Angeles Dodgers. Robinson lamented the fact that baseball owners were reluctant to hire Black managers, saying: "I am not convinced that baseball is ready to allow Negro players or ex-players to enter the executive suite. In fact, I feel that there is as much resistance on the part of the top brass of baseball to the idea of letting Negroes get to the top as there was in the early forties to allow Negroes to play."

He added that "baseball owners are willing to 'exploit the talent of Negro and other colored players, but after their playing careers are over, they have nowhere to go. Because the owners don't have the courage or decency to think in terms of the contributions these players have made to their fortunes, they just let them go.'" (Washington Post, April 14)

More than a baseball player

Never known as a radical, Robinson nevertheless became a national hero on and off the field because he changed the



"color" of baseball — still known as "America's pastime" and the most popular sport in the U.S. in his day. Even before becoming famous, he opposed racial segregation whenever and wherever he could. For instance, while living in Pasadena, California, in 1938, Robinson was arrested for defending a friend who was unlawfully detained by police. When he joined the segregated U.S. army during World War II, he was arrested for refusing to sit in the back of a military bus.

He became a prominent civil rights figure before the Civil Rights Movement gained prominence in the early 1950s, including when segregated schools were legally outlawed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954.

After playing 10 years in the MLB, Robinson was forced to retire prematurely due to diabetes. He then marched alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Robinson's legacy is that he fought for racial equality not only inside baseball but also throughout society until the day he died. □

As soon as Robinson set foot on the Dodgers' Ebbets Field, he had to endure incredible racist taunts and epithets from white players, including some of his teammates, and fans.

BOOK REVIEW

'Mobilizing in Our Own Name'

By Martha Grevatt

*Mobilizing in Our Own Name:
Million Worker March
An Anthology by Clarence Thomas
DeClare Publishing, 2021*

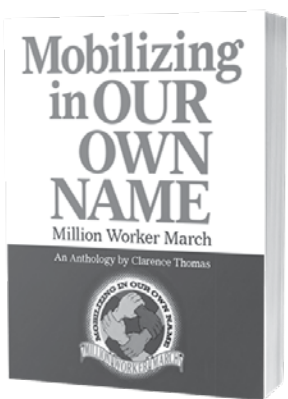
In a commentary introducing his anthology on the 2014 Million Worker March and its impact, Clarence Thomas writes: "On January 15, 2014, when he called me, brother Trent [Willis, now president of International Longshore Workers Union (ILWU) Local 10] was a young, emerging, rank-and-file leader and business agent for the local. He wanted my opinion on an idea: What did I think of organizing a Million Worker March in Washington, D.C.?"

The rest, as the saying goes, is history. But until the publication of Thomas' book last year, the history had never been properly told.

The march, an ambitious undertaking, succeeded in spite of opposition from the leadership of the AFL-CIO. John Sweeney, at the time AFL-CIO president, sent a letter July 13, 2004, to ILWU Local 10's President Henry Graham stating "we believe that devoting resources to a protest demonstration a few weeks prior to the presidential election is a diversion that our movement cannot afford." Sweeney had been elected president in 1995 on a promise to devote extensive resources to organizing the unorganized, but these resources were diverted to supporting Democratic Party candidates such as 2004 presidential candidate John Kerry.

A month later U.S. Labor Against the War informed march organizers that its Leadership Council opted not to endorse: "the reason that affiliates decline to endorse was its timing." USLAW missed a prime opportunity to ally with a labor demonstration that was unapologetically opposed to the U.S. war against the Iraqi people.

These misguided statements are included in the first chapter, along with many letters of support for the march and the extensive endorsers list. Chapter 2



gives the reader a feel for what took place October 17, 2004.

"Mobilizing in Our Own Name" is not a typical anthology, with 10 or 20 essays by a range of noted authors. Instead Thomas has assembled 300+ pages of articles, leaflets, letters, statements and photographs. Many of the articles are lifted from the pages of Workers World newspaper.

Local 10's sharp divergence from "business unionism" is a thread running throughout the book. In a 2005 statement released after a group of major unions left the AFL-CIO to form Change to Win, MWMM identified "central questions of concern to the rank and file" including "how to transform and make the existing top-down structure business unionism democratic."

Millions More Movement to May Day

As described in Chapter 3, in 2005 MWMM threw its support behind the Millions More Movement, which held actions in Washington, D.C., on the tenth anniversary of the Million Man March. These events brought together on one podium Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan and Black labor leaders, including Teamsters National Black Caucus Chair Chris Silvera, Metro Washington, D.C., Labor Council Representative Patricia Ann Ford and MWMM Co-Chair and ILWU Local 10 Executive Board Member Clarence Thomas.

The next chapters are each devoted to a different aspect of MWMM/Local 10's militant, class conscious activism: demanding reparations for Hurricane Katrina survivors, reviving May Day from 2005 onward, fighting

white supremacy, international solidarity, a conference on socialism, supporting justice for oppressed genders, the historic and current role of the ILWU, joining with Occupy Oakland, and ongoing struggles Local 10 has been recently engaged in.

Among the organizers mentioned are Local 10 leaders like Thomas, Willis, Leo Robinson, Keith Shanklin and the ILWU's first president, Harry Bridges — an anti-racist labor leader whose legacy lives on in the "shut it down" tradition that set itself against apartheid in South Africa and in the Zionist state of Israel, demanded freedom for political prisoners Angela Davis and Mumia Abu-Jamal, supported striking dockworkers in the Pacific Northwest, backed resistance to anti-labor legislation in Wisconsin, protested racism on and off the job, and, in 2020, shut down ports on Juneteenth in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter upsurge.

East Coast MWMM organizers also feature prominently, including Silvera; Brenda Stokely, former president of AFSCME District Council 1707 in New York City and Saladin Muhammad, a leader of Black Workers for Justice and the Southern Workers Assembly.

Clarence Thomas is starting a book tour in May. For more information or to buy the book go to millionworkermarch.com.

Martha Grevatt is a retired autoworker who served on the executive boards of United Auto Workers (UAW) Locals 122 and 869. She organized Cleveland activists as well as several coworkers to attend the Million Worker March in 2004.



PHOTO: MILLION WORKER MARCH MOVEMENT

Clarence Thomas speaking at Oscar Grant Plaza, Oakland, California, Juneteenth 2020.

Oakland coalition plans one-day strike

By David Welsh and Judy Greenspan
Oakland, California

At the first in-person school board meeting since August, Moses Omolade, one of the original hunger strikers protesting school closures in Oakland and a community services manager at Westlake Middle School, brought the house down April 13. Omolade dramatically turned his back to the Oakland School Board during the public comment segment and spoke directly to the community: “We got the power! We got parents, we got students, we got teachers. Let’s join together and let’s go on strike.” Needless to say, the audience cheered.

Students, teachers and the community had to fight to be heard at the school board meeting. School Board President Gary Yee looked for every opportunity to end public comment as speaker after speaker raked most of the school board members over the coals for supporting the school closures and mergers.

Later on, the board tried again to shut down public comment, but the passionate students could not be silenced. When denied the microphone, students used a bullhorn.

A senior at MetWest High School was scathing in her denunciation of the School Board majority. “These school closures,” she said, “plus the fact that you’re not listening to the students anyway, shows you don’t even really care about us.” Other MetWest students protested the firing of several teachers.

Ben “Coach” Tapscott, who began his teaching career at McClymonds High

School, said, “These school closures are an attack on Black and Brown students. You are paid by the wealthy to promote charter schools.”

Megan Bumpus, a teacher at Reach Academy in deep East Oakland, raised concerns about the safety of students about to be relocated with the closing of Parker Elementary. She challenged the Board to listen to parents who are worried about their children walking long distances to their new school. Bumpus also chastised the Board for trying again to shut down the voices of students and the community.

Teachers ready to strike

Omolade’s strike call echoed the call of many rank-and-file Oakland Education Association members, who voted overwhelmingly April 11 to authorize the OEA Executive Board to schedule a vote on holding a one-day strike April 29. Rank and file teachers are reaching out to union members to get their support for this action. The legal rationale for the strike is to support an unfair labor practices charge filed with the Public Employees Relations Board for breach of contract around the issue of school closures.

OEA President Keith Brown, on behalf of the entire OEA Executive Board, has endorsed the call for a one-day teachers strike.

OEA teachers, International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 members, students and parents from schools threatened with closure or merger, and community organizations and activists have been meeting for several weeks to plan

this one-day strike action April 29. Leaflets with the headline: “Stop Privatizing Oakland! Port Shutdown! School Shutdown” are beginning to blanket the city. This new coalition, which has long-range plans after the strike action, is called Schools and Labor Against Privatization (SLAP).

In this unique and nascent coalition, people are joining together to stop the rampant and racist gentrification of Oakland. Rank-and-file teachers and Service Employees Union (SEIU) Local 1021 classified workers have been fighting the closure or merger of 11 East Oakland flatland schools impacting primarily Black and Brown students. At the same time, new charter schools continue to be approved by the school board, and are being promised classroom space on public school campuses.

Local 10 members and other longshore workers are facing the closure of Howard Terminal, a major port area in Oakland. John Fisher, the owner of the Oakland A’s baseball team (and an owner of several charter school companies including Kipp Academy) is attempting to move the stadium to the port and build a complex of housing and shops that will cost dock-worker jobs and continue the gentrification of Oakland.

SLAP is organizing a day-long protest April 29 which will start with the teacher strike in the morning, with picketing at school sites and possible morning rallies



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

After the school board cut off the microphone, Fernando, a MetWest student, grabbed a bullhorn to demand the Board stop the school closures and firing of teachers.

at the schools scheduled to close at the end of this school year. Then at 2 p.m., teachers, longshore workers, parents, students and the community will rally at Oscar Grant Plaza. At 3 p.m. they will march down Broadway, first stopping at the offices of David Shorenstein, one of Oakland’s biggest real estate developers, and then ending at the empty offices of the Oakland Unified School District.

Protesters hope to paint a mural on the plaza outside of OUSD, which has been shuttered since the beginning of the pandemic. The school district pays hundreds of thousands of dollars in rent for the empty building but claims it has no money to keep neighborhood schools open.

Later in the afternoon, OEA members and SLAP activists will hold a car caravan to the Port of Oakland to picket several terminals and shut down the port, building support for this critical fight against the racist gentrification of this city.

For more information or to help build the April 29 strike, go to slapbayarea.org

Boston union to Starbucks’ Schultz ‘No to NFTs or union busting!’

By Steve Gillis

It quickly turned into a celebration with TikTok dancing when dozens of Starbucks workers, unionized baristas from Pavement Café and Darwin’s Café, and supporters from labor and socialist organizations gathered to watch the vote count for the first two Boston area Starbucks stores to file for union representation. Ballots marked “yes,” shown by National Labor Relations Board staffers on a Zoom screen, added up to a unanimous landslide for Greater Boston Starbucks Workers United at the Coolidge Corner and Alston stores April 11. So far 16 stores have filed.

Maria Suevo, an artist and Coolidge Corner barista, opened the victory press conference addressing “the working class in this country at all corporations like Starbucks.”

“My biggest take-away from this

experience,” said Suevo, “is that literally every store can do this. McDonald’s workers, if you’re out there, you can do this! Wendy’s, I’m looking at you. You can unionize! If we can get through the union busting, you can, too!”

The Boston victory came seven days after billionaire Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz declared that “corporations are under assault by unions” and the same day Schultz posted a “help wanted” ad for a labor lawyer “experienced in strike contingency planning.”

Schultz has already spent millions on modern-day Pinkertons, the law firm Littler Mendelson, and conducted a national shock-and-awe campaign of firings, mass discipline, slashing hours, and hiring potential scab replacements. The opening shot was the blatantly racist firing of the Memphis 7 organizers, days after

they announced their shop’s union filing on Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday. Firings of union organizers from Arizona, Washington, New York, Kansas, etc., are now routine corporate terror tactics, while baristas coast-to-coast file daily for union recognition in defiant response.

“Understand this, Howard Schultz,” declared Tyler Daguerre, a lead organizer at the Coolidge Corner shop. “Workers don’t want NFTs. They want you to sign the fair elections principles, and they would like you to stop union busting.” Daguerre was responding to Schultz’s ridiculous suggestion that workers should be satisfied with a bit of a digital picture investment scheme instead of a union contract.

“This victory is all of ours collectively — not just our stores, but our community and every worker here and around the world,” Daguerre continued. “This is a sign that we’re not going to take corporate greed. This is us standing up and fighting back.”

What has stunned the likes of Schultz, and sparked a new generation of union militants, who’ve now captured the attention of established unionists, are the rank-and-file organizing tactics, resourcefulness, and class conscious leadership of the young, multinational, multigender organizers at Starbucks and Amazon.

Union organizing unleashed

This worker-to-worker approach is spreading like prairie fire. At Boston’s vote count were barista leaders Casey Moore and Brian Murray, who traveled overnight from Buffalo, New York. Moore and Murray were among baristas who initiated organizing efforts in Buffalo last summer that led to the first union Starbucks stores in the U.S on Dec. 6, 2021.

These Buffalo leaders, with new leaders stepping forward in cities and towns faster than reporters can track, form the core staff of Starbucks Workers United. Their love, solidarity, optimism and “not gonna



WW PHOTO

Brian Murray and Casey Moore of Buffalo @SBWorkersUnited with Steve Gillis, center, April 11.

take it anymore” attitude — borne of their formative participation in the Black Lives Matter movement under pandemic precariousness — are this new labor movement’s main assets.

With advanced communications and technical skills, artistic merchandise and logos, and coordination through traveling and social media, organizers are reviving and sharpening rank-and-file organizing methods employed by socialists in the steel mills of Buffalo nearly a century ago. At the Boston vote count, some of these young organizers were discussing the old pamphlet “Unionizing Steel” by William Z. Foster [Workers Library Publishers, New York, August 1936], citing it as a source of their own “deep organizing.”

On March 3, Boston coffee shop organizers met in the same unionized bookstore to form a new city-wide coalition of coffee workers who use the hashtag #coffeeworkersolidarity. Emboldened by the joint May Day 2022 “Call to Action” by Starbucks Workers United and Amazon Labor Union, organizers from Starbucks, Pavement Café, Darwin’s LTD, City Feed and other local shops and supporters have put out a call for a mass May Day rally and march beginning at Cambridge Commons at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, May 1.

A powerful new labor movement is brewing to fight and win against Wall Street Goliaths, whose union-busting attacks are intended to deepen class exploitation.

Steve Gillis is a member of the executive board of United Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston school bus drivers’ union.

Portland to Starbucks: ‘Union coffee is hot’

Portland protesters rallied April 16 in front of a Starbucks location which is one of nine city stores trying to unionize. Four of these Starbucks will be casting their ballots later this month on whether to unionize. Three days earlier, on April 13, the first Starbucks in Oregon to successfully unionize was in Eugene where all 17 employees voted for the union.

Demonstrators at the April 16 rally cheered Starbucks workers as they spoke on the need for workers to be respected by management and to be able to get enough working hours and wages to pay their rent. Other speakers were workers from Portland Jobs with Justice, the Teamsters, the labor group and the youth group from Democratic Socialists of America as well as workers from other union and community groups.



Following the rally, demonstrators got out of the cold rain and traveled in a car caravan to two other unionizing Starbucks. They supported workers at each location by driving through, honking, and placing orders under the name “union strong.”

— Story and photo by Lyn Neeley

May Day: A clarion call to free them all!

By Ted Kelly

On May 1, 1886, the American Federation of Labor organized militant actions demanding the right of all workers to an eight-hour workday. On that day, workers walked off their jobs and withheld their labor from being exploited by the bosses.

As Martha Grevatt, a WW managing editor and retired Chrysler autoworker, wrote in WW: “About a quarter of a million took part in many cities, but Chicago, with its militant, left-wing labor movement, had the largest demonstration. There, tens of thousands laid down their tools, and women and men poured into the streets. The demonstrations continued past May 1, and on May 3 police attacked and six workers were killed.

“The next day a protest over the killings was held in Haymarket Square. A bomb was thrown, a policeman was killed, and a struggle broke out that left seven police and four workers dead. Eight workers’ leaders were convicted of murder, five of them sentenced to death. Four were hanged and one reportedly committed suicide. The other three were eventually pardoned.” (workers.org/2015/04/19516/)

Those eight became known as the Haymarket Martyrs — August Spies, Albert Parsons, Samuel Fielden, George Engel, Adolph Fischer, Michael Schwab, Louis Lingg and Oscar Neebe. These martyrs could also be referred to today as political prisoners — persecuted for their radical, left-wing beliefs as labor organizers and anarchists.

Since that first May Day, we reflect on the many working class radicals over the last 136 years whose dedication to revolution was so unshakeable, their ideas and activities so threatening to the capitalist order, that our class enemy could not permit them to live. On this May 1st, we acknowledge that the greatest way to honor their legacy is to liberate those freedom fighters still in the enemy’s custody, living each day in defiance.

The work of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party is to make it understood, on both sides of the walls, that prisons are concentration camps for the poor and the oppressed. These places are filled disproportionately with Black, Brown, and Indigenous people and people with mental and physical illness and disability because that is who the capitalist ruling class considers to be dangerous and disposable. In such a system, all prisoners are political prisoners because the vast majority of them belong to a global working class.

Mumia Abu-Jamal: ‘voice of the voiceless’

And for over 40 years, the voice that resonated most clearly from the depths of the prison system was that of former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal.

As Workers World First Secretary Larry Holmes said in remarks from a March 18, 2021, livestream event, “The struggle to free Mumia is in one way or another linked to consciousness about all the other political prisoners, because of his unique status as an international political prisoner in the struggle against white supremacy, racism, capitalism and imperialism in this country. This is how he’s known all around the world.

“A little more than 20 years ago, I was privileged to share the stage with the late Ossie Davis, the actor, along with his partner, Ruby Dee. Ossie Davis told a large crowd of thousands of people in Madison Square Garden



Theater in May of 2000, the millennium, that it was the mission of the next generation of young radicals to free Mumia. A lot of those young people he was speaking to then are now middle age.

“Mumia may be more renowned because he is a political prisoner, because of the circumstances around being framed up and the fact that they did it because they were afraid of him, and they wanted to silence him.

“But Mumia’s more than a political prisoner. To know Mumia, to have read not all of his works, but even just a few of them, is to have insight into his revolutionary brilliance, his intellectual insight. He’s a Black working-class, revolutionary intellectual. Mumia is a Black leader. He’s a bona fide global Black leader. I look at this from the point of view of history.”

A new generation of Black radical leadership has ushered in a new phase of the struggle to free Mumia, a campaign called #LoveNotPhear that puts a renewed emphasis on reconnecting Philadelphia’s Black community to this city’s own native son.

Meanwhile, international human rights activists like Julia Wright, daughter of acclaimed novelist Richard Wright, reminds us in a public letter that one of the reasons Mumia is the most internationally recognized political prisoner of the era is due to his own passionate internationalism:

“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.

“The effort to free political prisoners like Mumia must be international because, from the time of the transatlantic slave trade, the U.S. carceral apparatus itself was not confined to any recognized borders.”

“Prisons are used to eliminate the leaders of Indigenous resistance. Sitting Bull, the great 19th century Hunkpapa Lakota leader, was a U.S. political prisoner from 1881 to 1883 and was assassinated in 1890 during an attempt to rearrest him. The Oglala Lakota freedom fighter Crazy Horse was murdered by his jailers in 1877 at a concentration camp in what is now Nebraska. Chiricahua Apache resistance leader Geronimo died as a prisoner of war at Fort Sill, Okla., in 1909.” (workers.org/2021/10/59536/)

Why we must free them all

Author and CUNY professor Dr. Johanna Fernandez connects this legacy of white supremacist political repression of African and Indigenous leaders to the immigrant labor and political activists targeted by the state. She told WW, “In the late 19th century, labor

activists who were identified as part of the Haymarket Affair were rounded up by the police, accused of crimes they did not commit and sentenced to death. In the early 20th century, Sacco and Vanzetti, two anarchists, were executed by the state. In the 1950s, the Rosenbergs, who were communists, were executed by the state. And in the post-Civil Rights Movement era, Mumia became the figure that the state wanted to make an example of to send a message to those who dare resist authority, resist the state, resist capitalism, resist Empire — that this is what will happen to you.

“So when you ask the question, ‘Why do we need to be with Mumia?’ it’s because if we allow the state to get away with murder in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, we’re giving the state license to do the same with people who dare stand up for justice today.”

The question has only become more urgent since the advent of Black Lives Matter and the movement for environmental justice predicated on Indigenous sovereignty represented by AIM leader and political prisoner, Leonard Peltier.

Community leaders like Anthony Smith in Philadelphia, Dakota Access Pipeline protesters like Red Fawn Fallis and Jessica Reznicek, and countless other organizers and activists now constitute a new generation of U.S. political prisoners. Young whistleblowers like Chelsea Manning and Daniel Hale have been viciously

prosecuted for revealing hard proof of the war crimes committed by the U.S. military in its imperial adventures abroad.

Larry Holmes urges us to remember that Mumia Abu-Jamal has been imprisoned for longer than many of these next generation political prisoners have been alive:

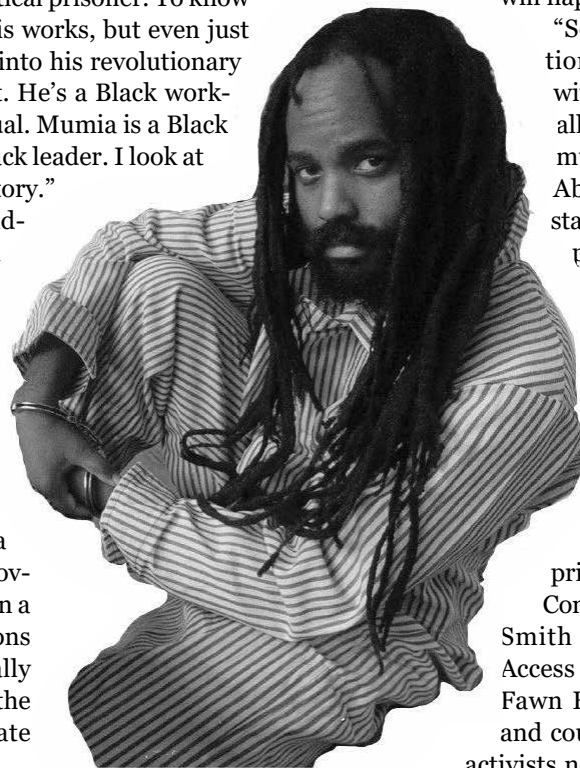
“Look at it this way. How can we possibly free these comrades, if we cannot free Mumia now, when his life is at risk behind those bars?”

For over 40 years now, the U.S. has been expending an unimaginable amount of effort and resources to fight back against the tide of people power demanding the liberation of Mumia Abu-Jamal. This is in itself proof that the ruling class believes his release would be a transformative moment in the struggle against mass incarceration, white supremacy, and capitalism. It would signify a bursting of the dam, unleashing a cascade of working class power. And from the confines of this vast network of dungeons, a millions-strong army of the working class will emerge to usher humanity into the next phase of its history.

The legacy of May Day is the ongoing fight for a world without capitalism under workers’ control.

To build a workers world, we must abolish prisons to free them all.

The writer is co-chair of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee. Monica Moorehead contributed to this article.



Mumia Abu-Jamal

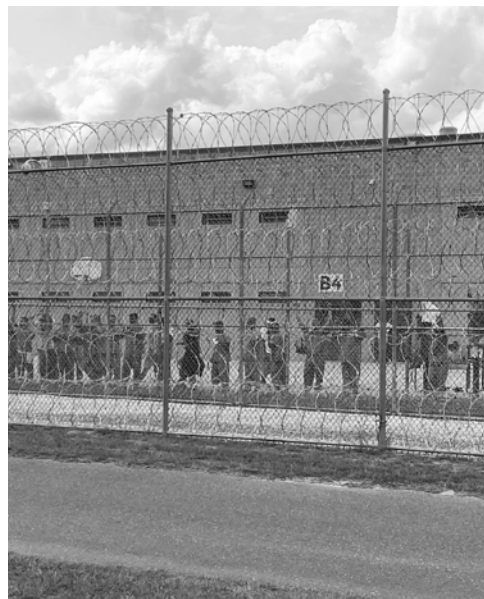


PHOTO: COALITION TO SHUT DOWN ICE IN GEORGIA

Detainees cheer activists, April 16.

Folkston detainees, immigrant rights activists chant together

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Folkston, Georgia

April 16 — Multiple organizations forming the Coalition to Shut Down ICE in Georgia have been giving special attention to the expansion of the Folkston ICE facilities in southeast Georgia, close to the Florida border.

Although the Biden administration had said it would no longer issue contracts to private prison operators, the GEO Group has been authorized to expand its Folkston site to some 3000 beds. This would be the largest detention center for immigrants in the U.S.

The Coalition organized a multi-faceted event on April 16

to protest expansion of the prison for profit. There was a family-friendly event with food and games for children in a downtown Folkston park, and also a protest across the street from the ICE facility.

To everyone’s surprise, several dozen detainees, who were in the exercise yard and saw demonstrators arrive with banners and signs, went to the fence with fists up. For 90 minutes, they chanted and exchanged information with their supporters, who learned there was a hunger strike going on to protest the inhumane conditions.

Coalition members — who had come from across Georgia and north Florida — left inspired by the resistance of the detainees and vowing to redouble efforts to “Shut Down Folkston!” □

MAY DAY MEANS SOLIDARITY

Prisoners Solidarity Committee demands: Ban Shackling!

By Marie Kelly

Members of the Prisoners 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.

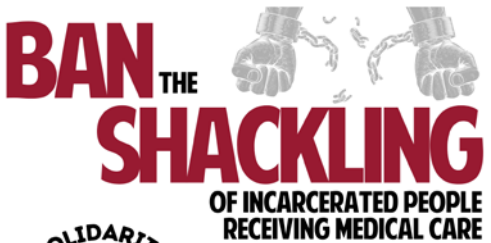
“We are concerned that the medical condition of Mr. Abu-Jamal (who also suffers from a severe skin condition and hepatitis C) could be linked to years of medical neglect by the Department of Corrections of the state of Pennsylvania,” the experts said.

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 harsh 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 health

care providers to resist the status quo, insist on delivering quality care to incarcerated patients and ultimately work with us to abolish the carceral system. □



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

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

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

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

5) Healthcare institutions must have the incarcerated patient verify who they've designated as eligible to receive updates on their medical condition and treatment.

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

7) Healthcare professionals should support prison abolition efforts.

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Released after 46 years, Bradford Gamble exposes medical abuse

By Ted Kelly

This edited article first appeared on workers.org on March 22, 2022.

There were moments Bradford Gamble doubted he would live long enough to see freedom. Despite the fact that Gamble uses a wheelchair, despite the fact that he has Stage 4 metastatic cancer, despite the fact that he is dying, only weeks ago he was shackled to a hospital bed at Geisinger Medical Center, still a prisoner of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections—in whose “custody” he had been for the last 46 years.

In 2021, Gamble was taken to the medical wing of State Correctional Institution Coal Township, where he had been imprisoned, and was told he was getting a routine colonoscopy. What he did not know was that medical staff at the prison performed a biopsy and extracted a length of his intestines. Their test confirmed that he had colon cancer. For eight months, no medical staff, no prison administrators—no one—relayed this diagnosis back to the patient, whose worsening abdominal pain and other unexplained symptoms were being treated with two Tylenol a day.

After months of Gamble filing numerous grievances with the prison administration and petitioning the prison medical staff with demands to see his own medical records, a guard dropped a medical slip in his cell that confirmed the diagnosis of colorectal cancer, as well as the news that the cancer had spread to his lymph nodes.

More than 20,000 elderly and dying prisoners sent petitions for compassionate release between January 2020 and June 2021. Only 3,608 were granted. (U.S. Sentencing Commission) There are over 300,000 prisoners in the U.S. over the age of 50. (Bureau of Justice Statistics) A 2018 report, “The High Costs of Low Risk: The Crisis of America’s Prison Population,” says: “With an estimated 2.3 million people in confinement, one out of every 32 adults under correctional control or community supervision, and roughly one-third of all adults with some sort of criminal record, the U.S. surpasses all other countries in sheer numbers and per capita incarceration and criminalization rates.

“By 2030, the population of people aged 50 and older is projected to account for one-third of all incarcerated people in the U.S., amounting to a staggering 4,400% increase over a 50-year span.”

Gamble was only 20 years old when he was condemned to spend the rest of his life in prison. He’s now 66. No technology existed then that even resembled the mobile device he can now hold in his hand and hear the voice of Bryant Arroyo, an organizer, environmental activist and Workers World contributor.

“One thing Mr. Arroyo taught me is to never give up,” said Gamble. Never stop fighting. If you can’t fight for yourself, fight for somebody else. I always told him, if I make it out of here—and we didn’t know, at that time, we really didn’t know—if I get out, I’m gonna touch somebody’s heart. And I’m gonna put them in a position to touch somebody else’s heart.”

At 50 years old, Arroyo himself has spent more than half his life behind bars for a crime he didn’t commit. But in addition to

waging his own struggle for freedom and exoneration, Bryant fought a relentless battle to win compassionate release for Gamble, whom he calls “Bub.” After months of phone calls, letters, emails, petitions, legal dead ends, obstruction from prison officials, Gamble became one of only 17% of terminally ill prisoners in the country whose compassionate release petition was accepted. (U.S. Sentencing Commission)

“He was Godsent,” Gamble said at a March meeting attended by members of the Abolitionist Law Center, the Innocence Project and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party. “I tell everybody that I talk to, family members, friends, when they ask me, ‘How did you get out?’ I say, ‘Bryant Arroyo.’”

Bradford Gamble says health care workers in the U.S. have an obligation to intervene on behalf of prisoners who are suffering and dying as a result of this ill treatment. “The word ‘care’ in your job description—health care—should mean a lot.”

“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. And we need help;

it’s as simple as that. We need help.

“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.” □



Bradford Gamble (seated) with prison abolition activists who worked for his release, March 13.



Bryant Arroyo

WITH INCARCERATED WORKERS

Act now! Stop the execution of Melissa Lucio!

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Melissa Lucio, the first woman of Mexican descent on Texas’ death row, has lived in relative anonymity since being convicted of capital murder in 2008 in the tragic death of her young daughter. Now she is facing execution on April 27 for a crime that never occurred. Lucio has maintained her innocence for 14 years.

But Lucio is no longer anonymous. Support for her has grown. At this critical time, calls for clemency have come from Hollywood celebrities, five of her original jurors, 87 state lawmakers, 130 faith leaders and Pope Francis. Other supporters are 225 domestic violence/sexual assault organizations and 30 Latinx advocacy groups.

“The State of Texas v. Melissa,” a documentary produced by Sabrina Van Tassell in 2020, follows Lucio’s case and exposes the racist, misogynist injustice dealt to her. It was selected for the Tribeca Film Festival in 2020, and won best documentary at the Raindance Film Festival. (View on Hulu.)

In 2021 the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear Lucio’s appeal. In January, Harlingen District Attorney Luis Saenz set an execution date.

Innocence Project exposes the truth

The Innocence Project’s website lists “9 Facts You Should Know About This Innocent Woman Facing Execution,” summarized below.

Two-year-old Mariah’s death was a tragic accident, not a murder. She fell down the stairs, appeared uninjured, and two days later, didn’t wake up. Two hours after

Mariah’s death, Lucio was interrogated, while in shock and pregnant with twins.

Cops berated and intimidated her for over five hours. After this browbeating and after Lucio said over 100 times that she did not cause her child’s death, she was coerced by a Texas Ranger into what he misconstrued as a confession at 3 a.m. She just wanted the interrogation to be over. Experts concluded that Lucio “was relentlessly pressured and extensively manipulated” during the interrogation.

Judge Catharina Hayes wrote on behalf of the seven dissenting judges on the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals: “The State presented no physical evidence or witness testimony establishing that Lucio abused Mariah or any of her children, let alone killed Mariah.” Lucio had no prior record of violence.

Lucio is a survivor of life-long sexual assault, beginning at age six, and domestic violence. The trial court denied testimony about this history, and how it shaped her reactions following her daughter’s death. But the Texas Ranger who coerced her incriminating statement testified for the prosecution that her behavior showed she was guilty.

Former Cameron County District Attorney Armando Villalobos was seeking re-election in 2007, and sought Lucio’s conviction to appear tough on crime. Today, he is serving a 13-year federal prison sentence for bribery and extortion.

Lucio’s family was torn apart. Her 12 children were aged 2 to 15 when she was arrested. She gave birth to twin boys

while in jail, and gave them up for adoption. The other children were split up, some sent to live with relatives, others placed into foster care.

Tivon Schardl, chief of the Capital Habeas Unit of the Federal Defender for the Western District of Texas and one of Lucio’s attorneys, said, “Texas tore this family apart through the cruelty and injustice of Ms. Lucio’s wrongful conviction. Her children, mother, and siblings

that misled the jury.

The attorneys’ petition details the police investigators’ and prosecutors’ gender bias. Professor Sandra Babcock, Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide’s faculty director and another of Lucio’s attorneys, said: “Police targeted Melissa because she did not fit their image of how a grieving mother should behave.

“They used interrogation tactics that replicated the dynamics of domestic violence, that told her ... to acquiesce ... [and] take responsibility for Mariah’s injuries. New linguistic analysis shows that while the police treated Melissa as a suspect, they treated her partner like an innocent victim, even though he was Mariah’s caretaker, and had a history of intrafamilial violence. He is now a free man.”

Lucio’s oldest son, John, and his spouse Michelle, several of Lucio’s siblings and her mother have traveled throughout Texas, spoken at press conferences, marched, shown the documentary, testified before state legislators and held zoom meetings when they visited Lucio at Mountain View Prison.

Instead of preparing for an Easter celebration with her children and grandchildren, Lucio will be counting down the hours to see if she will live.

Information from innocenceproject.org and deathpenaltyworldwide.org. Ask Cameron County District Attorney Luis Saenz to withdraw the execution date at 956-544-0849. Call Texas Governor Greg Abbott at 512-463-2000.



Melissa Lucio

PHOTO: INNOCENCE PROJECT

have been traumatized by Ms. Lucio’s arrest, prosecution, and death sentence.”

On April 15, Lucio’s attorneys filed a 242-page application for a writ of habeas corpus asking the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals to stay her execution and vacate her conviction and death sentence. For the first time, the courts will have the opportunity to consider the new scientific and expert evidence showing that her conviction was based on an unreliable, coerced confession and unscientific false evidence

Isaiah Andrews: Justice delayed, justice denied for 45 years

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

In 1974, two months after his wedding, Isaiah Andrews’ spouse Regina Andrews was murdered. That was just the beginning of a lifelong ordeal. Andrews, who passed away this month in Cleveland, spent the next 45 years in jail for a murder he did not commit.

In 2018 Ohio Innocence Project attorneys uncovered that police concealed evidence in the original trial that tied another man, who died in 2011, to the killing of Regina Andrews. Isaiah Andrews was released in 2020 — but was forced to wear an ankle bracelet and to undergo a second trial ordered by Cuyahoga County

Prosecutor Michael O’Malley. The monitoring device was only removed after a jury found him not guilty in October 2021, after deliberating only an hour.

In March Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court granted a motion by Andrews’ attorneys to have him declared “wrongfully imprisoned.” This would have meant the state of Ohio would owe him money for every year he spent behind bars. But with his death at age 83 of cancer, it will take another legal fight to get the money awarded to his estate.

O’Malley ordered the ankle bracelet, along with home confinement except for medical appointments, in an attempt to pressure Andrews to plead guilty with credit for time served. Andrews, who

proclaimed his innocence until his final breath, refused. This humiliating device robbed him of his freedom of movement in his few years outside of prison.

Isaiah Andrews is one of far too many people who have been sent to prison for acts they did not commit. The case exposes the rampant corruption and inherent injustice in the U.S. carceral system. Justice delayed is indeed justice denied here.

But longtime civil rights attorney Terry Gilbert, whose firm represented Andrews, wrote in a Cleveland Plain Dealer op ed piece: “His ordeal was not in vain, and his spirit as a freedom fighter will live on.” □



Isaiah Andrews, seated, with attorneys and other people who served lengthy sentences before being exonerated.

Letters from behind the walls

Dear Mundo Obrero/Workers World,

My name is Mr. John Jefferson and I am currently confined at a New York state correctional facility. The purpose for this correspondence is that I’m very much interested in Mundo Obrero/Workers World newspaper. Could you send me the paper, if you can? This man I know showed me your paper and told me to write down the address. Thank you for your help.

*John Bernard Jefferson, Jr.
Sing Sing Correctional Facility
Ossining, New York*

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd, and the subsequent calls for social justice reform, criminal justice reform and the dismantling of racist systems, I implore you to get involved.

The type-written letter I have enclosed is about the effects of the 1993 crime bill signed into law by

President Clinton, which included provisions that take away a person’s appellate rights.

It is fundamentally unfair that a one-year time limit to present legal claims is put against Pennsylvanians who have limited or no general education, no legal education and are adjusting to prison life, and yet they are expected to learn and navigate a legal system that practicing lawyers learn how to navigate in 4-12 years of college education. How can incarcerated Pennsylvanians be expected to present legal claims with competence in a one-year time limit?

The results have been that thousands of poor people, uneducated people and African Americans have been locked out of court procedures because the parties involved did not meet the one-year time frame. Thousands of Pennsylvanians that are owed judicial relief are sitting in prison even though they may have illegal sentences.

It is time to change this in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s criminal court system!

*John Passmore
SCI Somerset
Somerset, Pennsylvania*

Peace & Power 2 Those Who Dare 2 Struggle! I hope this brief letter lifts your spirit and finds you at peace as you, me, we struggle to engage colonial capitalism and challenge its relationship with the people on an international level.

I’m a prisoner who is a revolutionary internationalist and would like to be placed on the mailing list for any and all information your organization can share.

Thank you.

*C. Wiggins
South Central Correctional Center
Licking, Missouri*

Is U.S. dollar hegemony ending?

By Betsey Piette

Is there a global movement underway to ditch dependence on the U.S. dollar? Is the world witnessing the end of U.S. economic hegemony?

The prospect of de-dollarization of the global economy has been studied by economists for some time. Most admit it was not a matter of will it happen, but when. Since 2000, U.S. control of global exchange has been falling. The 2008 U.S. economic recession accelerated this process as more countries questioned investing in risky U.S. markets.

Expanding U.S. sanctions are fueling a rapid shift in global currency exchange that threatens the hegemony of the dollar. The latest U.S. sanctions aimed at Russia may be the tipping point, because many countries will lose so much economically by obeying the sanctions that they are refusing to obey them. In addition, by seizing funds of countries that have invested in dollars held in imperialist banks, the U.S. has forced countries to rethink how to store their reserves.

An International Monetary Fund report on March 24 found “a decline in the dollar share of international reserves since the turn of the century.” Over 46 central banks have increasingly diversified their holdings. The IMF’s study revealed that the dollar’s decline did not mean increased use of the pound sterling, yen, or euro — but of the official currency of the People’s Republic of China — the yuan renminbi.

Gold standard and the dollar

As World War II ended, U.S. imperialism dominated the global economy, holding most of the gold and serving as the world’s creditor. At a meeting of 44 countries in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1944, participants agreed to fix their currencies to the dollar, which in turn was fixed to gold at \$35 an ounce.

Until 1971, the U.S. kept the dollar price of gold fixed and adjusted the supply of dollars to maintain confidence in future gold convertibility. Facing massive debt from the war in Vietnam, U.S. President Richard Nixon took the dollar off the gold standard in August 1971, to avoid draining U.S. gold reserves.

In “The Coming Global Financial Revolution,” Ellen Brown notes: “The value of the dollar then plummeted relative to other currencies on global exchanges. To prop it up, Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger made a deal with Saudi Arabia and the OPEC countries that OPEC would sell oil only in dollars, and that the dollars would be deposited in Wall Street and City of London banks. In return, the U.S. would defend the OPEC countries militarily.” (Scheer Post, April 5)

Other countries still holding large reserves of U.S.

dollars ended up investing in U.S. Treasury bonds, used in turn by the U.S. to finance their military bases around the world. Interviewed in Popular Resistance March 29, economist Michael Hudson explained: “So basically [foreign] central banks have to keep their savings by weaponizing them, by militarizing them, by lending them to the United States, to keep spending abroad. ...



No countries in Africa, the Middle East or Latin America have imposed sanctions against Russia.

“[T]hat’s what dollar hegemony was, and it was a free ride. And it all ended last Wednesday when the United States grabbed Russia’s reserves, having grabbed Afghanistan’s foreign reserves and Venezuela’s foreign reserves and those of other countries. ...

“If the way you have dollar hegemony is to have other countries deposit money in your banks and handle their oil trade with each other by financing it in dollars, but all of a sudden you grab all their dollars and you don’t let them use U.S. banks to pay for their oil and their trade with each other, then they’re going to shift to a different system.”

Sanctions and wars

Heads of oil-rich countries, Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya attempted to establish new gold-backed financial systems separate from the IMF. Both Iraq and Libya faced sanctions. Both leaders were vilified and executed.

The U.S. and Britain invaded Iraq in 2003. The U.S. and NATO bombed Libya in 2011. Now President Joe Biden has publicly called for Russian President Vladimir Putin to be removed from office.

Washington imposed sanctions on Russia and is forcing other countries, particularly allies in the European Union, to reconfigure their economies to abide by these extreme economic penalties.

After initially taking a serious hit to their economy with a significant drop in the value of the ruble, Russia has been taking measures to rid itself of dollar-based

assets under U.S. control.

Russia is one of the world’s largest exporters of oil, gas, wheat, and fertilizers. Since Russia’s normal trading partners still need commodities from Russia, they now seek alternative payment currencies to the dollar, including the Russian ruble, the Chinese yuan, and the Indian rupee. They must do this to evade U.S. and EU sanctions.

Hudson stated: “This is a war to lock in [U.S.] allies so they cannot trade with Russia. They cannot buy Russian oil. They must be dependent on [U.S.] American oil for which they will have to pay three or four times as much.” He notes that if not allowed to buy fertilizer from Russia, countries must either pay more for U.S. liquified natural gas or experience 50% crop failures.

Russia is now insisting that “unfriendly nations” including EU countries supporting U.S. sanctions, pay for Russian exports with rubles.

Many countries not currently under U.S. sanctions are refusing to comply with the sanctions imposed on Russia. They include Brazil, India, China, and South Africa which with Russia comprise the BRICS countries. China and Russia have boosted bilateral trade in each other’s currencies.

Over 40 countries, which together hold one-third of the world’s population, face economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. To circumvent U.S. sanctions, many of these countries are developing new exchange programs. This includes signing up with China’s Belt and Road Initiative development programs. Many sanctioned countries receive shipments of needed fuel and grain from Russia.

Many countries not currently under sanctions are refusing to comply with U.S. and EU sanctions imposed on Russia. Countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and Mexico have refused to submit to U.S. measures that damage their own trade relations.

In an interview with The Cradle, April 15, Russian economist Sergey Glazyev stated: “Transition to the new world economic order will likely be accompanied by systematic refusal to honor obligations in dollars, euro, pound, and yen. In this respect, it will be no different from the example set by the countries issuing these currencies who thought it appropriate to steal foreign exchange reserves of Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, Afghanistan, and Russia to the tune of trillions of dollars.

“Since the U.S., Britain, EU, and Japan refused to honor their obligations and confiscated the wealth of other nations which was held in their currencies, why should other countries be obliged to pay them back and to service their loans?” (cradle.co) □

Stop NATO’s dangerous war against Russia

Continued from page 1

fail to bring victory to the pro-West regime in Ukraine, they have caused and will cause greater casualties among the Russian troops. They will extend the war’s duration, preventing a truce. Arms manufacturers, merchants of death, have received new orders and are raking in profits.

U.S. imperialism, other NATO regimes and their corporate media have waged a relentless propaganda war against Russia and its President Vladimir Putin.

In the U.S. this media blitz has surpassed in volume similar campaigns waged to provide pretexts for wars against Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. The media has demonized Putin as thoroughly as earlier coverage demonized Iraq’s Saddam Hussein, Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi, Yugoslavia’s Slobodan Milosevic and Syria’s Bashar al-Assad. The imperialists use the same playbook each war.

The enemy is at home

Anyone familiar with the recent history of U.S.-incited wars must be furious upon learning that Washington’s leaders want to charge Putin with war crimes. Even if the stories of civilian deaths in Ukraine are true — and nothing has been proven yet about what happened and who was responsible — they are

incomparable to the millions killed during U.S. invasions and bombings of infrastructure in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yugoslavia, etc.

Western governments, while boasting of “free speech,” have censored major media presenting the Russian side — RT, Sputnik — while the corporate media omit the recent history of NATO’s threats to Russia:

Since 1991 NATO has nearly doubled its members, annexing countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, some bordering on Russia and all whose regimes are hostile to Russia. NATO holds regular war

exercises near the Russian border. Most important, the U.S. is installing nuclear-capable rockets in the region that can reach Russian cities in five minutes and make a first nuclear strike on Russia possible.

Thus the advance of NATO eastward must be considered a serious existential threat to Russia, a danger at the very least of “regime change” to a Russian ruling-class grouping willing to submit to imperialist domination. Such a result would be a setback for oppressed nations worldwide and would extend, at least temporarily, imperialist domination.

The U.S. policy of prolonging the war in Ukraine by sending weapons and mercenaries is a danger to the world’s people. It is also a direct attack on the standard of living of the working class and people worldwide, including in the United States. Any mobilization of the workers to defend their standard of living must include a strategy to stop this war, a strategy aimed at the defeat of the imperialist ruling class, the main enemy of the world’s people.

Thus it is vital for anti-war and working-class organizations to organize education and action to demand:

Cut the military budget!
No arms to Ukraine!
Disband NATO!

□



Protest in Zaragoza, Spain, October 2015. Banner reads ‘Now and forever: No to NATO! Bases out!’

WW COMMENTARY

Remember the Maine! U.S. war lies

By Danny O'Brien

The reputation of the United States and its unrelenting military must precede any claim these entities make about “truth.”

Time and time again, the U.S. State and Defense Departments have lied their way into war. U.S. forces have razed the earth on which they warred, and countless millions of people have died in their wake. Defense companies and politicians have profited at the total expense of the global community.

What are some of the lies the U.S. has fabricated in order to justify its wars?

The USS Maine — and Cuba

In February 1898, a United States battleship, the USS Maine, exploded in the then Spanish-controlled Havana Harbor, now liberated and under the control of our Cuban comrades. The explosion, publicized with fervor by media mogul William Randolph Hearst and his bellicose cronies, was then casus belli (reason for war) for the United States to go to war with the Spanish Empire.

A declassified CIA document written March 13, 1962, outlines Operation Northwoods, a plan for a U.S. attack on Cuba following its 1959 Revolution: (tinyurl.com/2p9cj7ek)

On page 11, during an outline of false-flag tactics, the CIA directly uses the phrase “a ‘Remember the Maine’ incident,” and follows with plans to intentionally blow up a U.S. ship to start a desired “war on communism.” Our revolutionary comrades in Cuba hold as official history that the 1898 incident was a planned, false-flag operation.

Some historians believe the Maine catastrophe to have been caused by munitions exploding onboard, or, more dubiously, by spontaneous combustion. But only “patriotic” indoctrinating textbook companies or U.S. ultranationalists put forward the debunked story of a Spanish naval mine or torpedo.

The result of the ensuing 1898 war was a U.S. imperial seizure of former Spanish colonies, including Cuba, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. With this came the brutal U.S. occupation of Cuba, leading to a series of anti-labor and inhumane dictatorships, financed by the deep pockets of the United Fruit Company.

Cuba became a U.S. organized crime outpost and an offshore “Las Vegas” destination at the expense of the Cuban population. The war in the Philippines led to the establishment of concentration camps, massive waves of cholera, and a nightmarish onslaught that killed an estimated 1.5 million Filipinos, out of a population of 6 million at the time.

All because of a lie — “Remember the Maine.”

Pearl Harbor and the bombs

The December 1941 Japanese bombing of the U.S. naval station in Pearl Harbor — which led to a U.S. declaration of war — is usually characterized as a sudden “unprovoked attack.”

What is erased from the standard education of the working class in the United States is that the U.S. had been supportive, financially and diplomatically, of Imperial

Japan’s heinous conquest of China.

The U.S. had supplied oil and war materials to the Japanese government as part of an “Open Door” policy of exploitation in China. Then Japanese imperialism turned its goals towards the vast reserves of rubber, tin and oil in the rest of Southeast Asia. At this point the United States cut off Japan’s economic ventures with massive embargos.

These economic acts of war — or at the very least, anti-neutrality — raised concerns within the State Department that Japan would retaliate. It was already expected that Japan’s expansionism would not simply stop at the Philippines, where the U.S. had already amassed large military forces as part of its colonial domination.

Uncle Sam’s dictionary seems to define an “unprovoked attack” as one in which the U.S. or its imperial interests are wounded, regardless of provocation.

The most simplistic, nationalist U.S. textbooks trumpet that the atomic bombs the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 were a “justified” retaliation for Japan’s bombing of Pearl Harbor.

As if the death of around 2,400, nearly all military forces, could justify the death of over 200,000 people, the vast majority of whom were civilians!

Another reason given to uphold that lie is that the war crime was a necessity to end World War II on the Pacific Front. What is stricken from the record of this atrocity is that the Soviet Union had plans to enter the war against Japan. This military move on the USSR’s eastern border could easily have led to a Japanese surrender to the USSR, considering the strength and suc-

cesses of the Red Army.

Instead, the U.S. dropped its nuclear bombs mere days before the Soviets were to enter Japan, and negotiated a surrender leading to a Japanese client state whose ruling class was dependent on U.S. imperialism and its military machine.

The lie of Tonkin

In summer 1964, a U.S. warship, armed to the teeth, was taking an illegal cruise in the territorial waters of North Vietnam. The ship was surveilling the National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese Army, in support of the U.S.-backed and armed coup government of South Vietnam.

During this excursion, the ship attacked the coastline, supposedly because it was being followed by North Vietnamese ships. It was not attacked by torpedoes. Nor was it attacked by torpedoes two days later. But President Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara said otherwise, in order to rally the U.S. public towards a war in Vietnam — already being played out covertly for years in the hands of the CIA.

The conflict, lasting 11 more years, senselessly claimed the lives of over three million Vietnamese people, again mainly civilians. The U.S. implemented scorched-earth policies and kill quotas, targeted civilian and agricultural infrastructure,



An 1898 propaganda poster uses the explosion of the USS Maine to manipulate public acceptance of war with Spain as part of the ‘manifest destiny’ of U.S. imperialist expansion.

and massacred non-combatants, torching their villages and using chemical weapons to poison the countryside.

‘Baby incubators’

In October 1990, a 15-year-old girl, identified only as Nayirah, gave testimony to the U.S. Congressional Human Rights Caucus that Iraqi soldiers had stormed a Kuwaiti hospital and “thrown babies out of incubators to leave them on the cold floor to die.” (LA Times, March 6, 1992) She was later identified as Nayirah Al-Sabah, daughter of Saud Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States — not exactly a disinterested witness.

This lie was specifically crafted and funded by Hill+Knowlton Strategies, a U.S. public relations firm known for its anti-labor stance, which represented the steel industries multiple times during various strikes in the first half of the twentieth century. The firm was also responsible for putting out misinformation about the dangers of cigarettes and asbestos.

The Kuwaiti ambassador and his suspicious Citizens for a Free Kuwait organization paid \$12 million for the incubator lie. This prepared a pretext for the U.S. government to justify entering the Gulf War, which caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, and to bomb the population back to pre-industrial infrastructure and sanitary conditions through fire and brimstone.

‘Weapons of mass destruction’

There were no weapons of mass destruction in 2002 Iraq, another lie used to justify a second U.S. Gulf War in March 2003. This is admitted and well-known now.

But in late 2002, the United States agencies fabricated false reports of such weapons, and the U.S. administration clamored for the United Nations to give it leeway to bring the fires of hell down on Iraq. So continued an almost endless war that would ultimately claim the lives of countless civilians.

The WMD lie was finally retracted in 2016 by the U.S. secretary of state who made it before the U.N. in 2003. This was General Colin Powell, who had also been chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Syria and sarin gas

Like a broken record, the United States has claimed that the Ba’ath government of Syria, led by President Bashar al-Assad,

has attacked its own citizens using sarin gas. U.N. Human Rights Council investigators and German intelligence operatives following the accusation in 2013 have found that the gas was not used by the government.

An MIT professor emeritus of science and technology, Theodore Postol, published multiple studies of the gas attacks, showing that these were more likely to have originated from U.S.-backed rebel groups rather than Assad’s government. (See article, science.org, Sept. 24, 2019) The article stirred much controversy as there was oppo-

sition to Postol’s position, which was no surprise.

The United States ignored all of these claims and went forward with its attacks on Syria [including the infamous 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles launched on then President Trump’s orders to take out the Syrian airbase “from where the [alleged] chemical attack was [allegedly] launched” NYT April 6, 2017], claiming the accusation was reason enough to enter into supporting a proxy war on that country. This war, ongoing, has been a bloody quagmire that has already killed hundreds of thousands of civilians in less than a decade’s time.

Message to the working class of the United States

Working class and oppressed peoples are the primary targets of such blatant, ham-fisted U.S. lies and propaganda. Those in the State Department, with their pockets full from the coffers of Raytheon, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, need no factual incident to go to war. They want a payoff and their hedge funds want profits!

But they must manufacture public consent to save the already-tarnished image of “democracy” and wage the wars needed for profit.

These wars, catered to their economic interests quite carefully, are directly opposed to the interests of workers and oppressed people. On the home front, wars bring lower wages, hikes in inflation, higher fuel prices, class division and xenophobia. Wars divert our cries for better living conditions to shouts for someone else’s blood.

Anti-war fighters in the U.S. must call for free healthcare and education, a raise in benefits and wages, gender and race equity and many other material demands. The automated voice message of the U.S. state answers back: “We’re sorry; we need that money for the war.”

Look with hindsight at all of the debunked U.S. lies that in the past have led to total destruction and immiseration. Fight against the new calls for U.S. involvement in the Ukraine. Do not accept “truth” offered by a capitalist state as the truth.

By prying into the history of this current conflict people can realize that the surface level and the depths are not equal. Remember the WMDs! Remember the Gulf of Tonkin! Remember the Maine! □



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.

Free PDF download available at workers.org/books

Wanted: a safe place to sleep

During a spate of mass public shootings in the last few weeks—from Sacramento, California, to Syracuse, New York—an April 12 attack in the New York City subway system received frenzied attention. News outlets ran bystander videos that shocked with screams and blood.

But NYC’s ex-cop mayor, Eric Adams, has had only one “solution” to the problems of ordinary people who live in the city: Impose “law and order” by sending in more cops. More conflict in public places? His answer was to redeploy police from desk jobs onto the streets.

The NYC shooter himself, Frank James, diagnosed what really needs to be fixed. James recorded hours of social media video about his own struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder and inability to access treatment, saying: “Mr. Mayor, let me say to you: I’m a victim of your mental health program in New York City.” (New York Post, April 13)

After the attack Mayor Adams finally had

to concede that more “psychiatric beds” are needed. But what he has actually been doing is attacking oppressed and working people struggling with homelessness, eviction, crushing job loads and lack of health care of any kind—physical or mental.

This “law and order” mayor is renewing the old “broken windows” policy of right-wing Mayor Rudy Giuliani—to make the town “safe” for tourists and for those whose wealth is growing ever greater.

Adams has set cops to breaking up encampments of unhoused people, tearing up their pitifully few belongings. As of April 1, cops had “cleared”—demolished—about 250 homeless settlements. A law forbidding anyone from sleeping on the subways gives cops a free hand to menace and evict people seeking shelter there. (Amsterdam News, April 7)

During the two years of the COVID-19 epidemic, NYC landlords have filed to evict over 100,000 people. The same trend is apparent across the U.S. The evictions overwhelmingly harm single mothers,

older people, people of color and poor people. These are the people with the least resources, the people likely to be sheltering somewhere in the subway system and in unhoused encampments. (evictionlab.org/eviction-tracking)

Even housed workers are now vulnerable if they nap coming home from a job—an act common on the subway throughout its history.

Police can throw a sleeping person off at any stop. All the cops have to do is “advise them to get help.” And where is the help?

The cops are not there to help—certainly never “to serve and protect” working people. Cops exist to protect property and protect those who own the property—the capitalist class.

In past years there have been militant actions to support and assist New York subway riders who have disability issues.



Seven homeless people and supporters, defending an encampment at Avenue D and Ninth Street, were arrested when cops swept through to demolish the living space in the East Village, New York City, April 6.

Groups organizing have been The People’s MTA, ADAPT, Rise & Resist, People’s Power Assembly-NYC, the Straphangers Campaign and the Brooklyn Center for the Independence of the Disabled. Members of Disabled In Action, TransitCenter and UP-STAND, an advocacy group for pregnant women and families, have also participated. (See Workers World coverage.)

Now is the time for grass-roots action to defend subway riders who are evicted, houseless, neurodivergent or in need of physical or mental health services. And yes, for defense of tired workers who just need to sleep on the subway going to and from their exhausting jobs.

No evictions! No subway cops! Housing and health care are a right for all! □

WW COMMENTARY

By Jim McMahan

The capitalist class is “reopening” the international economy, harming many workers. Controls that significantly limited the spread of the coronavirus—like masking, vaccines and testing—are being stopped. Funds for controls are being cut. A paltry \$15 billion to provide funding for vaccine boosters and treatments is blocked in the U.S. Congress.

The working class of all capitalist countries in the developing world is left almost defenseless against the surge of the COVID-19 Omicron and other new variants.

In the U.S., the federal government is cutting back on testing. Many testing centers have closed down; others hike prices in response to the end of government-subsidized testing programs.

People rely on at-home tests, with results rarely reported. Without widespread and public testing, it is next to impossible to detect a surge in the coronavirus until too late to take measures to minimize damage.

This is nothing but an abandonment of the workers once again by the capitalist class.

Socialist vs. capitalist approach to health

The Peoples’ Republic of China is summoning all resources to put up a fight against a new Omicron variant in Shanghai. When you see responders in medical overalls delivering food packages everywhere, you’re seeing a society willing to put itself on war footing to defend the lives of the working class against the virus.

Xenophobic criticisms of China by the bourgeoisie deny the fact that the Chinese are saving lives while over a million people in the U.S. have died and 6 million people—at least—have died worldwide of COVID-19.

A March 10 article in the Lancet medical journal estimates as many as 18 million people may have died worldwide. China, with a full public mobilization and a socialized health care system, has had fewer than 5,000 deaths due to COVID-19. (worldometers.info)

This is the difference between a capitalist and a socialist approach to health.

The new Omicron BA.2 variant is triggering an uptick in cases in the U.S. and Europe. Will this be the only new variant? Or will a variant come that evades vaccines and sends the U.S. back into pandemic doldrums? The scientists have no definite answers.

Capitalists politicians—who have acted cluelessly in addressing the pandemic—especially have no answers.

COVID and the capitalist crisis

How many times have they stumbled by “reopening” the economy, causing great suffering?

The virus—with 800 deaths a day in April in the U.S.—is adaptable to changing circumstances. In addition, the protections given by vaccines drop over time, and some of the newest variants seem able to evade the vaccine protection. (New York Times, April 11)

Is there any national plan to defend the working class in the U.S. against an invasion of a new wave of the virus? No. Both Democrats and Republicans are very resistant to going back to lockdowns, mask mandates or even new funding.

Instead of a battle plan against COVID-19, U.S. imperialists are financing super-expensive weapons for a proxy war with

Russia. The misdirection of money to the military budget from health care is not worrying the imperialists. Whether people in the U.S., Ukraine and Russia die en masse of COVID-19 is no concern of the capitalists.

The bosses need to “open” the economy. They will put profits before people to beat competitors and make workers go back to work. The capitalist system requires banks and corporations to make big profits every single quarter of the year. They will open the schools despite dangers to students since schools produce future workers. The capitalists have to open the economy up, because otherwise the whole economic system will begin to crash.

The contradiction the bosses face is that the U.S. working class has suffered from a million deaths and 80 million COVID-19

illnesses. This unprecedented suffering and grief has led to massive worker resistance to the dictates of the bosses for hard work and drudgery with low wages.

Worker organizing with strikes and other workplace disruption has been taking place throughout the pandemic. The Great Resignation of the working class leaving oppressive work will continue. Four million workers have quit their jobs every month since July 2021. (Fortune, Feb. 1)

Sometimes it can seem that workers have lost their voices about how to deal with the pandemic. But their actions speak louder than words.

Sources: *Newsweek.com*, April 15, 2020; *Time Magazine*, Apr. 16; *NY Times*, April 16, Opinion Page, Charles M. Blow

Heat waves melt ice at both poles of Earth

By G. Dunkel

This updated article first appeared on workers.org March 30, 2022.

The climate crisis is real. Millions of people throughout the world are suffering and dying from floods and rising sea levels, droughts, stronger hurricanes and more intense tornadoes—several out of their normal season. Wind and ice storms, blizzards, heat waves, cold snaps, wildfires and mudslides are more frequent. Melting or structurally disintegrating “rotten ice” threatens the livelihood of Arctic people who rely on ice to hunt.

While many of these weather events occurred before global warming became established, their intensity and frequency are certainly due in great part to the atmospheric heat generated by capitalist production’s reliance on fossil fuels.

On March 25, the youth organization Fridays for the Future held 778 demonstrations and protests worldwide to “strike for climate reparations and justice.” Their website asserts “The catastrophic climate scenario that we are living in is the result of centuries of exploitation and oppression through colonialism, extractivism and capitalism.” (fridaysforfuture.org/march25/)

The heat wave on the Antarctic eastern coast saw temperatures rise by 70 degrees the second week of March, which led scientists on-site to take a picture of themselves in shorts and T-shirts. They were flabbergasted by this rise, since Antarctica was entering its fall season. In the 100 or so years

of meteorological observation in Antarctica, this was the first reported heat wave.

According to the Washington Post, “Satellite imagery and computer models indicate significant snow, rain and melting also occurred. During the heatwave, the ice sheet experienced its fourth-wettest day in more than four decades.” (March 22)

Along with this heat wave, the 1,200-square-kilometer Conger Ice Shelf, slightly larger in area than New York City, collapsed completely. It had been tottering before, but the heat wave was the last straw. These ice shelves surrounding the Antarctic continent keep the thick glaciers covering its land from melting more rapidly.

According to the AP, if all the glaciers in Antarctica melted, the seas would rise by 160 feet. (Yahoo News, March 25)

The Arctic experienced a heat wave at the same time as the Antarctic, which is surprising since it is in a different hemisphere and since its winter lasts until late April.

The Arctic is home to a number of Indigenous nations who depend on ice for transportation between communities, which are not linked by roads, and for hunting and fishing which supply much of their food.

There are at least 60 words in Inuktitut, the Inuit language, to precisely identify ice in its various stages.

Andrew Arreak is an Inuit scientist with SmartICE, a community-based enterprise that offers tools to adapt to climate change, integrating Inuit knowledge of sea ice with monitoring technology. It has branches in 32 communities in the Canadian North.

Arreak lives in Pond Inlet on Baffin Island in Nunavut. His community has had to confront the way ice responds to the ice breakers used by the iron ore mines on the island. He told Bloomberg News, “Sea ice is coming a little later, and melting a little earlier, each year.” He went on “It’s not just the thickness of the ice, it’s also what type of ice it is, whether it’s imported ice or newly formed ice.” (March 23)

The Arctic is warming much more rapidly than the rest of the planet, except perhaps Antarctica. The Inuit, whose ancestors moved into the area thousands of years ago, want to have a say in what happens there.

The rapid changes and climatic gyrations taking place at both Poles are due to global warming throughout the world. While the capitalists see the chance for big profits—for example, when the big oil and gas interests in the U.S. see they can use sanctions on Russia to make billions in profits from the German energy market—all their protestations on renewables are ignored in the blink of an eye.

The changes in the Arctic and Antarctic cause major changes for the rest of the world. The vanishing ice cover in the Arctic means more heat is absorbed and more energy made available for storms to intensify. The warmer Antarctica gets, the quicker its ice shields go, the quicker its ice cover melts, and the quicker seas rise throughout the world.

Renewables won’t solve all the problems of global warming. But adopting them quickly will give the world time to develop other, more comprehensive solutions. □

Palestinians resist Israeli attack on mosque

By **Richie Merino**

Israeli occupation forces violently raided Palestinian worshippers on April 15, during early morning prayers at the al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem. The premeditated and orchestrated attack came on the second Friday of Ramadan, the holiest month of the year for Muslims, when tens of thousands of worshippers travel to al-Aqsa to pray. Israeli occupation forces wounded more than 153 Palestinians and arrested more than 400 during the brutal assault.

According to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), thousands of worshippers experienced intimidation on entering the gates to the mosque compound amid a heavy presence of Israeli occupation forces, including snipers perched on the rooftop. Given the Israeli regime’s long history of terrorizing Palestinians during the holy month of Ramadan, the worshippers had placed wooden barriers around the mosque in anticipation of an Israeli raid. Shortly after the dawn prayer was concluded, Israeli forces occupying the roof smashed the stained glass windows of the mosque’s prayer hall and ambushed the worshippers, firing rubber-coated steel bullets, teargas and stun grenades into the crowd. Palestinians resisted the violent

onslaught for four hours before Israeli occupation forces finally cleared the prayer hall and the mosque’s courtyards of almost all worshippers. Multiple videos posted on social media show heavily militarized Israeli forces launching stun grenades inside the mosque and brutally punching and kicking Palestinians into submission. One video shows Israeli forces kneeling on the upper bodies of worshippers as they are brutalized and forcibly arrested.

Meanwhile, outside the prayer hall, Israeli police blocked entry to the compound and fired rubber bullets at paramedics as they rushed to aid the wounded. “They beat everyone. Journalists, medics, elderly women – everyone that was in their way. They didn’t spare anyone,” eyewitness Fakhri Abu Diab told Middle East Eye. Israeli forces shot rubber bullets into the eyes of al-Aqsa guards attempting to assist women and children caught in the crossfire. Another disturbing video shows an Israeli police officer striking an unarmed Palestinian woman in the arm with a club as she attempts to document human rights violations.

Francesca Albanese, the newly appointed U.N. special rapporteur on human rights in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, said on Friday that “places of worship, as an extension of freedom of religion, must be protected, especially on

holy days.” She added that intentional and unprovoked attacks on civilians constitute war crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Sheik Ekrima Sabri, the imam of al-Aqsa, said the raid was executed in coordination with far-right Israeli nationalists, who have vowed to raid the mosque and bring animals to slaughter inside its courtyard. The onslaught was intended to remove Palestinians and make room for Israeli settlers to storm the mosque during the Jewish Passover holiday, which started that evening.

During and after the planned raid, Israeli settlers tried to enter al-Aqsa Mosque carrying sheep and answering calls from Zionist organizations to slaughter the animals for religious sacrifices. Such nationalist groups also advocate destruction of the mosque and construction of a Jewish temple in its place. If such animal sacrifices were to occur inside al-Aqsa, it would be an unprecedented escalation of the illegal occupation and would likely provoke Muslims worldwide, who revere the Jerusalem site as one of the holiest in Islam.

Zionism is racism

According to the imam of al-Aqsa, it is likely that Israeli occupation forces will try to storm the mosque again, given Israel’s long history of escalating violent attacks



in occupied Palestine during the month of Ramadan. Last year, Zionists carried out multiple violent raids inside the mosque, leading to an 11-day war between Israel and armed resistance groups in Gaza. More than 256 Palestinians in Gaza, including at least 66 children, had been killed during the 11 days of intense shelling that followed.

In 1948, Israeli military forces, backed by the U.S. and Western imperialists, drove 700,000 Palestinians out of their homes into exile, destroying hundreds of towns and villages in order to form the state of Israel. Since then, the corporate media have been weak in covering human rights violations committed against occupied Palestinians and extremely biased in favor of Israeli settlers.

Israel has been a genocidal, settler-colonial apartheid project, but it is unable to crush the Indigenous Palestinian resistance. In times of increased Israeli aggression, it’s imperative to amplify Palestinian voices. Palestinian resistance – and armed defense – is justified in response to a century-long war of conquest and aggression by Israeli colonizers against the Indigenous people of Palestine. □

An African hero: Thomas Sankara’s killers condemned after 35 years

By **G. Dunkel**

The trial of the Burkinabè soldiers who in 1987 killed Thomas Sankara, the president of Burkina Faso, and some of his closest advisors ended April 6 with a guilty verdict and life sentences. The role in the assassinations that was played by French imperialism and its agents in the neighboring Ivory Coast is still unclear.

Sankara was a conscious revolutionary. His political views and organizational steps as president were modeled on those of socialist Cuba. (See Workers World, tinyurl.com/2z68hpva)

Alouna Traoré, who was Sankara’s legal counselor in 1987, left the court smiling

this time, 35 years later. He had somehow survived the deadly attack on Sankara and twelve of his advisors, according to an Aug. 4, 2015, interview with Le Pays, a daily newspaper in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso’s capital.

This week Traoré told German media giant Deutsche Welle, which covered the trial, “They attacked our dream thinking they could kill him. Thirty-five years later, I realize that the Burkinabè dream holds water. This excites the whole continent, the lines are moving.

“Thomas [Sankara] has done useful work, his example is being followed,” Traore added. “Our joy is that young people, future generations, use it for better fights, so that

we can turn these so-called territories of misery and precariousness into territories of happiness and well-being.”

Images of Sankara pop up all over West Africa – on cars, t-shirts, scooters – particularly on t-shirts in demonstrations. His modesty, lack of ostentation and humility, his defense of women’s rights and education, his concern over Burkinabès having enough to eat and a healthy lifestyle, even though he was only president for four years, has kept his memory alive. This legacy has supported the progressive movement in Burkina Faso and his family over the decades as they pushed for a trial.

The large statue of Sankara outside the

building where he was killed is a major tourist attraction in Ouagadougou.

Mass movement against French neo-colonialism

Sankara actively encouraged countries in Africa, particularly countries that were former colonies of French imperialism, to stop paying the foreign debt, which was forced on them by their former colonial overlords.

Nearly half the countries in Africa were French colonies or protectorates and France still dominates their economies, maintains military bases and conducts military operations against a variety of groups. The fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 produced a flood of weapons as the West Africans who fought in his army made their way home with their weapons.

Although the United States competes with France for domination of the region, it provides extensive help to the French military in West Africa. This can be logistical aid, intelligence sharing from the big drone base in Niger up to rapidly deploying forces.

There are armed insurgencies throughout the Sahel – a band of semi-arid land south of the Sahara and north of the Savanna that stretches across Africa and includes Burkina Faso. There was a major attack on an army base in northern Burkina Faso the first week of April during which 16 soldiers lost their lives.

Throughout the Sahel, there have been sharp signs that show an increase in mass pressure against the French presence. In Senegal, French stores and gas stations have been broken into; in Burkina Faso, tailors cut up French flags to sew into Russian flags; in Mali, French advisors and military technicians are no longer welcome, and have been replaced by Russian professional soldiers from the Wagner Group based in St. Petersburg.

In Niger, a French military convoy shot at protesters trying to block it, killing two protesters. This protest raises questions about France’s ability to supply its forces.

More general questions remain in the background: Will French imperialism be able to maintain its presence in Africa and how will this impact the U.S. role? □

March commemorates 20th anniversary of defeat of anti-Chávez coup

By **Ricardo Vaz, Caracas**

April 13, Venezuelanalysis.com — Big crowds took to the streets of Caracas April 13, to mark the 20th anniversary of a short-lived coup.

On April 11, 2002, U.S.-backed civilian and military elites ousted democratically elected President Hugo Chávez following a massive media campaign and false flag violence. A self-proclaimed “transition government” took power the next day and was endorsed by Washington and a handful of other countries.

A massive popular response in the ensuing forty-eight hours, especially from popular neighborhoods on the hillsides of the capital, pushed loyal military sectors into action. The coup was defeated and Chávez returned to the presidency in the early hours of April 14, 2002.

To commemorate the coup defeat’s 20th anniversary, two Chavista marches featuring tens of thousands of people were held in Caracas. The mobilizations, which included delegations and high-profile politicians from throughout the country, took off from different points before converging on Miraflores Presidential Palace in the afternoon.

“On April 13 (2002), the Venezuelan

people taught a lesson to the oligarchy and the empire,” President Nicolás Maduro said in his speech.

The Venezuelan leader paid tribute to those killed fighting against the short-lived coup government and hailed the events of 20 years ago as “a victory of the Bolivarian civilian-military union.”

The Bolivarian Militia had a strong presence in the rally, with several thousand members in uniform and in formation, many of them carrying weapons.

The organization was created by Chávez in 2005 and incorporated into the armed forces three years later. With a reported membership of over three million, the Bolivarian Militia is conceived as a territorial self-defense unit.

Leonardo Rodríguez, grassroots activist and professor, told Venezuelanalysis that the April 2002 events were “a turning point in Venezuelan history. Without firing a single shot, the Venezuelan people and the armed forces restored constitutional order and kicked out the usurpers,” he explained. Rodríguez stated that the main lesson from 20 years ago was the need to “trust the people.”

For her part, Carmen García, a local leader of the ruling Socialist Party (PSUV)



PHOTO: VNEZUELANALYSIS

March in Caracas, April 13, shows the Chavista revolution has mass support.

in the San Agustín barrio, stressed that the march was a great show of support for the Maduro government in the face of foreign threats.

“April 13, 2002, left us a legacy of unity that we remember in order to continue fighting in defense of the Bolivarian Revolution,” she told Venezuelanalysis.

For the 20-year anniversary commemorations, the Venezuelan government hosted an “International Summit Against Fascism” from April 11 to 13.

Featuring over 200 participants from 52 countries, the event had panels and presentations on the rise of far-right and fascist movements around the world, as well as the need to grow solidarity movements.

The summit likewise focused on the importance of alternative media to break the hegemony of corporate outlets and censorship efforts from social media platforms. □

En la
pancarta
está un
apelo para
apoyar el
sindicato en
Amazon.



MO FOTO: TONY MURPHY

Victoria del sindicato de Amazon es parte del creciente movimiento de solidaridad laboral

Por Tony Murphy

El creciente movimiento por los derechos sindicales recibió una inyección de energía el 1 de abril con la inspiradora victoria de los trabajadores de los almacenes de Amazon en Staten Island, Nueva York, en una victoria decisiva contra la vehementemente antisindical Amazon.

La importancia de esta victoria, en la que la solidaridad de los socialistas jugó un gran papel, no puede ser exagerada. Llega en un momento de auge de la clase trabajadora, ya que los miembros de todos los sectores de la fuerza de trabajo —desde Starbucks hasta la Cooperativa REI y los trabajadores de los estudiantes de posgrado— no sólo están despertando y luchando, sino que también están ganando.

Este despertar de la lucha es particularmente necesario ahora, con el Congreso financiando la guerra contra Rusia en Ucrania, desechando la ayuda COVID, abandonando la protección contra los desahucios y olvidando las promesas hechas a la clase trabajadora en Build Back Better.

Christian Smalls lanzó la campaña de organización de los almacenes de Staten Island hace un año, después de haber sido despedido por Amazon en 2020 por liderar un paro justo y necesario en protesta por la falta de protección COVID —un fallo de Amazon que persiste hasta hoy.

Desde entonces, él y los activistas del Sindicato de Trabajadores de Amazon han organizado firmas de tarjetas, barbacoas, acciones laborales, paros, protestas, reuniones en la calle y concentraciones frente al apartamento del ático de Jeff Bezos en Manhattan. Consiguieron recuperar los puestos de trabajo de los trabajadores despedidos. Cuando una trabajadora de Amazon fue acosada sexualmente fuera de un almacén de Staten Island, Smalls y otros líderes de ALU se plantaron fuera del edificio con un megáfono y obligaron a la dirección a tomar medidas contra el agresor.

El hecho de que la ALU fuera capaz de obtener victorias en el trabajo incluso antes de que se produjera la votación de la Junta Nacional de Relaciones Laborales significa que ya existía un sindicato, mucho antes de recibir el reconocimiento legal del Estado capitalista. Esto tiene importancia para el movimiento obrero, ya que otros trabajadores de Amazon se han estado organizando por los derechos de los trabajadores sin contratos sindicales. En particular, hace dos semanas los trabajadores de los almacenes de Maryland y del distrito neoyorquino de Queens —en acciones organizadas por Amazonians United— abandonaron el trabajo en acciones coordinadas para exigir un aumento de 3 dólares por hora.

Superar las barreras contra los sindicatos

Merece la pena destacar lo mucho que han tenido que superar los trabajadores de los almacenes de Amazon en Staten Island —en su mayoría afroamericanos y latinos, con una importante plantilla internacional procedente del sudeste asiático, África y América Latina —para conseguir el voto sindical.

En primer lugar, estaba el sesgo general favorable a la patronal de las elecciones sindicales supervisadas por la NLRB. Las leyes permiten a los empresarios realizar una gran cantidad de intimidaciones y coacciones durante las elecciones sindicales, sin apenas repercusiones ni sanciones. Las multas contra la dirección son tan insignificantes que las empresas antisindicales aconsejan a las empresas que las consideren como “licencias de caza”.

En segundo lugar, los trabajadores se enfrentaron a una de las empresas más grandes y ricas del planeta. Amazon es tan grande que ha evitado una gran parte del caos de la cadena de suministro fabricando sus propios contenedores y fletando barcos y aviones de largo recorrido.

Una empresa con ese tipo de recursos puede gastar más que la media de las empresas para acabar con las campañas sindicales. En 2021, Amazon gastó 4,3 millones de dólares en bufetes de abogados antisindicales. Obviamente, esa cantidad aumentará en 2022.

Un reciente artículo del New York Times detalló cómo Amazon se puso en marcha en las primeras etapas de la pandemia, no para hacer el lugar de trabajo más seguro, sino para contrarrestar el paro de Smalls en protesta por la falta de seguridad de COVID. La empresa “formó un equipo de reacción en el que participaron diez departamentos, incluido su Programa de Inteligencia Global, un grupo de seguridad formado por muchos veteranos militares”. (2 de abril)

Los jefes sometieron a sus trabajadores a reuniones con público cautivo, textos, despidos, reuniones intimidatorias individuales y televisores de pantalla plana que estaban colocados por todo el almacén y emitían constantes vídeos antisindicales. Mientras tanto, los organizadores del sindicato fueron arrestados más de una vez con cargos falsos.

En tercer lugar, el ritmo de trabajo agotador y el modelo de negocio inhumano de Amazon dan lugar a lo que sería un asesino para muchas campañas sindicales: una tasa de rotación anual en el lugar de trabajo del 150%. El almacén de Staten Island, en particular, tiene una tasa de lesiones que triplica la media nacional. Muchos trabajadores que habían firmado tarjetas fueron despedidos, pasaron a estar incapacitados debido a las lesiones o renunciaron sólo para proteger su salud.

Y, por último, Staten Island era la típica ubicación de muchos almacenes de Amazon: en lugares de difícil acceso y alejados que dificultan la celebración de protestas y acciones de solidaridad en apoyo de los trabajadores. La mayoría de los residentes de Manhattan, Brooklyn o el Bronx que no tienen coche tienen que tomar un ferry hasta Staten Island y luego un viaje en autobús para llegar al almacén de Amazon.

El papel clave de la solidaridad de la clase trabajadora

El hecho de que se hayan superado todos estos obstáculos es un testimonio de la organización de base, de trabajador a trabajador, llevada a cabo por la dirección de la UAL. Los veinte líderes principales leyeron la historia del trabajo sobre los fundamentos de la organización profunda, y se ganaron pacientemente a sus compañeros de trabajo. El líder de la UAL, Derrick Palmer, describió cómo incluso acudía al trabajo para organizar en sus días libres.

También es un testimonio del aumento de la conciencia de clase en el conjunto de la clase trabajadora, un fenómeno enraizado en la experiencia de los trabajadores de la pandemia, que coincidió con decenas de millones de personas en las calles luchando contra la violencia policial racista. El inspirador movimiento callejero tuvo un efecto radicalizador, mientras que los trabajadores de primera línea —empujados a poner en peligro sus vidas en aras de los beneficios— se vieron obligados a contraatacar.

Los trabajadores superaron el uso del racismo por parte de la patronal, una característica de esta lucha desde el paro que Smalls lideró en marzo de 2020. Los gerentes de Amazon fueron sorprendidos conspirando para desacreditar cualquier esfuerzo de organización con tácticas de desprestigio racista dirigidas a Smalls. Esto continuó durante todo el tiempo, siendo el ejemplo más reciente la detención en febrero de Smalls por entregar comida a los trabajadores durante su descanso. Durante ese incidente, el Departamento de Policía de Nueva York detuvo a otros dos trabajadores de la UAL —uno blanco y otro latino —pero sólo Smalls fue cacheado en busca de posibles armas.

Otra parte de la victoria fue la solidaridad, sobre todo de los socialistas que priorizaron la lucha sindical en Amazon como una lucha a vida o muerte. Para el éxito de la campaña, algunos “echaron sal” de forma muy eficaz en Staten Island. Otros, como la Red de Apoyo a los Trabajadores de Amazon (SAWN) y la Asamblea de Trabajadores contra el Racismo (WAAR), llevaron a cabo acciones de solidaridad que elevaron el perfil de la lucha y presionaron a los trabajadores organizados para que la apoyaran.

Incluso antes de que se pusiera en marcha la campaña de Staten Island, los activistas de SAWN celebraron una serie de manifestaciones nacionales a principios de 2021 en apoyo del primer intento del Sindicato de Minoristas, Mayoristas y Grandes Almacenes de sindicalizar a Amazon en Bessemer, Alabama.

Esto incluyó protestas en uno de los bufetes de abogados antisindicales de Amazon, Morgan Lewis, en Filadelfia y otras ciudades. La ciudad de Nueva York fue escenario de protestas en Union Square, Harlem y Brooklyn. El objetivo era construir la solidaridad de toda la clase, para convencer al trabajador medio de por qué le interesaba apoyar la sindicalización en Amazon.

WAAR para los trabajadores de Amazon

Los activistas de WAAR estaban allí cuando Smalls lanzó la campaña del sindicato del almacén de Staten Island el 31 de marzo de 2021. Durante el año siguiente continuaron dando prioridad a la lucha sindical de Amazon en asambleas a las que asistieron activistas involucrados en múltiples luchas de Nueva York.

Los activistas de WAAR hacían frecuentes viajes a Staten Island a la carpa de ALU situada frente al almacén de Staten Island, inscribiendo a los trabajadores en tarjetas y colocando material gráfico pro-sindical en la valla de rejas. Los líderes de WAAR también organizaron a propósito protestas en el centro de Manhattan, para sacar la lucha de su aislamiento físico y político.

Entre mayo de 2021 y febrero de 2022, WAAR reunió a estudiantes, trabajadores migrantes, activistas de Black Lives Matter, activistas de la vivienda y sindicalistas en una serie de acciones callejeras que rara vez contaban con menos de diez miembros de la UAL como principales oradores.

Muchas de estas acciones terminaron con marchas encabezadas por Smalls hasta el lujoso ático de Jeff Bezos en Manhattan. El Viernes Negro, que se ha convertido en un día de protesta mundial contra Amazon, Smalls encabezó una marcha desde la residencia de Bezos hasta el ático del director general de Starbucks, Howard Schultz. Al día siguiente, la protesta estuvo en el resumen de USA TODAY en un artículo sobre las protestas globales contra Amazon.

Cuando ALU solicitó por primera vez unas elecciones sindicales en noviembre, WAAR organizó un piquete frente a la NLRB. Organizaron la entrega de pancartas y campañas de visibilidad que llenaron el metro de pegatinas exigiendo que Amazon reconociera a ALU. WAAR publicó una serie de folletos bilingües para promover la campaña de Staten Island. Se distribuyeron folletos con caricaturas pro-trabajadores y pro-sindicato entre los trabajadores del almacén, y se incluyeron códigos QR para el sitio de tarjetas sindicales en línea.

En la recta final de las elecciones sindicales, socialistas, anarquistas, activistas de los derechos de los trabajadores y miembros del sindicato hicieron miles de llamadas a los trabajadores de Amazon, instándoles a votar sí al sindicato. Esto se organizó virtualmente, con gente haciendo llamadas desde sus casas, y desde las oficinas de UNITE HERE Local 100, y WAAR.

La solidaridad fue crucial en la victoria del sindicato de Amazon, asegurando que los valientes activistas de ALU no lucharan solos.

La manifestación del Primero de Mayo de este año en Nueva York —prevista para la 1 de la tarde en Union Square —añadirá una reivindicación principal a la fiesta internacional de los socialistas y los trabajadores: ¡Detener la destrucción de los sindicatos! Junto con las victorias sindicales en Amazon y Starbucks, la represión sindical continuará. Ya se despidió a los trabajadores de las tiendas de Starbucks, se les recortó el horario y los beneficios.

La victoria del sindicato de Amazon ha dado un fuerte impulso al movimiento obrero. Construir la solidaridad y aumentar la colaboración entre las luchas será fundamental para defender los logros de ese movimiento. □