

Workers World Party statement

Solidarity with railroad workers!

President Joe Biden has just signed legislation, passed by both houses of Congress, imposing a contract between Class One freight rail companies and the 11 railroad unions. Thus with the stroke of a pen, the CEO of the capitalist state, Biden, stripped these unions of their most basic right: the right to strike.

A separate bill adding seven paid sick days to the railroad workers’ contract — a key bargaining issue for the workers — passed in the House but was defeated in the Senate.

This anti-worker legislation should shatter any illusions that the Democratic Party is the party of the working class. Biden’s signing the deal gives the lie to his phony statement, made for the umpteenth time on Labor Day 2021, that he intends “to be the most pro-union president leading the most pro-union administration in American history.” (whitehouse.gov)

Rail unions have been trying to negotiate a just contract with the carriers for three years. Their last strike was in 1992; Congress forced them back to work then too. Since that time, the rail workforce has been systematically cut from 500,000 to 130,000, with train teams of only two people, which move more freight with about a quarter the workforce.

Now the companies want to reduce the two-worker team to one — one engineer operating “megamonster trains.”

Four unions representing a majority of all railroad workers have voted to reject the tentative agreement brokered by Biden and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh in September.

The workers’ main issues involve scheduling their work time and to take paid and unpaid time off for

health situations and family events.

Freight rail companies’ profits have skyrocketed. “Congress should not have to intervene. The railroads should provide paid sick leave to its employees,” Maintenance of Way Employees union (BMWED-IBT) said in a statement. “They have the money to do it, and it literally would cost them a penny of every dollar of record profits to provide it. It’s only 2% of what [the rail companies] CSX, NS and UP spent so

far this year in stock buybacks. It’s literally nothing to them, yet they refuse to provide it.” (cnn.com, Nov. 14)

“This one-two punch from the two political parties is despicable,” said Jason Doering, general secretary of the rank-and-file caucus Railroad Workers United.” (railroadworkersunited.org)

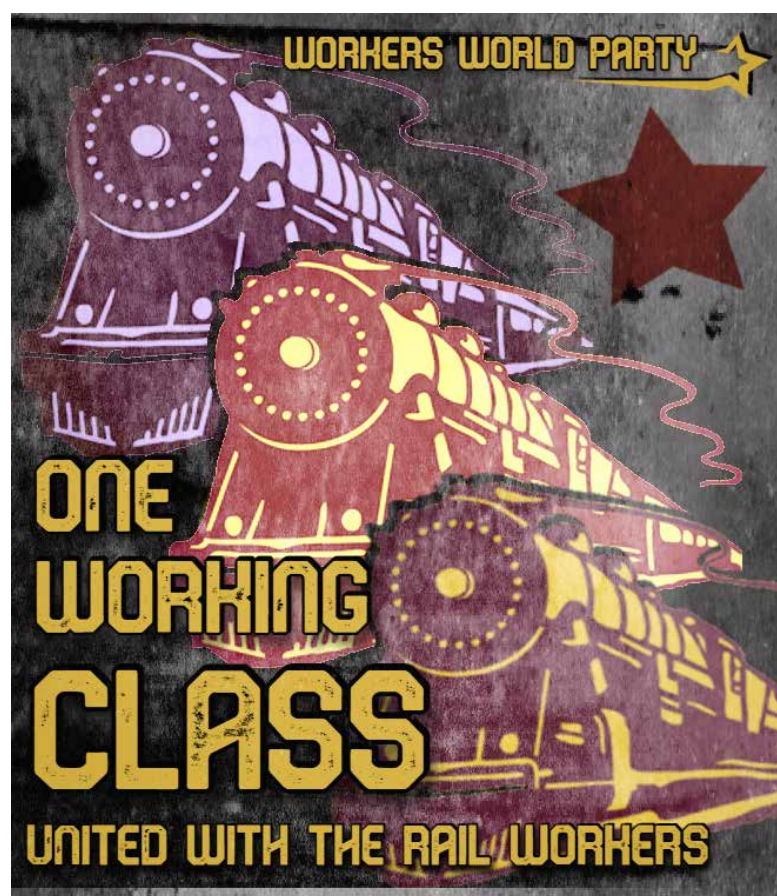
If they were to strike now, rail unions would be in violation of the law and would confront the capitalist state apparatus as well as the freight companies. Unlike the bulk of U.S. private sector workers, rail workers are not covered by the 1935 National Labor Relations Act.

The 1926 Railway Labor Act, passed before the National Labor Relations Act and before the mass labor upsurge of the 1930s, has language intended to limit the ability to strike. Specifically, it allows Congress to pass legislation imposing a contract on railroad workers — which it has done 18 times since the law’s passage — even after the workers vote to reject that contract.

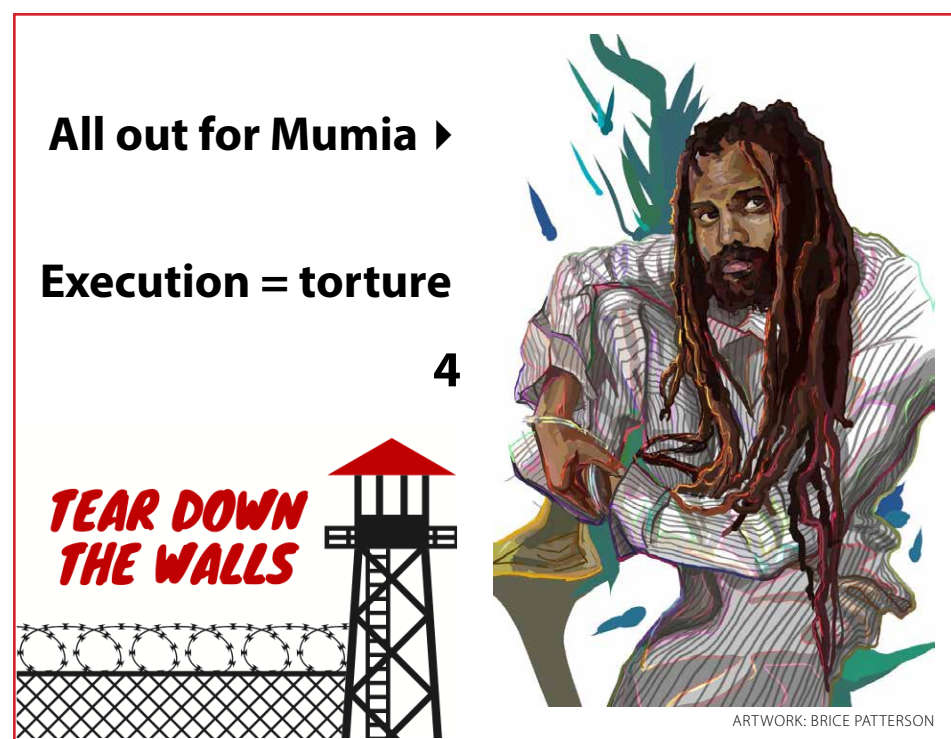
Biden says his action “helps our nation avoid what, without a doubt, would have been an economic catastrophe” for millions of workers, many of them union members. But what really

hurts unions is this bipartisan attack on the one real weapon labor has against capital: the power to withhold our labor.

Workers World Party is in unshakable solidarity with the rank-and-file railroad workers in whatever action they take next. We say no to state-sponsored strikebreaking. Repeal the Railway Labor Act! Pass the Protecting the Right to Organize Act! All power to the workers! □



All out for Mumia ▶
Execution = torture
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Moroccan soccer players display Palestinian flag as they celebrate their victory over Spain in the World Cup, Dec. 6.

PHOTO: TIMES OF GAZA

Amazon Labor Union calls out CEO Jassy

By Tony Murphy
New York City

Nov. 30 — In Manhattan today, Amazon Labor Union President Chris Smalls led a picket line outside the New York Times’ DealBook Summit, where Amazon CEO Andy Jassy was a scheduled speaker.

The summit was a meeting of war criminals and job-killing billionaires — people like FTX cryptocurrency finagler Sam Bankman-Fried and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, murderer of Palestinians — as well as Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Jassy, both of whom are responsible for tens of thousands of layoffs.

Smalls used the criminal bourgeois get-together and media attention to demand Jassy recognize and negotiate with the ALU. For several hours, Smalls and ALU supporters rallied in the rain, chanting “Union busting is disgusting!” and “What do we want? Contract!”

At one point Smalls spoke forcefully into the bullhorn, “Andy Jassy, come on out, baby! We got some contract negotiating to do!” He was joined by members of unions including Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), as well as supporters from Workers Assembly Against Racism, Workers World Party, People’s General Strike, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Democratic Socialists (DSA) and others.

Since Jassy began his tenure as Amazon CEO at the beginning of 2022, the e-commerce giant has used highly paid union busters to suppress the rights of its workers, harass organizers and delay bargaining required by law. The company has been charged with multiple Unfair Labor Practices for its unlawful treatment of Amazon employees at the JFK8 warehouse in Staten Island.

Last week in a rare move, a federal judge filed a national “cease and desist” order against Amazon, prohibiting the company from violating the rights of workers engaged in union organizing. In October, Jassy was personally cited by the National Labor Relations Board for violating labor law and interfering with the rights of Amazon workers.

Jassy and billionaires like Starbucks CEO Howard



WW PHOTO: TONY MURPHY
President Chris Smalls leads Amazon Labor Union members and supporters in chants Nov. 30, Columbus Circle, New York City.

Schultz are trying to resist the just demands of successful union campaigns, by refusing to negotiate with the unions their workers voted for and by firing workers at will.

The ALU is holding them accountable! □

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Austin
austin@workers.org

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

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

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

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

Cleveland
cleveland@workers.org

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

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

Minnesota
minnesota@workers.org

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

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio
sanantonio@workers.org

West Virginia
WestVirginia@workers.org

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

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

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

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

Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Sasha Mazumder

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, S. Hedgecoke

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

Mundo Obrero: Deborah Rodriguez, Carlos Vargas

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Members elect militants

‘A new, more aggressive UAW’

By Martha Grevatt

For over 70 years, the International Executive Board (IEB) of the United Auto Workers union has been dominated almost exclusively by the same class-collaborationist faction. A new militant team—UAW Members United, which ran on a platform of “No concessions, no corruption, no tiers” and was endorsed by the rank-and-file caucus Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD)—is on the verge of taking the union in a very different direction.

After the first-ever direct elections by the rank and file, the Administration Caucus has lost its monopoly of power over the IEB.

As the mail-in ballots were counted from Nov. 29 to Dec. 2, wins for union reformers were announced. Regional Directors Lashawn English, Brandon Mancilla and Dave Green defeated incumbents in Regions 1, 9A and 2B respectively. With 60% of the vote, Margaret Mock became the first African American woman to be elected UAW International Secretary-Treasurer. Rich Boyer and Mike Booth were the top two vote-getters for the three vice president positions, beating the AC’s chosen candidates.

English is African American; Boyer is Mexican; and Mancilla is Guatemalan.

Members United presidential candidate Shawn Fain will be in a runoff election next year with the incumbent president. About 20% of the vote in that race went to other opposition candidates. Also going to a runoff will be Members United candidate for Region 9 director, Dan Vicente.

The only Administration Caucus candidates elected to the IEB were those who ran unopposed. This remarkable

development comes just over a year after an opposition slate led by Sean O’Brien swept elections in the Teamsters (IBT).

“No matter what company our members work for, whether it’s the Big Three auto companies, Caterpillar or the University of California system, we want to put every employer on notice: Prepare for a new, more aggressive UAW,” Fain said in a news release issued after all the ballots were counted. “The cozy labor-management relationship is on its way to the dustbin of history.”

Nearly 50,000 UAW-represented student-workers are in the fourth week of striking the University of California system. Contracts with Caterpillar, Ford, General Motors and Stellantis (which includes the Chrysler brand) expire in 2023.

What happened?

For decades, UAW militants have been trying to bring the union back to being the fighting, democratic union that won recognition through the sit-down strikes of the 1930s. Many groupings have emerged over the decades — Locals Opposed to Concessions, New Directions Movement, Soldiers of Solidarity and Autoworker Caravan, and the latest, UAWD.

These groupings’ demands included changing how the Board is elected. They wanted to end the system that restricts the choice to delegates to a tightly controlled Constitutional Convention and replace this with direct elections by the membership.

But resolutions for “one member, one vote” were repeatedly shot down on the floor during past conventions.

Direct elections came by way of a different process. A consent decree between the federal government and the UAW came



Striking UAW-represented student workers at University of California-San Diego, Nov. 14.

after a federal investigation uncovered widespread corruption on the part of IEB leaders and union staff; part of the settlement was for a referendum to be held where the membership would decide whether to switch to a one member, one vote system.

UAWD mounted an all-out effort to get out the vote for union democracy. This was a necessary step to root out a corrupt, bureaucratic leadership that had made major concessions and allowed hundreds of thousands of jobs to be permanently eliminated — through plant closings, outsourcing and automation.

Direct elections won, defeating the convention system by a 2-1 margin.

Now the rank-and-file membership has made its voice heard again. As Mock explained, “the shop floor, so far, they’re speaking. They’re speaking in the votes being cast.” (In These Times, Dec. 2)

Change is coming to the UAW, and not a moment too soon. The shift to electric vehicles — which require fewer worker-hours to assemble — threatens to usher in a new wave of restructuring and job cuts.

Now the task is to mobilize the rank and file who elected these new leaders. It will take more than aggressive bargaining strategies; a monumental struggle will be required to reverse the pattern of making concessions and stop the hemorrhaging of more jobs.

And autoworkers will not win by themselves. Their union must be part of a global, multinational, multigendered, multigenerational classwide movement to finally put people before profits.

Martha Grevatt is a UAW Stellantis retiree and was an observer at the ballot counting for the Members United slate.

New School adjunct faculty strike enters third week

By Paddy Colligan
New York City

Dec. 5 — Raucous twin picketlines at the New School University Center and at neighboring Parsons School of Design in support of striking faculty declared their anger at the intransigence of the school administration. Honking cars and trucks, banging on buckets, tambourines and trumpets accompanied chants of “The teachers have spoken: the strike will not be broken!” and “Stand up, sit down, New York is a union town!” to make downtown Fifth Avenue a noisy center of struggle.

Part-time faculty at The New School have been on strike since Nov. 16. Demands include wages and benefits, but the 1,600 members of Adjuncts Come



WW PHOTO: PADDY COLLIGAN

New York, Dec. 5, 2022.

Together-UAW (ACT-UAW) Local 7902 are also demanding that the administration work to resolve issues of inequality that plague the institution.

Despite its progressive history as a haven for academics persecuted in 1930s Nazi Germany, and similarly persecuted scholars of color after World War II, The New School still has to answer for its anti-union and anti-worker actions.

Today’s treatment of its part-time academic staff resembles all too well the unequal business model of many private institutions of higher education in the United States. Adjunct teachers, who provide over 87% of university instruction, cannot be expected to solve budget deficits. Organizing and strikes are trending, as U.S. higher education institutions try

to impose shockingly inadequate pay on part-time faculty.

After 95% of the union members voted to reject what the university administration called its final offer, the contract dispute was submitted to mediation, which began Dec. 1 and continued over the weekend.

ACT-UAW members have been joined on daily picket lines by others from The New School community, both workers and students, and by union members from other colleges and universities in New York City, many of whom face their own contract issues.

A lawsuit by parents of New School students, to be filed Dec. 4, accuses the University of fraud for not providing services the parents had already paid for. □

Union strong at Houston Starbucks

Supporters gathered at the Starbucks in Houston’s huge medical center for a “Sip In” on Dec. 2 to support workers there who signed union cards. They are expected to have an election after the holidays. A vast majority of Starbucks workers signed union cards, and organizers say they’re confident the union will win an election.

The large group of supporters, called out by the DSA, waited in line to order their coffee. All gave their name as “Union Strong,” to be put on their coffee cups. Some workers’ shifts ended while

the supporters were present and came out to thank everyone for the solidarity. Workers said that managers were the ones taking orders and cashiering, while trying to keep union organizers in the back filling orders, where they could not chat with activists. This is the second store in Houston where workers have gone public with their plans to unionize with Starbucks Workers United.

— Story by Gloria Rubac



PHOTO: DSA HOUSTON

All out for Mumia Abu-Jamal Dec. 9

By Betsey Piette

Political prisoner and author Mumia Abu-Jamal was arrested 41 years ago on Dec. 9, 1981. He has been held captive by the state of Pennsylvania ever since. A final hearing on his current appeal is scheduled for Dec. 16 in Philadelphia.

Black activist and artist Brice Patterson, who grew up in Philadelphia during this time, described how he became aware of Abu-Jamal’s case:

“Mumia was someone who became a person of legend. I remember hearing elders and community members speak of him fondly or as a solemn story in passing, a history that for most of my younger years and young adulthood I had no understanding of.

“As I learned more, he transformed into a story of resilience in the face of police brutality. An individual who, at the time of my knowledge, was a target, being dehumanized, beaten and then imprisoned for the death of one of their very own perpetrators. He was made an example of — telling people who looked like him that under this system, they don’t have a right to resist or save themselves from the extrajudicial abuse from the actors, the police, enforcers who wish to control us.

“I learned the history of Mumia’s writing, journalism, activism and the voice he used for his community — a Black Panther, freedom fighter. Someone who challenged the hypercapitalistic, racist, anti-labor and imperialist narratives of the state. Someone who criticized our political system and the police who upheld it. He became even more; he became one of the many silenced for bringing truth and reality to the community he loved and was a member of.

“Then I saw images of him in incarceration — direct from community members who visited him. I saw the torture, the isolation, the attempts to remove dignity, the unjust punishment of an individual who dared to fight injustice. I saw how they allowed him no comfort, neither in accommodation, health or sanitation. Their attempts to strip a soul so profound from his original person and dignity that the conditions he has been put through merely represent the ugliness of themselves.

“I don’t think I’m equipped to fully depict or honor who community members like Mumia are, but I hope in trying my best I do honor him and others who have come before me. So in a way, they know that they are true art,

true gifts upon our communities and history.” (Patterson is the artist who created the drawing accompanying this article.)

Virtual rally Dec. 9 for Mumia

A virtual rally calling for freedom for Mumia and all political prisoners will be held Dec. 9, 7 p.m. ET. Speakers will include representatives of the Ed Poindexter Campaign, Samidoun Palestine Prisoners Network, Imam Jamil Al-Amin Campaign, Leonard Peltier Campaign, Veronza Bowers Campaign, Kamau Sadiki Campaign and incarcerated environmental activist Bryant Arroyo who was with Mumia at SCI Mahanoy. Register at Linktr.ee.mumia to attend the event.

Abu-Jamal support groups are calling on people in every city to hold some type of event Dec. 10 — rallies, teach-ins, film showings, flyer distributions — to build for the Dec. 16 court date. In **Philadelphia**, Making Worlds Bookstore at 210 S. 45th will host the official opening of their “Mumia Abu-Jamal Community Study Room,” by screening “Mumia: Long Distance Revolutionary” from 4-6 p.m. See tinyurl.com/2npetmvj to register.

Around the globe events are scheduled to pay tribute to Mumia and other political prisoners and to raise awareness of his critical court date Dec. 16.

In **France**, as has happened every first Wednesday each month for years, a rally in support of Mumia is set for Dec. 7 in Paris outside the U.S. Embassy. Supporters will write letters and sign petitions to Judge Lucretia Clemons, who is presiding over Abu-Jamal’s Dec. 16 hearing.

In **Germany**, a demonstration on Dec. 9 will march to the U.S. Embassy in Berlin and to the Brandenburg Gate. On Dec. 10, the **Britain**-based Collective for Political Prisoners will do a webinar around Mumia’s case featuring Linn Washington Jr., Johanna Fernandez, Mireille Fanon Mendes France and Julia Wright.

In **Mexico City**, starting at noon Dec. 11, there will be a demonstration at the U.S. Embassy, followed by a youth-focused gathering featuring the rap of Guerilla Bang Bang, Jamaican style music from Chingona Sound, songs by Eva Palma, a

pre-Hispanic dance by Aurelio and friends, graphic work by Ulises Xozulu, body stamps by Colibri and a new banner created by Indiosindios Lopez, plus battle raps of De Batl.

In **San Francisco**, the Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and Workers World Party are organizing a demonstration Dec. 15 at the Federal Building.

Visit Mobilization4Mumia.com for more information on Mumia’s case. □



Artist’s depiction of Mumia December 2022. CREDIT: BRICE PATTERSON

The torturous process of executions

By Gloria Rubac

During the 48 hours from the morning of Nov. 16 to the evening of Nov. 17, four men on death rows in four states — Arizona, Alabama, Oklahoma and Texas — were scheduled to be executed.

Three did take place, but in Alabama officials stopped the killing of Kenneth Eugene Smith after unsuccessfully searching for a vein to insert the IV for the lethal injection, after trying for 2 ½ hours. This was the second time in two months that Alabama has called off an execution in process.

Texas had better luck with their killing machine the evening before, but not until they had stabbed, poked and tortured Stephen Barbee while trying to find veins for the required two IVs that are used in Texas executions.

Texas now uses two IV lines, because in a past execution where there was only one line, it popped out as the killing was taking place. It squirted those in the room, causing one reporter to pass out and other witnesses to be traumatized. The room was cleared, and another IV was put into place. Witnesses and the media were brought back in, and the execution was carried out.

News media witnesses for Barbee’s execution had entered the death house at 6:00 p.m. Those protesting outside began to get worried when the witnesses didn’t come out between 6:30 and 7:00, as is usually the case.

“Something is wrong, something has happened,” one protester said. “We knew Stephen was disabled and couldn’t straighten out his arms. This should have already been over.” Another protester called the Texas Department of Criminal Justice’s Public Information Office, but they were as puzzled as those demonstrating.

Finally, the media witnesses came out at about 9:45 p.m. Barbee was pronounced dead almost an hour and half after the execution began.

Barbee’s first execution date was scheduled for 2019. It was stopped by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals to allow an investigation into whether it was a violation of Barbee’s Sixth Amendment right to counsel, when his trial attorney, against Barbee’s wishes, told the jury he was guilty. Apparently, the U.S. Supreme Court considered this to be no problem, and he was again given a date to die.

Temporary halt to executions in Alabama

Since the execution in Alabama had to be stopped Nov. 17, the governor has now called for an investigation into how executions are carried out and ordered the attorney general not to set any more execution dates.

According to the Death Penalty Information Center, legal reform and social justice advocacy groups praised Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey’s decision to undertake a review but expressed concern about the independence and transparency of the process.

In a joint statement, the Southern Poverty Law Center, Alabama Arise and Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty said: “Every government program, especially



The execution chamber in Huntsville, Texas, where legal lynchings via lethal injections take place.

executions, should be transparent from the start. We are relieved that there will be a review and dismayed that our state won’t simply throw out this archaic and unnecessary punishment.

“Among other things, at a minimum this review should assess the toll taken on corrections workers and establish PTSD support for tortured prisoners and corrections officers alike.” (tinyurl.com/45k2kn46)

The aborted execution Nov. 17 was just months after Alabama was accused of “cruel and unusual punishment,” when it spent three hours executing Joe Nathan James on July 28.

“Alabama officials tortured Joe Nathan James to death for over three hours, trying to set up an IV line, and then covered it up. Instead of pausing and investigating how their actions led to what may have been the longest recorded execution in our country’s history, they instead rushed Alan Miller to the execution chamber weeks later and tried to kill him in secret,” said Maya Foa, director of Reprieve U.S.

“Officials knew it was likely they would subject Alan Miller to the very same long and agonizing procedure as Joe Nathan James and Doyle Lee Hamm [whose execution was abandoned in 2018 after prison officials spent 2 ½ hours trying to access his veins], and yet they plowed ahead anyway — adding to the state’s horrific history of botched executions.

“It is hard to see how they can persist with this broken method of execution that keeps going catastrophically wrong, again and again. In its desperation to execute, Alabama is experimenting on prisoners behind closed doors — surely the definition of cruel and unusual punishment,” Foa continued. (tinyurl.com/42yzzvs3)

Gloria Rubac, a resident of Houston, Texas, is a long-time activist and leader in the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.

‘They want to lead us into war’

Interview with historic African leader from Mali

By Raphaël Schmeller [guest]

This interview with Aminata Dramane Traoré was first published Nov. 30 in the German newspaper junge Welt (jW). Traoré is an author, human rights activist and former Minister of Culture in Mali. She discusses the chaos caused by Western states in the Sahel and the interests of the international oligarchy. She will be a guest speaker at an “International Rosa Luxemburg Conference” in Berlin in mid-January 2023. Translated by John Catalinotto.

junge Welt: The media are focusing on the war in Ukraine on a daily basis. The African continent’s point of view hardly plays a role. How do you view this conflict?

Aminata Dramane Traoré: The war is exacerbating our problems considerably. You could say it is one evil too many for Africa. The bitter thing is that solutions could have been found at the beginning to prevent an escalation. But I don’t think anyone was interested in that. And even now I have the impression that no one intends to get to the bottom of the deeper causes of the war.

jW: What do you think are the war’s deeper causes?

ADT: What’s involved are the economic and geostrategic interests of the various actors. It is these issues that, in my view, underlie the upheavals that are underway in Ukraine. So from an African perspective, the war is also related to the economic policies that are being imposed on our countries.

jW: Can you elaborate?

ADT: In the 1960s, we wanted to break out of [foreign] domination and a model based on exporting only a few raw materials, without ever using them locally — so as to create jobs and transform our agriculture and our own production of food needs. To this day our economy consists of producing for international demand and the needs of others. Mass unemployment, mass poverty, emigration and what is called jihadism are directly related to these economic issues.

jW: In the West, Russia in particular is blamed for problems like hunger crises. Do you share this view?

ADT: No. After all, it is not Moscow but the West with its policies and military interventions in recent years that have failed and made everything worse — for example, in Iraq or Afghanistan. And when the British-French partnership and NATO decided to attack Moammar

Gadhafi and destroy Libya, Russia played no role there either. The West should stop misleading the public.

jW: Can you explain what consequences the Western sanctions against Russia have for your continent?

ADT: Russia and Ukraine have a significant role in the supply of wheat, which, along with other things, is now lacking because of the sanctions. This leads to hunger, and this brings us back to my previous answer: If we could structure our economies to produce to meet our own needs, we would not be in this situation today. So Ukraine is another problem for us but not the fundamental one.

jW: Russia and Mali signed an agreement last week to fight terrorism. What is this about?

ADT: This is not a question at the moment of systematically challenging the West. It’s about wanting to have the right to diversify our military partnership. Because when it comes to fighting terrorism, the West is ineffective.

The French military operation “Barkhane” failed to contain and effectively combat jihadism over a period of a good 10 years. On the contrary, the number of jihadists was around 400 in Mali in 2013, and they now number thousands in several countries in the Sahel.

This situation occurred because the jihadists can recruit locally. Hundreds of thousands of young men and women enter the labor market in these countries every year, yet there are no jobs. The prevailing economic model has no answer to poverty.

jW: Now the French troops have been withdrawn from Mali. You had already called for this 10 years ago. Why?

ADT: The real reason for the military intervention was never to combat terrorism. It is, conversely, a consequence of the expansionist policies of the capitalist system. [The governments in] countries like Mali do not make the decisions when it comes to their economic policy; the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have long since taken over.

So the core of the debate is that nothing has been done to meet the basic needs of Africans, while [at the same time] respecting their human rights and an intact environment, including the climate. Again, France and its allies, including Germany, are not even capable of successfully fighting jihadism. These countries are here because they want to take us to war, so they can defend their [economic and strategic] interests.

jW: Will this situation change, now

that France is turning its back on Mali?

ADT: In reality, France does not want to leave the country, it is just pretending to leave. And this is not only true for France. The German foreign minister, for example, says that it is out of the question for Russia to be left in charge of the country now.



Aminata Traoré, a political and cultural leader of Mali’s independence movement.

I find this Russia argument — which is being served up all the time right now for everything in all kinds of variations — incredible. The West was there before Russia — it was the West that failed to solve the problem. And yet now it’s supposed to be all about Russia?

The vast majority of Malians have long wanted negotiations with the Malian jihadists. But France and Germany say that dialogue between Malians, that is, between the jihadists, the authorities and civil society, is out of the question. They have repeatedly prevented such negotiations in recent years.

jW: Why have they refused to let these negotiations take place?

ADT: Because the West does not want to go. Because if the Africans can solve the problem themselves, they will be forced to leave. The military operations, the CFA franc [currency of the former French colonies] tied to the euro, the trade agreements between the West and Africa — are all only there to defend the interests of

the international oligarchy.

jW: In addition to the existing problems in Africa, there is now increasingly another one: the climate crisis.

ADT: Yes, this is a big problem. Africa, which produces just 4% of global greenhouse gases, is the region of the world that already feels the consequences of the climate crisis the most. When we see how little progress has been made since the 2015 Paris climate conference, how small payments of reparations are being bickered over and how billions are now being spent on war, we in the Global South really feel mocked.

The funds are there that could be used to ensure that neither Africa nor other parts of the world have to suffer so much from the consequences of the climate crisis. But little is being done in the fight against it, because that is not in the interest of capitalism either.

jW: Is the climate issue increasing resistance to Western domination?

ADT: I believe so. There is a new generation of Africans today who understand these connections. In this context, [French President Emmanuel] Macron talks about anti-French sentiment, which he says is on the rise, but that is not the point. People have simply become aware of cultural and racial contempt and want to emancipate themselves. It is this resistance that is at the heart of the conflict in Mali — not Russia or jihadism.

jW: What is your view of the future?

ADT: Times are tough, and everyone knows what’s at stake. So it’s up to us to change the circumstances. But we should not forget that all African leaders who have tried to represent the interests of their peoples in the past have been killed, their governments destabilized or marginalized in one way or another.

So there will be no democracy in Africa as long as democracy is in crisis in the ostensibly developed countries, which today face the same difficulties as the so-called Third World. In fact, great democratic regressions can currently be observed in the West. One could say that these countries are now themselves on the road toward the “Third World.” Maybe then we can talk to each other as equals.

Translator’s note: In January 2006 Ms. Traoré hosted the Bamako section of the World Social Forum and facilitated the special meetings of anti-imperialists organized by the late Samir Amin, which I had the honor of attending.

International Day of Solidarity with Palestine

Philadelphia City officials and other political leaders and community activists celebrated a city proclamation recognizing Nov. 29 as International Day of Solidarity with Palestine. The event featured speakers as well as placards and huge Palestinian flags.

When a small number of pro-Israel reactionaries turned out to harass the demonstrators, Palestinian activists and their supporters used the huge flags to create a barrier, blocking out the counterprotest.

That evening the documentary, “Naila and the Uprising” was shown at the Making Worlds bookstore, hosted by Black Alliance for Peace, Philly DSA, the Philadelphia Palestine Coalition and Workers World Party. The film chronicles the remarkable journey of Naila Ayesh and other women in Gaza throughout the First Intifada in Palestine in 1987. A lively discussion following the film focused on the continued importance of the global Palestine solidarity movement.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette



Be out, loud, proud – and organize!

The anti-LGBTQ+ assaults have been aggressive and unrelenting — from hundreds of punitive legislative bills to a deadly attack on people — gay, trans, heterosexual — at Club Q. The mean mocking voices have been loud on radio, television, social media.

But breaking news! Despite these coordinated attacks, LGBTQ+ folks are way out ahead in public opinion. In a pre-midterm election poll taken by the Human Rights Campaign and data analytics firm Catalyst, voters ranked LGBTQ+ issues so low on issues to be worried about that transgender health care and participation in sports came in last with just 5%, versus inflation at 59%.

In general, people — even if they don't identify as LGBTQ+ themselves — don't see gender fluidity or queer sexuality as a threat. A very small minority is vicious and murderous.

This survey amounts to a broad public opinion poll — a reality check for how much LGBTQ2S+ people have created a future of sex, gender and sexuality that reflects the wide, beautiful spectrum of human life.

So let's get a grip on reality and on the courage and the epic history of organizing. Remember the great victories that have been won with coordination and smarts and determination, by a broad, determined movement that Workers World Party has been a part of from the beginning.

We were organizing in 1975, when the right wing was just starting to bus Christian fundamentalists into the North Carolina legislature to oppose the Equal Rights

Amendment. We debated the anti-equality Eagle Forum in the public libraries, as they fearmongered with transphobia and the scare tactics of men and women “using the same bathrooms.”

We fought Florida's Anita Bryant 1977 smear campaign to “Save Our Children.” We turned back California's hateful Briggs Amendment in 1978 that threatened to ban all LGBTQ+

people from teaching in public schools. We rallied with the largest civil disobedience demonstration and arrests ever at the U.S. Supreme Court in 1987, after the Justices upheld the infamous Bowers v. Hardwick case to keep “crime against nature” laws on the books, leaving us marked felons in many states.

We came out to friends, family, co-workers and bosses and held state and national marches year after year. And in 2003, eleven LGBTQ+ historians filed a brief with SCOTUS that eviscerated the bigoted religious attitudes and lying history used to uphold Bowers, resulting in the Lawrence v. Texas decision that decriminalized our sexuality.

In 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges affirmed the right to same-sex marriage, with Gallup polls finding that public support for marriage equality reached 50% in 2011, 60% in 2015 and 70% in 2021.

These details merely scratch the surface of the daily, determined, risky, exhilarating, imaginative organizing that has transformed social and familial culture in the U.S.

Working and oppressed people have been creating families of love and survival throughout the history

of this country — from Indigenous nations to Black enslaved people, from white mill workers to LGBTQ+ sex workers.

Now right-wing rhetoric for “traditional” sex and gender is heating up again, as companies try to seize every hour that workers have for their families and for themselves. Workers are fighting and striking to hold onto time for their human loving relationships — from coal miners in Alabama to online health associates and railway workers, from warehouse workers at distribution conglomerates like Amazon to baristas at coffee shops like Starbucks.

The LGBTQ2S+ movement has given the world a vision of living that elevates human love, affection and chosen family far above corporate profit.

Let us fight for this vision of a world where the entire spectrum of sex and gender is available to all, and where multiple forms of family life and love can be created to help sustain us against corporate predations.

Let us be inspired by Cuba's Code of Families — passed in September after years of neighborhood discussion, debate and additions — by a two-thirds majority. Now there is official Cuban state recognition of families of choice from heterosexual couples to grandparents with grandchildren to LGBTQ+ friends in loving combinations. (workers.org/2022/09/66878/)

Instead of being pushed back by the voices and violence of bigots, let us organize, rally, march — be out, loud and proud! Let us press forward, further, into an even more radical collective future. □

WORKERS WORLD editorial

Forces behind the escalation of anti-Semitism

By Monica Moorehead and Shelley Ettinger

Ever since extreme right-wing multibillionaire Elon Musk bought Twitter on Oct. 27, there has been an alarming increase of anti-Semitic attacks online and threats of physical violence at synagogues and other places. While laying off a huge sector of workers who helped monitor hate speech, Musk reinstated the Twitter accounts of Donald Trump and other known anti-Semites and virulent racists, known for spewing hatred at Jewish people and people of color.

The fascist united march of armed neo-Nazis, KKK and other extreme right-wingers that took place in August 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol in 2021 reflect the growing threat of fascism and anti-Semitism inside the U.S., as the permanent instability of the capitalist economy continues to create havoc, panic and fear worldwide. Under such conditions, oppressed peoples become the easy targets for scapegoating for all the ills in a society riddled with inequality.

While anti-Semitism must be confronted whenever and wherever it raises its ugly head, there should be no confusion concerning its origins nor which class it truly benefits — the ruling class. Anti-Semitism, just like racism, LGBTQ+ oppression and misogyny is a worldwide issue, not just a U.S. issue. It emanates from the capitalist system, not from individual athletes or entertainers, and especially not from other oppressed groupings and nationalities.

Recently, Kyrie Irving, the super-talented African American guard with the National Basketball Association's Brooklyn Nets, was suspended from multiple games and fined for promoting on his Twitter account a documentary that questioned the legitimacy of the Holocaust. He has since apologized and removed that feed.

Ye, formerly known as the rapper Kanye West, recently professed his admiration for Adolph Hitler on Twitter. As harmful as such a comment is, it would be wrong to treat it as a root cause of the problem.

The following commentary, written by Shelley Ettinger — a longtime anti-Zionist, pro-Palestine Jewish communist — first appeared online on Dec. 29, 2018, in defense of Los Angeles Lakers forward, LeBron James. Just recently, James criticized the predominantly white sports media for not questioning more intensely the 80-year-old billionaire white owner of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys, Jerry Jones, for a photo he appeared in as a teenager in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. It appears that Jones was a member of a group



PHOTO: JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE

of racist students threatening to physically block Black students attempting to desegregate a high school.

James was making the point that Jones was treated with kid gloves by the same media that lambasted Irving for not swiftly offering a genuine apology. Jones has never apologized for appearing in the photo.

For the record, Jones has never hired any Black head coaches, and he had threatened his players with dropping them from the team if they showed solidarity with football quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who, in order to protest police brutality, took a knee while the national anthem was played in 2016.

A beloved athlete posts a brief song lyric on social media. Commentators denounce the lyric as offensive and him as a bigot. He says he didn't know it was offensive and apologizes. What does it all signify?

It signifies that it is in the interests of the capitalist ruling class to foment division and to blame the oppressed as somehow the real perpetrators of bias and bigotry.

The athlete is Los Angeles Lakers basketball megastar LeBron James. The lyric, which he posted to Instagram Dec. 22, included the phrase “Jewish money” from a rap song by the performer 21 Savage he'd been listening to.

Reaction was swift. Sports Business Daily reporter Darren Rovell took to Twitter to express his outrage and call on Jewish people, including National Basketball Association Commissioner Adam Silver, to join him.

Sports Business Daily is owned by Advance Publications Inc., a media conglomerate with vast holdings. These include Conde Nast, which publishes Vogue and Vanity Fair among other magazines; Fairchild Publications, which owns Women's Wear Daily and other publications; and American City Business Journals, the

biggest publisher of metropolitan business news-weeklies in the United States.

SBD is, in other words, a major capitalist media outlet. It posted \$2.2 billion in revenues in 2017. Rovell, formerly of the worldwide sports conglomerate ESPN, the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network, is one of its best-known commentators and a right-winger.

In fact, the headline of Newsweek magazine's Dec. 23 article on this “controversy” characterized James' Twitter post as “angering conservative critics.”

So a reactionary writer for a website devoted to the profitability of professional sports tries to stir up hostility toward one of the country's most prominent and progressive Black athletes for an unintended and immediately retracted reference. Although the attempt ultimately fizzled and did not draw in Commissioner Silver, it did gather some support, mostly on Twitter, where dozens of tweets called James anti-Semitic.

The day after his tweet, LeBron James said on ESPN: “Apologies, for sure, if I offended anyone. ... I actually thought it was a compliment, and obviously it wasn't, through the lens of a lot of people. My apologies. It definitely was not the intent, obviously, to hurt anybody.” (Dec. 22)

It seems clear, it rings true, that James honestly didn't know the historical meaning and use of phrases like “Jewish money” as fodder for anti-Semitism. He apologized anyway. What more could he do?

Also on a Dec. 22 episode of his HBO series, “The Shop,” James criticized the majority of white National Football League billionaire owners for having a “slave mentality,” by disregarding the rights of their players, 70% of whom are Black. (espn.com, Dec. 22) James made no apology for this accurate statement.

Real source of anti-Semitism

This is far from the first time that a prominent person of color, especially a Black person who is an outspoken activist against racism, as is LeBron James, has been lambasted as an anti-Semite. It's not the first effort to direct anger and fear, especially Jewish anger and fear, against such a person.

The issue, in reality, is never what the person did or didn't say, or how perfectly phrased the person's apology was. The issue is that it is in the ruling class's interest to deflect attention from the real source of anti-Semitism: itself.

Anti-Semitism is a very old, very effective strategy to

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Nicaragua's humane response to COVID-19 crisis

By Richard Merino

When Nicaragua identified its first COVID-19 case on March 18, 2020, President Daniel Ortega understood that shutting down the economy would be catastrophic for the country's informal farm-workers. In Nicaragua, three-quarters of all jobs are in farming. If workers don't work, they don't get paid.

Nicaragua's Sandinista government has been working for the last decade to strengthen local food production and self-sufficiency in the face of Western sanctions. Small, informal farmers play a decisive role in the Nicaraguan agricultural sector, producing 80% of basic grains and 65% of livestock products. Smallholder farmers generate most of the sector's exports, including coffee, meat, peanuts, sugar, sesame, beans and dairy products. Since the Sandinistas' food sovereignty campaign began in 2007, Nicaragua can produce around 80% of all the food it consumes.

President Ortega was under pressure from all sides to introduce strict COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns. Nicaragua's neighbors, El Salvador and Honduras, imposed lockdowns two days after registering their first cases. Costa Rica enacted lockdown March 16, 2020, and closed its borders three days later. These three governments demanded Nicaragua join in closing the regional economy.

Right-wing domestic opposition groups and media were also calling for a complete shutdown of the economy. But Nicaragua had barely recovered from a violent U.S.-backed coup attempt in 2018, and a lockdown would have further strained the government's attempt to rebound economically.

Because the Sandinista government chose to thread a narrow needle and protect the livelihoods of small and informal farm workers, Western liberal corporate media seized the opportunity to attack and began to spread misinformation.

On April 4, 2020, BBC News claimed that the Ortega government had taken "no measures at all" against the virus. The Guardian wrote that the "authoritarian" Ortega was one of four world leaders in denial about the virus. The Washington Post invented a narrative about Ortega "vanishing," and the Lancet published a letter calling Nicaragua's COVID-19 response "perhaps the most erratic of any country in the world to date." The New York Times falsely reported that Nicaragua had become a country of "midnight burials." (uherd.com)

A health care system that places people before profits

The corporate media's lies could not have been further from the truth. In January 2007, on President Ortega's first day back in office since former U.S.



Public health care worker from Nicaragua's medical brigade administers vaccines going door to door.

President Ronald Reagan used sanctions and illegally funded death squads in the 1980s to overthrow the Sandinista government, he signed an executive order restoring the people's constitutional rights to free and universal health care and education.

These rights had been systematically denied during the previous 17 years of neoliberal rule. President Ortega's government prioritized health care spending, raising it to 19% of the national budget by 2020, one of the highest levels in the world.

By prioritizing its national health care system, Nicaragua became one of the first nations in the region to devise a robust COVID-19 response strategy, issuing a joint protocol with the Pan-American Health Organization (the Americas branch of the World Health Organization) on Feb. 9, 2020. Thus, its 36,000 health care workers received training on dealing with the virus before the first case appeared.

A "track and trace" system was implemented, and health screenings were conducted at border crossing points, months before similar measures were enacted in the U.S. While tourism was paused and hotels and restaurants closed, most businesses remained open with safety precautions in place. Mask wearing, never required by law, became almost universal. Private schools closed, but public ones stayed open with voluntary attendance, because many children rely on the free school meals served to every pupil.

By depending on the Nicaraguan people's trust in the universal health care system created by the Sandinista government and refusing to lock down, President Ortega saved his country from economic disaster. Nicaragua's economy recovered swiftly from the pandemic, with its GDP growing by more than 10% in 2021 and is forecast to be 4% this year — the highest growth in Central America and one of the highest in all of Latin America and internationally.

Nicaragua has the most extensive and well-equipped universal public health system in Central America — and it's free for everyone. During the height of the pandemic, health "brigades" made 5 million house-to-house visits to provide education and to counteract misinformation, while also identifying and treating potential cases. Every Nicaraguan household received about four visits.

As for vaccines, Nicaragua was at a disadvantage, compared to its neighbors El Salvador and Honduras, as Nicaragua received no early vaccine donations from the U.S. However, once supplies arrived via the WHO's COVAX initiative, the government quickly met and surpassed vaccination rates in the region.

Societal trust in the universal health care system allowed community-based health teams to fully vaccinate 86% of the population, the highest rate in Central America (while 91% have had at least one dose). This was all achieved without coercive vaccine mandates. Since the pandemic's start, the government has built 24 new hospitals, 181 maternity homes and well over 3,000 health centers.

Nicaragua's COVID-19 response was objectively better than its neighbors and even many Western nations. According to Johns Hopkins University, Nicaragua had one of the lowest death rates per 100,000 population in the world — 189, compared with 276 for Britain and 374 for the U.S.

The international corporate media didn't question whether lockdowns were in Nicaragua's best interests or whether they were even feasible. Their only concern was how to make the victories of the Sandinista Popular Revolution invisible.

Successes of the Sandinista Revolution

Nicaragua has achieved one of the lowest rates of excess COVID-19 deaths in Latin America, the highest rates of COVID-19 vaccinations in Central America and one of the highest GDP growth rates in the region and world.

One might think that would be of great

interest to neighboring countries and the international health community more broadly. But instead, the revolutionary Sandinista government is maligned and demonized by the U.S. government and the empire's stenographers in the corporate media. An institutionalized propaganda campaign attempts to denigrate, belittle, undermine and ignore the unquestionable successes of the Sandinista government.

The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua threatens the U.S. empire, because the country is showing the world what can be achieved when the people's welfare — and not monopoly profits — is the driver of economic and political activity. Nicaragua has universal and free education from preschool through trade, university and professional school.

More than 1 million packages of scholastic supplies are delivered to students all over the country every year. In addition, food is distributed to schools to guarantee a daily meal to more than 1.2 million students, in a country with a population of 6.5 million.

Nicaragua ranked seventh worldwide for gender equality in 2022, with women in half of all government positions. It is among the safest countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and has the best road network in Central America. The government builds and provides thousands of good quality, low-cost homes annually. About 2 million families have been given title to their properties by the government.

The country generates 70% of its electricity from renewable sources, with electricity distribution covering more than 99% of the population. The government maintains subsidies for the price of petrol and its derivatives, for public transport on both land and water transport, and electricity for low-income families.

Nicaragua has the most advanced and democratic system of autonomy for Indigenous peoples in Latin America, with over 30% of the national territory titled in the name of 23 Indigenous and Afro-descendant territories. The country sponsors and helps develop thousands of cooperative businesses and agricultural enterprises and has an ambitious national plan to fight poverty that exceeds the 2030 United Nations sustainable development goals.

Nicaragua has overcome centuries of colonial oppression and neocolonial exploitation in order to achieve these victories. So, to the same extent that the radical democracy of the Cuban Revolution and the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela are steadily defeating the economic, psychological and political and economic blockades of the West and its local proxies, so too will the popular Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua. □

Forces behind the escalation of anti-Semitism

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direct the working class's rage away from the true source of its problems: the ruling class, which is overwhelmingly made up of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. It instead portrays Jewish people, a tiny group — only 0.2% of the world's population — as somehow owning and controlling the world's wealth by being devious, evil schemers bent on driving workers and the poor into poverty and misery.

While its roots are deep and wide and

go back millennia, anti-Semitism flourished during the rise of capitalism in Europe. From 19th-century czarism in Russia through the Nazi genocide, it was skillfully crafted as a tactic to break up revolutionary movements.

To this day, with resurgent fascist organizing again casting caricatured Jewish bankers as the culprit behind workers' worsening standard of living in Germany, France and other countries, the capitalists wield anti-Semitism as a favored tool.

In this context, the absurdity of portraying oppressed communities as

purveyors of anti-Semitism should be clear. Who has the motive and the power to foment attacks against Jewish people? Who poses an actual threat to Jewish people?

Of course it is not, and can never be, the oppressed. Of course it is only, and will always be, the bosses.

The threat is real, as evidenced by the Oct. 27 massacre at a synagogue in Pittsburgh. Emboldened under Trump, previously suppressed elements, the worst violent, anti-Semitic scum, are surfacing and acting in a way that has not

been seen in this country for decades. At the same time, racist attacks, already epidemic, are on the rise, whether against Latinx migrants, Black youth or other oppressed people.

The only effective response is unity, first and foremost against racism and against all forms of bias and division, from anti-Semitism to sexism to LGBTQ2S oppression. It's this unity, rejecting the bosses' attempts to divert anger away from themselves, that will move the struggle of the workers and oppressed forward against capitalism itself. □

Un tribunal anula la prohibición del aborto en Georgia

Por Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

El 16 de noviembre, el juez del Tribunal Superior del Condado de Fulton, Robert McBurney, ordenó la restauración de las regulaciones sobre el aborto que existían antes de la implementación de la controvertida legislación de 2019, que prohibía casi todos los abortos. Esta legislación, que entró en vigor en julio tras la anulación de Roe v. Wade por parte del Tribunal Supremo, prohibía los abortos a partir de las seis semanas de embarazo, si se podía detectar la actividad del desarrollo cardíaco del feto. Muchas personas ni siquiera saben que están embarazadas a las seis semanas, por lo que la legislación les niega esencialmente cualquier opción.

Por ahora, se restablece la ley vigente antes de 2019, con un plazo de 22 semanas. El juez dictaminó que cuando la legislación de 2019 fue aprobada por la Asamblea de Georgia, las garantías de aborto de Roe eran la ley de la tierra; las restricciones de Georgia eran inconstitucionales entonces y no podían ganar estatus legal tres años después con una nueva sentencia tras un cambio en el Tribunal Supremo.

McBurney declaró que la Asamblea General tenía la opción de volver a aprobar las restricciones en esta próxima sesión, si así lo decidía.

Casi inmediatamente después de conocerse el fallo del juez, los teléfonos de las clínicas de Atlanta empezaron a sonar incesantemente con solicitudes de citas. Algunas personas que llamaban habían

planeado ir a otros estados, pero se sentían aliviadas de no tener que gastar tiempo y dinero para obtener la atención sanitaria que deseaban.

Ninguna clínica de la zona de Atlanta había cerrado desde julio, pero el regreso de los servicios completos exigía la reposición del personal y la preparación de la seguridad. Sin embargo, desde el 16 de noviembre se han realizado decenas de procedimientos.

Aunque el fiscal general del estado presentó inmediatamente un recurso ante el Tribunal Supremo del Estado de Georgia para que revocara la decisión del juez McBurney, no se ha indicado qué hará ese tribunal. En Georgia, como en todo el país, la gran mayoría de la población apoya el derecho al aborto.



PHOTO: KELLY JORDAN
Manifestación a favor del aborto frente al edificio del capitolio estatal, Atlanta, 2 de octubre de 2021.

Miles de personas se manifestaron y marcharon en Atlanta y en todo el estado tras la sentencia del Tribunal Supremo. Los derechos reproductivos y la justicia han ocupado un lugar destacado en las últimas elecciones, sobre todo en la contienda por el Senado de Estados Unidos entre Raphael Warnock y Herschel Walker, cuya segunda vuelta se celebrará el 6 de diciembre.

La mayoría de los funcionarios electos y políticos contrarios al aborto se mantienen en silencio sobre si la legislación tendrá otro intento en 2023, ya que sólo se aprobó con un margen de un voto en la Cámara de Georgia hace tres años. Lo que está claro es que seguirá habiendo un movimiento creciente para garantizar los derechos reproductivos y la justicia. □

MUNDO OBRERO editorial

Musk the Knife arrasa en Twitter

El estándar de pop y jazz “Mack the Knife”, tomado de “La ópera de tres centavos” de Bertolt Brecht y Kurt Weill, describe la codicia y la violencia de un jefe de la mafia londinense.

Pero las ganancias mal habidas de Mack the Knife eran calderilla comparadas con las del hombre más rico del mundo. Elon Musk, cuyo padre se hizo rico como propietario de una mina de esmeraldas en Sudáfrica durante el apartheid, tiene actualmente un valor estimado de \$208.000 millones de dólares. En cuanto adquirió Twitter por \$44.000 millones de dólares, Musk the Knife despidió a la mitad de la plantilla mundial de 7.500 trabajadores.

Muchos trabajadores sólo se dieron cuenta de que sus puestos de trabajo estaban entre los recortados, cuando sus cuentas de correo electrónico de la empresa se desactivaron abruptamente sin previo aviso.

Un correo electrónico en el que se informaba a los trabajadores despedidos de su destino, firmado impersonalmente por “Twitter”, insistía cínicamente en que “esta acción es desgraciadamente necesaria para asegurar el éxito de la compañía en el futuro.”

Los despidos de Musk de los trabajado-

res estadounidenses pueden estar violando la Ley federal de Notificación de Ajuste y Reentrenamiento de los Trabajadores, que requiere 60 días de aviso de los despidos masivos y varios trabajadores despedidos en California han presentado una demanda colectiva sobre esa base. (nbcnews.com, 4 de noviembre)

Junto con los despidos masivos se produjo una flexibilización de las normas de contenido, es decir, se volvió a permitir el discurso de odio. Los tuits abiertamente racistas aumentaron, y se extendió el rumor de que al ex presidente Donald Trump se le levantaría la suspensión en su cuenta de Twitter —demostrando que son ciertas las advertencias de los grupos de derechos civiles de que los mensajes tóxicos aumentarían una vez que Musk aplicara su noción de “libertad de expresión”.

Los recortes inmediatos de Musk incluyeron a los equipos de derechos humanos y de experiencia en discapacidad de Twitter. La toma de posesión de la plataforma de medios sociales plantea preguntas: ¿Utilizará Musk, mientras permite que florezca el discurso del odio, su control de Twitter para impedir su uso generalizado por parte de los organizadores sindicales en Starbucks y Amazon?

Sandra Sucher, profesora de gestión en la Universidad de Harvard, calificó la brusquedad de los despidos de “particularmente inhumana”. Pero la brutalidad de Musk es habitual en el capitalismo.

Cuba ofrece palabras de sabiduría socialista

En los últimos años, plataformas como Facebook y Twitter han censurado cuentas que supuestamente tienen vínculos oficiales con el gobierno cubano. En “Granma”, la voz oficial del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba, Michel E. Torres Corona explicó el carácter de clase de estas empresas de redes sociales: “Fue el sueño ingenuo de algunas de las mentes brillantes detrás de la creación de Internet: La extensión digital de nuestra patética existencia física borraría todas las contradicciones, todas las desigualdades; colocaría a los seres humanos en un plano de completa horizontalidad.

“Pero lo humano no puede huir de lo humano, ni siquiera cuando se organiza en forma de algoritmos y códigos binarios. El poder, ese viejo problema de nuestra especie, que se remonta a los tiempos en que nos convertimos en “animales políticos”, acabó infiltrándose en el Edén virtual, como

la serpiente en el Paraíso. Su mordedura sigue envenenando el corazón de la sociedad moderna: Los resortes analógicos del ejercicio del poder (propiedad, autoridad, dinero, clase) se mantuvieron e incluso se reforzaron con las nuevas tecnologías.

“Una red digital como Facebook o Twitter, que alguien podría considerar como un refugio contra el despotismo o el comportamiento antidemocrático, no es más que un producto de una empresa transnacional, cuyo principal interés, por naturaleza, es obtener beneficios económicos.” (28 de octubre)

Estos despidos masivos pueden ser sólo la punta del iceberg, ya que las recientes cifras de creación de empleo apuntan a una importante desaceleración económica. Pueden ser un presagio de lo que está por venir, ya que el capitalismo tardío comienza a acercarse a la mayor crisis de sobreproducción de la historia.

Musk personifica lo peor que puede ofrecer el capitalismo. Es el producto de un sistema impulsado para maximizar los beneficios a expensas de las necesidades humanas básicas.

¿La solución? Seguir el ejemplo de Cuba. Combatir el capitalismo, ganar el socialismo. □

MUNDO OBRERO editorial

¿A un pelo de la escalada?

Durante la jornada del 15 de noviembre, el mundo estuvo a punto de sufrir una rápida escalada de la guerra por delegación de Estados Unidos y la OTAN contra Rusia en Ucrania. Sin embargo, pronto los representantes del gobierno de Estados Unidos hicieron declaraciones que lo alejaron del borde. Por ahora. Los acontecimientos recordaron algunos de los momentos más tensos de la Guerra Fría del siglo XX.

En la tarde de ese día, hora de Varsovia, un misil cayó en territorio polaco cerca de la frontera con Ucrania. El presidente ucraniano, Volodymyr Zelensky, acusó inmediatamente a Rusia de haber lanzado el misil que cayó en Polonia. Su ministro de Asuntos Exteriores exigió una cumbre de la OTAN con la participación de Ucrania y pidió a los países de la OTAN

aviones de guerra modernos y sistemas de defensa aérea.

Moscú negó haber lanzado el misil, pero durante gran parte del día los medios de comunicación corporativos de Europa ignoraron este desmentido y repitieron la falsa noticia de que Rusia había atacado con misiles el territorio polaco.

Dado que los miembros de la OTAN, según el tratado, tienen la responsabilidad de defender a cualquier otro miembro de la OTAN que sea atacado, las consecuencias de aceptar las acusaciones de Zelensky como ciertas serían graves. Los miembros de la OTAN estarían obligados a ayudar a Polonia contra Rusia.

El presidente de Polonia, Andrzej Duda, declaró entonces que creía que el impacto del misil había sido un accidente.

El presidente de Estados Unidos, Joe Biden, lo confirmó desde Bali (Indonesia), donde, paralelamente a la conferencia del G20, acababa de mantener una reunión con el presidente chino, Xi Jinping.

El gobierno de Biden, incluidos algunos de los principales generales, no tardó en dejar claro que no tenían pruebas de que fuera un misil ruso. Por el contrario, tenían pruebas de que el misil era un misil antiaéreo lanzado por las fuerzas armadas de Kiev que aparentemente se extravió. En una conferencia de prensa celebrada posteriormente en Arlington (Virginia), el jefe del Estado Mayor Conjunto, el general Mark Milley, y el secretario de Defensa, Lloyd Austin, confirmaron esa valoración.

En esa misma conferencia de prensa, el general Milley advirtió a Kiev que era

poco probable que pudieran expulsar a Rusia de Ucrania por completo. Austin, que a principios de este año pidió que se agotara a Rusia con la guerra de Ucrania, dijo expresamente que no comentaría lo que era posible. Su aparente desacuerdo es una advertencia para los pueblos del mundo de que no pueden contar con el gobierno de Estados Unidos para evitar una escalada de este tipo en el futuro.

Tanto más importante es prestar atención a esa advertencia y movilizar las fuerzas populares y de la clase obrera contra la continua participación de las fuerzas de Estados Unidos y la OTAN en la guerra. Estos belicistas imperialistas están utilizando a los ucranianos como carne de cañón en una guerra por delegación contra Rusia. Y están atacando el nivel de vida de los trabajadores en casa mientras imponen sanciones a Rusia. □