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Anniversary of first union win

Protests target Starbucks

By Martha Grevatt

December 9 marked the one-year anniversary of the historic victory at a Starbucks store in **Buffalo, New York**, when the workers voted to be represented by Starbucks Workers United (SBWU). During a rally at Niagara Square, 100+ Starbucks workers and supporters marked their year of struggle, braving the winter cold while listening to union speakers.

Solidarity came from the Buffalo Central Labor Council, various teachers unions, the United Auto Workers (UAW) and others. Starbucks workers linked the fight against gender oppression and racism to the fight for labor rights and asked union supporters not to buy Starbucks gift cards this holiday season.

“I know everyone today will be celebrating, as we should be,” SBWU organizer Arjae Red told the crowd. “We are up against the largest coffee corporation in the world; and in just one year, we managed to organize 270 stores representing more than 7,000 workers. We’ve seen the momentum of our movement



In the city where it all started, Starbucks workers say ‘Buffalo is a union town!’ Dec. 9.

explode beyond Buffalo and inspire workers across the country and even outside Starbucks, to other companies like Amazon, REI, Chipotle, Trader Joe’s, Apple and many, many more. This was viewed as impossible just a year ago, but we’ve proven everyone wrong who said we

couldn’t do it. For this we should be proud.

“But if I’m being honest, I am angry today, and I think many other workers here today are too. Because we are one year in, and we don’t have a contract. We are facing mass firings and write-ups. We are being purged from our workplaces, and we have seen no justice. We did achieve the rehiring of the Memphis 7 and a handful of other workers, which would not have been possible without our fight. ... But justice is not just undoing a few wrongful firings; justice is reinstating all fired workers. Justice is an end to new firings. Justice is a contract where we have our basic needs met. Justice is having a say in how our workplace is run. Because we, the workers, built this company, not Howard Schultz.

“We have filed over 900 Unfair Labor Practice charges. Are we going to wait till we file 900 more? It’s up to us! It’s up to our class — not the middle class — the working class. But Starbucks workers are only one small part of our class, and we need the rest of you onboard; and you need us too, if we all want to win. We can win, our class has won before. And companies like Starbucks know this, or they wouldn’t spend untold millions trying to break us.”

About 300 people showed up in City Hall Park for **New York City’s** day of action — a couple of miles from the Starbucks Reserve Roastery, where a strike had been prompted by a bedbug infestation, mold in the ice and management’s failure to meet.

Having won health and safety concessions from the Roastery bosses — as well as a date for contract negotiations, a rarity for Starbucks unions — the Starbucks workers returned to work Dec. 12, after being out for seven weeks.

Starbucks union members active in the struggle were given a voice on a podium surrounded by pro-union signs and cameras. Madalyn Stauffer, a New York City barista, expressed that they “have witnessed firsthand

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Cuban Revolution still inspires us

This slightly modified editorial was originally published Nov. 15, 2021, when U.S.-orchestrated protests were taking place in Cuba.

When on Jan. 8, 1959, a triumphant Fidel Castro entered Havana, he called on Cuban revolutionaries to “settle down to the peaceful aims of the Revolution.” He spoke with a white dove on his shoulder, a symbol associated with Fidel throughout his long life.

But the U.S. empire, with its southernmost point a mere 90 miles from the socialist island nation, has never allowed Cuba to know peace. The U.S.-sponsored invasion of Cuba in 1961 at Playa Girón (the Bay of Pigs) suffered a resounding defeat, but President John F. Kennedy imposed an economic blockade in 1962.

This act of economic warfare remains in place to this day and has actually been tightened by Congress on more

than one occasion. Cubans continue to suffer from the effects of the blockade, through shortages of food, medicine, medical supplies, construction materials and much more. While Cuban medical science is very advanced, including the development of Cuba’s own COVID-19 vaccines, distribution of the vaccines has been hampered by a shortage of syringes.

U.S. economic warfare has been combined with numerous terrorist acts by Miami-based counterrevolutionaries and a long history of assassination attempts on Fidel.

It is in this context that the so-called “protests” taking place Nov. 15 [2021] in Cuba must be seen. They are a funded attack from U.S. imperialism, which has spent the past six decades creating the very shortages the “protesters” claim to be “protesting.” Paid agents have manipulated social media to foment

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PHOTO: TIMES OF GAZA

Players from the Moroccan soccer team raised the Palestinian flag while celebrating their victory over Spain at the World Cup in Doha, Qatar, Dec. 6. More on page 9.

Workers World's message for 2023

Fight for a socialist future!

Workers World is a workers' newspaper, written by, for and about workers. Now at the end of the year, we hail the many struggles for union recognition and rights, higher wages and safer working conditions that took place in 2022, many of which have been covered in our pages.

WW lauds the members of the multinational, multigender, multigenerational working class who have taken on corporate bosses, some of them the richest people in the world, who deprive workers of livable wages and decent working conditions to keep on accumulating wealth.

Our pages have devoted much space to news of the brave Amazon Labor Union, which seeks to organize those whose labor increases the coffers of founder Jeff Bezos. WW applauds the courageous young organizers who have unionized 270 Starbucks stores this year, staying strong against hostile union-busting bosses. Their victories have inspired workers around the country to organize.

WW articles back the railroad workers, who were forbidden to strike by the self-proclaimed "most pro-union president" Joe Biden. Despite their need for paid sick days, the capitalist state denied them the strongest weapon workers have: the right to strike.

Our newspaper's staff members have walked picket lines and attended rallies for these and other workers. Many writers are current or retired union members and organizers. WW's point of view is resolutely on the

workers' side against corporate bosses.

Our newspaper gets to the crux of the problems workers face: capitalism, the system based on exploiting the majority of people to enrich the wealthiest few. WW encourages workers to take their struggles to the next level — to build a united classwide movement against capitalism, with the most oppressed in the lead. The goal is to oust this abominable system-for-profit, and fight for a socialist society, free of profiteers and geared to providing all human beings with the necessities and joys of life.

WW needs your support!

Workers World relies on our readers' backing. The WW Supporter Program was founded 45 years ago to help build this socialist newspaper, which now produces one print issue a month. Since the early 1990s, this fund has supported the website workers.org, where new articles are posted daily and the PDF of the weekly paper is displayed.

Workers.org contains news and analyses of global and U.S. struggles; it is a resource for political activists. This website contains firsthand accounts by writer-activists in many countries, translated by our staff. Timely articles by worker-organizers keep the newspaper current on U.S. union drives, along with reports on anti-racist and other progressive movements.

While WW's staff is voluntary, the printed issue and the website incur expenses. Although many online publications require payment to read their articles, WW does not. **Our articles are free to all readers.**

Join the WW Supporter Program. Can you donate \$50, \$100, \$200 or more per year? Contributing \$50 or more will entitle you to 12 print issues a year, a PDF of every weekly issue in your email inbox and, upon request, a copy of the book "What road to socialism?"

By donating to this fund, you can help get class truth to more readers. Write monthly or annual checks to Workers World. Mail them with your name, address and email to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011.

We appreciate your support. □



Workers World subscriber Jerome Coffey reads the Nov. 19, 2020, issue inside SCI Pine Grove in Pennsylvania.

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Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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Indigenous leader exposes racist myth of 'Thanksgiving'

By Kimimilasha James

The following edited remarks were made by Kimimilasha James, co-leader of United American Indians of New England, at the 53rd annual National Day of Mourning rally, Nov. 24, 2022. Go to youtu.be/3VZpy2GhNxc for the live stream of the entire rally.

Good afternoon sisters, brothers and siblings!

Once again on so-called "Thanksgiving Day," United American Indians of New England and our supporters are gathered on this hill to observe a National Day of Mourning for the Indigenous people murdered by settler colonialism and imperialism worldwide. Today marks the 53rd time we have gathered here to mourn our ancestors, tear down settler mythologies and speak truth to power. ...

Fifty-two Thanksgivings ago, my grandfather, an Aquinnah Wampanoag man named Wamsutta Frank James, was invited by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to speak at a banquet celebrating the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrims. The organizers of the banquet no doubt imagined that Wamsutta would sing the praises of the American settler-colonial project and thank the Pilgrims for bringing "civilization" to these shores.

However, the speech that Wamsutta wrote, which was based on historical fact rather than the sham version of history perpetuated in the Thanksgiving myth, was a far cry from complimentary.

Wamsutta's speech

In his speech, Wamsutta not only named atrocities committed by the Pilgrims but also reflected upon the fate of the Wampanoag at the hands of the settler invaders. The speech contained a powerful message of Native American pride. "Our spirit refuses to die," wrote Wamsutta. "Yesterday we walked the woodland paths and sandy trails. Today we must walk the macadam highways and roads. We are uniting. ... We stand tall and proud; and before too many moons pass, we'll right the wrongs we have allowed to happen to us."

When state officials saw an advance copy of Wamsutta's speech, they refused to allow him to deliver it, saying that the speech was too "inflammatory." They told him he could speak only if he were willing to offer false praise of the Pilgrims. The organizers even offered to write a speech for him, one which would better fit with their settler-colonialist narrative.

But Wamsutta refused to have words put into his mouth. His suppressed speech was printed in newspapers across the country, and he and other local Native activists began to plan a protest. The flyer for this protest, which was circulated nationwide, read: "What do we have to be thankful for? The United American Indians of New England have declared Thanksgiving Day to be a National Day of Mourning for Native Americans."

First National Day of Mourning

On so-called Thanksgiving Day 1970, Wamsutta and members of at least 25 tribes, as well as a sprinkling of non-Native allies — 200 people — gathered here on this hill and observed the first National Day of Mourning. ... They spoke out about the Pilgrim invasion and conditions in Indian Country, marched around Plymouth, boarded the Mayflower II and even buried Plymouth Rock!

Over the years we repeatedly disrupted the Pilgrim Progress parade, a tradition we continued until 1996. The following year in 1997, we were blocked on Leyden Street, brutalized by police and arrested without warning for simply trying to march peacefully. The resulting court case and settlement led to the National Day of Mourning plaque you see here on Cole's Hill and the Metacombet plaque we will visit when we march.

Consistently, our organization has never collaborated with the Pilgrims or their institutions, whether the Mayflower Society, the Plymouth 400 international colonizer celebrations or the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

So, why do so many Native people object to the Thanksgiving myth? According to this myth, the Pilgrims,



Kimimilasha James speaks at National Day of Mourning, Nov. 24, 2022.

seeking religious freedom, landed on Plymouth Rock. The Indians welcomed them with open arms and then conveniently faded into the background, and everyone lived happily ever after. The end.

Here is the truth

First, the Pilgrims are glorified and mythologized because the circumstances of the first permanent English colony in North America — Jamestown — were too ugly to hold up as an effective national myth. Pilgrims and Indians are a much more marketable story than settler cannibalism.

Second, the Pilgrims came here as part of a commercial venture. They didn't need religious freedom — they already had that back in the Netherlands. The Mayflower Compact was merely a group of white men who wanted to ensure they would get a return on their investment.

Third, when the Pilgrims arrived — on Outer Cape Cod by the way, not on that pebble down the hill — one of the first things they did was to rob Wampanoag graves at Corn Hill and steal as much of their winter provisions of corn and beans as they were able to carry.

Fourth, some Wampanoag ancestors did welcome the Pilgrims and save them from starvation. And what did we, the Indigenous people of this continent, get in return for this kindness? Genocide, the theft of our lands, the destruction of our traditional ways of life, slavery, starvation and never-ending oppression.

Fifth, the first official Thanksgiving did not take place in 1621, when the Pilgrims had a harvest-time meal provided largely by the Wampanoag. Instead, the first Thanksgiving was declared in 1637 by Governor Winthrop of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to celebrate the massacre of over 700 Pequot men, women and children on the banks of the Mystic River in Connecticut. ...

Subsequent slaughters of Indigenous people would be celebrated by a day of Thanksgiving; and yet we are labeled as "savages" in the history books.

When people perpetuate the myth of Thanksgiving, they are not only erasing our genocide but also celebrating it.

We are as strong as ever

We did not simply fade into the background, as the Thanksgiving myth says. We have survived and flourished; we have persevered. The very fact that you are here is proof that we did not vanish. Our very presence frees this land from the lies of the history books and the mythmakers.

Many of the conditions that prevailed in Indian Country in 1970 still prevail today. In 1970, our average life expectancy was just 44 years. Today, we continue to have the lowest life expectancy of any group in the

U.S., and the death rate for Native women has increased 20% over the past 15 years. In 1970, our suicide and infant mortality rates were the highest in the country. This has not changed.

We all know that racism is alive and well. All of us are struggling under the oppression of a capitalist system, which forces people to make a bitter choice between heating and eating.

And we will continue to gather on this hill, until we are free from this oppressive system — until corporations and the U.S. military stop polluting the earth — until we dismantle the brutal apparatus of mass incarceration.

We will not stop until the oppression of our LGBTQ+ siblings is a thing of the past, until unhoused people have homes, until human beings are no longer locked in cages at the U.S. border, despite the fact

that no one is illegal on stolen land. Until Palestine is free, until no person goes hungry or is left to die because they have little or no access to quality health care, until insulin is free, until union busting is a thing of the past — until then, the struggle will continue!

We did not simply fade into the background, as the Thanksgiving myth says. We have survived and flourished; we have persevered. The very fact that you are here is proof that we did not vanish. Our very presence frees this land from the lies of the history books and the mythmakers.

In 1970 we demanded an end to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. That is still a demand today; Native nations do not need federal oversight to govern ourselves or take control of our own lands. ...

Let us not forget that this country was founded on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery and a policy of genocide and land theft. Let us not forget that under the pipelines, skyscrapers, mines and the oil rigs lie the interred bones, sacred objects and villages of our Native ancestors. ...

In 1970, very few people would have given any thought to the fact that the Indigenous people of this hemisphere do not look upon the arrival of the European invaders as a reason to give thanks. Today many thousands stand with us in spirit, as we commemorate the 2022 National Day of Mourning.

As my grandfather said back in 1970: "We are now being heard; we

are now being listened to. The important point is that ... we still have the spirit; we still have the unique culture; we still have the will and, most important of all, the determination to remain as Indians. We are determined, and our presence here ... is living testimony that this is only the beginning of the American Indian, particularly the Wampanoag, to regain the position in this country that is rightfully ours."

In the spirit of Crazy Horse, in the spirit of Metacomb, in the spirit of Geronimo — above all, to all people who fight and struggle for real justice.

We are not vanishing. We are not conquered. We are as strong as ever. □



As the Day of Mourning march continued Nov. 24, 2022, the emblem 'Una tierra, un pueblo, one land, one people' represented the principle of allowing no European-imposed borders to divide Indigenous nations.

On the picket line

By Marie Kelly

New union wants to raise up Southern workers

A new generation of labor activists has formed the Union of Southern Service Workers (USSW). The union will work to organize the most oppressed, underpaid and exploited workers in service industries, like fast food, retail and home care; the majority are Black and Brown workers. USSW intends to build its membership across all service industries, from McDonald's and Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steamburgers (where workers led successful walkouts during the pandemic) to Walmart and Dollar General.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports only 5% of workers in the U.S. South belong to a union. Bosses in the South have had a long history of creating racist divisions among workers to defeat their solidarity. But the 150 co-founders of the USSW are drawing inspiration from the Fight for \$15 campaign and the tremendous surge in labor power across the U.S. since the COVID-19 pandemic. USSW grew out of the work of Raise Up for \$15, the Fight for \$15 organization in the South.

Service workers' collective consciousness was raised with the realization that despite being "essential" frontline workers, they had some of the lowest quality of life in their communities. USSW founding member, Quadrell Adams, has worked in fast-food restaurants for years, but, because of abysmal monetary compensation, he must ration his seizure medications and rely on family for a place to live.

The union wants to elevate demands for higher wages, safety protections and consistent schedules to the status of human rights for a living wage, housing and health care.

Durham, North Carolina, labor organizer Ieisha Franceis was part of the labor actions at Freddy's. She was hesitant at first to challenge the bosses but has grown with the realization that workers have power. According to Franceis, "USSW will give us the representation we need to transform these jobs that most people frown upon into high-paying union jobs. That's going to give us a new sense of dignity." (tinyurl.com/2rtp85u6)

Harm-reduction center workers resist capitalist abuses

Workers at OnPoint NYC, an overdose prevention center, have submitted a demand for voluntary recognition of their union, OnPoint United. The center provides a safe environment and supplies to drug users, along with opportunities to receive other services, including comprehensive medical care.

The workers come from a broad range of backgrounds, including the formerly incarcerated. They have witnessed the catastrophic fallout the U.S. War on Drugs has had on communities, especially on poor and marginalized Black and Brown people.

OnPoint United is demanding better health care and more decision-making power in the workplace. They have seen how the profit-driven privatization of treatment centers like OnPoint NYC has intensified the defects of capitalism. As physician Michael Pappas states: "There's an interesting relationship here, as the services OnPoint NYC provides are useful to the capitalist system in a way, because it's ideal for the ruling class to keep the end result of capitalism — poverty, homelessness, psychological suffering, etc. — out of the public



PHOTO: UNION OF SOUTHERN SERVICE WORKERS

Workers celebrate as they vote the Union of Southern Service Workers into existence, Columbia, South Carolina, Nov. 19.

eye for the ongoing facilitation of private accumulation under the system.

"At the same time, by [workers] treating people using drugs with love, compassion and respect and demanding they are treated like humans, we can fight to show that our participants, along with the public generally, deserve a system better than capitalism." (tinyurl.com/538uapt7)

NewsGuild members stage 24-hour walkout, urge reader boycott

It was in 1965 when newsroom workers, members of the New York Times Guild union, last shut down the New York Times; that strike lasted 24 days. On Dec. 8, 1,100 Times workers, members of the NewsGuild of New York (part of The Newspaper Guild-CWA), made history once again by staging a 24-hour walkout to protest management's failure to meet their contract demands. The workers also called on the general public to boycott both the print and digital versions of the New York Times for that day.

Workers haven't had a pay raise since 2020, despite the paper increasing its paid subscribership and reporting record profits. The recent 30% hike in pay for executives certainly made the rank and file see red ink. The bosses' disregard was right there in black and white. (nyguild.org, Dec. 7) □



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Craig Gordon speaks out at an earlier press conference protesting teacher firings and retaliation.

Oakland teachers, community demand 'Education, not retaliation'

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, California

Nov. 30 — Teachers, parents and students rallied today downtown, outside the nearly empty Oakland Unified School District building, to protest retaliatory measures and firings of both classroom and substitute teachers who actively opposed recent school closures and other district policies.

In August, the district ordered a police attack on teachers and family members who were occupying Parker School, a historically Black public school, and fired two substitute (formerly classroom) teachers, Craig Gordon and June Nelson, for their tireless organizing.

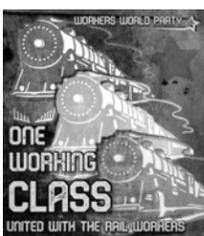
Since then, rank-and-file Oakland Education Association (OEA) members have been mobilizing. Bolstered by the formation of an ad hoc coalition against the retaliation, press conferences and protests have been held in front of La Escuelita Elementary School, the site of Oakland school board meetings.

The rally was co-chaired by Misty Cross, an Oakland parent activist and member of Moms for Housing, and Judy Greenspan, Chair of the OEA Substitute Teacher Caucus, who expressed the outrage of OEA substitutes over the arbitrary teacher firings. Greenspan stated: "On behalf of the OEA substitute teachers, we are solidly behind this movement to stop all school

closures, and we are solidly behind getting some protection for substitute teachers in this district."

Ismael Armendariz, OEA First Vice President, said, "Our union stands really strongly behind ensuring that members have due process and are not retaliated against for union actions."

Tut KingDom X, an Oakland parent and a leader of the first Unfair Labor Practice strikes at Walmart, stated, "They are trying to make it private, but we are not going to let that happen." He added, "The school is a place of refuge for education. It's a place where we cultivate the leaders of the community for the next generation." □



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! □

On one-year anniversary of the first Starbucks workers' union victory

A New Year's resolution for the labor movement

The following Dec. 9 statement was issued by Workers Assembly Against Racism, based in New York City, as solidarity actions were called for that day across the U.S.

One year ago today, workers at a Starbucks store in Buffalo, New York, voted for a union and opened the biggest year of U.S. worker organizing since the 1930s. Today, workers in nearly 300 Starbucks stores have voted to unionize.

The organizing contagion has inspired union drives in other chain stores and restaurants, like Target and Chipotle. At the same time, Amazon workers from New York City to California, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and many other places have started union organizing against one of the biggest transnational corporations in the world.

This worker organizing wave holds the potential of not only reviving the labor movement but also transforming that movement from its present state into a militant, rank and file-led workers' movement that is hostile to the entire capitalist system.

The superrich capitalists, who for decades have grown accustomed to waging what seemed like a one-sided war against the workers, are scared to death by what is happening.



Workers Assembly Against Racism picketed Starbucks' CEO Howard Schultz at his multi-million-dollar penthouse in New York City, July 19. WW PHOTO

With the full backing of Wall Street, the corporate boardrooms of Starbucks and Amazon have unleashed a no-holds-barred, multimillion-dollar union-busting campaign to crush this new rising workers' movement. Pro-union workers have been fired; and efforts to force the bosses to the negotiating table, either on a worksite, regional or national basis, have been stymied by an army of union-busting

lawyers.

Many in the labor movement have pointed out that the National Labor Relations Board is woefully underfunded and therefore unable to respond to all of the union-busting charges. This no doubt is true — but relying on a government agency like the NLRB, that pretends to be neutral but is more often favorable to union busters, is not the real solution.

As we enter a new year of struggle, it must be made clear to all that the only way to ensure that this young workers' uprising is not crushed is for there to be a sea change in organized labor's relationship to the uprising.

Lofty speeches and photo opportunities with leaders of this new workers' movement are not enough. Labor leaders must be made to understand that if they don't commit themselves to real support for this movement, the movement will not survive, and every union and every worker will be hurt by such an outcome.

What does real support look like? The next time Starbucks workers anywhere go on strike, not just hundreds but thousands of workers must be mobilized to join the picket line and not just for a few hours but every day. Labor leaders must stop relying on the Democratic Party and a president who just denied railroad workers the right to strike for paid sick leave.

When Amazon workers walk off the job, other union workers should show their solidarity by doing the same thing; 2023 has got to be the year that a real workers' movement that can shut down cities and disrupt the status quo comes into being.

Let's make doing whatever is necessary to accomplish this our most important New Year's resolution. □

Protests target Starbucks

Continued from page 1

management's attempts to union bust, since our vote back in April. What started out as minor inconveniences quickly became major issues, because of lack of communication and mutual respect between managers and baristas."

Ezra Scollo, a trans representative of New York State Poor People's Campaign, emphasized the importance of the prominent queer voices in the Starbucks workers struggle and the labor force as a whole. "Starbucks and many other corporations have pink-washed themselves, especially in June," Scollo said. "But it is now December, and a rainbow logo isn't going to pay our rent!"

In an interview after the rally, Ley Kido spoke on the importance of community. As the head organizer of the Roastery strike, she sang the praises of the employees who walked out, picketed and stood alongside her when things looked bleak. And although the New York City work stoppage was a "minority strike" — not all workers went out — the ones who did

were able to disrupt their environment enough to meet with management and make their demands known.

Attendees included members of Amazon Labor Union, Service Employees Union (SEIU), Workers Assembly Against Racism, Workers World Party (WWP), Young Communist League, Athena and the New York City Central Labor Council.

Protests in 10 target cities

In **Atlanta**, although it poured rain and kept raining through the entire rally, supporters turned out. In addition to Atlanta Starbucks workers, people came from Alabama and Florida. An international labor conference was taking place in Atlanta; unionists from Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium attended the rally.

Atlanta-North Georgia Labor Council, the Painters union, American Federation of Teachers, SEIU, Teamsters, United Steelworkers, WWP, Democratic Socialists of America, Party of Socialism and Liberation, Communist Party USA and the radio station WRFG were represented.

The rally was held at the Peace Amphitheater of Ebenezer Baptist Church, across from the crypt of Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King. Organizers emphasized the links between the Civil Rights and anti-racist struggle, the growing multi-national, multi-gendered workers movement, and the need for a mass solidarity movement.

About 100 Starbucks workers and supporters rallied in Seattle to protest the closure of the Broadway and Denny Starbucks store, the first store to unionize in the city. The rally, held a block away from the store, was called to affirm the union's determination to grow their organization in defiance of store closures, firings, cuts in hours and Starbucks' refusal to bargain. It was announced that five new stores had just voted in the union.

A speaker from the Martin Luther King

Central Labor Council acknowledged the support of many unions present, including the UAW, SEIU Locals 1199 and 775, Washington Education Association, Seattle Education Association and others. The MLK Labor Council spokesperson congratulated the Starbucks workers for the one-year anniversary of their revival of the labor movement.

Mari, an SBWU organizer, talked about the benefits Starbucks workers had won locally, including 10% pay raises and severance pay, despite the company's stonewalling in negotiations.

Three speakers from the LGBTQ+ community affirmed their support going forward, as two union Starbucks stores had been closed in the LGBTQ+ neighborhood of Capitol Hill. Shellea Allen, former national president of Pride at Work, talked about her partner's growth through the union struggle at the nearby Starbucks

Roastery. And as in Buffalo, a speaker asked people not to buy Starbucks gift cards for the holidays.

Demonstrations also targeted Starbucks in **Boston; Arlington, Virginia; Pittsburgh; Chicago; San Antonio; and Los Angeles.**

The solidarity visible Dec. 9, with Starbucks workers joined by unions, elected officials and socialist groups, showed very quickly that this worker struggle was bigger than Starbucks.

This was a shout from workers everywhere to remind the capitalists at the top that their multibillion-dollar corporations can't run without employees — and a demand that worker contributions and worker power be recognized.

Arjae Red, Dianne Mathiowetz, Jim McMahan, Janisse Miles and Tony Murphy contributed to this article.

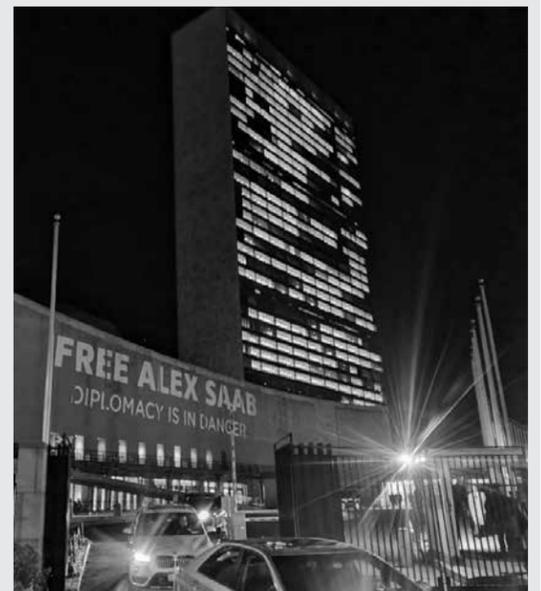


Starbucks solidarity rally at City Hall, New York City, Dec. 9.

Alex Saab on trial

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Alex Saab, diplomat and Special Envoy for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, was placed on trial Dec. 12 in Miami for defying U.S. sanctions. For making trade arrangements for food, medicine, technology and other things which benefit the Venezuelan people, he was illegally imprisoned in Cape Verde in 2020 and then kidnapped by the U.S. in 2021. Solidarity activists protested for his release outside the Federal Court building in Miami, as well as in Detroit, Milwaukee and New York City at the United Nations. Follow the struggle at fightbacknews.org. □



WW PHOTO: LEE SIU HIN

Can Brittney Griner's release expose U.S. hypocrisy on prisons?



By Monica Moorehead

As the majority of the world knows by now, Brittney Griner, a star player with the Women's National Basketball Association's Phoenix Mercury, was released from a Russian prison Dec. 8 in a prisoner exchange swap for Viktor Bout, a Russian prisoner held in the U.S.

She was first arrested at a Moscow airport on Feb. 17 and then charged with drug possession, after vape pen cartridges of hashish oil were discovered in her luggage. She pled guilty and in August was sentenced to nine years in prison.

The reason for her being in Russia in the first place was to fulfill her contract to play for the Russian women's team, UMMC Ekaterinburg, for \$1 million, a salary four times more than her salary with the Mercury.

Despite being a WNBA champion and multiple all-star, Griner was still compelled to earn more money outside the U.S. during the off-season. This put her in a very vulnerable position of being subjected to repressive laws in other countries.

The discrepancy in salaries for WNBA players and the men's NBA players is incredibly stark. The average NBA salary is over \$9.6 million, with the minimum salary being over \$1 million especially for undrafted players.

Compare that to the average WNBA salary of over \$102,000 and a base salary of over \$72,000. Blatant sexism is on full display when it comes to the lower salaries. Then there is the lack of many perks for WNBA players that NBA players enjoy, like private jets for game travel.

The WNBA players are 80% Black women, with a large number being queer. And Brittney Griner is an important face of the WNBA being both Black and queer.



Brittney Griner

A July 11 Workers World editorial on Griner pointed out: "It is important to put into political context that Russia is not the same as the former Soviet Union with progressive laws on the books. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union 30 years ago, Russia has developed a capitalist economy riddled with social divisions and inequalities. President Putin is not a proponent of LGBTQ+ rights." (workers.org/2022/07/65377/)

The truth on U.S. incarceration

When Griner was released, of course there was tremendous relief and joy on the part of her spouse, Cherelle Griner, her fellow WNBA players and millions of others. There was, however, also criticism of the U.S. Justice Department, questioning why Griner was swapped with Viktor Gout, a Russian "arms dealer," instead of Paul Whelan, a convicted U.S. spy held in Russia for four years.

Many bourgeois commentators, including sports analysts, pushed the argument that Griner faced brutality and trauma once she was transferred to a so-called Russian "penal colony."

Isn't it ironic that there is so much intense propaganda against Russian incarceration — an extension of the U.S.-NATO proxy war in Ukraine — but virtual silence when it comes to the conditions of incarceration in the U.S.?

It is no secret that the U.S. is home to 25% of the world's incarcerated people — a country with only 5% of the world's population.

The U.S. is a modern-day prison house of nations, with a disproportionate number of Black, Brown and Indigenous people locked up, many until they die there. Private prisons, including migrant detention centers, have been a source of tremendous profits for Wall Street investors since the 1980s.

Brutality women face behind the walls

According to a July 20, 2020, report, "The new Jane Crow: Women's mass incarceration" by Michelle Goodwin, the U.S. incarcerates more women in the world than those imprisoned in Russia, Thailand, China and India combined. An estimated one-third of the world's female incarcerated population is in the U.S., with Black women representing 22% while being only 6% of the U.S. population.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported in 2014 that, on a state level, 25% of incarcerated women were serving time for drug offenses, compared to 15% of incarcerated men, with African

American women being statistically overrepresented.

Queer lives and U.S. propaganda

Black gender-nonconforming women face special oppression behind the walls, especially if they are misgendered. Nearly one in six transgender people in the U.S. — and one in two Black transgender people — have been to prison, according to lambdalegal.com. The Sylvia Rivera Law Project states, "Over-policing and profiling of low-income people and of trans and gender-nonconforming people intersect, producing a far higher risk than average of imprisonment, police harassment and violence for low-income trans people."

Women prisoners face poor health care in relationship to various cancers, COVID-19, shackling during birth, sexual assault and rape at the hands of male guards and even death. Both 28-year-old Sandra Bland, a Black woman, and 30-year-old Andrea Circle Bear, an Indigenous woman, died behind the walls in 2015 and 2020 respectively.

Griner was viewed as a political prisoner by bourgeois pundits. But what about U.S. political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Ana Belén Montes, Dr. Aafia Siddiqui — not to mention hundreds of Palestinians languishing in U.S.-backed Zionist dungeons?

The justified celebration of Brittney Griner's return should not be used as an excuse to promote chauvinist and anti-communist propaganda against Russia, China or any other country that is in the crosshairs of U.S. aggression, especially if incarceration is a major focus. □

An appeal to Brittney Griner and the WNBA

By Gloria Rubac

Dear Brittney,

As a Houstonian, I'm relieved and happy you are finally home. Your spouse, Cherelle Griner, and the Women's National Basketball Association initiated a mass movement to bring you home.

I have admired you for years, as you played basketball right here in Houston at Nimitz High School and then at Baylor College. And now in the WNBA, you have again excelled.

WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert said it best, "There has not been a day over the past 10 months, where we all haven't had Brittney Griner on our minds and in our hearts, and that has now turned into a collective wave of joy and relief knowing that she will soon be reunited with her family, the WNBA player community and her friends." (wnba.com, Dec. 8)

In 2020 when you announced you'd stay in the locker room when the national anthem was played before games, you took a heroic stance against police violence. In a protest for justice for Breonna Taylor, a Black woman murdered by police in Louisville, Kentucky, in March of 2020, your position against killer cops raised an urgent issue way too common in communities of color.

The WNBA has tremendous power and a voice that is already loud and clear for social justice. For instance, the Atlanta Dream helped to oust their former racist, right-wing owner, Senator Kelly Loeffler in 2021.

Each of your 12 teams already work with and financially support an organization in their town committed to helping people who don't have a voice.

Your team, the Phoenix Mercury, works with the Black Mothers Forum in Phoenix. One of their goals is to break the cycle of the school-to-prison pipeline.

The New York Liberty works with A Little Piece of Light, whose focus is to empower and facilitate healing for women, girls and gender-nonconforming individuals

directly impacted by the criminal justice system.

Right here in Texas, the Dallas Wings work with a community foundation, which confronts homelessness and mental health care, both issues which often lead to incarceration.

What if you all gathered your collective power and used your voices to aid the women in prison here, women who are primarily Black, Brown and Indigenous? You have proven yourselves to be strong, motivated and socially conscious.

Here are the facts

In the U.S., women are the fastest growing group of people locked up in state and federal prisons, county jails and juvenile detention centers. Between 2018 and 2019, a total of 1.2 million women were under criminal justice supervision, according to The Sentencing Project.

The news media speaks about the dreadful conditions you experienced in the Russian prison, but were those conditions unlike prison conditions here? Most people in prison here have horrible and unhealthy diets; health care is abysmal, and living conditions are disgusting. An

overwhelming percentage of prisoners take plea deals instead of going to trial, sometimes out of fear and intimidation, sometimes pleading guilty to a crime they didn't even commit.

What if each team could focus on their state and the issues women locked up there face? Are they shackled during pregnancy and childbirth? Do male guards strip-search and sexually abuse them? Are they even given supplies for their menstrual cycle? Do they go without necessities like soap, toothpaste and shampoo if they have no funds in their commissary account? Are women dying or becoming ill in jails, because they don't have money for bail?

Brittney, our state, Texas, has the 10th highest incarceration rate in the country — 840 per 100,000 people, according to a 2021 report by the Prison Policy Initiative. The United States was the number one country in the world with a rate of 664 per 100,000 as of July 25, 2022.

Think of the real changes that you all could make right here. You have influence and not just on the basketball courts.

Brittney, you were so right, saying in a 2020 interview: "Basketball doesn't mean anything in a world where we can't just live. We can't wake up and do whatever we want to do. Go for a run, go to the store to buy some candy, drive your car without the fear of being wrongfully pulled over." (tinyurl.com/24358tch)

You and the rest of the WNBA can help make this world a better place by supporting rights for incarcerated people, especially women of color.

For all the Sandra Blands of the country, I hope you all will do it.

Again, welcome home, Brittney.

Gloria Rubac
Organizer with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement



Support for Brittney Griner at a WNBA game

Health care in prisons is a crime

By Bryant Arroyo and Joe Piette

If you have the misfortune of being convicted of a crime, innocent or not, what's it like behind bars if you have an illness, disease or injury?

Bryant Arroyo, incarcerated at State Correctional Institute at Coal Township, Pennsylvania, gave recent examples of how people there are treated by Wellpath (formerly CCS), the health care provider for Pennsylvania prisons. All doctors and physician assistants working in that system are Wellpath employees.

Arroyo said, "Wellpath health care has set up a scam corporation to make them appear as though they are headed by doctors. They hire retired wardens as medical consultants to cut costs, while providing prisoners with inadequate medical care. They also promote nurses like Lynette Rich, who is the medical director at SCI Coal Township charged with overseeing doctors. She continuously overruled them and rejected medications and treatment prescribed by doctors."

Sick people routinely mistreated

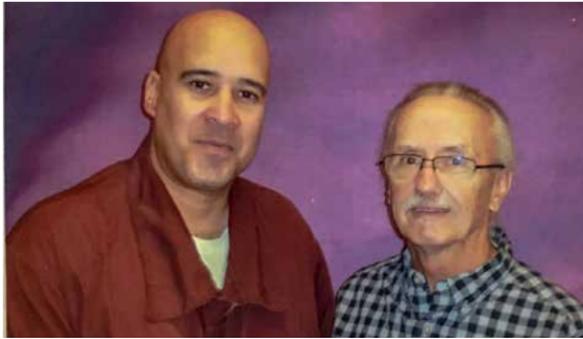
Arroyo said, "Phillip Quinn (ES6149) received a pacemaker in 2010. He was sent to the emergency ward on Oct. 6 due to his pulse rate being 31, which can lead to heart failure and death." Normal heart beat is 71-79 beats per minute. "Quinn is disoriented at times and has to sit down because he doesn't feel right. He's already had quadruple bypass surgery. His pacemaker beeps, a sign it needs to be replaced, but his doctor said they won't get a new battery for him until 2023."

Arroyo described Ryan Devine (MG6828), suffering from high blood pressure and COVID-19 symptoms, who was falsely accused by Wellpath prison infirmary staff June 11 of illicit drug use. After explaining that in the weeks prior, he had visited sick call numerous times, giving lab/blood work, urine samples, etc. and found free of drugs, he was finally transported to Geisinger Hospital, where they confirmed he had a cyst in his nasal cavity and referred him to an ear, nose and throat specialist.

Since then, Devine has filed grievances charging that "the medical department/staff were deliberately indifferent to his serious medical needs, and [he] was wrongfully accused of illicit drug usage [in] their records without any reliable or credible proof." Devine's grievance seeking the firing of all staff related to the incident, and \$200,000 in compensatory and punitive damages, was denied on Oct. 13.

On Nov. 4, Matthew Early (NP7177) went into a diabetic coma due to glucose levels of 20 and fell off the top bunk while he was sleeping, landing face first on the concrete floor.

Arroyo reports what he witnessed: "The nurse brought the wooden gurney to bring him downstairs, but he didn't know how to strap the injured person in so he wouldn't fall off. The lieutenant made the decision that four officers grab Early's legs and arms and carry him out that way. Even with a neck brace, it was a dangerous way to



Bryant Arroyo and Joe Piette

transport someone with a possible spinal injury. That's how they took him out."

Early was not only diagnosed with a mild concussion, headache and sharp neck pains, but also received an injury in his upper left eye receiving one stitch. The medical treatment was two Tylenols. He stated recently that he continues to suffer from "constant debilitating pain in my neck area."

These are just a few examples of the ineptness, unprofessionalism and lack of human compassion in how Wellpath and prison staff treat incarcerated people. Arroyo said, "They have the cheapest bare-bones system for treating prisoners suffering from life-threatening physical illnesses. Wellpath willfully places budgetary concerns over prisoners' health care."

In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court set the standard for the medical rights of prisoners in *Estelle v. Gamble*, ruling incarcerated people should be granted health care equal to what is available to those living in the immediate community beyond prison walls.

Wellpath notorious

Numerous reports make it clear Wellpath's profits-first policies lead to poor care and preventable deaths of incarcerated people. But Wellpath — which should not be the health care provider at any prison — is still the largest private provider of health care in U.S. jails.

In March 2022, Prison Legal News (PLN) published an extensive article on Wellpath's contracts in prisons, covering the October 2019 federal indictment to which Wellpath's Chairman of the Board Jerry Boyle later pleaded guilty. The article discloses that Boyle "provided Sheriff McCabe [of Norfolk, Virginia] with cash, travel, a loan, entertainment, gift cards, personal gifts, sports tickets and campaign contributions, over a period from 2004 through 2016. In return McCabe provided CCS/Wellpath help with contract extensions and renewals, including inside bidding information, for the provision of health care at the Norfolk City Jail." ([tinyurl.com/2a6bnt97](https://www.pln.org/2022/03/26/2022-03-26-01))

Arroyo asserts that Wellpath's culture of corruption continues despite Boyle's resignation. As just one example, he points out the Wellpath's hiring of Dr. John Hochberg at SCI Coal Township. The New Jersey Board of Medical Examiners imposed a five-year license suspension and

\$60,000 in civil penalties on Hochberg in 2009, because his "gross negligence" contributed to the death of an inmate under his care while he was medical director at Northern State Prison in Newark. He was charged with repeated acts of gross negligence, malpractice and/or professional misconduct in the care of four other patients he had treated for chronic pain. ([tinyurl.com/zykc52am](https://www.tinyurl.com/zykc52am))

Arroyo pointed out that, while Wellpath and the Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections gave Hochberg a second chance to resume his career, those same hypocritical officials don't believe in giving incarcerated people a second chance.

PLN also revealed a number of cases of people who died from inadequate care, citing the danger of staff attitudes that Ryan Devine had to contend with. "There is a baked-in cynicism about what inmates say and what they complain about," said Andrew Harris, a professor of criminology and justice studies at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell.

That lack of trust plus a culture of profits first is a dangerous combination. According to Corene Kendrick, a staff attorney with the Prison Law Office in California, there is "incentive to scrimp on care, because for every lab test not run or a specialist visit not done, that's just additional profit that the company can pocket."

Culture of profits

A 2019 CNN investigation by Blake Ellis and Melanie Hicken examined complaints at nearly 120 locations in 32 states and found that CCS/Wellpath "provided substandard care due to its focus on containing costs, leading to numerous deaths and other serious outcomes that could have been avoided with more staffing, better training and more experienced employees. ... [CCS/Wellpath] employees have denied urgent emergency room transfers. ... They have failed to spot or treat serious psychiatric disorders and have allowed common infections and conditions to become fatal." ([tinyurl.com/mrkj8kss](https://www.tinyurl.com/mrkj8kss))

In November 2022, Michael Fenne compiled a very critical report about Wellpath, "Equity Firms Rebrand Prison Health Care but Care Issues Continue." He cited the following U.S. Department of Justice evaluation:

"In San Luis Obispo County, [California,] medical staff frequently overlook prisoners' concerns, fail to provide prompt care or fail to provide care at all. ... Other deficiencies noted were "failures to provide adequate specialty care, ancillary services and follow-up treatment and care." Appointments, laboratory blood draws and other tests "are frequently 'rescheduled' for no discernable or documented reason, resulting in very long delays or the failure to perform tests or deliver follow-up care entirely." ([tinyurl.com/2p8vrrj9](https://www.tinyurl.com/2p8vrrj9))

Read in full the investigatory articles from *Prison Legal News*, *CNN* and *Private Equity Stakeholder Project*. Then you'll understand the depth of Wellpath's routine refusal to provide adequate health care for our incarcerated loved ones and why their policies should be made a crime.

'The Mumia exception'

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

For 41 years, journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal has been unjustly imprisoned for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer. His case comes before Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge Lucretia Clemons on Dec. 16 for what may well be a final appeal hearing.

Mumia's case has been fraught with police, judicial and prosecutorial misconduct and rampant racism. Journalist Linn Washington Jr. coined the phrase "the Mumia exception" to describe how courts routinely deny Abu-Jamal the same legal rights extended to others challenging unjust convictions.

In a recent essay titled "Cruel and unusual: How the justice system is failing Mumia Abu-Jamal," Washington explains the unusual pattern of rulings: "These judges have denied Abu-Jamal the legal relief that others convicted of murder — who asserted violations of their legal rights — were granted. For example, during the 28 years after Abu-Jamal's arrest, Philadelphia and Pennsylvania appellate court judges overturned 86 Philadelphia death penalty convictions, due to various errors by police, prosecutors, defense attorneys and even judges — including the judge at Abu-Jamal's 1982 trial. ([tinyurl.com/yc3hmeuf](https://www.tinyurl.com/yc3hmeuf))"

"However, during that time frame, judges declared not a single error — evidentiary or procedural — existed

anywhere in the Abu-Jamal case, despite the persistent emergence of compelling new evidence that undermined all elements of his conviction.

"The fact that state and federal judges have consistently upheld Abu-Jamal's conviction is cited as solid confirmation of his guilt. Brushed aside is the fact that judges have upheld Abu-Jamal's conviction

by skirting established legal procedure (precedence), creating new legal standards that undercut Abu-Jamal's claims and rejecting newly discovered evidence of improprieties by police, prosecutors and even judges.

"An analysis of Abu-Jamal's case by Amnesty International in 2000 tracked the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's 1986 establishment of a standard that prohibited particular remarks prosecutors could make to a jury. Pennsylvania's highest court reversed that standard, when it rejected Abu-Jamal's first appeal in 1989. A year later that standard was reinstated."

Judge Clemons, following in the footsteps of her



Demonstration in Philadelphia, April 24, 2021.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

predecessors, claims a judicial "time bar" prohibits new evidence — from six boxes of Abu-Jamal case material, including evidence of racism in jury selection, hidden in the District Attorney's office for 36 years — from being heard, despite U.S. and Pennsylvania law that requires prosecutors to promptly disclose evidence favorable to an accused person.

Clemons announced her intent to reject Abu-Jamal's request for a new trial. But where there is clear evidence of racial bias, as there is throughout Mumia's case, no "time-bar" should apply. □

U.N. rocked by International Day of Persons with Disabilities

By Disability Justice and Rights Caucus of Workers World Party

On Dec. 2, the eve of the 30th annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities, disabled activists and artists and allies, organized and led by Parents to Improve School Transportation (PIST), rocked Dag Hammarskjold Plaza at the United Nations in New York City.

They demonstrated in-person with a political and musical hybrid event, demanding the rights and benefits guaranteed to children and adults with disabilities by human rights treaties, which the U.S. still refuses to ratify. These are the Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Conventions on the Rights of the Child.

The rally endorsed PIST's campaign to put a Schoolbus Bill of Rights on the city election ballot, so disabled students and their peers will have the same access to education. As of Oct. 31, some 500 New York City students are not receiving the yellow school bus service they are entitled to. Lack of reliable transportation has caused thousands more to miss hours and days of school.

Activists spoke between songs played by Harlem-based DJ CrystalClear, while ASL interpreters signed.

Sara Catalinotto, co-founder of PIST, introduced Monica Roman of PIST, who shared that her own disabled daughter's school bus is often late. Roman held a yellow placard with work by Rebecca Freimuth, a blind photographer in Ohio, who has said: "I want people to see the reality of our culture and society. ... I want you



to pause for just a moment and take in the world around you. Pictures speak a thousand words, and I want people to hear the voices of the forgotten."

Edward M. Yood of Communications Workers Local 1180 pointed out that workers throughout the U.S., 90% of whom are not in unions, are increasingly vulnerable to becoming disabled during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yood is Chair of Local 1180's Committee on People with Disabilities and of the Disability Pride NYC Parade's Outreach Committee.

Yood reported that the unemployment rate for people with disabilities in New York state is a whopping 67%. This fact constitutes a broken promise, violating the Second Bill of Rights proposed by disabled President Franklin Roosevelt in his 1944 State of the Union Message, which had advocated full employment throughout the U.S.

Yood demanded that President Joe Biden lawfully bypass the Senate and ratify the Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities immediately by

issuing an Executive Order. Then by a second Executive Order, Biden should extend all of its protections to the Americans with Disabilities Act, thus keeping the promise he made in his 2020 election victory declaration speech to folks with disabilities.

Robert Acevedo of Disabled in Action next addressed the rally. Acevedo is a veteran of many protests for elevator access in the city's subways. More than three-quarters of elevators are not accessible for people with mobility and other disabilities.

Elias Ellis, a City University of New York student, spoke as the sibling of a city schools District 75 school bus rider, who attends a specialized high school program. Ellis pointed out that the entire family is thrown off physically, mentally and financially when the bus does not arrive by 9:00 a.m., or later due to the shortage of full-time and substitute drivers. (See the short film "School Bus Bill of Rights, tinyurl.com/29v8cx2j.)

Lupe Hernandez, aka DJ Karamel, an education equity activist, online-party organizer and mother of a former school bus rider, explained to the in-person and online audience how to tune in to the online celebration. For the next 12 hours, supportive DJs from around the world shared their music mixes online. (For the photos and music, see tinyurl.com/37fp8nkp.)

A report by a participant in this event was featured at the Dec. 11 Disability Justice and Rights Caucus of Workers World Party. The next public zoom meeting of the 2nd Sunday Dialogue will be Sunday, Jan. 8, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. Contact djrcwwp@workers.org for more information. □

Long COVID: a public health catastrophe

By G. Dunkel

On Sept. 18, President Joe Biden declared: "The pandemic is over. We still have a problem with COVID. We're still doing a lot of work on it. But the pandemic is over."

The U.S. had an average daily rate of 207 deaths from COVID as of Dec. 10. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 2,987 COVID deaths in the week preceding Dec. 7, with 458,986 new cases. These figures indicate that the pandemic is not really over, even though most U.S. politicians and indeed most people throughout the world wish it were.

There is a lot of crowing in the U.S., especially among officials with public health responsibilities, about the changes China is making in its public health policies with respect to COVID. China has had 5,233 deaths and around 1.6 million cases since the beginning of the pandemic.

According to Forbes: "If the U.S. were to report similar numbers every day for a week, it would be one of the country's very best weeks throughout the entire pandemic." (Dec. 3)

Those figures mean that, since China managed to keep exposure of people to COVID low, the impact of long-term COVID in China will likewise be low.

But in the U.S., the 98 million confirmed COVID cases mean that tens of millions of people in the United States will contract long COVID, a condition or conditions that are a consequence of being infected with COVID and surviving the initial infection. The CDC and the World Health Organization have different definitions; and the medical establishment is still investigating what causes long COVID, which affects 15% to 25% of people with the disease.

Over 200 symptoms are associated with long COVID. Shortness of breath, fatigue and sleep disorders or insomnia are the

most common. Others include anxiety, depression, heart palpitations and "brain fog," when patients have problems with cognition, such as thinking, concentration, communication, comprehension, memory and motor function. Some sufferers have organ damage to their heart, lungs, kidneys, skin and brain. These symptoms can last for months and make it difficult or impossible to work.

The Census Bureau conducts a survey called the Household Pulse Survey which has been asking questions about long COVID since July 2022. According to HPS, 16 million workers in the U.S. have long COVID, and 2 million to 4 million are out of work due to it. Economists, using some involved calculations laid out in a Brookings report, project that this is equivalent to 1.8% of the entire U.S. civilian labor force. (tinyurl.com/3f8kcpbc)

If 3 million people are out of work, then their foregone wages, using the average U.S. wage of \$1,106 per week, would

amount to \$168 billion a year, nearly 1% of the total gross domestic product. If the figure is closer to 4 million, then the working class would lose \$230 billion, and of course the bourgeoisie would lose the profits on what these 4 million people would produce.

Given that most workers in the United States are "at-will" employees, the bosses can fire a worker who doesn't show up for a few weeks, a few days or even a few hours. So these workers — many without paid sick leave — work when sick, even though it's dangerous for themselves and their colleagues.

Beyond the direct loss of wages, there are losses in productivity. Workers might have difficulty doing some kinds of work. Medical expenses will rise; the safety net will be stretched; consumer spending will be reduced, and quality of life will suffer.

A Harvard economist, David Cutler, estimates that long COVID could cost the U.S. economy, more precisely U.S. workers, \$3.7 trillion a year. □

New York City Sick days are a human right

By Workers World New York City bureau

A coalition of unions, activists and workers' rights groups protested Dec. 7, outside and inside Grand Central Station in New York City, to demand full sick pay and labor rights for the 115,000 rail workers who transport essential goods. Their 11 unions were denied the constitutional right to strike by a bill passed by Congress and signed by President Joe Biden Dec. 2.

Coalition organizers called out Biden for his assistance to Wall Street and the rail corporations, which loot billions in profits from rail workers' labor, while endangering their health and safety.

"If Biden wants to avoid disrupting the economy during the holidays," said Larry Holmes, a leader with Workers Assembly Against Racism, one of the coalitions calling the action, "with the stroke of his pen,

he can extend Obama's legislation requiring paid sick leave for employees of companies with federal government contracts

to rail workers.

"Congress' anti-worker legislation should shatter any illusions that the



A broad coalition of labor union organizers and allies attended the Dec. 7 action, including these railroad union representatives, Grand Central Station, New York City.

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 is "the most pro-union president leading the most pro-union administration in American history."

Black labor and community activists took the lead in organizing this important solidarity action. The coalition includes December 12th Movement; Chris Silvera of Teamsters Local 808, Workers Assembly Against Racism; Charles Jenkins, president of the New York City Chapter of Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; Matthew Mitchell and Edward Valente of Association of Commuter Rail Employees Locals 1 and 2; and Neil Merola of ACRE Local 166 — Signal Maintainers.

Sick days and the right to strike are human rights! □

Forces behind the escalation of anti-Semitism

By Monica Moorehead and Shelley Ettinger

Ever since extreme right-wing multimillionaire 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 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.



Oakland, California, May 1, 2016. PHOTO: JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE

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 newsweeklies 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 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. □

Solidarity with Palestine marks World Cup games

By Kathy Durkin

If there is a clear victor at the World Cup soccer games in Qatar, it is the Palestinian people. Even though they are not competing, solidarity with their struggle has been front and center in the stadiums, markets and streets of Doha, the country's capital, the site of the first such competition ever held in the Middle East.

The games have not been free of controversy. The mistreatment, even deaths, of migrant workers since Qatar was named host of the games in 2010, has been criticized. FIFA, the World Cup's owner, banned players from wearing "One Love" rainbow armbands symbolizing inclusivity because they promoted LGBTQ rights, violating Qatar's strict laws. However, state officials have allowed armbands and other symbols of solidarity with Palestine.

"Free Palestine" flags fly everywhere. Thousands of fans wear pro-Palestine armbands. Chants and songs supporting the struggle against U.S.-backed Israeli repression reverberate throughout Qatar and beyond to other Arab countries and further, as anti-Zionist allies worldwide show their solidarity.

During a game between Tunisia and Australia Nov. 26, the crowd displayed an enormous "Free Palestine" banner. When Tunisia played France four days later, fans ran onto the field waving Palestinian flags, while the crowd chanted "Palestine!"

Significantly, Morocco's national team highlighted the Palestinian cause by raising Palestine's flag after its many victories. Fans celebrated, especially

when Morocco eliminated Spain in a penalty shootout Dec. 6. And then on Dec. 10, Morocco beat Portugal 1-0.

Morocco is the first Arab team to make it to the quarterfinals of the World Cup, and the first African team to make the

semifinals. Their wins are seen as a victory for Africa and the Arab world, and especially for the Palestinians.

Following Morocco's victories, celebrations occurred nightly in Doha of Arab peoples cheering for Palestine. Thousands

joyfully danced and honked car horns in Ramallah and throughout the Occupied West Bank and Gaza; festivities occurred throughout the Arab world. After the team beat Spain, ecstatic fans filled the streets of Rabat and Casablanca in Morocco and in London, Paris and Madrid.

Despite diplomatic ties between some Arab governments and Israel, the masses in the Arab world defiantly support the Palestinians. This love and solidarity is heartwarming to the Palestinian people. □



Fans hold huge 'Free Palestine' flag during the game between Tunisia and Australia on Nov. 26.

China and the cost of reversing COVID-19 policies

For months western media has been attacking China's COVID-19 policies, condemning them for causing enormous inconvenience and discomfort to avoid massive deaths from the pandemic. So, it comes as no surprise that when protests actually occur within China against the protective restrictions, these same media pundits elevate them to the degree of the alleged 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

Anti-government protests that occurred in China in late November added ammunition to the argument that China should adopt the capitalist viewpoint that the world's priority should be to get back to business as usual, to keep making profits regardless of the virus's toll on the global working class.

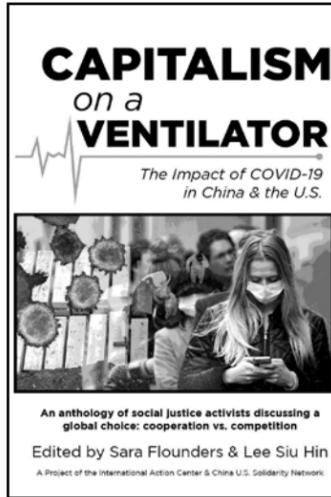
There was little analysis of the class forces behind these protests, similar to the media's treatment of widespread "anti-masking" and "anti-vaxing" right-wing demonstrations in the U.S. and Europe in 2021. In early February 2022, corporate media gave extensive

coverage to the controversial, overtly racist, right-wing "Freedom Convoy" of truckers protesting vaccine mandates in Canada for three weeks, while barely covering persistent counterdemonstrations.

The global capitalist class has long pressured China to loosen their COVID-19 restrictions and "open up" its economy for production. A prolonged disruption of China's manufacturing industry impacts the global economy, as China exports up to one-third of the world's intermediate goods.

The capitalists want people back at work. They depend on workers showing up at factories in China to provide goods for Western markets. But at what cost?

In the U.S., population 331.45 million, there have been 99,402,420 confirmed



COVID-19 cases as of Dec. 11, 2022, and 1,092,410 confirmed deaths since early 2020. The U.S., which has loosened its COVID-19 protective policies, is now being hit by a "triple-demic" of COVID-19, the flu and Respiratory Syncytial Virus or RSV, which impacts young children and the elderly in particular. Some health officials are now calling for a return to mask mandates.

To date, mainland China, population 1.4 billion, has had 5,235 deaths among 1,851,983 confirmed cases, according to the World Health Organization. Deaths have been higher in Hong Kong, which has not adhered to mainland China's "zero-COVID" policies. Given the difference in population size, if China had as disorganized an approach to the pandemic as has

the U.S., some 4.5 million more Chinese people might have died.

Even prior to the protests, China had introduced 20 measures to relax COVID-19 controls to a limited extent, but a spike in cases due to the Omicron variant has officials reluctant to change course entirely. The latest national guidelines eliminate mass testing and shutdowns of entire cities. Restrictions would only apply to high-risk communities, buildings and households. People no longer need evidence of a negative test to travel. The guidelines prioritize boosting rates of vaccination, especially for older people.

Whatever additional measures China takes — or doesn't take — it has proved capable, time and again, of dealing with the crisis, including the building of massive new hospitals to treat patient overflows when that was necessary in 2020.

Time after time, socialist China's health care system has proven itself vastly superior to the for-profit health care that exists in the U.S. □

Palestine will be free

The year 2022 begins the 75th anniversary of what Palestinians and supporters call the Nakba, "the disaster," which followed the illegal founding of the state of Israel in 1948, with the full cooperation and support of international imperialism.

The founding of the Israeli state was accompanied by massacres and the forced removal through terror and intimidation of three-quarters of the population of Palestine at that time. Some 750 towns and villages were literally wiped from the face of the Earth, their remains bulldozed away. In violation of international law, not to mention the human rights of the Palestinians, the Israeli military occupied Arab homes and land, vowing never to allow the people they had cruelly uprooted and driven out to return to their homeland.

In 1967, in another war of aggression, Israelis seized the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights, where they remain to control, blockade and bomb.

All over the world, people for decades

have mobilized in solidarity with Palestine. Launched in 2005, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, led by Palestinians, began to have a major impact in effectively challenging international support for Israeli apartheid and settler colonialism.

In May 2013 the academic world was stunned when the late, noted theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking announced he was joining the academic boycott of Israel and would not attend an international conference there. Hawking, who took part in many intellectual gatherings despite being paralyzed by a debilitating form of the neurodegenerative disease ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease), added: "Had I attended, I would have stated my opinion that the policy of the present Israeli government is likely to lead to disaster." (Time.com, May 13, 2013)

That disaster has long since come. Now with the November re-election of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in

collaboration with other far-right forces, the persecution and outright murder of Palestinians in their ancestral homeland has intensified.

Human rights groups have condemned current Israeli attacks on Palestinians in Gaza as war crimes resulting in deaths of civilians. In early August 2022 the Israeli government launched indiscriminate airstrikes there, killing and injuring nearly 400 Palestinians, including dozens of children. Israel's ongoing air, sea and land blockade of Gaza, in place for over 15 years, is collective punishment on 2 million Palestinians. (globalr2p.org)

Zionists are attempting to muzzle all criticism of these genocidal actions, even trying to remove a Netflix movie from distribution. "Farha," set during the Nakba,



PHOTO: SAVANNAH KUANG
In San Francisco, protesters at a Nakba 74 rally in May 2022 denounce the murder of Palestinian-American Abu Akleh, activist and Al Jazeera reporter, by Israeli soldiers.

graphically shows an Israeli soldier murdering a Palestinian family in cold blood.

But the truth will win out, and resistance will continue. We mourn the Nakba — and we resolve to struggle with determination side-by-side with the Palestinian people for liberation and their right to return to their homeland — free of discrimination, violence, intimidation — free to live there "from the mountains to the sea." □

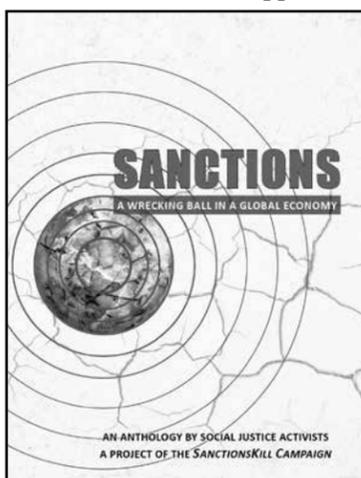
Sanctions Kill: a book, a webinar, a movement

By Lyn Neeley

Several authors of the new book, "Sanctions: A Wrecking Ball in a Global Economy," discussed the destructive effect of sanctions on over 40 countries in a webinar on Dec. 10. More than 1,000 people registered for the webinar. (View at youtu.be/6_r07VTvOc8.)

Sara Flounders, contributing editor in Workers World Newspaper, organizer with the International Action Center and co-editor of the book, has visited many of the most vulnerable countries that have been devastated by sanctions: Iraq, Iran, Gaza in occupied Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua.

She said sanctions were



the most brutal form of war. Countries lacked basic antibiotics and essential medicines, so that diarrhea or a broken bone was often a death sentence. There was no way to process clean water or pay teachers or medical staff.

Cuba has been heavily sanctioned by the imperialists for 60 years, yet they have supplied more doctors and medical staff to Africa than the World Health Organization. Though Cuba developed its own vaccines, because of the sanctions, it took a worldwide movement to send enough syringes to immunize its own population.

Lee Siu Hin from the China-U.S. Solidarity Network created a video, "Vaccine and

Sanctions," based on the Sanctions Kill book. He is showing the video throughout China and played a segment during the webinar. The video contains material from "Capitalism on a Ventilator: the impact of COVID-19 in China and the U.S.," a book he co-authored.

Ajamu Baraka of the Black Alliance for Peace spoke about small developing nations like Cuba and Nicaragua. The U.S. calls them threats to U.S. security in order to justify the use of sanctions, not because they will invade, but because they are an example of commitment to human rights, housing, medical care and clean water.

Other authors who spoke on the webinar were Rick Sterling from the Task Force on the Americas, who said sanctions are against international law, and thousands of people in Venezuela and other countries have died as a result; Erica Jung from Nodutdol Korean Community Development, who explained the dual impact of U.S. and U.N. sanctions; Carlos Martinez from the International

Manifesto Group and Friends of China, who discussed the U.S./NATO-instigated war in Ukraine; Judy Bello of the Syria Support Movement who spoke on the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC); and Ann Garrison, with Pacifica radio and the Black Agenda Report, who described the impact of sanctions on Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The Sanctions Kill campaign is both analysis of and organizing against U.S.-imposed sanctions, a brutal form of warfare imposed on a third of civilian populations around the world. The Sanctions Kill website, sanctionskill.org, offers concrete resources for schools and activists. The Sanctions Kill book is sold at iacenter.org/sanctions-book.

A week of action to "Stop U.S. Wars" is called for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday week, Jan 13-22, 2023, in cities across the U.S. and around the world. Start organizing now and send planned actions for listing at unaceace.org. □

Perú, Argentina, México

Lessons of coups and 'lawfare' in Latin America

By John Catalinotto

Dec. 12, 2022 — Coup in Perú Dec. 7. "Lawfare" in Argentina Dec. 6. Confrontation in México Nov. 27. In the past few weeks, Latin America's reactionary elites, junior partners of U.S. and world imperialism, have challenged leftist elected officials in these three countries.

These events illustrate what Karl Marx and V. I. Lenin taught long ago about how the ruling class uses the state apparatus it controls — police, courts, jails, army,

corporate media — to attack popular governments and prevent social progress.

Perú

Reactionaries in the Peruvian Congress mounted their third impeachment attempt in 18 months against popular working-class leader President Pedro Castillo. From a peasant Indigenous family, Castillo became a schoolteacher and a union leader before challenging Perú's corrupt politicians. He faced the open hostility and racism of Perú's rich, who control the country's banks, media, police, courts and armed forces.

To stop the third impeachment, Castillo ordered the reactionary Congress dissolved Dec. 7 and called for a provisional assembly to write a new Constitution. This last-ditch action failed when Perú's Constitutional Court condemned it, slandering Castillo's moves as an "attempted coup d'état." The national police arrested Castillo, who today remains in prison, from where he asked México for asylum.

The world corporate media — the New York Times and the British-based Economist, for example — stood truth on its head and blamed Castillo for the coup that his enemies had plotted against Castillo since before he won the 2021 election.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro said clearly that the far right wanted to send a message: "We are not going to allow you to govern." (venezuelanalysis.com, Dec. 10)

Argentina

Argentina's last presidential election in October 2019 had replaced neoliberal, pro-imperialist incumbent President Mauricio Macri with center-left Alberto Fernández, whose vice president is former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

Because Cristina Fernández was president herself and was previously the spouse of the late President Néstor Kirchner, the mass of working-class voters identify her — more than the president — with progressive and pro-sovereignty policies. For the same reason, Argentina's ruling-class politicians

targeted her with "lawfare."

Lawfare means the elite use the judges and courts they control to twist the law against popular politicians like Cristina Fernández and push them out of office and into prison if they can. She was found guilty Dec. 6 and was sentenced to six years in prison, which she can and will fight.

Lawfare's biggest impact was in Brazil, where it was used to depose President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 and keep Luis Ignacio "Lula" da Silva in prison during the 2018 election, handing that election to ultrarightist Jair Bolsonaro. And lawfare was a key weapon in the repression of the left in Ecuador.

México

The right wing in México has floated baseless corruption charges against President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO). Anticipating the rightist opposition, AMLO and his party, Moreno, called their own mass support demonstration on Nov. 27. Some 1.2 million people marched in México City and gathered in the massive Zócalo square to support the government's calls for progressive reforms. While mass protest is no guarantee of victory for AMLO's program, it strengthens his hand against those plotting a coup or lawfare.

Consider Bolivia. In the fall of 2019, the wealthy 1%, with the police and army, overthrew the leftist government led by Evo Morales. During the following year, mass actions continued within Bolivia's Indigenous communities, forcing a new election and a victory for Morales' party as 2020 ended.

Elections and state power

In his pamphlet on "State and Revolution," Lenin quoted Marx to show the limitations of electoral victories in bringing about a change in class rule: "Particular attention should be paid to Marx's extremely profound remark that the destruction of the bureaucratic-military state machine is 'the precondition for every real people's revolution.'"



Supporters of former President Pedro Castillo clash with riot police during a demonstration demanding his release, Lima, Dec. 11.

Elections can indicate the political consciousness of the working class and poor — they show what the masses want — and even that is limited by the influence of money and the impact of reactionary ideology. The police, courts and army can impose capitalist rule despite mass anti-capitalist opinion, so a leftist politician can take office without really taking power.

Mass mobilizations can discourage illegal actions by a small group of conspirators working with the armed bodies of the state. But they offer uncertain protection unless the masses are armed and organized. While the election victories for leftist candidates in México, Chile, Brazil and Colombia are encouraging, imperialism and its local elite junior partners remain a dangerous threat and in most countries remain in control.

Contrary examples can be found in Cuba and Venezuela, where the state apparatus is in the hands of the left. Despite vicious sanctions and blockades that have inflicted massive suffering on the populations, the left governments have resisted the imperialists' plots to overthrow them.

In both countries the governments have used their own control of the state apparatus — no longer in service to the rich — and combined this with mass popular mobilizations to defeat imperialist coup attempts. Revolutionaries should keep this history in mind, as they evaluate what a working-class government needs to do to defend itself and the masses it represents. □

Cuban Revolution still inspires us

Continued from page 1

and mobilize resentment arising from the shortages.

As Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel correctly pointed out, "U.S. diplomatic officials meet frequently with leaders of the counterrevolution, to whom they provide guidance, encouragement and logistical and financial support." (Reuters, Oct. 25, 2021)

These agents have the full backing of the U.S. capitalist media and its stooges in bogus "advocacy" groups, such as Human Rights Watch.

Nevertheless, the Cuban government and mass organizations, such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, the Federation of Cuban Women and the Confederation of Cuban Workers, have reached out to people who have grievances in an effort to involve people in problem-solving.

A profound example of this is the process that led to the passing of a new Family Code, popularly known as a "Code of Affections," in September. Widely discussed by the Cuban population before its enactment, this codifies and expands marriage, adoption and other family rights, regardless of gender identity, sexuality, race or disability.

U.S. policy: no peace for Cuba

Either President Joe Biden or Congress could end the blockade with the stroke of a pen and allow Cuba to pursue its "peaceful aims" — food, housing, jobs, education and medical care for all under a socialist economy — without interference. But the blockade has always had bipartisan support, despite decades of repeated calls by the United Nations General Assembly to end this violation of human rights. This is because Cuba's model is in sharp contrast to the neoliberal model, which imperialism has imposed on much of Latin America: ruthless exploitation, debt servitude and brutal political repression.

The Cuban government has the right to use any means necessary, including force or legal charges, to defend its sovereignty from this latest imperialist attack.

Since Workers World Party's founding in 1959, the same year as the triumph of Cuba's Revolution, we have defended this shining socialist example from imperialist subterfuge, economic warfare and outright lies.

Today we join with others in denouncing the U.S.-orchestrated demonstrations in Cuba and in confronting the reactionaries threatening the Cuban Mission to the U.N. in New York City.

We again proclaim: U.S. hands off Cuba! Long live the Cuban Revolution! □

MUNDO OBRERO

Los cubanos aprueban el Nuevo Código de Familia por 2-1

Continúa de page 12

automáticamente para votar a los 16 años y pudieron votar en el referéndum, si así lo decidieron.

Personas LGBT+, mujeres, embarazadas, discapacitados y más

El nuevo Código establece el derecho de todos los cubanos a formar una familia, independientemente de su sexo o identidad de género. Se reconocen diversas formas de familia, incluidas las familias multiparentales y se permite compartir la patria potestad entre una familia extensa y no tradicional que podría incluir abuelos, padrastros y madres subrogadas.

El nuevo Código refuerza el derecho al aborto libre y seguro en un hospital o clínica para todas las cubanas. En Estados Unidos se está eliminando, restringiendo severamente o socavando el derecho a la elección reproductiva, a la salud reproductiva y a la salud materna.

Cabe destacar en el nuevo Código de Familia la defensa de las personas con discapacidad en materia de relaciones y familia. Caridad del Carmen Valdés Díaz, profesora de Derecho de la Universidad de La Habana, dijo: "Los cambios incluidos en el Código de Familia buscan que las

personas con discapacidad motora, sensorial o psíquica tengan la posibilidad de ejercer sus derechos con cualquier otra persona, en absoluta igualdad." (Granma, 5 de septiembre)

El ministro cubano de Justicia, Oscar Silvera Martínez, enfatizó que la ley "es más sólida porque está impregnada de soberanía popular, esencia revolucionaria, protección de derechos y un alto valor humano... y no regula modelos familiares rígidos o preestablecidos, sino que favorece que todos puedan acceder a la protección de instituciones de carácter familiar." (Telesur, 18 de agosto)

Oposición ultraderechista fomentada en EE.UU.

En la isla hubo cierta oposición de derechas al Código basada en creencias religiosas conservadoras. Contrariamente a los estereotipos anticomunistas, los organismos religiosos, incluida la iglesia católica, no están prohibidos en Cuba; simplemente no se les permite establecer principios políticos para el país.

Tras votar en el referéndum, el Presidente Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel declaró: "Hay personas que, por su fe o credo, no han entendido que el Código no niega el tipo de familia que defienden, sino

que da garantías para otros tipos de familias". (Resumen Latinoamericano-US, 26 de septiembre)

Más insidiosa fue la campaña neofascista contra el Código de Familia organizada desde Estados Unidos en las redes sociales y los medios de derecha. El objetivo era incitar a los cubanos a votar "no" utilizando el argumento de que apoyar el proyecto de ley significa apoyar al gobierno cubano.

Díaz-Canel aclaró: "No es un problema de convicciones, razonamientos o sentimientos; hay personas que adoptan esa posición porque consideran que, si se trata de un Código dentro de la Revolución, entonces no debe ser aprobado."

Los cubanos —desafiando la propaganda anticomunista y las penurias muy reales del bloqueo estadounidense— han demostrado una vez más que nunca dejan de buscar la justicia, y que nunca dejan de "hacer la Revolución."

Bill Sacks, organizador y participante de la Brigada Venceremos, que ha roto el bloqueo de viajes durante más de 50 años, contribuyó ampliamente a este artículo. En 1975 Pratt perdió la custodia de sus dos hijos pequeños en virtud de la ley anti-LGBTQ+ "crimen contra natura" de Carolina del Norte.



FOTO: GRANMA

En el desfile anual del orgullo LGBT en La Habana, Cuba, los manifestantes llevan una pancarta que dice en español: 'Soy parte de la revolución — Yo también soy Fidel' un cántico muy extendido en el país tras la muerte del Comandante en 2016.

Inclusivo, expansivo, revolucionario

Los cubanos aprueban el Nuevo Código de Familia por 2-1

Por Minnie Bruce Pratt

27 de septiembre de 2022 — Tras años de intensas discusiones, debates y un proceso democrático sobre el terreno, barrio por barrio, el pueblo de Cuba ha aprobado un nuevo Código de Familia. Las disposiciones de este "Código de los Afectos", como se le conoce familiarmente, son progresistas, revolucionarias y honran la realidad de la amplia gama de familias que la gente está creando en desafío al capitalismo patriarcal.

A lo largo de la historia, la gente ha formado todo tipo de configuraciones familiares diferentes. Pero en el capitalismo actual, hasta hace muy poco, sólo un tipo —el matrimonio heterosexual dominado por el hombre y conforme con la mujer— ha recibido la sanción legal del Estado.

Recientemente se han hecho algunos avances a nivel internacional, incluido EE.UU., para sancionar legalmente las uniones de parejas del mismo sexo y conceder derechos de adopción a esas parejas. Aunque esta adaptación se ha hecho basándose en el hecho de que este "nuevo" tipo de familia es paralela a la norma heterosexual de parejas, la igualdad matrimonial en EE.UU. puede estar ahora de nuevo amenazada, dado el aumento de los esfuerzos profascistas en muchos estados y la actual composición del Tribunal Supremo de EE.UU. Ahora Cuba ha ampliado

heroicamente la comprensión mundial de lo que puede ser una visión socialista del matrimonio y la familia. El nuevo Código de Familia acoge con generosidad las muy variadas y reales estructuras familiares que los seres humanos crean para amarse, cobijarse, protegerse y nutrirse a sí mismos y a sus hijos.

El nuevo Código legaliza el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo, permite a las parejas del mismo sexo adoptar niños, promueve el reparto equitativo de las responsabilidades domésticas y amplía los derechos laborales (incluida la remuneración) a quienes cuidan a tiempo completo de niños, ancianos o personas con discapacidad. El Código confirma el derecho al aborto libre, al permiso familiar retribuido y a los embarazos asistidos y subrogados (pero sin ánimo de lucro). Lucha contra la violencia de género y amplía los

derechos de los niños y los abuelos.

El nuevo Código sustituye el concepto de "patria potestad" por el de "responsabilidad parental". Luis Palenzuela Páez, experto en Derecho Civil y de Familia y miembro del grupo de trabajo que redacta el nuevo Código, destacó que el concepto de patria potestad tiene su origen en el "pater familia" de la familia romana, que ostentaba el poder y el derecho legal de vida y muerte sobre los miembros de su familia, que incluía a su esposa, hijos y personas esclavizadas.

Con deliberación, el nuevo Código de Familia plasma en su articulado principios como "la igualdad de género, la obligación de los padres de proporcionar a sus hijos estabilidad emocional y contribuir al libre desarrollo de su personalidad, a partir de sus capacidades, aptitudes y vocación". (Granma, 20 de septiembre)

La votación culminó un proceso democrático de años entre el pueblo cubano para actualizar el Código de Familia de 1975, que codificó la igualdad de género en la ley. Por mandato de una nueva Constitución aprobada en 2019, se redactaron múltiples versiones y se enviaron a la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular en 2021, que aprobó un proyecto para someterlo a discusión y debate del pueblo cubano.

Entre febrero y abril de este año, casi 6,5 millones de cubanos participaron en más de 79.000 reuniones facilitadas por la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas, los Comités de Defensa de la Revolución y otras organizaciones comunitarias. En estas reuniones se ofrecieron propuestas y enmiendas al borrador de trabajo del Código propuesto. El pueblo hizo más de 400.000 propuestas, que se presentaron a la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular para su evaluación, y el proyecto revisado se devolvió de nuevo al pueblo para que lo debatiera y presentara nuevas propuestas.

Tras examinar todas las propuestas y revisiones, la Asamblea Nacional votó la 25ª versión del Código presentada, aprobándola por unanimidad y enviándola a votación en referéndum.

A diferencia de Estados Unidos, donde los reaccionarios de un estado tras otro están dificultando el voto de la gente de color y de los pobres y trabajadores, todos los ciudadanos y residentes cubanos están registrados

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FOTO: GRANMA

Miembros de la comunidad LGBT llevan una bandera del orgullo gigante durante el desfile que marca el Día Internacional contra la Homofobia, la Transfobia y la Bifobia en el país, en Pinar Del Río, Cuba, 17 de mayo de 2018.

Una victoria rotunda para el pueblo de Cuba

Los días 18 y 25 de septiembre, los cubanos que acudieron a las urnas para votar en referéndum sobre el código fueron 6.251.786. Los votos del "sí" fueron 3.936.790, es decir, el 66,87%, y los del "no" 1.950.090, el 33,13%. Con la gran mayoría de los votos escrutados, la presidenta del Consejo Nacional Electoral, Alina Balseiro Gutiérrez, anunció en una retransmisión en directo el 26 de septiembre que el Código será ley.

Declaración del Partido Mundo Obrero

¡Solidaridad con los y las trabajadores del ferrocarril!

El presidente Joe Biden acaba de firmar una ley, aprobada por ambas cámaras del Congreso, que impone un contrato entre las compañías de ferrocarriles de carga de clase uno y los 11 sindicatos de ferrocarril. Así, de un plumazo, el director general del estado capitalista, Biden, despojó a estos sindicatos de su derecho más básico: el derecho de huelga.

Un proyecto de ley separado que añadía siete días de enfermedad pagados al contrato de los trabajadores de ferrocarriles —un tema de negociación clave para los trabajadores— fue aprobado en la Cámara pero fue derrotado en el Senado.

Esta legislación antiobrera debería acabar con cualquier ilusión de que el Partido Demócrata es el partido de la clase trabajadora. La firma del acuerdo por parte de Biden desmiente su falsa declaración, hecha por enésima vez en el Día del Trabajo de 2021, de que pretende "ser el presidente más pro-sindical al frente de la administración más pro-sindical de la historia de Estados Unidos". (whitehouse.gov)

Los sindicatos de ferrocarriles llevan tres años intentando negociar un contrato justo con los transportistas. Su última huelga fue en 1992; el Congreso les obligó a volver al trabajo también entonces. Desde entonces, la plantilla del ferrocarril se ha reducido sistemáticamente de 500.000 a 130.000 trabajadores, con equipos de trenes de sólo dos personas, que mueven más carga con una cuarta parte de la plantilla.

Ahora las empresas quieren reducir el equipo de dos trabajadores a uno: un maquinista que opere los "trenes megamonstruos".

Cuatro sindicatos que representan a la mayoría de los

trabajadores del ferrocarril han votado para rechazar el acuerdo provisional negociado por Biden y el Secretario de Trabajo Marty Walsh en septiembre.

Los principales problemas de los trabajadores tienen que ver con la programación de su tiempo de trabajo y con la posibilidad de tomarse días libres pagados y no pagados por situaciones de salud y eventos familiares.

Los beneficios de las empresas de transporte por ferrocarril se han disparado. "El Congreso no debería tener que intervenir. Los ferrocarriles deberían proporcionar bajas por enfermedad pagadas a sus empleados", dijo el sindicato de Empleados de Mantenimiento de Vías (BMWED-IBT) en un comunicado. "Tienen el dinero para hacerlo, y literalmente les costaría un centavo de cada dólar de beneficios récord proporcionarlo. Es sólo el 2% de lo que [las compañías ferroviarias] CSX, NS y UP han gastado en lo que va de año en recompra de acciones. No es literalmente nada para ellos, y sin embargo se niegan a proporcionarlo". (cnn.com, 14 de noviembre)

"Este golpe de los dos partidos políticos es despreciable", dijo Jason Doering, secretario general del sindicato de base Railroad Workers United. (railroadworkersunited.org)

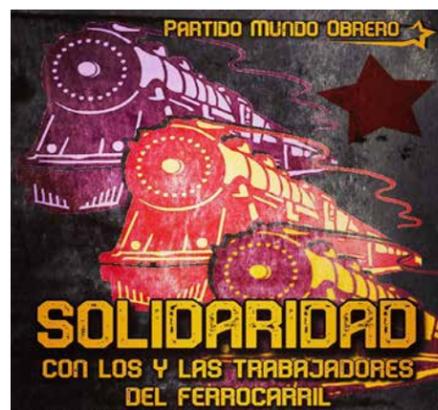
Si hicieran huelga ahora, los sindicatos del ferrocarril estarían violando la ley y se enfrentarían al aparato estatal capitalista, así como a las empresas de transporte de mercancías. A diferencia del grueso de

los trabajadores del sector privado estadounidense, los trabajadores ferroviarios no están cubiertos por la Ley Nacional de Relaciones Laborales de 1935.

La Ley de Trabajo de Ferrocarriles de 1926, aprobada antes de la Ley Nacional de Relaciones Laborales y antes del surgimiento masivo de trabajadores en la década de 1930, tiene un lenguaje destinado a limitar la capacidad de huelga. En concreto, permite al Congreso aprobar leyes que impongan un contrato a los trabajadores de ferrocarriles —lo que ha hecho 18 veces desde la aprobación de la ley— incluso después de que los trabajadores voten para rechazar ese contrato.

Biden dice que su acción "ayuda a nuestra nación a evitar lo que, sin duda, habría sido una catástrofe económica" para millones de trabajadores, muchos de ellos sindicalizados. Pero lo que realmente perjudica a los sindicatos es este ataque bipartidista a la única arma real que tiene el trabajo contra el capital: el poder de retener nuestro trabajo.

El Partido Mundo Obrero es solidario con los trabajadores del ferrocarril en cualquier acción que emprendan. Decimos no al rompohuelgas patrocinado por el Estado. Derogar la Ley de Trabajo de los Ferrocarriles. Aprobemos la Ley de Protección del Derecho de Sindicación. ¡Todo el poder para los trabajadores! □



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