

Panamá: Workers strike, win price rollback

By Deborah Rodriguez

The author was in Panamá City, Panamá, on a school trip with her daughter when the national strike to reduce prices began July 1. She combines her observations with research to tell this story.

The Panamanian people have won a significant battle. They have been in the streets since July 1 demanding their government reduce the cost of living and necessary goods, whose prices impact the day-to-day lives of Panamanian people. They also demanded the government abandon the protection of neoliberal rules that protect the power elite of the country. On the day the strike began, from the top of Ancon Hill in Panamá City, you could hear a distant chanting that sounded like a protest. It is hard to ignore the stark differences between developed and underdeveloped neighborhoods. In Panamá City, near Plaza de la Independencia there was an “Alto a la gentrificación” (“Stop gentrification”) demonstration. The differences in living



Three-week blockade of highways in July helps win price cuts in Panamá.

conditions from block to block were stark. One block had bars, restaurants and tourist shops. Two blocks away were shanty homes with sheets serving as doors and windows.

Leaders from the People United for Life Alliance, from the capital Panamá City; the National Alliance for the Rights of the Organized People (ANADEPO), from Veraguas; and the Indigenous organizations from the Ngäbe Buglé region organized and called the national strike.

The people called for President Laurentino Cortizo’s government to set a price freeze on fuel, medicine and certain other commodities; address the medicine shortage; improve conditions in the health and education sector; increase salaries and pensions; repair the country’s public infrastructure; commit to ending corruption; reject U.S. military bases; withdraw its plans to cut 10% of the public sector

workforce; and install a voluntary retirement program for public sector employees, among their 30 demands.

It’s evident that the people’s basic needs have been ignored by the neoliberal government, resulting in millions of Panamanians going to bed hungry. The people have suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of U.S. and European Union sanctions against Russia.

The national strike closed roads and disrupted services, as picketing blocked access to public buildings. Organizers persisted despite government repression, media attacks and assaults from right-wing forces that are blatantly ignored by security forces.

After three weeks of negotiations, on July 24 the regime agreed to a 30% decrease in the prices of over 72 essential goods. The government agreed to support price caps and subsidies on national brands and to strengthen the agency charged with regulating prices and quality of services — the Authority for Consumer Protection and Defense of Competition (ACODECO).

The leadership of the national strike are persistent and note that they are still negotiating the reduction and price freeze on fuel and electricity, the cost and lack of medicine, the 6% allocation of GDP for the public education budget, among other demands.

The people’s demands are just and dignified. They show that the people are demanding an end to neoliberal and repressive policies; and despite the repression, they will continue fighting until they reach victory. □

Stop the FBI attack!

Workers World issued the following statement on the FBI attack on the African People’s Socialist Party.

An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us!

WW STATEMENT

That idea fits all organizations fighting for workers’ rights. It fits all individuals and organizations fighting against imperialist wars.

The FBI attacked July 29. It tried to weaken those within the United States who are organizing to stop the U.S.-led NATO aggression against Russia. All of us who are waging that antiwar struggle must join to stop the FBI’s attack.

The FBI invaded the offices of the

Uhuru Movement and the African People’s Socialist Party in St. Petersburg, Florida, and in St. Louis. These political police hurled flash-bang grenades into the home of APSP chairperson Omali Yeshitela and handcuffed Yeshitela and his spouse while the house was being raided.

The FBI pretext for the raids was that people in the organization had alleged connections with a Russian national charged with “spreading propaganda in the United States.”

The APSP had participated in a conference in Russia in 2015 — as did other anti-imperialist and antiwar organizations based in the U.S. The right to attend

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Honor the legacy of Black August

Support Workers World

Did you know the month of August holds special meaning for the Black Liberation struggle? This August marks the 403rd anniversary of the arrival of the first ship of Africans brought in chains to the shores of the British colony of Virginia in 1619. And this August marks 246 years of the enslavement underlying the establishment of the U.S. colonial state — with its countless injustices, brutality and institutionalized crimes against humanity. Those atrocities continue in this white-supremacist, capitalist society to this day.

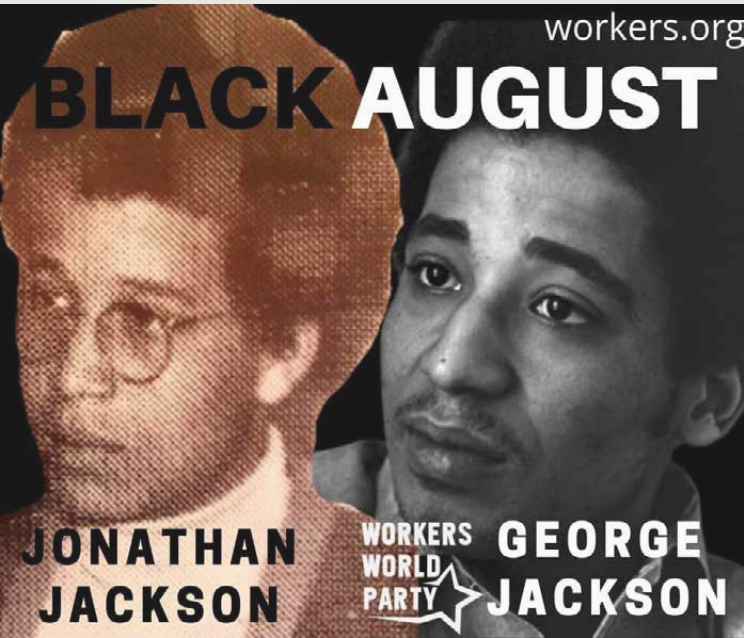
But August is also a time to commemorate the Black Resistance Struggle, from the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 to the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831, from the Fugitive Slave Law Convention of 1850 to the Underground Railroad that ran from the late 18th century to 1865, from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925 to the March on Washington in 1963, the Watts Uprising in 1965 and the National Prison Strike from Aug. 21-Sept. 9 in 2018.

A number of freedom fighters were born in August, including Marcus Garvey, Fred Hampton and Russell Maroon Shoatz, while a number died in that month: W.E.B. Du Bois, Huey P. Newton and Jonathan Jackson. Jackson was killed Aug. 7, 1970, while attempting to free the imprisoned Soledad Brothers, who included his brother, Black Panther leader George Jackson. One year and two weeks later on Aug. 21, 1971, George Jackson was executed by prison guards. His assassination was an important spark leading to the heroic Attica Prison Rebellion in September 1971.

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Workers World depends on your help. The WW Supporter Program was founded 45 years ago to help build this revolutionary socialist newspaper. Since the early 1990s, the fund has supported the website workers.org, where WW articles are posted daily and the PDF file of every weekly paper is displayed.

Staff health concerns during the pandemic caused us to reduce the number of printed issues to once a



month. But the weekly online newspaper has never been skipped during this 2 1/2 year health crisis. And while WW's staff is voluntary, both the printed newspaper and the website require monthly expenses.

Workers.org contains news and analysis of global and U.S. events and struggles and is a resource for political activists. The website posts first-hand accounts by writer-activists in many countries, with translations by our staff. Timely articles by worker-organizers keep the newspaper up to date on what is happening in key U.S. union drives, led by young people of many nationalities and genders. Workers World cheers them on.

For a donation of \$75 to \$100 to \$300 a year, members receive a year's subscription and one, two or three free subscriptions, respectively, to give to friends. Supporters can receive the book, "What road to socialism?" (Notify us of your request.) Or read it for free at workers.org/books.

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

We're grateful for your help in building Workers World!

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and

worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. ☐

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

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Vol. 64, No. 31 • August 4, 2022
Closing date: August 3, 2022

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published monthly by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$36; institutions: \$50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.

Manchin bill could worsen climate crisis

By Betsey Piette

Politicians and media pundits are lauding the yet to be passed \$369 billion Inflation Reduction Act as “the most ambitious climate action” ever taken by Congress. However, considering that the U.S. Congress has never passed any significant climate legislation, the praise is a bit of a stretch. And the devil is in the details.

In a surprise move July 28, Senator Joe Manchin and Senate Majority leader Chuck Schumer announced legislation that includes hundreds of billions of dollars for climate and energy programs. The announcement was all the more shocking considering that Manchin is a coal company millionaire, who has received more campaign cash from the oil and gas industry than any other senator.

While Manchin is not the only senator with strong ties to the energy industry, the act could easily be called the “Benefit Joe Manchin” bill. Among its key provisions are generous tax credits for technologies like carbon capture and storage and low-emissions hydrogen fuels — long supported by the West Virginia senator.

President Joe Biden and Congressional Democrats — so eager to pass any legislation prior to the midterm election — are willingly overlooking major provisions of the bill that clearly benefit the oil and gas industry. If enacted, they claim it would enshrine climate change action in law, making it more difficult for future administrations to roll back these measures.

And that, according to critics, is a big part of the problem.

Wenonah Hauter, executive director of the climate advocacy group Food and Water Watch, stated the deal “won’t solve the climate crisis and may make it worse.” (New York Times, July 30) She is referring to key provisions of the bill that would actually expand oil and gas production.

Giveaway of public lands

The Center for Biological Diversity notes that, buried near the end of the 725-page bill, are provisions that would “require massive oil and gas leasing in the Gulf of Mexico and the Cook Inlet in Alaska, reinstate an illegal 2021 Gulf lease sale and mandate that millions more acres of public land be offered for leasing before any new solar or wind energy projects could be built on public lands or waters.” (commondreams.org, July 28)

Provisions of the bill would require the Interior Department to offer at least 2 million acres of public lands and 60 million acres of offshore waters for oil and gas leasing, each year for a decade, as a prerequisite for installing any new solar or wind energy. This would result in over 600 million acres of offshore leasing — four times the size of the entire Gulf of Mexico outer continental shelf.

In January a federal judge actually overturned a proposed 80-million-acre lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico, because the Interior Department failed to address the climate harms from the leases. If

passed, the Inflation Reduction Act would prohibit the granting of any renewable energy projects on public lands or waters, if the Interior Department fails to grant these offshore drilling leases.

Expanding tax credits for carbon capture technology allows coal- or gas-burning power plants to keep operating with lower emissions. Democratic “leaders” apparently promised Manchin that they would speed up the process of issuing permits for energy infrastructure, including a natural gas pipeline in West Virginia.

Should it pass, what the bill will not do is meet established goals for cutting emissions in half by 2030, as the Democrats promised last August.

Little for workers

So, what’s in it for the average worker? The answer is not much.

Those able to afford a high-priced electric vehicle could receive a tax credit. Some homeowners could get rebates for making their homes more energy efficient. Neither of these measures promises any reduction in the current inflationary cost of gas and oil.

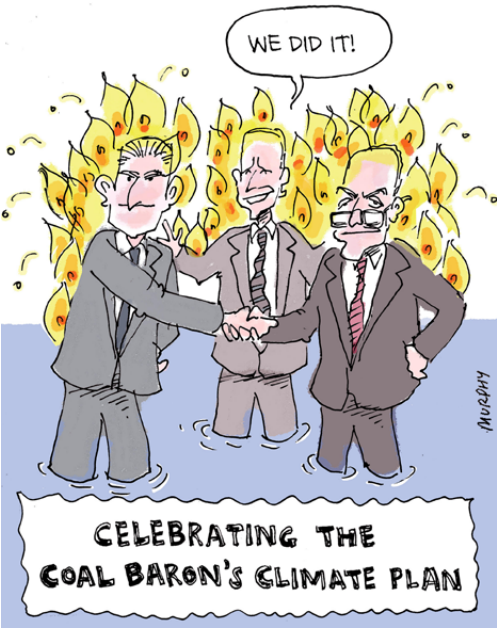
There is some talk of reducing the cost of prescription drugs and extending enhanced subsidies for the Affordable Care Act. Some provisions could result in higher taxes, but again the details are murky.

Unlike earlier bills promoted by Biden, the Inflation Reduction Act carries none of the administration’s

initial promises of broader benefits like child care tax credits, student loan reduction or investments in education or public transportation.

However the politicians and pundits try to sell it, what is clear is that the legislation holds no hope of relief for the millions of people impacted by the fires and floods that are ravishing entire communities right now.

Brett Hartl, government affairs director at the Center for Biological Diversity, labeled the bill “a climate suicide pact” noting: “The new leasing required in this bill will fan the flames of the climate disasters torching our country.” □



Kentucky floods caused by capitalist greed

By Workers World West Virginia bureau

As of July 30, at least 25 people have been reported dead from the destructive flash flood in eastern Kentucky that started in the early evening of July 27.

Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear declared a “state of emergency” shortly after the heavy rainfall. Parts of West Virginia and Virginia were also affected, but neither compare to the damage inflicted on the people in the eastern region of Kentucky. In addition to the official death toll, which is expected to increase in the coming days, there are many more people missing or unaccounted for.

One of the most horrific stories reported was about four young siblings in Knott County, who were physically torn from their parents just moments after seeking shelter together and were found dead on July 29.

The Kentucky National Guard has been assigned to assist with “search and rescue” operations, while an incident management team was sent from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

This reporter spoke with hospi-

tal workers at the Whitesburg, Hazard and McDowell Appalachian Regional Healthcare facilities, many of whom have either lost everything they owned or are close to people who did. ARH is one of the largest employers in the area and is one of the only employers that still honors union recognition.

Workers at ARH are represented by the United Steelworkers and National Nurses United. The hospitals were originally built in the 1950s and 1960s by the United Mine Workers of America for union miners and their families. According to WKYT news reports of July 29, 61 ARH employees lost everything, and 30 are unaccounted for.

“Night shift employees had to work into the day shifts, because the people scheduled for day shift could not arrive and the night shift workers could not leave,” one ARH hospital worker told WW. “To make matters worse, several people lost everything while they were here working.”

Nurses at ARH, all of whom are represented by NNU, have created GoFundMe pages on social media for those affected.

Appalshop, a progressive media arts center in Whitesburg, was partially destroyed,

resulting in the loss of much historical material and artifacts. Established in 1969, Appalshop is known for releasing a lot of social justice-themed resources, such as a documentary about civil rights advocate Anne Braden and a record for activist folk singer Si Kahn. The shop has produced important projects to raise awareness about coal mining and its impact on the environment and miners’ health. Despite its material losses, Appalshop has been using social media to collect food and medicine supplies for others in need.

Climate crisis? Capitalism is to blame!

The five counties in Kentucky hit hardest are Breathitt, Floyd, Knott, Letcher and Perry, all of which were once thriving with well-paid coal mining jobs. Throughout much of the 20th century, there were many militant strikes, with fighting between multinational union coal miners and the operatives of coal company bosses, who had cops and the terrorist Ku Klux Klan on their side.

Now material conditions have changed. There are very few mining jobs left in eastern Kentucky, and the mining jobs that do exist are mostly nonunion.

In the 1960s, coal operators wanted to quickly increase their profits by expanding strip mining projects. Strip mining is alleged to have started as early as 1800, but underground mining was the most common form of coal extraction until the mid-20th century.

In addition to strip mining, coal bosses looked to other forms of mechanization, such as long-wall mining and even the environmentally devastating mountaintop removal to advance their capitalist gains. Automated forms of coal extraction were detrimental to the coal miners, their families and to the environment where they lived. And the Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that mountaintop removal “valley fills” are responsible for burying more than 2,000 miles of vital Appalachian headwater streams and poisoning many more. (tinyurl.com/4jsv4hay)

Workers World Party co-founder and late Chairperson Sam Marcy warned workers early on about the growing dangers posed by automation under capitalism. In his 1985 “High Tech, Low Pay,” Marcy wrote of how technological innovations under capitalism can be disastrous to the working class. “High technology, especially in the era of computers and electronics, continues to take quantum jumps. A plant which just recently may have had 10 years to [continue production] can now become obsolete as a result of the constant revolution of the means of production.”

Despite the barrage of pro-coal industry propaganda throughout eastern Kentucky, southern West Virginia and southwest Virginia, several experts have warned that decades of strip mining and mountaintop removal have likely contributed to mass flooding over the years.

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Aerial photo shows devastating impact of floods in Kentucky

Labor Minister meets with young Starbucks and Apple union organizers

By Arjae Red
New York City

Union organizers from Starbucks Workers United and the Communications Workers, along with representatives of DSA, met with Spain’s Minister of Labor and Social Economy, Yolanda Díaz Pérez, who also serves as the country’s Second Deputy Prime Minister, in New York City on July 21.

Díaz is a member of the Communist Party of Spain and a leader of the SUMAR (United) electoral platform, which was announced in May as a vehicle to unite progressive forces for their upcoming election. Díaz has focused on the struggle against precarious work as a main goal of her mandate.

The meeting was an informal discussion on ways that Spanish and U.S. workers can learn from each others’ struggles and organizing strategies.

Díaz commented: “The United States is experiencing a new wave of unionization. These are the workers of large companies known worldwide: Starbucks Workers United, Apple Workers Union or Amazon Labor Union. In essence we all want the same thing, something as elementary as the rights of working people being respected.”

U.S. organizers described how the campaigns to unionize Starbucks and Apple began, the difficulties workers faced and the kinds of tactics used to overcome union busting. Of particular interest were the experiences of LGBTQ+ workers, who still face much transphobia and

homophobia in Spain, similar to the U.S.

The meeting with young union organizers took place exactly a year after Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez met with the top executives of some of these same corporations, like Apple.

“The president met with the companies; I meet with the new unionism,” said Díaz.

The political significance of this meeting is enormous, demonstrating that the new wave of union support in the U.S. has caught the attention of the whole world, as well as opening up possibilities of new international connections for the unions to strengthen global solidarity.

Corporations like Starbucks, Apple and Amazon exploit workers in countries all over the world, so workers must take on a global approach in their organizing.

Starbucks Workers United has already begun planting the seeds of friendship with other Starbucks unions, such as Sindicato Starbucks in Chile and Unite in New Zealand, as well as the Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo in Nicaragua, which represents coffee farmers and other agricultural workers. Starbucks Workers United organizers attended the World Federation of Trade Unions conference in Rome in May; the WFTU represents 92 million workers in 126 different countries.

Starbucks is a corporation with a large presence in



PHOTO: SPANISH CONSULATE

Starbucks organizers Angel Krempa and Arjae Red met with Spain’s Minister of Labor and Social Economy Yolanda Díaz, July 21, in New York City.

Spain, with over 100+ stores. With meetings like the one which Díaz convened, it won’t be long before Starbucks workers are able to come together across national boundaries.

Workers World Party founding member and late Chairperson Sam Marcy said, in “High Tech: Low Pay,” “By virtue of their vast facilities, often in other countries and not unionized, these corporate mon-

sters have gained broad social, political and diplomatic leverage against single unions. These concentrations of capital are classwide organizations to which the workers in the unions have to develop a classwide perspective, nationally as well as internationally, in order to be able to get a firm handle on how to fight the companies ...

“Even greater is the necessity, even if only in embryonic form, for the absolutely indispensable education of the workers: the development of union consciousness into class consciousness — and with it an appreciation of international cooperation between all the workers.”

The author, who attended this meeting, is an organizer with Starbucks Workers United and a member of Workers World Party.

UAW Convention

Militants open struggle against business unionism

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

February 11, 1937, marks the victory of the 44-day Flint Sit-down Strike that forced General Motors to recognize the United Auto Workers.

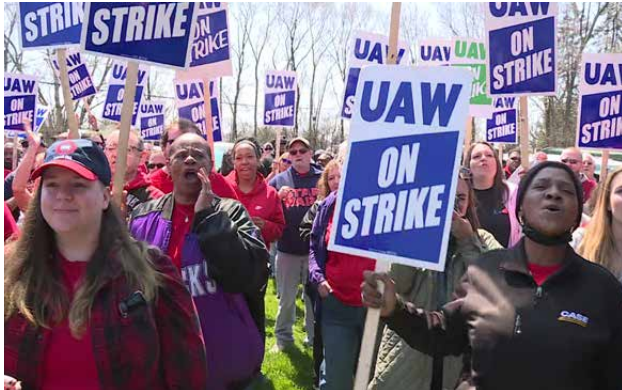
After the victory, however, a factional fight divided the fledgling union. Within a few years’ time, UAW-CIO — militants affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations — defeated UAW-AFL, class collaborationists who wanted the union to be part of the conservative, craft-oriented American Federation of Labor. (The two then-separate federations did not merge until 1955.)

The recent 38th UAW Constitutional Convention demonstrated that the struggle over the union’s direction is still very much alive. As has been the case for decades, rank-and-file militants have become the opposition to the top-down business unionism of the controlling Administration Caucus (AC), which has more in common with the old UAW-AFL than the radical-led UAW-CIO of the past. The current International Executive Board (IEB) prefers labor-management cooperation over class-struggle unionism, squelching union democracy to stifle any challenges to the AC.

But this Convention, held July 25-28, marked a qualitative shift in the balance of forces. Among the 900 delegates — representing over 300 local unions in a range of sectors from manufacturing to higher education to public employees — there was enough organized opposition to force resolutions submitted by the locals to the floor for debate. This feat is in no small part due to the efforts of Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD), a rank-and-file-led caucus formed in 2020.

Typically the AC runs a staged convention around its own omnibus resolution, which is weakly progressive on a variety of issues, interspersed with speeches by Democratic Party politicians. Candidates for the IEB are nominated toward the end of the convention; for the most part they have run unopposed or with marginal opposition. The AC exerts enough pressure on delegates to prevent them from reaching the threshold needed to bring other amendments and resolutions to the floor — that threshold being roughly 15% of delegates under convention rules.

A critical change from previous conventions is that now the IEB must be elected directly by the UAW rank-and-file members. Members defeated the old system of election by convention delegates in a 2-1 vote last year. The referendum was ordered as part of the consent decree between the UAW and the federal government, after a federal investigation uncovered massive corrup-



UAW members striking Case New Holland hold rally May 9, Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin.

tion, including theft of union funds, kickbacks from vendors and taking bribes from Fiat Chrysler Automobiles in exchange for contract concessions.

Delegates discuss tiers

Several amendments, which were drafted by UAWD and passed by a number of locals, were the subject of lively discussion. One would have modified the UAW Constitution to commit the union to opposing unequal and divisive tiered pay and benefits. Allowing two tiers in the 2007 contracts with Ford, General Motors and Chrysler (now part of Stellantis) meant big savings for the companies, i.e. bigger profits, by paying newer workers lower wages, offering fewer benefits and denying them a traditional pension.

The recent 38th UAW Constitutional Convention demonstrated that the struggle over the union’s direction is still very much alive. As has been the case for decades, rank-and-file militants have become the opposition to the top-down business unionism of the controlling Administration Caucus.

This betrayal of the next generation of autoworkers has become widely unpopular. The way the AC defeated the progressive amendment was to argue that the subject “didn’t belong in the Constitution” and should be raised at the Special Bargaining Convention in 2023. But there is no sidestepping the issue; that almost 300 delegates voted to take the amendment to the floor was unprecedented.

Over two dozen locals passed a UAWD resolution to

raise weekly strike benefits to \$400 per week, beginning on day one instead of after the first week. Prior to the convention, the IEB voted for the increased \$400 weekly strike pay. Convention delegates enshrined this in the Constitution and instituted the day one start — and then amended that language to further raise weekly strike pay to \$500! A member currently on strike since May at Case New Holland said that would be a real disincentive to anyone thinking of crossing the picket line.

With the Big Three auto company contracts expiring in 2023, putting more money in the pockets of striking workers to help them get by would ensure greater leverage at the bargaining table. Withholding labor at the point of production is the only real weapon unions have against powerful corporations, who have the backing of the capitalist state.

Fourth day: business unionism as usual

The AC had lost control; the convention was not following the script. Maneuverings on the final day of the convention were an effort to put the genie of militant, independent rank-and-file activism back in the bottle. Delegates were given their marching (backward) orders before the gavel struck.

The charade began with the nominations for an International Trustee, still chosen by convention delegates. The rules approved by delegates allowed only two nominating speeches per candidate. Yet over 60 delegates went to the microphone to nominate the AC’s hand-picked candidate, a process that ate up hours of discussion time. UAWD Steering Committee Chair Scott Houldieson was, however, still able to garner a sizable number of votes.

The worst example of AC manipulation, after many delegates had left to catch flights home, followed. A delegate made a motion to bring strike pay back down to \$400, claiming \$500 would bankrupt the strike fund. The reduction passed by a wide margin.

What message does this retreat send to the bosses? That “we’re prepared to fight” — but not too much, so don’t worry?

A text thread for UAWD-friendly delegates was burning up with angry comments. Noted was the irony that a pay increase for IEB members was not brought up for reconsideration.

The struggle at the UAW convention is part of a bigger debate: Should unions continue a policy of class peace, settling for whatever crumbs the capitalists are willing to offer? Or is it time to revive the class struggle and take it beyond the confines of the traditional union structure and build a global classwide movement?

For workers, to pose the question is to answer it. □

Abortion access under attack in West Virginia

By Otis Grotewohl
Charleston, West Virginia

As a result of the recent SCOTUS overthrow of *Roe v. Wade*, the bigoted coal baron governor of West Virginia, Jim Justice, used a special legislative session — originally called to establish income tax cuts — as an opportunity to carry out a vicious assault on abortion rights in the state.

Justice, a Republican, issued a proclamation on July 25 to attack abortion access. Justice's excuse was "to clarify and modernize the abortion-related laws currently existing as part of the West Virginia Code."

Justice openly bragged about his anti-choice intentions: "From the moment the Supreme Court announced their decision ... I said that I would not hesitate to call a Special Session once I heard from our legislative leaders that they had done their due diligence and were ready to act." (WSAZ, July 25)

A proposed law, now known as House Bill 302, was quickly introduced in the misnamed "Committee on Health and Human Resources" within the House of Delegates. The law would prohibit abortions at all stages of pregnancy, and it provides no exceptions for rape or incest survivors.

The only exemptions are for certain occasions such as an ectopic pregnancy, a "nonmedically viable fetus" or an unspecified medical emergency. To make matters worse for those needing abortion health care, there is only one facility left in the state that provides abortions.

The ferocious attack from the governor and the Republican supermajority House of Delegates was partially in response to a July 18 ruling from a state court judge that temporarily blocked an archaic 19th century abortion ban still on the state books. People in the state celebrated the judge's ruling throughout social media, but the victory was short-lived.

HB 302 moved rapidly through the House, despite a 2019 survey among registered West Virginia voters, con-

ducted by Hart Research, which concluded that "61% of respondents support a woman's right to abortion." (MetroNews, Sept. 23, 2019)

Activists respond to attack

People packed the state Capitol building in Charleston July 27, when the House was expected to — and did — overwhelmingly approve the bill. In the morning, several pro-choice activists signed up to speak during the allotted public comment period, and many were cut off short.

At one point, a 12-year-old woman passionately used a hypothetical scenario of being personally assaulted herself, as a child, and then having no choice but to bear a child. The young speaker wore a green bandanna in solidarity with the people of Argentina. In a massive historic campaign, characterized by tremendous solidarity across many sectors, Argentinians finally won the right to abortion access on Jan. 1, 2021. As the young speaker advocated for abortion access to be preserved in West Virginia, she was rudely cut off.

Shortly before noon about 400 pro-choice supporters with signs gathered inside the Capitol rotunda, most of whom were young women and gender-nonconforming youth. Organizers of the rally included people from the Women's Health Center of West Virginia, Holler Health Justice, ACLU West Virginia, Planned Parenthood and WV FREE.



Workers World reporter (left) and West Virginia House Delegate Danielle Walker at July 27 rally for abortion access in the Capitol rotunda.



Reproductive justice activists confront West Virginia legislators, July 29, Charleston.

The half a dozen anti-choice bigots congregating in the rotunda were drowned out by the justifiably angry crowd. Pro-choice picketers blocked the anti-choice bigots with their signs when local media reporters were filming and taking pictures.

The crowd chanted "Our bodies, our choice," "Not the church, not the state, we alone decide our fate" and "2, 4, 6, 8 — Separate the church and state!"

One familiar chant that was led and altered by young protesters to reflect gender inclusion was "'Pro-life' is a lie, you don't care if people die." There was a strong emphasis among most of the participants to include trans and gender-oppressed people in their unified messaging.

Following the chants, people packed the balconies to witness the House vote.

Workers World spoke with Delegate Danielle Walker, one of the most vocal opponents of HB 302 and the only African American woman currently holding a seat in the West Virginia House. Walker stated: "Abortion is health care for all, including transgender folks, nonbinary people, gender-fluid people, women and children in West Virginia. A ban on abortion will only deny safe, accessible, affordable abortions. House Bill 302 is removing freedoms in reproductive health care."

A second rally held July 29, the day the bill reached the state senate, drew an even larger crowd than the first. Reproductive justice activists inside the capitol were enraged by legislators' vile misogynist comments that demeaned rape survivors. Amid the commotion they were forced out of the galleries.

Expanding defense of abortion rights

West Virginia is one of eight states — along with Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Wisconsin — that still have pre-*Roe* abortion bans in their laws. Ever since the reactionary Supreme Court's far-right move to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, other states, such as Indiana, have recently introduced new bills to criminalize abortion.

HB 302 has still not been approved, as differences between the House and Senate version are unresolved, but few are optimistic it will be amended or killed, since anti-choice Republicans and Democrats control the Senate. Some argue the Senate is not as punitive and reactionary as the House — which was the case during the 2018 and 2019 education worker walkouts — but only time will tell.

Some of the same legislators who attacked the education workers' unions still hold office today and are the ones leading the charge against abortion rights. They are joined by a couple of opportunistic Democrats who want to pander to backward voters.

At the rally, while a few people chanted "Vote them out," it was clear that many of the young people leading the chants are disillusioned with the electoral system, along with the bourgeois court system. They want immediate results.

Rather than wait until the next election, the strongest course of action is for people to collectively organize and put mass pressure on the state. As the economic crisis deepens, fascist threats against humanity will increase. The attack on abortion access is just one of the many examples.

Now is the time to unite along class lines and fight back against the far right! □

WW COMMENTARY

Choice means choice

By Olujimi Alade

The SCOTUS overturning of *Roe v. Wade* has inspired a wave of reaction. The fervor in support of reproductive autonomy is unlike any I've witnessed before, and it is a powerful sign that people in the U.S. are waking up to the fact that democracy in the so-called "land of the free" is a facade.

However, I'm noticing a disturbing trend among so-called liberal activists: a tendency to emphasize certain circumstances that lead to an abortion. While browsing the internet, I noticed an Instagram post by Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow that went viral. It had four points detailing that it wasn't about "killing babies" — it was about paying heed to the extenuating conditions that would make having an abortion an indisputable decision to make.

While the message of the Instagram post was strong and impactful, it played into the same respectability politics liberals like to tap into when it comes to liberation of marginalized people.

In order to appeal to moderates of the Republican Party and moderates in general, liberals like to tailor the message in a way that won't threaten the status quo of contemporary culture. They have done it when it comes to race; in order to disarm white supremacists holding unsavory views of people of color, liberals will often cater to mainstream respectability and highlight people of color who represent the "American Dream" — well-spoken, highly educated and well-dressed — in order to counter negative, "ghetto" stereotypes.

Just like the two aforementioned examples, liberals have been sanitizing the fight for reproductive autonomy. The Democratic Party and its skills have not made the case that the right to decide when to bring a baby to term should be held by pregnant people, no matter what the reason or circumstances. Instead they go straight for the heartstrings.

Stories about victims of rape, victims of statutory



Pro-choice, abortion access rally in Boston, July 26.

incest and ectopic pregnancies permeate mainstream discourse, with the purpose of appealing to political moderates who might have a heart. While it is important to highlight these stories in order to pack an emotional punch, the fact of the matter is that many people who seek an abortion do it for other reasons.

What about the 24-year-old law student who doesn't want a baby to distract her from her studies? What about a professional basketball player who would find a pregnancy altered their athletic abilities? What about a sex worker who doesn't want a fetus inside their womb to affect her job? Or what about a trans-masculine person who doesn't want a pregnancy?

And there are millions of people able to become pregnant, for whom it is not an option due to economic hardships, lack of access to safe and affordable health care and, frequently, already having children they are struggling to care for in this crisis-driven economy.

All these and more are valid reasons to want to terminate a pregnancy, and we as activists need to stop appealing to the civility of adversaries. People should be free to do what they want with their bodies, and they shouldn't have to justify exercising their rights. □

Pennsylvania county jails are a death trap

By Ted Kelly
Philadelphia

An unprecedented number of incarcerated people have died inside Pennsylvania’s county jails in the last two years, and the staggering rate of death continues to increase.

Allegheny and Philadelphia Counties — which contain the state’s two most populous cities, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia — have reported the deaths of dozens of people in county custody in recent years. The vast majority of these deaths are of people awaiting trial, people who have not been convicted of a crime. In these two counties combined, a prisoner dies roughly every three weeks.

The Allegheny County Medical Examiner’s Office announced in July that Victor Joseph Zilinek had become the fourth person to die in a Pittsburgh jail in 2022. He was only 39 years old, and jail officials have so far refused to release details surrounding his death.

In March, 26-year-old Gerald Thomas Jr. died of an apparent pulmonary embolism at the same facility. (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, July 15)

Allegheny County Councilmember Bethany Hallam, who sits on the Jail Oversight Board for Pittsburgh, said in a statement: “We hear continuously, month after month, we have loved ones who lost their family members in the jail. Oftentimes we are told [by jail officials] there was no

foul play; it was a “natural” death — I don’t know about you, but I don’t think it’s natural when we have 26-year-olds falling dead on the floor of the jail.”

After Zilinek’s death in July, Hallam tweeted, “Another life stolen inside the walls of the death trap that is the Allegheny County Jail.” Zilinek was the 15th person to die while in the custody of Allegheny County since April 2020.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

In Philadelphia, people organized a car caravan in February to protest deaths of their loved ones in the city and county jails.

Across the state in Philadelphia County, twice as many incarcerated people died during the same 26 months. The Philadelphia Inquirer reported that since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 29 people incarcerated in county jails have died. But many of the reported deaths were not caused by complications due to the coronavirus.

“It’s like a waking nightmare,” said Mark Subher, who was formerly incarcerated at

Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia. The Inquirer reported that in the 22 months that Subher was incarcerated, two dozen people died there, making that “an annual jail mortality rate 77% higher than the national average. All told, there were at least 29 deaths since the start of the pandemic, including three by suicide, five by homicide and 10 by drug overdose. During at least two deaths, no staff were present.”

Workers World reported May 5: “Prisoners have been denied access to legal counsel and are not even able to attend court dates. Starting during the pandemic, there have been prolonged lockdowns, during which the people incarcerated were denied more than an hour or two out-of-cell time. Some people were not let out of their cells for days at a time, [which is] a violation of constitutional protection against cruel and unusual punishment. The entire system is the equivalent of solitary confinement.

“Many incarcerated people have complained of going days without food and sleeping on the floor for lack of beds. One man, who was due to be released, died when the sprinkler in his cell malfunctioned and flooded the cell with water. Despite the entire cell block banging on the bars and shouting for correction officers to step in, no one came for two hours.” (“Death sentences delivered before trials,” May 5)

Penn Live revealed Feb. 9 that Pennsylvania jail officials are now sim-

ply failing to report deaths to oversight bodies — and even to the families of those incarcerated!

In response to this ongoing atrocity, the Abolitionist Law Center, based in Pittsburgh, has filed 62 separate complaints against Allegheny County Judge Anthony Mariani. These claim that the skyrocketing death rate can be attributed in part to judicial misconduct.

In a July 5 statement, the ALC said, “practices of policing and punishment including traffic stops, pretrial detention, probation detainers and solitary confinement, support the maintenance of local ‘death-making institutions,’ a term coined by abolitionist Mariame Kaba.” The complaints mention the death of 26-year-old Gerald Thomas specifically.

In response, on July 21 the editorial board of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette called for the leadership of the Allegheny jails to resign. “Whether Warden Orlando Harper was lying or simply didn’t know better, when he reported a false mortality rate for the Allegheny County Jail, really doesn’t matter. Either way, it’s another example of his penchant for dismissing problems instead of fixing them. As long as Mr. Harper calls the shots, the jail’s troubles will fester and grow. Among them: high death rates, costly lawsuits, chronic staff shortages, improperly housing transgender inmates, substandard health care and questionable practices on solitary confinement.” □



‘Reading Workers World saved my life’

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
I am serving a life without parole sentence for defending myself. I lost my last appeal, and it hurt me very much. My spirits were crushed. All I thought about was suicide. Never during these last 10 years of this incarceration have I thought about killing myself.

Reading Workers World newspaper saved my life. Just before swallowing about 150 blood pressure pills, I saw my latest copy of Workers World, and I started to read. I became stronger and stronger. Every article I read was about brothers and sisters “fighting.” So right then I threw those 150 pills in the toilet

bowl. I know I have to struggle and fight. I know I must be stronger than what I am now.

Workers World, you brothers and sisters saved my life. Thank you! I don’t know if I’ll ever get out of this prison system, but I do know one thing for sure. I will “fight” and never [give] up.

Thanks for the free subscription; thanks for helping me help myself. God bless everybody at Workers World.

Very Respectfully,
Lawrence Gaines
SCI Benner
Pennsylvania □

Michigan

Prison authorities ban dictionaries, activists win reversal

By Martha Grevatt

In a June 2 story, National Public Radio broke the news that the Michigan Department of Corrections had, over the past year, banned Spanish and Swahili dictionaries. This racist, xenophobic decision denied the legal right to an education to Spanish- and Swahili-speaking prisoners and to any prisoner desiring to learn these languages. The bogus excuse MDOC concocted was that “If certain prisoners all decided to learn a very obscure language, they would be able to then speak freely in front of staff and others about introducing contraband or assaulting staff or assaulting another prisoner.” (npr.org, June 2)

Neither Spanish nor Swahili is obscure!

Activists organized a protest campaign. Nearly 400 “library workers, advocates for incarcerated people’s rights and community members who believe in our inherent right to education,” signed a letter to MDOC to “demand the Michigan Department of Corrections immediately rescind this racist policy.”

Signers were from 95 Michigan cities and towns, 40 U.S. states, Canada and the Netherlands. The Detroit and Michigan chapters of the National Lawyers Guild, the Detroit-based Sugar Law Center for Economic

and Social Justice and the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls also signed.

The letter pointed out: “Dictionaries and other reference materials are some of the most important foundational materials in a prison library. Dictionaries also are among the most requested materials by incarcerated people and are needed to complete education programs.

“The ban on non-English dictionaries not only violates the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution but also MDOC’s own policies. MDOC Policy Directive 05.03.115 states: ‘Each librarian shall maintain a comprehensive range of library services. This shall include a collection containing reference, general and specialized reading materials selected to meet the educational, informational and recreational needs of the prisoner population. Materials shall be available for various reading levels, languages, ethnicities and special interests.’”

On July 21 MDOC issued a memo reversing the dictionary ban!

In the words of the great Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass, “Without struggle there is no progress.” □



THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS HAS ONCE AGAIN DENIED THE RIGHT OF OUR INCARCERATED SUBSCRIBERS TO READ WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER.

IN 2017, THE PA DOC BLOCKED WORKERS WORLD BECAUSE WE "CALLED ON PEOPLE TO JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST WHITE SUPREMACY."

THE REASON FOR THEY GAVE FOR THE DENIAL THIS TIME IS THAT WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER "CREATES A DANGER WITHIN THE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY" BECAUSE OUR PUBLICATION "ENCOURAGES SOLIDARITY."

WELL, YEAH. THAT'S WHAT WE DO.

TELL THE PA DOC: WE ENCOURAGE SOLIDARITY! STOP BLOCKING PRISONERS' RIGHT TO READ AND WRITE!

PA DOC SCI GREENE
(717) 728-2573 724) 852-2902

Unite and fight abortion bans!

By Kathy Durkin

Protests continue countrywide against reactionary state abortion bans that have been implemented or will be realized any day in half the states. Right-wingers in state governments eagerly awaited the Supreme Court’s overturn of the right to access abortions. The top court obliged them June 24 by overturning the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, thus eliminating the federal right to obtain abortions.

These bans are repressive, racist, misogynistic and classist. They deny pregnant people essential health care, fundamental rights and bodily autonomy. In many states, violators of the laws — abortion providers, patients and their helpers — would be punished with fines and even imprisonment. These harsh measures emanate from a hardcore reactionary grouping, in the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government, which represents a segment of the capitalist class. Their ultimate goal: a countrywide abortion ban.

But there is resistance.

Thousands fill Indiana Statehouse

For several hours July 25, protesters, including many Black women, loudly objected to an abortion ban being pushed by the state Senate’s Republicans. Hundreds of angry people lined up outside its Chambers in Indianapolis. They packed the North Atrium and the balconies of two floors and chanted. Others lined up around the outside of the building and yelled at the lawmakers.

Despite opposition by doctors, major medical associations and the thousands of women and others who can become pregnant who were protesting at the Statehouse throughout the week beginning July 25 — and despite support for abortion rights by two-thirds of Indiana residents — state senators passed Senate Bill 1 by a vote of 26-20 on July 30. Now it goes to the House.



Rally, Indiana Statehouse, Indianapolis, July 25.

After a week of debate, the Senate bill’s final version banned all abortions except in cases of rape, incest or when the pregnant person’s life is at risk. However, exceptions for rape and incest only apply within the first 12 weeks for people age 15 or younger and the first eight weeks for people 16 or older. And the abortion seeker would have to sign a notarized statement, verifying when the assault happened. This ridiculous bill prohibits abortions from the time a fertilized egg implants in a uterus!

‘Restore abortion rights!’ in Louisiana

In other news, the Louisiana Abortion Rights Action Committee organized a spirited march July 31 in New Orleans, which demanded the state “Restore abortion rights!” The group called for a fight-back against the state’s abortion ban. This action was a response to the judiciary’s overturn of an injunction that had temporarily blocked implementation of the ban. State Attorney General Jeff Landry, a

right-wing millionaire, had pushed hard for the ban. A judge agreed and allowed immediate implementation of this ban, which outlaws nearly all abortions. It even denies the right to access abortions

by impregnated rape or incest victims/survivors. There are minimal exemptions for seriously ill pregnant people. Already, clinics that provided abortions have closed.

A multinational, multigender grouping of over 200 people, the majority young, participated in the march and rally. In the French Quarter, workers came out of restaurants and bars to cheer and applaud the demonstrators. Even some tourists joined in. A goal of the action was to involve more workers in this struggle; this issue will impact members of their class, especially low-income earners and members of oppressed communities.

This committee’s class-conscious agenda includes other critical issues in addition to the restoration of abortion rights and reopening of clinics. It calls for funding free child care, health care and education, higher wages, lower rents and workers’ rights. The group condemns racism, gender oppression, militarism and war. And it concludes by calling for a fight-back against the millionaires who are funding these reactionary bans, with contempt for those whose lives are affected. □



New Orleans, July 31.

PHOTO: LOUISIANA ABORTION RIGHTS ACTION COMMITTEE

Big Pharma’s crime: profits from addiction

By Princess Harmony

New Hampshire’s attorney general, John Formella, has launched a lawsuit against Walmart, Walgreens, CVS, RiteAid and other pharmacies for failing to track opioid prescriptions and for failing to take action against possibly unnecessary, fraudulent or otherwise excessive opioid prescribing. Pharmacy managements have concealed the failure to track the prescriptions, compounding these crimes against the working class.

Many thousands of people have become addicted to opioid painkillers. Many more have died of overdoses due to using opioids like fentanyl and its analogues — furanylfentanyl, ohmefentanyl, acetylfentanyl, carfentanil — when they could no longer get their legally prescribed painkillers.

In the era of COVID-19, addiction to opioids has increased, and so have deaths from opioids. In 2020, 92,000 lives were lost to opioids, and many more have been wrecked due to them. (National Institute on Drug Abuse)

Painkiller producers such as Purdue Pharma — the maker of OxyContin (oxycodone) — are one major source of the opioid and overdose epidemics. These companies knowingly and deliberately lied about the addictive nature of their painkillers. The doctors who prescribed the companies’ drugs received kickbacks and rewards for

their ability to push the most painkillers. (“Purdue Pharma guilty in opioid deaths,” Workers World, Oct. 26, 2020)



Chain pharmacies should have tracked overprescriptions and reported suspicious or excessive prescriptions to authorities to investigate. This did not happen. Instead, as Attorney General Formella said, the pharmacies acted as “the last link” in the opioid supply chain.

Lawsuits against ‘pusher’ pharmacies and companies

New Hampshire isn’t the only state to file lawsuits against pharmacies. Two counties in the state of Ohio have previously launched lawsuits against Walgreens, Walmart and CVS. Those lawsuits were successful, though another legal proceeding will determine what damages will have to be paid.

CVS, Walgreens and Walmart rejected the decision, claiming that it wasn’t “their fault.” Given results of other opioid law-

suits, it is a possibility that the three pharmaceutical giants and their owners will get off for their crimes against the proletariat.

For example, the Sackler family — owners of Purdue Pharma and founders of Mundipharma — was given immunity in their New York bankruptcy trial, despite the fact that overprescription of OxyContin was to their economic advantage.

Activists — including former opioid addicts — protested granting immunity to the Sacklers and their agents. The Department of Justice and several other state attorneys general protested the decision, saying that people who were harmed by the overprescription of OxyContin and other opioid painkillers had the right to sue the people responsible for their suffering.

Whether opioid makers — Purdue Pharma, Teva Pharmaceuticals, Johnson & Johnson and others — or opioid distributors — Walmart, Walgreens, CVS, Rite Aid and others — the chain of the opioid flow can be traced through all of them.

Who gets scapegoated for drug use?

Poor Black and Brown people, along with poor white people, are labeled as the root cause of the opioid crisis, because some of them have had to turn to low-level drug dealing to survive. But these are not the people who created the crisis — far from it. The bourgeoisie of drug

makers and distributors and the petty bourgeoisie of doctors and pharmacists are the creators of the opioid crisis.

People who became addicted did not receive billions in profits from opioid sales, nor did they receive kickbacks and rewards for prescribing drugs. But poor workers of all nationalities were mocked and jailed as low-down people who were addicted to the pills.

The “War on Drugs” is a lie. If the War on Drugs was truly a war against drugs, the Sacklers of Purdue Pharma, the corporate managers of Teva Pharmaceuticals, the Waltons who own Walmart, the owners and executive managers of CVS and many others would be in handcuffs and in jail. They would be forced to turn their blood-money profits over to the people. They would get their just punishment for killing and addicting so many.

Instead, the “War on Drugs” continues to attack Black, Brown and poor white people as if they’re the ones responsible. They are still arrested and held in the prison systems, punished for low-level “crimes” wealthier people get away with, and labor for pennies or for nothing with no chance at meaningful job training.

The drug war against people continues. It is our job to hold the feet of judges and district attorneys to the fire, to make them punish the true culprits of the opioid and overdose epidemics: drug maker companies and drug distributor pharmacies. □

Haiti under the gun

By G. Dunkel

In the current situation in Haiti, organized groups — invariably called gangs by the bourgeois media — often have more and heavier weapons than the Haitian cops. Some of these “gangs” were created to profit from extortion and kidnapping, like the “400 Mawozo” who grabbed 17 missionaries in December 2021 for ransom.

In reaction, other “gangs” have been organized to defend their neighborhoods. These groups are generally neighborhood based and are known to handle neighborhood problems, like trash pickup. In essence, they exercise a local authority that comes close to replacing the authority of the Haitian state, especially in poor and working-class neighborhoods.

Nationally, Fanmi Lavalas, a political party led by former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was able to call hundreds of thousands of protesters into the streets throughout the country in a June 26 protest.

Since the one-year anniversary of President Jovenel Moïse’s assassination July 7, two coalitions of “gangs” have been contending with deadly force as to which will control Cité Soleil, a large, very impoverished community in Port-au-Prince, where Haiti’s largest fuel depot for gasoline and diesel is located.

One of these coalitions is called the “Revolutionary Forces of the G9 Family and Allies, Mess With One, You Mess With All,” which is generally shortened to G-9. This is led by an ex-cop, Jimmy Chérizier, known as “Barbecue” because of his family’s business. The other coalition is called G-Pèp and is run by Gabriel Jean-Pierre, also known as “Ti Gabriel.”

G-Pèp is funded by and politically aligned with Réginald Boulos, a member of Haiti’s big bourgeoisie, who helped organize two coups against Aristide and who has close ties to the U.S., where he was born.

The fighting between G-9 and G-Pèp has been very heavy. Hundreds of people have died or been wounded, thousands have fled their homes. People in neighborhoods in the areas where the fighting has been most

intense have been afraid to leave their homes. People have gone hungry and run out of water.

As of July 24, it appears there is a ceasefire in effect; at the Varreux Terminal in Cité Soleil, operators reported on Twitter that they had filled 129 tanker delivery trucks on July 21.

The U.S. opposed a strict U.N. embargo on allowing weapons to go to Haiti. The U.N. officially estimates that 270,000 weapons, mostly from the U.S., are in Haiti.

Food and water

The U.N. World Food Program Country Director Jean-Martin Bauer, in a series of tweets July 19, explained how the WFP delivers aid to the 4.5 million Haitians — nearly half the population — now at risk of famine.

The WFP says it can’t use Port-au-Prince as a distribu-

tion hub, since “criminal groups block the roads leading to Port-au-Prince,” so it uses its ship “the Linda D [to] safely transport humanitarian trucks and cargo.” Once the ship reaches a port, it uses its cranes to unload an entire truck and to pick up an empty truck.

For over a year, “criminal groups” have blocked nor-



Restitution and Reparations for Haiti

mal commerce, the regular transport of goods, services and people between Port-au-Prince and the rest of the country, particularly with the southern peninsula where much food is produced.

The U.N. estimated Haiti’s overall inflation rate is 25%. Before the Ukrainian conflict, Haiti imported 80% of its cereals, so the WFP predicts that now the cost of food in Haiti will be even more inflated.

Reparations and the roots of Haiti’s poverty

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Its poverty was imposed in 1825. That year a French fleet showed up off Haiti’s coast to demand the country pay France for the loss of its most valuable colony that had contributed half of France’s income, in particular the loss of its most valuable asset in that colony — enslaved people.

France “lost” this colony when Haiti’s people rebelled, fought France in a war of independence and declared Haitian sovereignty in 1804.

France wanted compensation for what the Haitian revolution won with the blood of its people. It wanted 150 million gold francs, 10 times the price it got from the United States for the Louisiana Purchase.

The New York Times, in its May 28 “Ransom” project, carefully documented how the debt imposed by France in 1825 forced Haiti to borrow from French banks, how the debt ballooned many times over because of interest and how U.S. banks took over that debt.

Haitian economists estimate that Haiti now deserves \$20 billion to \$30 billion in reparations for this injustice. □



In line for water in Cité Soleil, a community in Port-au-Prince.

Demonstrators demand reparations for the people of Haiti

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

Chanting “Stop the occupation of the Haitian nation,” the Haiti Action Committee and supporters of self-determination for Haiti held a spirited rally July 28 in the financial district of San Francisco.

“We are here to call out Citibank, France and the United States for their crimes against Haiti, for the wealth they have amassed on the backs of the Haitian people and the violence and chaos they have inflicted on Haitian lives,” stated Leslie Mullin, a spokesperson for HAC, as demonstrators flanked both sides of the sidewalk outside the French Consulate and Citibank.

On July 28, 1915, the U.S. government sent the U.S. Marines into Haiti to occupy



Demonstrators line the outside wall of CitiBank demanding reparations for the people of Haiti, July 28, San Francisco.

the country, in collusion with CitiBank, then called the First National City Bank of New York. The imperialist bank raided the treasury of Haiti’s national bank and hauled all of the money into its coffers in New York City. According to Mullin,

by 1922 the National City Bank had commandeered control of the National Bank of Haiti — its treasury, revenue and debt payments to France.

Mullin, in her welcoming remarks, reminded the protesters that James Weldon Johnson, who visited Haiti on behalf of the NAACP in 1920, had said that occupied Haiti was a “government of, by and for the National City Bank.” Today’s rally protested the robbery by U.S. and French imperialists of Haiti’s riches and sovereignty and upheld the Haitian people’s continuing struggle for reparations and independence.

Pierre LaBossiere, Haitian activist and leader of HAC, pointed out that the imperialists have always been interested in stealing Haiti’s land and its natural resources of oil, copper and valuable minerals. He said that the Haitian government was actively financing and arming the “so-called gangs,” which are really military death squads that are torturing and murdering the Haitian people who are in the streets struggling for their land and their livelihood.

LaBossiere stated that Citibank owes the people of Haiti over \$20 billion for its original robbery of the gold reserves of the National Bank of Haiti and its continuing role of draining Haiti’s treasury and collaborating with Haiti’s imperialist occupiers.

The Haitian leader reminded everyone that the Haitian struggle was at a critical point. He challenged demonstrators to rise up to oppose the occupation and to support the fight of the Haitian people to control their own country. □

July 26 celebration in Cuba

Thousands of Cubans celebrated the 69th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada garrison and honored those who gave their lives in this opening battle of the Cuban Revolution.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel in his address to those assembled here in Cienfuegos, including U.S. Cuba solidarity organizations, spoke of the great achievements of socialist Cuba.

Two of those achievements include the development of COVID-19 vaccines and the successful vaccination of over 90% of the Cuban population, despite severe hardships imposed by the criminal U.S. economic blockade of Cuba.

— Report and photo by Bill Sacks



Citizens’ Pole

An indisputable victory for the Panamanian people in a united struggle

Statement of Polo Ciudadano (Citizens’ Pole)

Note from Workers World: Following huge price rises in Panamá for necessities during the first part of the year, including a 50% increase in energy prices, a mass movement erupted in July. The masses blocked the main roads for three weeks. As a result, prices were rolled back 30% and frozen at that level. The following statement describes some of the reasons for the victory, which should be an inspiration to all popular struggles. Translation: John Catalinotto.

The great social explosion of the Panamanian people, who massively took to the streets to repudiate the indiscriminate increase in food and fuel prices that had occurred during the first half of July 2022, has obtained an indisputable victory.

The combined force of the educators’ strike, which included all the country’s schools, together with the combativeness of the Indigenous peoples, particularly of the Ngäbe-Buglé nation, as well as the determined participation of the organized and popular labor movement, have forced the neoliberal government of President Laurentino Cortizo of the PRD to negotiate with the entire undivided movement before the national television cameras.

The slogan, “Without struggles, there are no victories,” has once again been proven to be true. One of the main achievements of this struggle has been the 30% reduction of prices, freezing prices of a basic food basket of 72 products, which goes far beyond the popular “arroz con tuna” (rice with tuna). This is a varied and healthy food basket, which includes proteins and vegetables, and not only carbohydrates, as the Cortizo government intended.



In the early 1970s, Center for United Labor Action held demonstrations and other activities to fight for a food price rollback. Is it time to start up similar efforts?

The whole country has begun to understand that the problem is not only the government now in office and its corruption, but the problem is the country’s “economic model,” which is at the service of a handful of monopolies that control the distribution of fuel, food and medicine.

The price reduction of gasoline in all its variants to 3.25 Panamanian Balboas per gallon is another important victory that must be claimed. Although the original demand of the movement was a reduction to B/3.00, what has been achieved so far is a significant savings compared to the B/3.95 that President Cortizo was aiming for. [The Balboa is set equal to the U.S. dollar]

This reduction was won even for fishing motors and agricultural machinery, with the mere presentation of the consumer’s identification card. The transporters and producers who had complained about the blockades [of roads by the mass movement] owe this achievement to the union and popular movement, as well as to the Indigenous Ngäbe-Buglé population.

At the time of writing this communiqué, agreements continue to be reached on drug prices and the budget for public education, which must meet a budget equivalent to 6% of the GDP.

All these concrete measures, which imply an important relief for the suffering popular classes, are the product of this struggle; they are no government handout.

But the popular victory goes beyond the material gains. The whole country has begun to understand that the problem is not only the government now in office and its corruption, but the problem is the country’s “economic model,” which is at the service of a handful of monopolies that control the distribution of fuel, food and medicine.

Both from the streets and at the televised negotiations table, the Panamanian people have begun to realize that the price hikes that burden them are imposed by foreign and national capitalists for whose interests the governments work.

The mobilization and the negotiations have helped advance popular consciousness, so that the people understand that even the conquests achieved are only temporary, they are partial — as long as the current neoliberal economic-capitalist model persists.

As long as the politicians and parties rule at the service of this corrupt system, which allows the enrichment of a few at the expense of the hunger of the people, the freezing of prices for gasoline and food, in reality becomes a “subsidy to the rich,” which we, the exploited classes, will pay for indirectly with taxes.

The fundamental solution is to limit the profit margins of these companies, whether they are importers and distributors of gasoline, food or medicines. The “middlemen” and supermarket chains are responsible for imposing prices that bankrupt agricultural producers, while selling at high prices to consumers.

The excessive imports, and not the blockades of the Indigenous organizations, are responsible for bankrupting the producers [farmers, fishers]. We must put an end to the Free Trade Agreements that only benefit traders. We must carry out a tax reform to make those who earn the most pay more, and we must put an end to tax exemptions and tax evasion.

Putting this discussion on the negotiating table has been a success for the negotiators representing



Panamá City, Panamá WW PHOTO: DEBORAH RODRIGUEZ

the Indigenous men and women of the Ngäbe Buglé Comarca, the two popular “alliances,” because of the educational impact it has on public opinion.

But, from the popular and union movement we must also understand that, while recognizing the conquests achieved in this struggle, the root of the question goes beyond the negotiating table. This is because the government, supported by the complaints of the owners, who now demand to be included, is not going to change the “model,” because it is not interested in solving the socio-economic situation of the Panamanian people.

To change the anti-popular economic model, to change the corrupt political regime, to build a more just, democratic, inclusive and egalitarian country, we must organize a political movement that aspires to be a government. A political movement that overcomes divisiveness and sectarianism, as has been achieved at the current negotiations table.

To the government as well as to the businessmen and businesswomen, who are now concerned about the “model” and who say they want to “negotiate” about it, we say that the occasion to do so is within the framework of the debate and the constitution of an ORIGINAL CONSTITUTORY ASSEMBLY, which should be convened as soon as possible, in the context of the popular clamor for a better country.

Panamá, July 28, 2022. □



WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

¡Cuba Sí!

The New York/New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition held its monthly action in Central Park July 31, near the statue of beloved Cuban liberation hero José Martí. Car caravans, marches and rallies are held on the last Sunday of every month here and in other cities around the world to demand an end to the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

At least 10 organizations had speakers at the rally, including Brazilian, Colombian and Cuban activists. Larry Holmes spoke for Workers World Party.

In response to right-wing Cubans who threatened to attack the rally, the Coalition said, “The haters have vowed to sabotage the event. They are desperate. Every day more and more Cuban Americans, Americans and decent people around the world are calling for an end to the sanctions that punish the Cuban people. These extremists will not intimidate us.”

The right wing was outnumbered by Cuba solidarity activists 3 to 1. When the rightists tried to grab pro-Cuba signs, they failed.

— Report by Marsha Goldberg

Kentucky floods caused by greed

Continued from page 3

According to Jack Spadaro, a former director of the National Mine Health and Safety Academy, there are credible findings by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers and the West Virginia state government: “These are scientific studies done by teams of scientists, hydrologists and engineers; they’ve all shown there is a link between mountaintop removal mining and flooding.” (Public News Service, July 8, 2009)

Temperatures in the places hit hardest by the recent flash flood have been abnormally high through most of the 2022 summer. According to a July 29 report from

CNN regarding the flood, “As global temperatures climb, the atmosphere is able to hold more and more water, making water vapor more abundantly available to fall as rain.”

Even if coal mining is less common than it used to be in eastern Kentucky, the damage caused by strip mining and mountaintop removal is already done. The existence of climate change is indisputable, and it is a symptom of capitalist exploitation.

The only way to prevent future floods is for workers and oppressed people to wipe out the profit motive that is the determining factor of all business decisions under capitalism. Only a socialist system can help reverse the destruction caused by capitalist profit and greed. □

Stop the FBI attack!

WW STATEMENT

Continued from page 1

such conferences — to learn the truth when the imperialist media provides nothing but an avalanche of lies — is a right we have and must defend.

Why did the FBI make this attack?

Let's look at the facts — political facts that are withheld or distorted in the corporate media and by the government:

Over decades, Washington and its NATO allies have broken all diplomatic promises and pursued aggressive acts against Russia. The U.S. and its state agents considered Ukraine a target for NATO membership. They organized and aided two coups, in 2004 and 2014, to place forces hostile to Russia at the head

of the Kiev regime.

Elements the U.S. backed in the 2014 coup, which remain strong in Kiev's army and police, include pro-Nazi forces dating from World War II. Ever since the 2014 coup, the Kiev regime has waged war against the Russian-speaking Ukrainian citizens in the Donbass region, killing 14,000 people. Meanwhile NATO has expanded toward Russian borders.

Realizing these threats, the Russian government intervened militarily this year in Ukraine to stop the NATO/Ukrainian offensive.

Proxy war and the Big Lie

Since the winter, Washington has escalated the proxy war against Russia, sending tens of billions of dollars worth

of weapons to Kiev and pressuring NATO allies to stop trade with Russia. This imperialist aggression has prolonged misery in Ukraine, increased economic suffering in Europe and the world and heightened the threat of a nuclear world war.

The ruling classes of the U.S. and Western Europe have unleashed an avalanche of lies, trying to justify the U.S.-NATO intervention and to blame Russia for every ill that occurs in the world.

That the FBI attacks the antiwar movement here indicates that the U.S. rulers fear their Big Lie will fail.

Under those conditions, it is not just the right but the duty of U.S. antiwar organizations to act against the U.S.-NATO warmakers. This includes taking part in meetings in Russia.

The FBI chose to attack the APSP, a Black organization, first. That is no surprise given the U.S.'s racist history.

Workers World defends the APSP and calls on all anti-imperialist and antiwar organizations, on any who defend democracy in the United States, to do what is necessary to stop the persecution of the APSP leaders.

We note that other organizations and media have condemned the FBI and supported the defense of the APSP. This includes the Black Alliance for Peace (tinyurl.com/3kbu3csn) and Fightback News (tinyurl.com/s6mz6cej). We expect this list to grow.

Stop the FBI attack on the antiwar movement! □

Workers launch first union at Trader Joe's

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Continuing the breakthrough of union drives in the U.S., workers at Trader Joe's in Hadley, Massachusetts, won a 45-31 vote July 28 to become the first unionized store in the trendy grocery store chain. The corporation has more than 530 locations across the U.S., with 10,000 employees and an estimated 2022 revenue of \$13.3 billion.

Organizers at the Hadley store, which is about 100 miles due west of Boston, launched their union campaign in May through an open letter to company CEO Dan Bane, citing concerns about pay, benefits and safety. The 81 workers at the store — called crew members by the company — were eligible to vote in the election supervised by the National Labor Relations Board.

On the Twitter feed of Trader Joe's United, Sarah, who has worked at the company for 18 years, said: "I'm voting YES because as a captain [store leader] and now crew member, I watched the company put profit over the well-being of the crew repeatedly.



Sarah, a worker for 18 years at Trader Joe's, organizes for the 'yes' vote.

It's time for us to have a say in the decisions that affect our lives. That means a union, and that means a contract." (July 28)

Trader Joe's United, an independent union, is now posting forms on Twitter so workers at other stores can contact them about how to unionize: "Fellow crew, want to organize your store but don't know where to start? Reach us thru our contact form."

Workers at Trader Joe's locations in Minneapolis and Boulder, Colorado, have also initiated unionization efforts. □

Buffalo Starbucks strike wave

By Arjae Red
Buffalo, New York

Buffalo's Genesee Street Starbucks, the second Starbucks in the U.S. — out of more than 200 now — to win its union election, went on strike for three days July 29-31.

Genesee Street is the fourth Buffalo Starbucks to strike in July alone. This follows a wave of strikes in other cities, like the massive eight-store strike in Seattle, along with stores in Pittsburgh and Dallas. At the same time as the Genesee Street store baristas struck, stores in Ithaca, New York, went on strike, and another store in Pittsburgh went out Aug. 1. The Boston Starbucks strike has been going on for over two weeks, and workers have expanded the protest to put pressure on the National Labor Relations Board to end Starbucks' ruthless union-busting operation.

Those listed are just a few of the Starbucks strikes that have taken place since the first successful union election last year. Common reasons have been retaliatory firings of organizers, slashed hours, store closings, threats and harassment from management, deliberate understaffing and overwork, unsafe working conditions and refusal to bargain for a contract. These are just a few of the over 250 Unfair Labor Practice charges Starbucks Workers United has filed with the NLRB against the company.

Starbucks has been waging a war of attrition against the union, trying to waste as much of



Buffalo Genesee Street Starbucks workers hold three-day strike July 29, 30, 31.

the union's time as possible and demoralize the workers. But the worsening conditions have caused many workers who were formerly on the fence about the union or in some cases against it to flip to a pro-union position.

Workers in these striking stores are facing the same conditions as many workers in companies outside Starbucks — like Apple, Trader Joe's and REI, where stores have also gone union.

When the class struggle intensifies, most working class people end up on the side that aligns with their class interests. Starbucks workers understand that many of the problems plaguing their workplaces will only be solved by winning a union contract.

The author is an organizer with Starbucks Workers United and member of Workers World Party.

California Labor Federation

Convention inspired by national wave of organizing

By Dave Welsh
San Francisco

The 2.1 million-member California Labor Federation kicked off its biennial convention here in mid-July with a special meeting featuring Chris Smalls from the Amazon Labor Union. The theme: How to organize the unorganized.

A state labor federation statement said that during the COVID-19 pandemic: "Workers were deemed 'essential,' but employers didn't treat them that way." Often with young workers in the lead, Amazon, Starbucks and many other places have now witnessed organizing drives — "the most exciting year labor's seen in recent times. Members were clear they want a movement that's about more than bread-and-butter issues like fair pay. They want economic justice, social justice, racial justice."

Chris Smalls told the union crowd how a core group of organizers had, one step at a time, won union recognition for an

8,300-person warehouse in New York City on Staten Island.

He gave a few pointers: "You can't rely on politicians ... And you need to establish strongholds, where you go back again and again and consolidate your different bases in the workplace. Organizing is no joke; it's like a full-time job."



Amazon Labor Union President Chris Smalls and California union members rally against Amazon's plans to buy the One Medical health care chain, San Francisco, July 26.

A Service Employee's Union member in the audience told how he had worked for Uber as a ride-share driver. Then he got hired as an Amazon flex driver, using his own vehicle, and was misclassified as an independent contractor, working in two-hour blocks to deliver 40 to 60 packages, getting injured and not being told of his

worker compensation benefits.

Smalls responded, "The union is our family. Over time they see that. Over time we show them, in thousands of small meetings. They can see the power of the people when we come together."

The newly elected head of the California Labor Federation is Lorena Gonzalez, the daughter of a farmworker and a nurse. "We are going to ruffle some feathers," she said, "and you are not going to get any apologies."

Gonzalez's first act as Executive Secretary-Treasurer was to bring the United Farm Workers back into the Federation after a 16-year absence. The UFW, founded by people like César Chávez, Larry Itliong and Dolores Huerta, was forged out of unity between Filipino-American and Mexican-American farmworkers in the great historic 1965-1970 strike against the grape growers in Delano, California. Chávez was one of the first major civil rights leaders to support LGBTQ+ issues visibly and explicitly. □

Another war?

U.S. uses Pelosi to provoke China

By Sara Flounders

Bulletin: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was smuggled into Taiwan August 2. Read the statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry here: tinyurl.com/455vrnyb

U.S. provocations against China have moved into high gear. Even as the war in Ukraine, instigated by Washington, unfolds with disastrous consequences for European economies and vibrates through the world economy, a more ominous confrontation is planned.

The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, with its accompanying battle group of warships, a guided missile cruiser, destroyers and nuclear submarines, is headed to the coast of China near the Taiwan Strait. This aggressive show of force is intended as a threat to back up Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi's announced plan to visit Taiwan.

China made a strong objection to this open military escalation as a flagrant violation of the U.S.-agreed position that China is one country and incorporates Taiwan as a province.

President Xi Jinping warned U.S. President Joe Biden in a conference call July 28 that "Those who play with fire will perish by it." Xi called on the U.S. to honor the One China principle to which they had agreed. (tinyurl.com/35wpmymu)

"Don't say we didn't warn you" was a July 29 Global Times headline. It is the highest level of warning used in the past before China has taken military action.

"China's responses will be systematic and not limited to a small scale, given the severity of Pelosi's actions and the damage to political trust from Sino-U.S. relations," said Yang Mingjie, head of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Institute of Taiwan Studies.

Yang said China's response could include "military options and comprehensive countermeasures from the economy to diplomacy."

Based on the strong warnings from China, it is uncertain whether Speaker of the House Pelosi's six-person congressional visit to Taiwan goes ahead as part of her visit to Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan. The purpose of the trip is to reassert an aggressive intervention in Asia and openly challenge the One China agreement.

Pelosi, who ranks third in the line of succession to the presidency, would be the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit the island in 25 years. Pelosi is hardly on a personal trip. The visit is an arrogant challenge to China's unity and will be backed up by a U.S. aircraft carrier battle group and military jets.

China's consistent position

China has held a consistent, well-understood position on its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Washington is now openly violating a signed international agreement made 50 years ago, on Feb. 28, 1972, between Premier Zhou Enlai and U.S. President Richard Nixon, called the Shanghai Joint Communiqué. U.S. Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Special Advisor Henry Kissinger participated in drafting this document.

At that time the U.S. was isolated in Asia and all but defeated in Vietnam. This was the motivation to normalize relations — after two decades of failed efforts to overturn the Chinese Revolution through harsh sanctions and military disruptions. The U.S. was especially anxious to drive a wedge between China and the Soviet Union. This division between the

two largest but still developing socialist countries was a historic setback for the working class internationally.

Now, 50 years later, U.S. imperialist power is waning. China, Russia, Iran and other countries of the region are increasingly united and able to assist each other when faced by U.S. imperialism's military threats and new levels of economic sanctions.

The bottom line of the People's Republic of China in 1972 for normalizing relations with the U.S. was a signed pledge of noninterference in its internal affairs and respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Of course, like all its agreements and treaties, the U.S. has violated this pledge numerous times through its interference in Hong Kong, Tibet, Xinjiang and Taiwan and its funding under U.S. AID programs to hostile and disruptive movements within China.

Pelosi, who ranks third in the line of succession to the presidency, would be the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit the island in 25 years. Pelosi is hardly on a personal trip. The visit is an arrogant challenge to China's unity and will be backed up by a U.S. aircraft carrier battle group and military jets.

Of greatest importance was the inclusion of Taiwan in the Shanghai Joint Communiqué of 1972, which remains valid today. The United States acknowledged that "all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China, and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves."

What Wall Street wants to disrupt

China's planned economy now surpasses the capitalist economy of the U.S. To the U.S. ruling class, efforts to disrupt China have become a priority.

With a population of only 23 million, Taiwan has become a pawn in the struggle to disrupt China. Several cities on the Chinese mainland have larger populations than the island province of Taiwan. Why is disrupting Taiwan so important to Washington's strategy?

China is Taiwan's largest trading partner. It is an important manufacturing center for semiconductor computer chips and other high-tech products that are critical in global supply chains. Taiwan Semiconductor (TSMC) currently dominates the market in the production of the

most advanced types of semiconductor chips. Its integrated circuits are essential for appliances, cars, computers and phones. It now makes 92% of the world's most advanced semiconductors.



The USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike group is now in the South China Sea.

None of these advanced chips are currently made in the U.S. Meanwhile, China is putting enormous resources into quickly developing its own computer chips. Breaking this essential supply chain is intended to disrupt Chinese global production. Of course it will be even more disruptive to the U.S. and the European Union. Already, based on aggressive sanctions threats, the U.S. has forced Taiwanese semiconductor companies to stop doing business with major Chinese clients like Huawei.

One China policy

Taiwan island has remained officially a province of China since 1683 during the Qing Dynasty.

Following the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the corrupt U.S.-backed Kuomintang Nationalist forces withdrew to China's island province of Taiwan with U.S. naval support. The victorious Chinese Communist Party then established the People's Republic of China.

On Taiwan, the Kuomintang forces established what they called the Republic of China, claiming it was the government of all China, and they continue to do so today. But even Taiwan's constitution claims that Taiwan is a province of all of China. The overwhelming majority of the world, along with the United Nations, officially agree that Taiwan is part of People's China.

U.S. imperialism, however, has reversed course and is seeking through political and military measures to use Taiwan to destabilize China and provoke a military confrontation.

U.S. military 'Pivot to Asia'

In 2011 President Barack Obama announced a "Pivot to Asia," aimed at encircling and containing China. Under Donald Trump, the official position was that the military must prioritize planning for a major power conflict with the People's Republic of China. He took this military hostility to the next level with a trade war.

President Joe Biden has taken it even further, with more weapons sales and aggressive actions. Democrats and Republicans in Congress try to outdo each other in proposing anti-China measures.

The U.S. military presence in Taiwan doubled last December — although not included in counts are U.S. Green Berets training Taiwanese soldiers; other U.S. advisors and contractors involved in weapons placement, technical assistance and training; and a steady escalation of

U.S. weapons sales to Taiwan.

The U.S. military and its weapons contractors have told Taiwan what to order, including drones, Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and Javelin anti-tank missiles, the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System and naval sea mines.

The Pentagon has provided similar weapons to Ukraine.

A \$108-million U.S. arms sale May 25 was the fifth under the Biden administration and the fourth approved this year. It follows a \$95-million air defense system in April and a \$100-million upgrade for Patriot missiles in February. A \$14.2-billion backlog of military equipment ordered since 2019 has not yet been delivered.

The goal is to make Taiwan a "porcupine" bristling with weapons. The island is being aggressively transformed into an offensive launch platform for war, even as U.S. strategists seek to provoke China into military action.

Washington for years employed a similar strategy to build up military and fascist forces within Ukraine as a platform against Russia, with the aim of provoking the current disastrous war there.

These continuing weapons sales, along with Pelosi's visit, are aimed at further undermining the One China policy.

Nikkei Asia reports that the U.S. has been in discussions to build a network of offensive missiles which would violate the INF treaty on Taiwan. On May 5 the State Department removed wording on its official website that had said "the United States does not support Taiwan independence" and that had acknowledged "the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China."

This year, for the first time, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea were invited to participate in a NATO Summit as "Indo-Pacific Partners." This invitation was part of a new "NATO Strategic Concept" — a 10-year strategy plan that openly declares China a threat: "The close alliance between China and Russia threatens western values."

Endless war, the quick fix

U.S. wars in Asia have cost millions of lives, poisoned generations of children and left environmental destruction that is still unrepaired. Who can forget the devastation caused by U.S. wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria? Millions of people were displaced. While each ended in failure for U.S. imperialism, they reaped trillions of dollars in profits for the military industries and the capitalist class.

The very real danger of a new war is rising. As a capitalist crisis deepens, U.S. imperialism will again choose war. Not because they win the wars, but the parasitic capitalist class desperately needs a huge infusion of military spending. Like an infusion of drugs, it's a quick, temporary fix.

The U.S.-instigated war in Ukraine has not led to the predicted collapse of the Russian economy, but it has disrupted supply chains of energy and food globally. It is a major cause of the current recession.

A military confrontation with China would be far more disruptive. And it is even less likely to succeed. □



Manifestación en Panamá por reversión de precios de artículos de primera necesidad, 12 de julio.

Visita a Oriente Medio, acceso al petróleo se impone a los derechos humanos

Ningún palestino que vive bajo la ocupación israelí se benefició un ápice de la breve visita del presidente Joe Biden a Oriente Medio. Biden tenía el poder ejecutivo para revertir el daño hecho cuando el ex presidente Donald Trump trasladó la embajada de Estados Unidos a Jerusalén, reconociendo el control de Israel sobre la disputada capital. Biden decidió no hacerlo.

Biden nunca ha abordado la responsabilidad de Israel en el asesinato de la periodista palestino-estadounidense Shireen Abu Akleh, asesinada por soldados israelíes en mayo, mientras cubría una operación de las Fuerzas de Defensa israelíes en la Cisjordania ocupada.

Biden pasó su breve estancia en la Palestina ocupada reuniéndose con el primer ministro israelí Yair Lapid. Ambos firmaron una declaración estratégica conjunta en la que se comprometían a una

mayor cooperación bilateral. Se dirigieron con odio al movimiento internacional de Boicot, Desinversión y Sanciones (BDS), que organiza una oposición no violenta para presionar a Israel para que se adhiera al derecho internacional.

Biden y Lapid hablaron de impedir que Irán obtenga un arma nuclear. Sin embargo, Israel, que nunca firmó el Tratado de No Proliferación Nuclear, posee unas 400 cabezas nucleares y tiene la capacidad de lanzarlas por varios métodos. Poco después de la breve visita de Biden, Israel intensificó sus bombardeos sobre la Franja de Gaza ocupada, a la que se suele denominar la mayor prisión al aire libre del mundo.

Arabia Saudí

Ni los trabajadores ni los campesinos de un Yemen devastado por la guerra obtuvieron ningún consuelo del breve

viaje de Biden a Arabia Saudí, uno de los peores violadores de los derechos humanos en la región. A pesar de los ataques de la campaña de Biden a Trump y las promesas de romper con la guerra de Arabia Saudí contra Yemen, el imperialismo estadounidense sigue apuntalando el esfuerzo saudí.

La guerra y el bloqueo saudíes a Yemen, respaldados por Estados Unidos, han provocado la muerte de más de 110.000 personas, han destruido el país más pobre del mundo árabe y han dejado a dos tercios de la población de Yemen, de 30 millones de personas, dependientes de la ayuda humanitaria internacional. Sin embargo, Biden continúa con la política de sus predecesores de respaldar a Arabia Saudí contra Yemen, sin importar el coste humano.

Biden habla de derechos humanos y luego visita a dos de los peores violadores de derechos humanos de Oriente Medio. Critica a otros países — socialistas y no leales a Washington — por sus supuestas violaciones de los derechos humanos, y sin embargo, como hizo Trump, visitó al gobierno saudí que ejecutó a 81 personas hace apenas unos meses.

Biden pasó gran parte de su viaje reforzando las políticas de Trump para la región, en lugar de aplicar las políticas en torno a las que hizo campaña. Las violaciones de los derechos humanos nunca

fueron una preocupación para la visita de Biden a la región. Su prioridad era asegurar el acceso a las reservas de petróleo de la región, ahora que la guerra en Ucrania, respaldada por Estados Unidos y la OTAN, ha cerrado el acceso global al petróleo de Rusia.

Uno de los principales planes de la guerra de la OTAN en Ucrania, instigada por Estados Unidos, era establecer un tope de precios para el petróleo ruso. Hasta ahora, el cártel de la Organización de Países Exportadores de Petróleo (OPEP) se ha negado a secundar el plan estadounidense. Washington ha dado prioridad a mantener a Arabia Saudí, el tercer mayor productor de petróleo del mundo, como aliado, incluso si eso significa ignorar las importantes violaciones de los derechos humanos.

Durante su visita a Arabia Saudí, Biden supuestamente no se enfrentó al príncipe heredero saudí Mohammad bin Salman sobre el asesinato del colaborador del Washington Post, el periodista saudí Jamal Khashoggi, sancionado por el Estado saudí en 2018.

Cuando los periodistas le preguntaron al respecto a su regreso a la Casa Blanca, la respuesta de Biden, muy reveladora, fue: “¿Por qué no hablan de algo que importe?” □

MUNDO OBRERO editorial

El gobierno de Joe Biden tiene el siguiente plan para hacer frente al COVID-19:

1. Aceptar como normales 420 muertes extra cada día, es decir, 150.000 al año;
 2. Asumir que la mayoría de las muertes y gran parte de los síntomas graves seguirán concentrándose en los sectores de población más viejos, pobres y oprimidos;
 3. Cuando afecte a las personas más ricas y poderosas — como Biden y otros miembros de su administración — asegúrese de que reciben medicamentos antivirales y los mejores cuidados de apoyo, aunque los demás no puedan hacerlo;
 4. Esperar que el número de casos graves sea lo suficientemente pequeño como para que los hospitales eviten el colapso — pero no tomar ninguna medida para ampliar la atención de COVID-19 u otros cuidados médicos a la población en general;
 5. Afirmar que todo está bajo control, lo esté o no. Volver a las andadas, sin mandatos de máscaras gubernamentales, sin movilización continuada para distribuir vacunas, sin establecer y facilitar protocolos de salud pública — como las pruebas y el rastreo necesarios para afrontar la próxima variante y la próxima pandemia; y
 6. Culpas a China de establecer estrictas cuarentenas locales y, sobre todo, de cerrar los negocios. Casi se insiste en que la China Popular permita que el virus se extienda como lo ha hecho en gran parte del resto del mundo, a pesar de que esto probablemente provocaría millones de muertes adicionales al año.
- A pesar de que el escenario anterior es

muy inquietante, es posible que se desarrolle una variante del virus que sume al mundo en un caos aún mayor. Pero por el momento, dejemos de lado ese pensamiento.

El enfoque de la administración democrata ante la pandemia parecía razonable en 2021, pero sólo en comparación con su predecesor. El plan de la banda de Trump consistía en negar el problema y despreciar la ciencia — a menos que ellos mismos enfermaran. Incluso entonces estaban dispuestos a probar peligrosas pseudocuras.

El desmantelamiento de los protocolos de los dos grandes partidos capitalistas para hacer frente al COVID-19 y sus variantes revela mucho sobre la incapacidad del sistema capitalista para proteger y desarrollar a la humanidad. Esto está aún más probado, ya que la incapacidad ha sido duplicada por casi todos los gobiernos del mundo imperialista. Esto es cierto incluso para aquellos países en los que un fuerte movimiento obrero ha conquistado históricamente un sistema sanitario más humano.

El valor más alto bajo el capitalismo es maximizar las ganancias. Cómo le va a la clase obrera en todo el mundo, si incluso vive, la clase dominante lo desestima como algo trivial.

Esto puede verse en cómo la clase dominante imperialista afronta el reto de la pandemia, la crisis climática, la inestabilidad económica e incluso la guerra imperialista. Su principal objetivo sigue siendo maximizar los beneficios. Cualquiera que sea el

sufrimiento que cause este objetivo, tratan de imponerlo al Sur Global y a la clase trabajadora. Lo hacen incluso cuando pone en juego su propia seguridad. La crisis de COVID-19 lo demuestra.

La clase dominante hace tiempo que perdió toda capacidad de orientar positivamente el destino de la humanidad.

La alternativa es dar prioridad a la

mejora de las condiciones de los sectores más pobres y oprimidos de la clase trabajadora — junto con la de todo el planeta, lo que mejorará y protegerá la vida de la mayor parte de la humanidad. Esto sólo puede hacerse en un sistema en el que haya desaparecido el afán de maximizar los beneficios. El sistema necesario es el socialismo. □

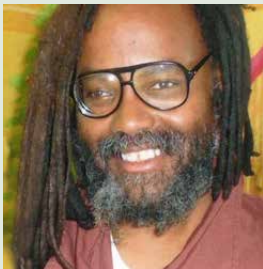
El desafío de Biden a la COVID-19

Uvalde: Lo que significa

Han pasado varias semanas desde los desgarradores eventos en la Escuela Primaria Robb en Uvalde, Texas. Semanas desde que 19 niñas y niños y 2 de sus maestras fueron abatidas por un joven con un rifle semi-automático AR-15 que disparó cientos de balas dentro de la escuela.

Al principio los policías se pintaron como héroes abnegados que defendieron las vidas de estudiantes y maestras — hasta que las cámaras telefónicas los mostraron en los pasillos de la escuela esperando, esperando, esperando, esperando. Los niños y niñas fueron asesinados lenta y metódicamente mientras los policías quedaron a unos pocos metros de distancia.

¿Cuántos policías? Más que los que caben en un estacionamiento de Dunkin Donuts. Varias docenas. Por lo menos



19, 20, 50, más de 100, casi 400 policías.

El ataque duró casi una hora y media, precisamente 77 minutos, hasta que la amenaza fue neutralizada. 77 minutos de muertes de criaturas de 7 a 10 años. Niños y niñas inteligentes, con aspiraciones.

Algunos marcaron 911 para pedir ayuda, sin saber que los policías ya estaban ahí.

Desde los primeros minutos estuvieron ahí, armados con rifles semi-automáticos y escudos. Esperando. ¿Para qué sirvieron?

¿Y ahora cómo pueden los padres sentirse seguros al enviar a sus hijas, sus hijos, a la escuela de nuevo? ¿Cómo será posible confiar en la policía?

Con amor, no miedo, soy Mumia Abu-Jamal.