

Boston University

Historic union win
for grad workers

By Steve Gillis
Boston

Over 3,000 new members of the Boston University Graduate Workers Union (BUGWU), Service Employees (SEIU) Local 509, celebrated a 98.1% NLRB election victory Dec. 7, which was months in the organizing. To punctuate that 2022 has been a wildly successful year of rank-and-file union organizing in the U.S., some labor researchers have characterized the 1,414 to 28 vote as “the most lopsided NLRB election win **ever** by a bargaining unit [of] more than 1,000 people.” (@dskamper, @gradworkersofBU, Twitter)

Speaking at a Dec. 9 Boston rally marking the one-year anniversary of the first victory for Starbucks Workers United, rank-and-file BUGWU organizer Wu Nairan credited “the inspiration and solidarity of [this summer’s 64-day] strike of Boston Starbucks Workers United on the BU campus” with propelling BUGWU’s win. “I was there when Starbucks management brought in the Pinkertons and Boston police,” recalled Nairan to rousing cheers. “And guess what happened. The next day they were defeated by the solidarity of the workers!”

BUGWU organizers applied these militant lessons on the same streets and in the boardroom suites on Oct. 18, when they marched on BU’s administration building to demand voluntary recognition from BU’s University Council while it was meeting upstairs. When the union delegation was refused a hearing, squads of organizers evaded dozens of hastily scrambled-together BU and Boston cops, making their way in elevators and stairways to present their demand to BU’s usually secretive, unknown corporate vice presidents, finance and operations officers.

In an interview with Workers World, Nairan explained that these Council members of one of Boston’s largest “nonprofits” — which pay zero taxes in Massachusetts — divvy up billions of dollars in grant monies from mostly military, high tech, biotech, Big Pharma and Wall



BUGWU members and supporters march on BU administration building, Oct. 18. Wu Nairan, second from left.

Street-sponsored companies and foundations to various university departments. The lion’s share goes to STEM. “With these enormous funds,” Wu said, “BU’s sprawling campus and neighborhood housing for over 34,000 students is like a giant real estate company that sells modern education and research.”

It’s the thousands of graduate students, master’s and Ph.D. levels, who provide the labor to produce research advances and educate undergraduates, the next generation of workers, for pillars of capitalist industry like Boston’s Raytheon, GE, Fidelity, Akamai, iRobot and Moderna.

Low pay for student labor

While the shrinking ranks of tenured professors present most lectures and get sometimes larger salaries, sometimes headlines from the university, graduate workers perform more than 90% of the educational labor for the corporation. In addition to leading all daily discussion groups and labs, handling tens of thousands of student communications, providing office staffing and scoring all quizzes, tests and theses, graduate workers simultaneously work full-time as students, while doing the research that drives the grants for every department.

Master’s candidates go into debt to pay BU’s \$50-65,000 yearly tuition and fees. Their hourly wage is based on minimum required hours; if actual hours spent working are added up, they are often paid less than Massachusetts’ minimum wage. Ph.D.-level workers receive a department-dependent “stipend,” with the “arts” at the lowest pay rate of \$24,000 per year.

Graduate workers’ health benefits are akin to the company store of years past, with BU Health Services the sole referral agent to Boston’s for-profit health market, where student workers often have massive out-of-pocket expenses. Dental and vision benefits are currently non-existent and mental health services largely inaccessible.

When it comes to room and board, these frontline graduate workers are essentially on their own, with Boston’s studio apartments averaging \$2,885 per month, more than 100% of what most graduate workers earn in pay. BU and other big landlords in the near-zero vacancy rate neighborhood have almost total control of rental costs. Most graduate workers can’t afford the university’s meal plan.

Nairan pointed to BU administration’s dangerous requirement for graduate workers to teach in-person at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic as a major catalyst for BUGWU’s organizing drive. While nearly 100% of undergraduate students opted for remote learning before introduction of vaccines in 2021, BU bosses forced graduate workers to show up to often empty, windowless classrooms and labs, many without ventilation.

And in 2022, like nearly every other employer in the U.S., BU administration has discarded every pandemic mitigation protocol that its own scientists and public health specialists advocated, like masking and testing. This has made life for graduate workers in Boston even more precarious.

For the many international graduate student-workers, the right to study and live in the U.S. is tied by the

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MUTULU IS HOME!

Dr. Mutulu Shakur has been released from prison and is now home with family!

@FreeDrMShakur
#MutuluIsHome
#StraightAhead

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS



Court decision benefits Mumia

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People’s political mural

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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.



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

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 for-profit system, 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. □

MUNDO OBRERO

WORKERS WORLD

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Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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How the war machine ‘recruits’ poor, oppressed youth

By Richie Merino

A Dec. 11 New York Times report highlighted how thousands of public high school students in majority poor, Black and Brown districts are funneled into the U.S. military’s Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps program. Students are automatically enrolled and forced to participate as an explicit requirement without parental consent. Some high schools have saved money by using JROTC, which is ostensibly a feeder system for children to ultimately enlist in the military, as an alternative to hiring physical education or health teachers. (NY Times, Dec. 11)

More than 10,000 military recruiters stalk the hallways of high schools across the country with promises of a guaranteed job, health care, housing and a free college education. Poverty is one of the Pentagon’s most effective recruiting tools. Military officials explicitly acknowledge that young people’s inability to afford a college education is responsible for their success in meeting recruitment goals, and lawmakers warn that helping people pay off crushing student debt will hurt recruitment. Military recruiters exploit the student loan debt crisis to coerce youth into believing that enlisting is their only option.

No one should have to invade foreign lands and kill poor Black and Brown citizens worldwide in exchange for an education. Defenders of mandatory JROTC enrollment cite the need to “divert students away from drugs or violence” and “the allure of drugs and gangs” in urban areas, while simultaneously corralling them into the single most violent gang on earth: the U.S. military.

The fact the U.S. military spends \$400 million a year to lure children into that violent, predatory institution should come as no surprise. The U.S. government utilizes the cultural infrastructure to embed the military into almost all aspects of life and to promote militarism. From pledging allegiance to the flag to applauding veterans during halftime, it is nearly impossible to watch sports without billionaire-owned teams constantly idolizing war.

Military recruiters reach youth through video games, such as the popular “Call of Duty” franchise. The role-playing game teaches children to glorify guns and violence and then funnels them into the military to live out their murderous fantasies. Hollywood is the most prominent recruiter for the U.S. military; the Pentagon has spent billions on “heroic” war movies vilifying Russia, China and the Middle East. For example, the U.S.

Department of Defense collaborated with Paramount Pictures to weave imperialist, pro-war narratives into the movie “Top Gun: Maverick.”

War machine embedded in education

Some public high schools, like the one I teach at in the South Bronx, do not have a formal JROTC program, but military recruiters are very much embedded in the school’s culture. For example, during our annual field day where students participate in competitive sports to win trophies and prizes, the school invites military recruiters to host push-up, pull-up, running and other competitions. The school invites military recruiters to graduation ceremonies, where veterans present several memorial scholarship awards to “honor” the students who have decided to join the military upon graduation.

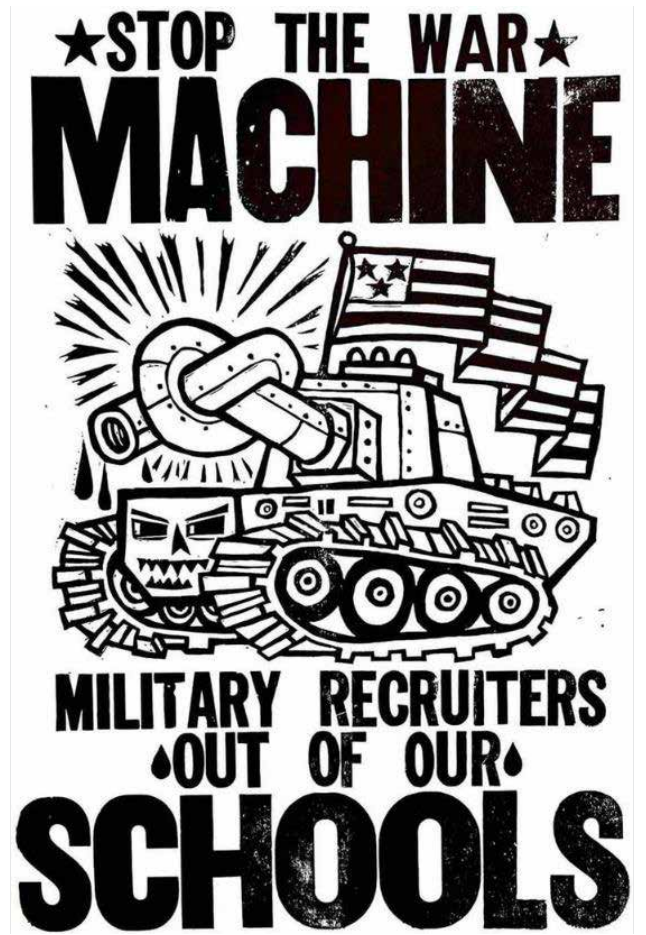
If military recruiters don’t capture poor kids in high school, they continue to prey upon low-income students in community colleges and public universities, such as the City University of New York, where a majority of students are housing insecure. As a current CUNY student, my personal contact information was shared with military recruiters without my explicit consent. As a result, I receive an obscene number of emails, phone calls and text messages coaxing me to join the military and even to refer a friend.

A recent text message I received enticed potential recruits with “full health care and dental benefits, including paid sick leave,” which is egregious given Congress’ recent rejection of paid sick leave for railway workers.

The struggle to end the poverty draft is personal to me, not only because I’ve seen my students’ eyes light up at the thought of having stable housing and food for the first time in their life, but because I saw how my brother’s economic deprivation led him to join the U.S. Navy. At 18 years old, his partner had an unexpected pregnancy, and he found himself scrambling to find a job that would pay him enough to survive and support his newborn. As a college freshman at a State University of New York campus, he found the military to be his only option.

After witnessing my brother, cousins and students being recruited into the military — not because they were patriotic, but because they needed money to support themselves and their families, I realized that the U.S. military preys on vulnerable people by design and in the spirit of capitalism.

As the Western empire and U.S. hegemony decline,



the capitalist ruling class grows desperate to maintain rising profits through brute military adventures. We can expect the U.S. military to further increase its deceitful targeting of poor and disenfranchised youth to serve as cannon fodder for the military-industrial complex. We must take our antiwar and anti-imperialist movement into the streets.

The only war worth fighting is class war.

Dismantle the school-to-military pipeline! Police and military recruiters out of our schools! We will no longer be used as tools for imperialist aggression! We will no longer be used to fight and kill working people like ourselves! Money for jobs, education, housing and health care — not for war!

The United National Antiwar Coalition has called for coordinated protests Jan. 13-23, 2023. To find or list an action in your area, go to unacpeace.org. □

Why rail workers need paid sick days

By Olujimi Alade

On Dec. 1, 2022, congressional Democrats and Republicans came together in a bipartisan effort to shut down the railroad workers’ planned strike. The legislation, which passed 290-137 in the House, codified a tentative agreement reached by the rail companies and the federal government to negate the autonomy of the rail workers and further suppress them under the boot of late-stage capitalism.

One of the most important measures rail workers are fighting for was paid sick leave days. The blatantly false secondary bill the House passed had contained seven days paid sick leave, although the rail workers’ demand was for 15. But when the measure reached the Senate, even the meager seven-day provision was dropped.

Adding sick leave of any amount would have cut into the rail companies’ profits, and they fought tooth-and-nail to deprive the striking workers any opportunity to rest up and heal themselves. Something that all human beings, no matter what their profession, deserve.

COVID-19 and flu underscore need for sick leave

While sick leave should be a human right that all workers are entitled to, not all workers have equal access to sick days, paid or unpaid. As in many things under a capitalist, materialistic society, it seems that the ruling class and the politicians have more access to sick days than workers in the industries which keep society running.

As recently as 2019, close to 100% of the top 10% of wage earners have access to paid sick leave, compared to only 25% of the lowest-paid 10%. ([pewresearch.org](https://www.pewresearch.org)) As



CREDIT: WORKWEEK RADIO

Rally in solidarity with railroad workers’ contract fight, with support from International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, Oakland, California, Oct. 27.

far as the specific professions are concerned, over 90% of workers in management and finance have access to sick leave, which is over a third more than workers in service industries.

The U.S. government’s ruthless assault on workers’ rights comes at a time when COVID-19 and influenza cases are on the rise. At the beginning of December, there was a 32% increase in patients admitted to the

hospital with the flu and a 14% increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations. ([cnn.com](https://www.cnn.com))

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on lower-income communities, with casualties twice as high in poor countries than in wealthier ones. This highlights how necessary sick leave is to the working class. Not only could workers stay at home and recuperate, but they could limit transmitting viruses to co-workers and make the spread more manageable.

As a wage worker, I know how valuable having paid sick leave can be. One morning I woke up with a very high fever and an overall body ache. It took all my energy and strength to get out of bed and get ready for the day. Coming into work that day, I didn’t think I had what it took to stay alert and focused. Feeling that I had no other choice, I decided to press through and work the rest of the day, headaches and sweats be damned. When I got home, all I could do was lie in bed. I didn’t have the stamina to stand nor even sit upright.

Knowing how important my well-being was, I decided not to risk anything and took a couple of sick days to rest and recuperate. Those two days were the difference between a lethargic, unfocused person and an alert, energetic one. In fact, a study found that people without paid sick leave had more trouble staying awake than those who did have sick leave. ([csuohio.edu](https://www.csuohio.edu))

Having paid sick leave to recover from illness can make a huge difference in the health of an individual. It is imperative for all workers to support the rail workers in their fight for paid sick days, because a healthy workforce is a safer and more empowered workforce. □

Critical hearing for Mumia Abu-Jamal



By Betsey Piette

Dec. 16 — Supporters and family of Pennsylvania political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal filled the courtroom and demonstrated outside the Philadelphia Criminal Justice Center today. All were asking whether Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Lucretia Clemons would continue the long miscarriage of justice against Mumia — 41 years in prison — or whether she would place herself on the side of justice and rule in favor of Abu-Jamal.

In the end, it is accurate to say Clemons straddled the judicial fence — but in a way beneficial to Mumia.

After hearing additional oral arguments from attorneys Judith Ritter and Sam Spital for Abu-Jamal and counter arguments from Assistant District Attorney Grady Gervino for the commonwealth, Clemons announced she would not make a ruling today. But in a surprise move, Clemons asked how much access Abu-Jamal’s attorneys had been given to the case files, beyond the six boxes made accessible in January 2019.

Ritter explained that, when the case was before Common Pleas Court Judge Leon Tucker, only the staff for the judge reviewed the files, looking for evidence related to former Philadelphia District Attorney, and subsequently Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice, Ronald Castille, and the issue of his judicial bias against Abu-Jamal.

In piecemeal fashion, the commonwealth provided 31 evidence boxes to Tucker during the entirety of the hearings, from April 24, 2017, through December 2018. Toward the end of that initial appeal, District Attorney Larry Krasner’s office admitted there were more than 200 boxes of files that could be relevant to the case.

Following Tucker’s December 2018 ruling, Krasner admitted finding six additional evidence boxes, which were

numbered as if belonging to a separate group of 29 boxes. Abu-Jamal’s attorneys were given access to the six boxes, but they raised questions about whether there were 23 more that were not made available to review.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Mumia supporters march against flow of traffic on Chestnut Street in Philadelphia, Dec. 16.

Acknowledging that she was aware of the 200 boxes mentioned by Krasner, Clemons stated that, in the interest of uncovering any additional evidence to support claims of violation of Abu-Jamal’s rights, his attorneys should be granted access to all file boxes. The relevant legal cases are Batson (involving racism in jury selection) and Brady (concerning withholding exculpatory evidence from the defense).

After the commonwealth prosecutors agreed to make this happen, Clemons announced a 60- to 90-day extension and adjourned the proceedings. Contrary to its own interests, by acknowledging the existence of evidence previously withheld from Abu-Jamal and his attorneys, the commonwealth admitted a Brady violation.

Stopping a legal lynching

In a 31-page notice of intent to dismiss the petition on Oct. 26, Clemons questioned why Abu-Jamal and his attorneys had not previously raised the evidence that District Attorney Joseph McGill had tracked the race of potential jurors — a Batson violation. (tinyurl.com/mtvcfs4)

At the hearing today, Spital reiterated the points made in Abu-Jamal’s July 1995 Post-Conviction Relief Application (PCRA) hearing, regarding jury selection by race. These were dismissed by trial judge Albert Sabo, who was also the judge in Abu-Jamal’s initial 1982 hearing. (tinyurl.com/mvfstd3w)

Sabo’s history of convictions and sentences in capital cases evidenced deep racial disparities, including a high number of defendants sentenced to death — 31 people given death sentences over a period of 14 years, 29 of whom were racial minorities. In 2001, court stenographer Terri Maurer-Carter declared under oath that she had heard Sabo state to another judge, ‘I’m going to help them fry the n****r,’ referring to jurors in Abu-Jamal’s 1982 trial. (tinyurl.com/mr2rwnbp)

No time-bar for racism

On Dec. 6, the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent filed an amicus brief — a friend of the court document — that reinforced the facts and arguments in Mumia’s 1995 PCRA filing. They argued that no judicial time-bar should be applied when the defendant is a victim of historic racial bias that may have tainted the possibility of a fair trial and due process. (tinyurl.com/587r633p)

At a Dec. 13 press conference announcing the brief, the Hon. Wendell Griffen, Division 5 judge of the 6th Judicial Circuit Court for Pulaski County, Arkansas, said: “Clemons is only the second Black judge to hear any aspect of Abu-Jamal’s case. Will she have the courage to say that there are too many factors here that compel for Mumia to justify dismissing the motion? This evidentiary hearing is required, because exculpatory evidence was concealed.” (youtu.be/Xh38IKVc_oc)

Griffen clarified his statement during a Dec. 14 Democracy Now interview: “Under a 1963 decision that every law student knows about and every lawyer knows about who does criminal law practice, *Brady v. Maryland*, the Supreme Court of the United States held that due process of law is violated when the prosecution conceals evidence relevant to guilt or punishment from defense. In this country, that kind of precedent should have required Mumia to be released, and the state, or the commonwealth, in this case, decide whether or not to prosecute him based upon having revealed the right evidence. That hasn’t been done.” (tinyurl.com/y86bd3ks)

‘Brick by brick, wall by wall, we’re gonna free Mumia Abu-Jamal’

Following the hearing, Abu-Jamal’s supporters concluded a spirited rally with a militant march through Center City. From the courthouse, demonstrators circled City Hall, marched in 15th Street to Chestnut Street, then turned against traffic to 21st and Chestnut, where they gathered for a strategy meeting at the Unitarian Church.

Since the Oct. 26 hearing when Clemons announced her intent to dismiss, Abu-Jamal’s supporters have taken the struggle into overdrive. Multiple global demonstrations for Mumia and a zoom rally for political prisoners took place on and around Dec. 9, the anniversary of his incarceration. Hundreds of letters, including statements from labor unions, were sent to Clemons. The day after the U.N. press conference Dec. 13, a one-of-a-kind mural, picturing a younger Mumia Abu-Jamal holding a child, was displayed on a wall outside One Art in West Philadelphia.

The energy from the past weeks fueled today’s events. Abu-Jamal’s supporters are determined to continue to fight until Mumia is free. □

‘From the Darkness Shines a Light’

By Betsey Piette

Philadelphia is known as the “City of Murals,” with over 4,000 works of community-based public art adorning outer brick walls of buildings in every neighborhood. The artworks are part of a “campaign by the city to repurpose public spaces and create positive dialogue in communities,” according to Mural Arts Philadelphia.

Yet since its inception in 1984, this government sponsored nonprofit, anti-graffiti program has never included a mural of Philadelphia’s most famous

native son — no, not the fictitious Rocky Balboa — but real-life political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Artists and activists supporting Abu-Jamal took it into their own hands to do something about this in advance of his Dec. 16 court date. With his appeals trial entering a critical phase around the 41st anniversary of his incarceration, they felt it important to “humanize” Pennsylvania’s most famous political prisoner.

Lead artist Makeba Rainey and support crew Sam Rodriguz and Boris Bernard wanted to create an image for

#LoveNotPhear of Abu-Jamal before his incarceration. They chose an older, personal family photo of him, but they included a picture of him today on a postage stamp at the top, to depict how incarcerated people communicate with the outside world through mail. The mural carries the message “From the Darkness Shines a Light.”

The mural appears on an outside wall of One Art Community Center on North 52nd Street in West Philadelphia. Organizers reported traffic coming to a halt as drivers slowed down to take cell phone pictures of



CREDIT: SUNNY SINGH

People’s mural of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Philadelphia, Dec. 14.

this incredible political art. Visit Sunny Singh’s video at tinyurl.com/4ucjmt7j to witness the production. □

Oregon governor commutes death row sentences

By Maddi Johnson
Portland, Oregon

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown has commuted the sentences of everyone awaiting execution by the state: 16 men and one transgender woman. Instead they will face life in prison. Oregon has a long history of indecisiveness regarding the death penalty, abolishing and reinstating it twice over the past century.

In 2019, Oregon’s death row was closed and a moratorium placed on executions. Though the bar is low, this was a progressive step forward.

The twin evils of capitalism and racism are encapsulated perfectly in the U.S.

incarceration system. The prison-industrial complex makes billions of dollars in profits through exploiting enslaved labor and the siphoning of tax dollars. At the same time it serves the settler-colonialist role of exerting terror and control over Black and Brown communities, who are disproportionately policed, arrested and sentenced. (“Demographic Differences in Sentencing: An Update to the 2012 Booker Report,” ussc.gov)

Crime prevention and rehabilitation are directly contrary to the mission of the U.S. prison racket. In order to keep the capitalist hierarchy intact, workers are fed a pervasive narrative that the material struggles they face are caused not by the

powerful elite but by the desperate poor.

The intense stress workers are put under, trying to survive, is channeled into fear and anger toward the most oppressed elements of society. Workers are following the bosses rules and are still suffering, so when they see someone break the rules, it causes resentment.

The targets of state-sponsored punishment become scapegoats, and seeing them put to death is the ultimate expression of this misplaced rage. There is little evidence that the death penalty deters crime but plenty to show that it’s more expensive than life in prison.

A 2016 study found that in Oregon, “death penalty cases cost between

\$800,000 and more than \$1,000,000 more per case, when compared to similar non-death penalty cases.” (tinyurl.com/7mt4f9ps)

Without even touching on the existence of false convictions, corrupt officials and the moral bankruptcy of murdering people who are locked away and cannot pose a threat to society, the death penalty serves as little more than an expensive cry of anguish from a deeply wounded society. We would be better off pursuing prison abolition and addressing the root causes of crime, which is poverty and state-sponsored violence. □

Three-day strike at 100+ Starbucks stores

By Maddi Johnson, Portland, Oregon, and Jim McMahan, Seattle, Washington

Union coffee is hot, and at this point the bosses must feel like they’re getting boiled. In November more than 100 Starbucks stores countrywide went on strike for three days; and over the weekend of Dec. 16-18, Starbucks Workers United (SBWU) did it again.

“This store has been unionized since last year, and Starbucks won’t bargain with us. We are demanding decent pay, so that we can be able to live in this city,” exclaimed a picket leader at a strike-picket in front of the Seattle Starbucks Roastery on Dec. 17. This was followed by chants of “No Contract, No Coffee! No Workers, No Starbucks!”

The coordinated strike involving 1,000+ workers protested Starbucks’ store closures, which are part of the company’s union-busting campaign. Seattle workers were particularly outraged when Starbucks recently closed its Broadway and Denny store; it was the first store to unionize in Seattle. But five other recently unionized stores here — in the original home of Starbucks — and many more across the country have been shuttered.

The SBWU strikes follow their nationwide solidarity rallies Dec. 9. “We won’t back down from this fight!” says a leaflet distributed at the mass picket. “We call for full staffing at all our union stores, for credit card tipping to be implemented across the nation and for these targeted closures to stop.” The workers at newly unionized stores have not been allowed credit card tips, which causes a big loss of income. Meanwhile nonunion stores provide for credit card tips — a blatantly discriminatory policy.

Droves of tourists from across the country and around the world were confronted with the militant picket at the Roastery, a big surprise. Many just stood across the



Five happy striking Starbucks workers. WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY
From left: Alicia, Marcell, Ive Anne, Milo, Alysia

street, and others were turned away. Two other Seattle stores were also part of the strike.

Portland Starbucks: Second three-day strike in a month

At least 10 stores in Oregon joined in the walkout. At the Macadam location in Portland, close to 30 people showed up to make their voices heard. One was Arthur Pratt, a transgender six-year employee from another location, who had been fired in Starbucks’ union-busting onslaught, sparking outcries from co-workers and the community. The company has been accused in the past of targeting pro-union trans employees by threatening their trans-affirming health benefits.

The primary demand expressed at the Macadam location, judging by some of the picket signs, was financial security. Alicia Flores, who has worked for Starbucks almost seven years, spoke on the stark divide between workers and upper management in the company. While

upper management is insulated from having their hours cut due to being salaried, hourly workers frequently have their economic well-being threatened by unreliable schedules.

In addition, Flores says that managers rely on the age-old trick of selectively enforcing policies to discriminate against those who may unionize. “The system that we see throughout the campaign across the country is that people are getting fired for time attendance; and if you look at the record, it’s like two minutes, three minutes — when managers themselves are late all the time. There’s no accountability for someone that’s a salary employee, just the hourly employees.” Flores says this practice is “100%” union busting.

Despite having a predominantly warm reaction from the community, especially during this weekend’s strike, Flores called attention to a troubling classist notion that some customers have repeated: They don’t believe that baristas need a union.

Historically, some unions have made a critical error in trying to draw a distinction between “skilled” and “unskilled” labor. A Marxist analysis of capitalism shows us that all who sell their labor power to survive, whether mechanics, doctors or Starbucks baristas, belong to the same class with the same interests.

Any division of our class serves only to weaken us, while strengthening the capitalist class. Furthermore, it is the fundamental right of all workers to bargain collectively and improve their lot in life. Claiming to value democracy while opposing the right of workers to have a say in their day-to-day existence is like allowing someone to choose the size of their coffee cup but not what goes into it.

If you would like to contribute to the strike relief fund for Pacific Northwest Starbucks Workers, do so here: gofundme.com/f/PNWStarbucksWorkerRelief.

Freight workers union calls 2022 Rail Solidarity Rally

By Stephanie Hedgecock
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Rail union conductors and supporters gathered outside the New Mexico Roundhouse Tuesday, Dec. 13, despite 15 F wind chills, to demonstrate against the corporate freight push to run one-person trains, which will endanger the lives of freight engineers, rail workers and the communities that freight trains traverse nationally.

SMART-TD (Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers) union members rallied in multiple cities Dec. 13, as the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) held a public hearing on a safety proposal for a two-person train crew requirement. Railroad corporate bosses oppose the rule and are pushing to run megatrans with only one engineer.

The demonstrations called for paid sick days and drew attention to the dangers of the cost-cutting scheme known as “Precision Scheduled Railroading.” Congress passed a bill to impose a contract on rail workers that contains no paid sick days and does nothing to address huge scheduling problems that negatively affect workers’ health and family lives. President Joe Biden signed the bill.

Rail union members protested in Denver; Galesburg, Illinois; Des Moines, Iowa; Royal Oak, Michigan;



Royal Oak, Michigan WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Minneapolis; Sparks, Nevada; Columbus, Ohio; Salt Lake City; and Cheyenne, Wyoming; as well as Santa Fe.

On the picket line, retired conductors told stories of keeping engineers awake on long runs, of being forced to work while sick and of deaths due to unsafe conditions. As freight rail workers are prevented from taking a day off under the federally enforced contracts, union retirees turned out nationally to represent SMART-Transportation Division. SMART-TD is the largest of



Santa Fe, New Mexico PHOTO: SMART-TD

the 12 unions representing freight rail workers, with 450 locals representing railroad conductors and engineers. (smart-union.org/news)

The FRA has extended the period to accept public comments on the proposed two-person train crew rule through Dec. 21. Comments may be submitted through Dec. 21 to docket FRA-2021-0032 at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).

Martha Grevatt contributed to this article.

Historic union win for grad workers

Continued from page 1

university and U.S. Homeland Security to performing the university’s required work. Many international graduate workers at BU, who are unable to travel to Boston from their home countries due to pandemic conditions, are nevertheless required by the university to keep working remotely in order to graduate — but for free, since they must work in-person to be paid.

Unity across departments

Wu explained that the united rank-and-file upsurge—from the linguistics, philosophy and music departments to biology, physics, engineering and economics — is raising demands for a living wage of at least \$50,000, higher for the

many graduate workers with children; full health care benefits for all workers and their families; full accessibility for all BU workers and students with disabilities; paid sick days and COVID-19 health protocols; and a strong grievance process to defend the rights of the rank and file.

BUGWU’s position is that BU’s diverse workforce should be contractually empow-

ered to participate in deciding every aspect of student-worker life.

Nairan emphasized that last week’s historic vote was the result of months of building solidarity through the Black Students Caucus; the Caucus for Disabled, Chronically Ill and Neurodivergent Grad Workers; the Women and Sexual Minorities Caucus; the Queer Students Caucus; the Latinx and Asian American Grad Workers Caucus; the International Students Working Group; and the Parent and Caregiver Caucus. The new union’s caucuses are publicized on its website. (BUGradworkers.org)

“Caucuses are the vehicle for bargaining out what is fair treatment for every group of workers on BU’s huge campus,” concluded Nairan. “The union is about giving a voice to

and promoting the identities, human needs and demands of all the workers who have been denied a voice for too long by the BU administration.

“During the three weeks before the election, over 100 people, including community members and supporters from other unions, collectively made over 10,000 calls to counter BU’s attempts to suppress the vote. We have shown that we will no longer accept BU’s attitude of treating us solely by how much labor and profit they can extract from us. At BUGWU we mean what we say, ‘No decisions about us without us!’”

Steve Gillis is a 37-year member and an elected leader of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751, now working for the members and retired from driving.



BUGWU rank and file confront BU finance administrators, Oct. 18. PHOTO: BUGWU

Disastrous Keystone oil spill in Kansas

By Otis Grotewohl

A major Keystone oil spill of roughly 600,000 gallons occurred Dec. 7 in a creek in rural Washington County, Kansas, in the northwest region of the state. The Keystone spill is the largest in the history of that pipeline network; even more alarming is the fact that it was not a spill of conventional crude oil — problematic enough — but a product of the filthy Canadian tar sands, diluted bitumen, also known as “dilbit.”

Diluted bitumen is much harder to clean up than standard crude oil, because it is a much thicker, heavier substance. According to a recent report in the Topeka Capital-Journal, bitumen does not float on water as does standard crude oil, which leaves a short time to capture diluted bitumen from the surface of rivers and lakes. It disappears quicker from view compared to basic crude oil, and “most methods for try-

ing to detect sunken bitumen don’t seem to work well.” (Dec. 15, 2022)

Jane Kleeb, a longtime anti-Keystone pipeline activist and founder of the pro-environmental group “Bold Alliance” stated in a Dec. 17 NPR interview: “When a tar sands disaster like this happens, it is worse than a traditional oil spill. Because tar sands are much more difficult, expensive and much more toxic to clean up. We know that this is going to take years.”

A similar spill of bitumen oil occurred near the Kalamazoo River in Michigan in 2010. Results showed the dilbit turned into a peanut butter-like material that caused severe damage in the surrounding area, especially to wildlife and habitats.

Capitalist greed is to blame

TC Energy, the company responsible for the spill, has been accountable for over 20 spills since construction of the Keystone pipeline in 2010. The Keystone

pipeline runs from the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin in Alberta to refineries in Oklahoma. It has been the target of many protests in the last 12 years, especially from Indigenous activists and area ranchers. TC Energy also owned the infamous Keystone XL pipeline, which was shut down in 2021 after years of protests and mass pressure.

Prior to the construction of the Keystone pipeline, TC Energy received a “special permit” from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to generate portions of the pipeline at a higher pressure level than is ordinarily allowed under agency regulations for oil transport. (NPR, Dec. 17) This made the operation more profitable.

The fact that a Canadian corporation was able to force a U.S. government agency to “bend the rules” in a way that led to a major ecological disaster proves finance capital does not recognize the



EPA photo of section of Dec. 7 oil spill in Kansas.

fictitious borders its state imposes on migrant families. This shows the disparity in how profit-driven corporations are coddled by capitalist politicians, when compared to the railroad workers who have had an unfair contract forced on them to prevent them from striking for basic sick days and safer conditions.

Settler colonialism and capitalist greed are the culprits responsible for this disaster and others of its kind. Collective actions and mass power were helpful in stopping the Keystone XL pipeline, and they can be again in halting more disasters like this. □

Water polluting energy company gets green light to resume fracking

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Nearly 14 years after a water well explosion on Jan. 1, 2009, made residents of Dimock, Pennsylvania, aware of methane in their groundwater, the fracking company responsible pleaded no contest to 15 criminal charges, including nine felonies. The notorious Cabot Oil & Gas, now Coterra Energy, agreed Nov. 29 to pay more than \$16 million for a public water line to Dimock residents and to cover their water bills for 75 years.

For the residents of this rural town, who had suffered from multiple cancers and other illnesses related to contaminated water and air quality, the court ruling against Coterra Energy was long overdue. Unfortunately, it was also short-lived.

On the same day that Houston-based Coterra pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor violation of the state Clean Streams Law, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulators lifted the moratorium on fracking in Dimock, which has been in place since 2010.

Coterra can return to drilling in Dimock, poisoning the community and potentially making hundreds of millions of dollars in the process. The \$16 million they are required to pay out in the penalty agreement pales in comparison to the profits they stand to gain.

With President Joe Biden’s administration using the war in Ukraine and energy

shortages — caused by U.S. sanctions — to push for export of U.S. natural gas to Europe, the capitalist U.S. government will do nothing to limit its production. As long as there are more profits to be made, regardless of the environmental destruction and risk to human lives, the unfettered energy industry will continue its plunder.

Water lit on fire

Cabot Oil & Gas was the company featured in the 2010 HBO documentary “GasLand” in which Dimock residents were shown able to light water from their taps on fire, because of the amount of methane in it. At the time, this reporter interviewed one Dimock resident who carried a gallon jug of brown, contaminated water from their wells every time they spoke in public.

Fracking involves pumping millions of gallons of salt- and chemical-laced water deep underground to break up shale formations and release natural gas. While called “the clean energy” by drillers, this process of mining for natural gas releases elevated levels of methane into the environment.

Exposure to the chemical compounds used in fracking has been linked to serious sinus, skin, neurological, liver and kidney problems. DEP whistleblowers alleged in 2012 that the presence of heavy metals, including boron, chromium, cobalt, lithium and titanium, are tested for but deliberately not reported, even when levels violate safe drinking water standards.

Testing results for the volatile organic

compounds acetone, chloroform and t-Butyl alcohol are also not reported. These compounds, as well as several of the unreported metals, are known fracking-related contaminants and carcinogens. The tainted DEP reports were often used to dismiss claims of Pennsylvanians who suspected their water and their family’s health were at risk from drilling, so it is not surprising that the so-called state “regulators” came out again on the side of a corporation that just admitted to 15 criminal charges.

Both corporate political parties bear blame

Fracking was greatly expanded under Republican Governor Tom Corbett during his only term from January 2011 to January 2015. His successor, outgoing Gov. Tom Wolf has consistently failed to take a position against fracking in Pennsylvania, while claiming the minimal tax revenues generated from fracking are “good for the state.” Incoming Democrat governor-elect Josh Shapiro, in his current position as state attorney general, was responsible for negotiating the plea deal with Coterra.

“We got played,” said Ray Kemble, a Dimock resident who has led a years-long fight against the fracking company and state regulators alike.

Food and Water Watch Pennsylvania state director Megan McDonough, said



PHOTO: NATURALSOCIETY.COM

During a protest in 2017, Dimock resident Ray Kemble holds a gallon jug containing water contaminated by Cabot Oil & Gas, which tried to sue Kemble for his “frivolous claim.”

in a Dec. 13 statement: “This outrageous action by Gov. Wolf is just one more gift his administration is delivering to the dirty fracking industry. The people of Dimock suffered at the hands of careless corporate polluters, as have other communities across Pennsylvania. Reaching this deal, on the very same day that Coterra was in court for contaminating Dimock’s water, raises serious questions about what was going on behind the scenes in the Wolf administration.” (Common Dreams, Dec. 13, 2022)

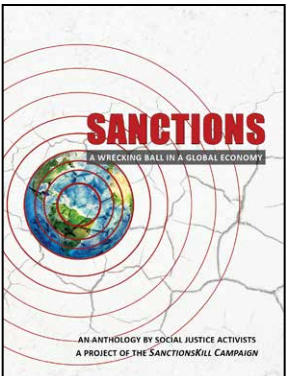
The environmental group said allowing Coterra to drill again was an unconscionable “betrayal of suffering communities” and urged incoming Gov. Josh Shapiro to undo the deal when he takes office. Shapiro, however, who was at the press conference with Dimock residents when the plea deal was announced, avoided answering press questions about the sell-out deal.

Anti-fracking activists can’t rely on politicians — they have to keep building a grassroots movement to stop the energy companies from destroying their communities. □

SanctionsKill Coalition holds nationwide meetings

By G. Dunkel

The U.S. and its imperialist allies — Germany, France and England, plus NATO — have grown ever more active these past few years in using broad sanctions as a tool in their quest to dominate the world. For the past three years, the SanctionsKill Campaign has tried to explain and organize resistance to sanctions in the worldwide antiwar movement in response.



The SanctionsKill Campaign held a very successful webinar Dec. 10 that registered over 1,000 people, some from outside the U.S. Many speakers explained how the sanctions imperiled the livelihood and development of the 40 countries currently sanctioned and how these effects were boomeranging on the countries imposing them. (youtube.com/watch?v=6_ro7VTvOc8)

Besides the webinar, the Campaign organized face-to-face meetings: Dec. 6 at the Calvary Center for Culture and Community in Philadelphia;

Dec. 7 at Hostos Community College in the Bronx, New York City; Dec. 13 at the People’s Forum in Manhattan, New York City; Dec. 14 at the Burning Books Bookstore in Buffalo, New York; and Dec. 15 at the East Bay Media Center in Berkeley, California.

These meetings involved political activists and militants in discussions with several authors, book signings, and drawing people and their organizations into new, further struggles. The SanctionsKill Campaign from the start has seen a large number of groups and individuals opposing how U.S. imperialism and its allies oppress smaller, poorer countries.

Sara Flounders, editor of “SANCTIONS:

A Wrecking Ball in a Global Economy,” said: “When the U.S. tried to impose sanctions on China — the world’s second largest economy — and Russia, a major energy producer, the oppressed countries of the world could see how de-dollarization of world trade was an essential step in their own survival. Our book, which is an anthology coming from a number of different authors, provides some explanation of what was going on and examples of struggles.”

Flounders said the first edition of “SANCTIONS” has already sold out, but a second edition was almost finished and can be ordered from iacenter.org/sanctions-book. □

German warmakers target antiwar organizer

By John Catalinotto

Antiwar organizer Heinrich Bückner, who operates the Co-op Anti-War Cafe in Berlin, Germany, faces charges stemming from his speech at a protest last June. His case impacts antiwar activists worldwide.

Bückner's speech focused on the horrors the Nazi Wehrmacht inflicted on Ukraine during German imperialism's World War II occupation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. It described the close relation between the Ukrainian ultranationalist organizations of that period — which collaborated with the Nazis in carrying out the horrors — and pro-fascist organizations that are part the current Ukraine regime in Kiev.

The German army's crimes of the 1941-44 occupation included "the whole or partial destruction of 15 cities, 1,710 towns and 70,000 villages, nearly 60 million buildings," according to Bückner, plus the murder of millions of Jews and other minorities, communists and the many Ukrainians who resisted the Nazis.

Bückner's speech thus reported information that many historians consider factual. Since pro-fascist groups — Bandera, the Azov battalion — are part of the Kiev regime, his facts dispute the imperialist propaganda that describes the current Ukrainian regime as "democratic."



German antiwar activist Heinrich Bückner making a speech last summer that became a pretext for repression, Treptower Park, Berlin.

Bückner writes of a "narrowing of political space" in Germany to express opinions opposing German participation in the proxy war in Ukraine against Russia. The charges brought against him for his speech, for which he can face up to three years in prison and a fine, is proof of it. This increase in repression of antiwar forces, he writes, also exists in other European Union countries.

The U.S.-led war and sanctions against Russia, which the coalition government in Berlin has backed in full, has forced sacrifices on Germany's working class. Many won't afford to heat their homes this winter and put food

on the table. Meanwhile, big capital in Germany has accelerated investments abroad, including building factories in U.S. states with union-busting conditions.

The reaction, especially in Eastern Germany, has been mass protests calling for an end to the blockade of Russian oil and gas, the cause of high fuel prices. This mass sentiment provides an opportunity for anti-imperialists in Germany to mobilize, by opposing German military aid to the Kiev regime, demanding an end to the sanctions against Russia and opposing plans to double Germany's military budget. The German Peace Council took such a position at their Dec. 10 annual meeting in Kassel.

Many antiwar activists in Germany are disappointed that, except for some resolute anti-imperialists, the leadership of The Left Party (Die Linke) has abandoned their usual opposition to German militarism in Bundestag (Parliament) voting. This retreat has left an opening for far-right parties — which oppose the current government but are pro-militarist at heart — to play a major role in mobilizing the discontent.

Antiwar organizations in the United States should make clear their solidarity with Bückner and with all in Germany who oppose NATO and German, European Union and U.S. imperialism's proxy war against Russia. □

German Peace Council statement

'On the way to a new world order — for cooperation instead of confrontation!'

The text below is the final statement of the German Federal Peace Council from the 29th Nationwide Peace Council on Dec. 10-11, 2022, in Kassel, Germany. It is important to U.S. antiwar activists, as the debate within the movement in Germany mirrors what is taking place here in the United States. Translation: John Catalinotto.

The old U.S.-dominated unipolar world order is coming to an end. The United States and its allies are using all means to try to stop this development. At the risk of a major war, they are intensifying their proxy war in Ukraine against Russia and at the same time igniting military activities directed against China in the Pacific and provocations around Taiwan. The economic war, expanded since February, is exacerbating hunger and social inequality worldwide and undermining the fight against climate change.

From the 1999 Zeitenwende to the war in Ukraine

The often cited "Zeitenwende" (historic turning point) began, not with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but in March 1999. NATO's invasion of Yugoslavia then was the overture to further Western-led wars and interventions, all of which violated international law. At the same time, NATO began to advance toward Russia by absorbing countries that had been members of the Warsaw Pact; this broke binding promises to Moscow that the military alliance would be extended "not an inch to the east."

[The Zeitenwende] was the beginning of the end of the attempt at a European peace order that had been initiated in the early 1990s with the Charter of Paris, among others, and also became part of the Two-plus-Four Treaty [of 1990, settling the borders of Germany]. The agreements combined the right to choose one's own alliance with the obligation not to strengthen one's own military position at the expense of third parties but to take into account the security interests of other states.

NATO ruthlessly disregarded this [agreement] and pushed the confrontation ever further with troops and large-scale maneuvers on Russia's borders and by pledging that Ukraine would join NATO. The Maidan Coup in 2014, the subsequent rearmament and successive NATO integration of Ukraine finally crossed Moscow's red lines and — in conjunction with the imminent deployment of new U.S. medium-range missiles — sharply increased the threat posed to Russia. Then the U.S. and NATO brusquely rejected negotiations on security guarantees that Russia demanded.

At the same time, Kiev escalated the war in the



Berlin, Oct. 22, 'Heat, bread and peace.' Anti-imperialist consciousness has been slow to develop in Germany, but resentment at sacrifices made to fuel the proxy war in Ukraine arose quickly.

Donbass. After refusing for seven years to implement the Minsk Agreement [establishing a cease-fire in Ukraine's civil war], which was binding under international law, the Ukrainian government launched a military offensive against the Donbass republics in mid-February 2022. This entire background cannot be ignored when assessing Russia's invasion, which violates international law and shows where negotiations to end the war in Ukraine must begin.

The United States and its allies, on the other hand, torpedoed the promising negotiations in Istanbul at the end of March and, even after nine months of war, are urging Kiev to refuse to show any serious willingness to negotiate under any circumstances. They see a prolonged war as an opportunity to decisively weaken their rival [Russia] and, in conjunction with an unprecedented economic war, to "ruin" it. (German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock)

By increasingly feeding the war with heavier weapons, military advisors, trainers, enemy reconnaissance, intelligence information and mercenaries, they helped Ukrainian troops achieve successes, albeit with heavy losses. The Russian army responded with massive attacks on Ukraine's infrastructure.

As the impact of Ukrainian defensive missiles in Poland showed, the war can escalate into a larger one at any time. With each passing day, not only the risk of a state using nuclear weapons grows, but also that of a nuclear catastrophe through attacks on nuclear power plants in the war zone.

We demand that the German government and the EU stop fueling the war with arms deliveries and propaganda and instead make serious efforts to achieve a cease-fire and negotiations — without preconditions.

The Social Democratic-Green-Free Democrat (Ampel) government is driving a course that leads straight into

the abyss. Together with its partners in the EU, it is ensuring supply bottlenecks and price explosions for oil and gas, causing increases in living costs and a foreseeable crash of the economy, by striving to achieve as complete an economic decoupling from Russia as possible.

At the same time, the government plans to further expand Germany's role as a major power, with gigantic armaments projects, and to make the German armed forces the strongest conventional military power in Europe. With the planned increase in military spending to 2% of gross domestic product — it threatens to double to 100 billion euros (\$105 billion) in just a few years — funds the country urgently needs to overcome pressing problems in the areas of social welfare, health, the environment and climate.

We demand that the German government abandon this antisocial course, which endangers peace, and disarm!

We oppose weapons systems like hypersonic weapons, which make the option of a USA/NATO decisive [nuclear] first strike possible against Russia — like the Pershing II did in the 1980s against the Soviet Union.

The German government must refuse to deploy U.S. hypersonic missiles and other intermediate-range missiles. It must join the United Nations' nuclear weapons-ban treaty and cancel the treaties on the stationing of troops!

The German government now wants to join the U.S. efforts to encircle China militarily, which began more than a decade ago, by deploying the German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr). An arms race of the West against the China-Russia partnership is an aberration that may lead to the annihilation of humanity.

The inevitable contradictions must be resolved at the negotiating table. The time of climate catastrophe, global hunger and simultaneous increase in world population urgently calls for cooperation instead of ever more confrontation.

We therefore advocate a peace order consisting of equal common security, agreements and structures that take into account the security interests of each state. Instead of a NATO geared to high armament and deterrence, we need a United Nations and an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe that — freed from Western dominance — become more capable of action.

We must also work to ensure that the new multipolar world order will be committed to the principles of social justice, international solidarity, democracy and environmental sustainability. □

2022 – The year of the workers

This is the year of striking, fighting workers in the U.S. — coal miners, warehouse workers, nurses, baristas, prisoners, teachers and more. You’ve seen the numbers.

On Jan. 1, there was one unionized Starbucks store — on Elmwood Avenue in Buffalo, New York. By Dec. 9 — the one-year anniversary of when the Buffalo workers voted — there were close to 270 unionized stores.

Amazon Labor Union scored a historic victory by unionizing the first Amazon warehouse ever in the U.S. on April 1 in Staten Island, New York, with an impressive multilingual, multicultural, everybody-onboard campaign.

In Alabama, 25,000 majority-Black, incarcerated people at 17 separate prisons mounted a Sept. 26 to Oct. 2, withheld-labor strike to protest killing conditions in the jails. In their letters from the inside, organizers signed themselves “Alabama’s slaves” and said that the strike is “in protest of the continued institution of neo-slavery.” (tinyurl.com/2bk43x3a)

In the last three months, education workers rising up for a union or improved contracts totaled more than 18,000, including graduate students at the University of California, Boston

University, Northwestern, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Alaska and Yale. (More Perfect Union) At the New School in New York City, after a three-week strike, adjunct workers were victorious in securing a contract that provided significant back wages.

These are a few highlights of a very long list of actions — from school bus drivers in Jefferson Davis County, Mississippi, who went out on a one-day strike for fair wages and won, to picketing Teamsters in Boston reinforced by other Teamster local members showing up at dawn with big-rig self-defense.

Revolutionary intransigence and cross-union solidarity infused a Clarksville, Indiana, Starbucks worker’s statement: “Educators are among those who have kept organized labor alive in this country for the last several decades, and we wouldn’t be on the line today without them!” This tweet with a photo from a 1930s teachers’ strike sign bearing the question: “Is a pledge to city employees less sacred than an agreement with bankers?” (Twitter, Mila Wren@milawren, Dec. 17)

Yes, that is the question! What is our sacred pledge — to each other as workers or to the bosses?

The showdown between the capitalist

“democracy” and workers came to a head Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, when Congress denied railway workers any sick days.

That’s right. Not one single sick day.

Coming from legislators who get luxury-level health care from the state, this was a decision that left even a mainstream news commentator calling for workers to “Shut it down!” (Philadelphia Inquirer, Dec. 4)

Corporations have bitterly opposed the workers through brutal union busting: harassment, firings and court cases. Capitalist owners and investors are desperate to pile up more profits within an economic system teetering on the brink of collapse — and to push workers to the edge of survival.

But when the district manager threatened to call the cops on striking workers at Nottingham Square Starbucks near Baltimore, the workers replied “WE DO NOT CARE!” (Twitter, Lee Lee @RosaLeah_, Dec. 17)

These are the multigender, multinational, defiant, wisecracking, dancing, shouting, militant workers with signs that say “Seize the beans of production!” Infused in this year of class struggle is the left-forward, socialist-leaning, proletarian-rooted, revolutionary outlook of millennials and Generation Zers.

When one is fired by the company for wearing an anti-suicide pin, “You are not alone,” then workers at stores from Oklahoma, Washington, Arizona, Vermont, Kansas, New Jersey to Tennessee wear the same pin.

Solidarity is their middle name.

And this is the strength it will take to choose ourselves — us, the workers and oppressed — over the death-dealing demands of the bosses. Because, as Marx and Engels said in the Communist Manifesto:

“And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule, because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slaves within their slavery, because it cannot help letting them sink into such a state, that it has to feed them, instead of being fed by them.”

The worker unionization drives continue to accelerate. Resistance continues and imaginative actions flourish. Cross-union solidarity is increasing.

Not only are we on the cusp of a new year. Collectively, we may be on the cusp of another massive leap forward for our class. □

Join antiwar actions Jan. 13-22

“The greatest purveyor of violence in the world: my own Government; I cannot be silent.” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., April 4, 1967.

With this quote, the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) announced its call for coordinated actions in cities across the United States for the period of Jan. 13-22, the period around the holiday celebrating Dr. King’s life.

It is fitting that UNAC together with World Beyond War, Code Pink, Black Alliance for Peace and many others have called actions during that 10-day period, focusing on Dr. King’s contribution. UNAC’s call clarifies the role of U.S. imperialism, which since World War II “has initiated more than 60 military interventions in foreign countries.

“Today working people face escalating costs of food and energy, recession, growing insecurity and attacks on efforts to unionize. The continuing wars and military provocations have brought us to the brink of nuclear war.” (unacpeace.org)

The UNAC call includes the demands: “Stop U.S./NATO wars and sanctions! Stop Washington’s war moves toward Russia



PHOTO: UNACPEACE.ORG

Minneapolis, October 2022. One of 70 local UNAC-coordinated antiwar actions.

and China! Stop endless wars: Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Palestine. ... everywhere! Fund human needs, not war! No to NATO!”

Workers World appeals to all in the U.S. who want to stop the war in Ukraine to support the UNAC call and all the demonstrations called in that period. We call upon revolutionaries to bring to any such gathering a clear position that gives responsibility for the war drive to the U.S. and its imperialist allies in Western

Europe, Japan and Australia.

These are the states and militaries that conquered much of the rest of the world in the 18th and 19th centuries and fought each other for domination in the first half of the 20th century, unleashing two murderous and mutually destructive world wars.

They targeted the working class’s attempt to build socialism from the first days of the 1917 Russian Revolution. Since the 1989-’91 counterrevolution, the U.S.

and its allies, led by the Pentagon, have been trying to reconquer any parts of the Global South that had managed to win some measure of sovereignty.

Using NATO, an alliance of oppressor nations — disguising itself as “the free world,” Washington has since 1999 unleashed wars destroying Yugoslavia, Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan and wreaking havoc in Syria. Meanwhile it has armed the Saudi monarchy in its war against Yemen, and it has sewn chaos across Africa to plunder its natural resources. This warmakers’ alliance has fed its military-industrial complex with arms that greatly increase the killing of Russians and Ukrainians.

The antiwar movement should keep these facts up-front while mobilizing against the wars in Ukraine and in the Pacific. As revolutionaries have repeated since 1914, the main enemy is at home, and that’s the front where we have to take the fight. The next step in that struggle is to call a protest in your city, inform UNAC, and take to the streets to support other actions this January. (tinyurl.com/38wtdzz9) □

Rest in power, Chairman Sison!

By Princess Harmony

The revolutionary movement lost an immensely important leader — Professor Jose Maria Sison — Dec. 16, 2022. As the founding chairman of the revolutionary Communist Party of the Philippines, Sison used the revolutionary thought of Marxism to lead the proletariat in the Philippines to battle against U.S. imperialism and against the reactionary bourgeoisie of the Philippines.

Workers World Party recognizes the great achievements of Joma and mourns alongside the Communist Party of the Philippines and the world proletarian movement.

Rest in power, Chairman Sison!

The following message was issued by BAYAN:

#KaJomaLives in every Filipino fighting for a better future against foreign domination, domestic feudalism,

bureaucrat capitalism and fascism. We honor the man who led the founding of the revolutionary party of the proletariat that continues to fight for national and social liberation in the Philippines. His impact on Philippine society as well as on the global stage is far-reaching indeed.

In the end, a revolution does not revolve around one man. The vultures will gloat today, but they will be ultimately frustrated, because the seeds of resistance have already been planted, and these will continue to grow wherever oppression and injustice exist.

The life of Jose Ma. Sison should lead us to take a hard look at the social ills that he fought against and the pressing need for change. The cause of just peace can only be attained if the roots of the armed conflict are finally addressed. We know for a fact that, in the face of widespread repression and exploitation, the people will continue to fight, by all means necessary, until they are free. □



Prof. Jose Maria ‘Joma’ Sison, 2019.

United Nations steps in with amicus brief in Mumia Abu-Jamal’s case

By Betsey Piette

The United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent filed an amicus brief Dec. 6 with Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Lucretia Clemons regarding the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Their primary message to Clemons is that no judicial time bar should be applied when the defendant is a victim of historic racial bias that may have tainted the possibility of a fair trial and due process.

A press conference was held Dec. 13 to discuss the U.N. Working Group’s Amicus Brief and key evidence regarding the appeal by political prisoner Abu-Jamal. The amicus brief is now before the court. The evidence was first discovered in 2019 in six evidence boxes hidden in a remote storage area in the Philadelphia District Attorney’s office.

The next court appearance for Mumia will be held Dec. 16 at 8:30 a.m. at the Philadelphia Criminal Justice Center, 1301 Filbert St., Philadelphia. Abu-Jamal supporters will demonstrate outside during the hearing and the rally will be live-streamed at youtu.be/zT4AFJY1QC0.

Impact of systematic racism

Under the jurisdiction of the U.N. Human Rights Council, the Working Group has followed this case for years regarding the impact of systemic racism, the legacies of colonialism and the historic trafficking of enslaved Africans. Their brief states in part: “Presumed victims of racial discrimination are not required to show that there was discriminatory intent against them ... Instead the U.N. Member State [United States] has an obligation to investigate and remediate discriminatory effects.

“... [U]nder international human rights law, the State has an obligation to confront and address ongoing racially discriminatory effects. This obligation is not mitigated by the age of the case or the fact these discriminatory effects may have persisted for decades already. The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal may present such concerns.

“... [T]he courts have an independent responsibility to a de novo review or a specific review in light of the possibility of racial animus, racial bias or systemic racism that may have tainted the guarantee of a fair trial and due process.”

Press conference speakers included moderator Johanna Fernandez, associate professor of History at Baruch College; Hon. Wendell Griffen, trial judge Sixth Judicial Circuit of Arkansas; Vijay Prashad, executive director Tricontinental; Julia Wright, daughter of author Richard Wright and founder of the Mumia Abu-Jamal Health Committee; and Linn Washington Jr., a Philadelphia-based investigative reporter who has covered Abu-Jamal’s case since his Dec. 9, 1981, arrest.

Fernandez explained that the new evidence involves prosecutorial misconduct in relation to the state’s two primary witnesses and the prosecutor’s tracking of potential jurists by race — known as a Batson violation. During a hearing Oct. 19, Clemons indicated her intent to dismiss the appeal based on the delayed introduction



Demonstration for Mumia in Philadelphia, July 3, 2021.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

of the evidence, ignoring that it was withheld from Abu-Jamal and his attorneys for over 36 years.

Clemons claimed Abu-Jamal and his attorneys should have known that Prosecutor Joseph McGill was using race to track jurists, while offering no explanation as to how the defense could have seen the prosecutor’s notes from across the courtroom.

Police, prosecutorial and judicial racial bias, misconduct

Washington relayed other examples of police, prosecutorial and judicial racial bias and misconduct rampant throughout the case. The examples were all cited by the U.N. brief, section #35, which stated: “According to the information the Working Group received, a significant percentage of the police officers involved in gathering evidence and presenting the case were investigated and eventually convicted and jailed on charges, including corruption and evidence tampering, information that was unavailable to the jury at the time it was assessing the credibility, tendency toward bias and reliability of these officers.

“A court stenographer, Terry Maurer Carter, declared under oath that she heard the trial judge, Hon. Albert F.

Sabo state to another judge, ‘I’m going to help them fry the n****r,’ directly referring to Mr. Mumia Abu-Jamal. The trial judge’s own history of convictions and sentences in capital cases also evidenced deep racial disparities, including a high number of defendants sentenced to death—31 death sentences over a period of 14 years, 29 of whom were racial minorities.”

Wendell Griffen, a Black judge, addressed the impact of historic racism on the judicial system. “Often everyone in a courtroom is white except for the defendant. The judicial system has become essentially numb, blind and unwilling to acknowledge its own embrace of cultural racism. The people who decide the sentence are culturally unable to acknowledge the elephant in the room.

“Clemons is only the second Black judge to hear any aspect of Abu-Jamal’s case. Will she have the courage to say that there are too many factors here that compel for Mumia to justify dismissing the motion? This evidentiary hearing is required, because exculpatory evidence was concealed. Being a Black judge, one problem she will have is to explain to her white peers who are unable to understand their own cultural incompetence.”

Mumia’s grandson Jamal Jr. addressed the press conference during Q&A. “We all knew that corruption, racism and other inequalities designed for use against nonwhite people are real issues in this country. So many points of injustice are ignored by people holding the keys of justice in this case. Mumia is innocent. Injustices in his case have inspired so many people to put their boots to the ground to get to the root of this massive problem, where innocent people have to waste entire lives behind bars because this justice system is upheld by racism.”

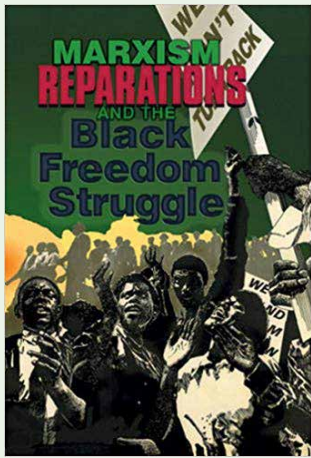
A video of the press conference is available at: youtu.be/Xh38IKVc_oc. The full text of the Working Group Amicus Brief to Judge Clemons can be found on Mobilization4Mumia.com. □

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper
Edited by Monica Moorehead

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes • **Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy • **Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell • **The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead • **Black Reconstruction: The unfinished revolution** Minnie Bruce Pratt • **Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad • **Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal • **The U.S. role in Darfur Sudan** Sara Flounders • **Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions** Pat Chin • **Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation** Consuela Lee • **Africa needs reparations, not occupation and sanctions** Deirdre Griswold • **The May Day uprising of 2006** Larry Holmes

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COVER GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

La especulación tecnológica quiebra: decenas de miles de despedidos

Continúa de página 10

Facebook, por ejemplo, ofrecía comidas gratis, servicios de tinturería y servicio de transporte para llevar a casa a los trabajadores cuando trabajaban hasta tarde.

El número de despidos es importante. Cuando se producen despidos masivos en un sector, a los trabajadores despedidos les resulta mucho más difícil encontrar un nuevo empleo.

En la búsqueda de las super ganancias cuando se han producido cambios en la tecnología que aumentan la productividad, el capitalismo tiene una tendencia

innata a producir más bienes de los que se pueden vender con beneficios. Las primeras empresas en adoptar los cambios pueden obtener grandes beneficios si aumentan las ventas. Esto obliga a otras a adoptar la nueva tecnología. (Véase “El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida”, de Fred Goldstein, para un análisis del impacto de los saltos tecnológicos espectaculares en la economía capitalista).

Para una empresa tecnológica, los cambios en la tecnología se derivan de las habilidades que tienen o desarrollan sus empleados. Amazon es un ejemplo del impacto que pueden tener estos

cambios. Desde 2004, cuando los ingenieros de software que trabajaban para Amazon se dieron cuenta de que la forma en que Amazon construía centros de datos flexibles y potentes podía generalizarse para permitir a cualquier empresa, por una tarifa, ejecutar su tecnología en los Servicios Web de Amazon y eliminar a todos los trabajadores bien pagados que dirigían centros de datos individuales, AWS ha crecido hasta proporcionar 62.000 millones de dólares en ingresos y tres cuartas partes de las ganancias de Amazon en 2020, según los analistas de Wall Street.

Una forma de que una empresa tecnológica se asegurara de tener empleados que

pudieran desarrollar nuevas tecnologías era contratar a todas las personas calificadas que pudiera para investigación y desarrollo, así como a representantes de ventas que pudieran vender lo que se producía. Esto significaba que contrataban a muchos trabajadores, especulando con que podrían necesitarlos si aumentaban las ventas.

Ahora que hay menos demanda de lo que producen, las empresas tecnológicas tratan de reducir costes para operar con beneficios. Para ello eliminan trabajadores. Las cifras de desempleo siguen siendo bajas, pero los despidos masivos en el sector tecnológico indican que la recesión que se avecina será aguda. □

MUNDO OBRERO



Manifestantes protestan contra la campaña del gobernador anti-LGBT+ Ron Desantis a mediados de noviembre, Fort Myers, Florida.

Revelate, hazte escuchar, siénte orgullo... ¡y organízate!

Los ataques anti-LGBT+ han sido agresivos e implacables — desde cientos de proyectos de ley punitivos hasta un ataque mortal contra personas — homosexuales, trans, heterosexuales — en el Club Q. Las mezquinas voces burlonas han sido ruidosas en la radio, la televisión y las redes sociales.

Pero, inoticias de última hora! A pesar de estos ataques coordinados, las personas LGBT+ están muy por delante en la opinión pública. En una encuesta previa a las elecciones de mitad de mandato realizada por la Campaña de Derechos Humanos y la empresa de análisis de datos Catalyst, los votantes clasificaron las cuestiones LGBT+ en un lugar tan bajo entre los temas que les preocupan que la atención sanitaria y la participación en deportes de los transexuales quedaron en último lugar con sólo un 5%, frente a la preocupación sobre la inflación con un 59%.

En general, la gente -aunque no se identifique como LGBT+- no ve la fluidez de género o la sexualidad queer como una amenaza. Una minoría muy pequeña es despiadada y asesina.

Esta encuesta equivale a un amplio sondeo de opinión pública: una comprobación de la realidad de hasta qué punto las personas LGBT+ han creado un futuro del sexo, el género y la sexualidad que refleja el amplio y hermoso espectro de la vida humana.

Así que hagámonos cargo de la realidad y del valor y la épica historia de la organización. Recordemos las grandes victorias que se han conseguido con coordinación e inteligencia y determinación, por un movimiento amplio y decidido del que Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero ha formado parte desde el principio.

Estábamos organizando en 1975, cuando la derecha estaba empezando a meter fundamentalistas cristianos en la legislatura de Carolina del Norte para oponerse a

la Enmienda de Igualdad de Derechos. Debatimos en las bibliotecas públicas contra el Foro Eagle, contrario a la igualdad, mientras ellos temblaban de miedo con la transfobia y las tácticas de miedo de que hombres y mujeres “usaran los mismos baños”.

Luchamos contra la campaña de desprestigio de Anita Bryant de Florida en 1977 para “Salvar a nuestros hijos”. Hicimos retroceder la odiosa Enmienda Briggs de California en 1978, que amenazaba con prohibir a todas las personas LGBT+ enseñar en las escuelas públicas. En 1987 nos unimos con la mayor manifestación de desobediencia civil y detenciones de la historia ante el Tribunal Supremo de Estados Unidos, después de que los jueces confirmaran el infame caso Bowers contra Hardwick para mantener las leyes de “crimen contra natura” en los libros, dejándonos marcados como delincuentes en muchos estados.

Salimos del armario ante amigos, familiares, compañeros de trabajo y jefes, y celebramos marchas estatales y nacionales año tras año. Y en 2003, once historiadores de la comunidad LGBT+ presentaron un escrito ante el Tribunal Supremo que destripaba las actitudes religiosas intolerantes y las mentiras históricas utilizadas para defender el caso Bowers, lo que dio lugar a la sentencia Lawrence contra Texas, que despenalizó nuestra sexualidad.

En 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges afirmó el derecho al matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo, y las encuestas Gallup concluyeron que el apoyo público a la igualdad matrimonial alcanzó el 50% en 2011, el 60% en 2015 y el 70% en 2021.

Estos detalles no hacen más que arañar la superficie de la organización diaria, decidida, arriesgada, estimulante e imaginativa que ha transformado la cultura social y familiar en Estados Unidos.

Las personas trabajadoras y oprimidas han creado

MUNDO OBRERO editorial

La especulación tecnológica quiebra: decenas de miles de despedidos

Por G. Dunkel

Decenas de miles de trabajadores del sector tecnológico han sido despedidos este año de 2022.

Las estimaciones varían, dependiendo de cuándo se empiece a contar -enero o junio- y de cómo se clasifique a los trabajadores. La clase capitalista, que ha utilizado la “alta tecnología” para bajar los salarios de los trabajadores en múltiples industrias, ahora está tratando de bajar los salarios de los trabajadores de alta tecnología.

Algunas empresas, en particular Amazon, tienen importantes operaciones tanto en tecnología como en ventas al por menor. Los 400.000 trabajadores de los almacenes de Amazon, que afrontan una ajetreada temporada de vacaciones, no se han visto afectados por los despidos, pero 10.000 trabajadores de Amazon Web Services, que prestan servicios vitales de procesamiento de datos a miles de empresas, sí han sido avisados.

Según el grupo comercial CompTIA, unos 175.700 trabajadores han encontrado empleo en el sector tecnológico este año. Al mismo tiempo, Meta, el gigante del comercio electrónico y empresa matriz de Facebook, ha anunciado que va a despedir a más de 11.000 trabajadores, alrededor

del 13% de sus empleados. Twitter, actualmente de actualidad tras la adquisición por parte del multimillonario de extrema derecha Elon Musk, ha recortado alrededor de 3.700 trabajadores, y 1.200 trabajadores de Twitter han renunciado. Lyft, el principal competidor de Uber, despidió a 700 de su administración; Stripe, una gran empresa de pagos en línea, a otros 1.100.

Intel, el principal fabricante estadounidense de chips, está ligado al mercado de los ordenadores personales. Debido a las previsiones de un fuerte descenso de las ventas de ordenadores personales, Intel ha anunciado que la empresa reducirá sus costes en \$3.000 millones en 2023 y entre \$8.000 y \$10.000 millones en 2025, lo que implica que se avecinan grandes despidos.

Los despidos de Meta van acompañados de una tremenda caída del valor de sus acciones. Valorada en un billón de dólares hace tan sólo un año, el valor de la empresa, medido por su cotización en la bolsa de valores ha caído a una cuarta parte de lo que era en su punto más alto. La caída de las acciones de Meta es aproximadamente la misma que la de las criptomonedas en el mismo periodo. Según el New York Times del 10 de noviembre, “Acciones como Meta, Microsoft, Amazon

y Apple han sufrido pérdidas asombrosas [en valor de mercado] este año”.

Las empresas tecnológicas suelen adoptar una estrategia que implica operar con pérdidas durante mucho tiempo para crear o dominar un mercado, confiando en sus inversores para evitar la quiebra. Cuando los inversores saben que una empresa tecnológica sigue esa estrategia, el precio de sus acciones no suele verse afectado.

Un buen ejemplo es Amazon. Amazon se fundó en 1994 y no tuvo ganancias durante un año hasta 2003, aunque ya era una empresa multimillonaria desde años antes.

La actual caída de los valores de mercado de varias empresas no es una decisión empresarial consciente. Refleja fuerzas económicas generales. En lo que afirma es su objetivo de controlar la inflación, que es más alta ahora que en cualquier otro momento desde la década de 1980, la Reserva Federal ha estado subiendo los tipos de interés y ha dejado claro que el precio de pedir dinero prestado, también llamado interés, va a seguir siendo alto durante un tiempo.

La estrategia de la Reserva Federal encarece la especulación de los capitalistas y hace estallar las burbujas especulativas de las empresas que operan con



pérdidas.

Las grandes pérdidas en los valores bursátiles sacuden la economía capitalista. Pueden conducir a una recesión, que castiga a los trabajadores, ya que a menudo pierden su empleo. Perder un empleo golpea a los trabajadores, que, en la mayoría de los casos, viven de cheque en cheque. A menudo pierden importantes prestaciones, además de su cobertura sanitaria.

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