



March protests union-busters

By Tony Murphy
New York City

The June 7 Starbucks union win in Memphis, Tennessee, showed that the bosses’ tried-and-true, union-busting tactics aren’t working like they used to. In the face of the February racist firing of the Memphis 7, election tampering by the bosses and constant anti-union interference, workers at that store still voted 11-3 for the union.

Workers’ victories at Starbucks, Amazon and other workplaces are happening in the face of anti-union retaliation

campaigns, with more firings and cuts in workers’ hours and benefits.

That’s why activists with Workers Assembly Against Racism (WAAR) hit the streets June 9 with a ‘March on Union-Busting Billionaires.’ The raucous, militant protest — accompanied by the steady, pro-worker beat of the Rude Mechanical Orchestra — started at the penthouse of Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz and ended at the luxury apartments of Amazon boss Jeff Bezos.

June 9 was chosen because that was the day a federal judge began hearing the National Labor Relations Board

suit demanding the reinstatement of the Memphis 7. Just the day before, an Arizona federal judge rejected the reinstatement of three Arizona Starbucks union supporters. What the NLRB can do for workers is limited; WAAR activists wanted to make sure that in the broad fight against union-busting, on the workers’ side is not just NLRB lawyers in the courtroom but protesters on the bosses’ doorsteps.



‘March Against Union-Busting Billionaires,’ June 9, New York City.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Justice for Patrick Lyoya!

Patrick Lyoya was a 26-year-old Congolese immigrant, who had his whole life to look forward to until it was tragically cut short by a bullet to the back of his head.

That bullet came from the gun of a white police officer in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on April 4, which happened to be the 54th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The police officer, Christopher Schurr, claimed he acted in self-defense when he shot Lyoya following a traffic stop for a questionable license plate. The police department also attempted to demonize

Lyoya based on an autopsy, saying that Lyoya had a high concentration of alcohol in his blood.

What has become commonplace, woven into U.S. society, is that another young unarmed Black person was gunned down for no other reason, except driving while Black — while white supremacists like Dylann Roof and Kyle Rittenhouse are treated with kid gloves by police.

Since the public lynching of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in May 2020, Black people continue to be killed by police at more than double the rate of

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BOOK REVIEW

Leon Trotsky’s ‘History of the Russian Revolution’

By Susan Schnur

How does a person begin to write a book review of “The History of the Russian Revolution” by Leon Trotsky? Just reading the 3-volume, 1,400-page classic seems like a daunting task. But there is so much in it — history, theory and sometimes humor!

There are many published histories of the October 1917 proletarian victory in Russia. Trotsky writes from the Bolshevik point of view vs. countless volumes from the defeated capitalist class.

Trotsky himself thought “Ten Days that Shook the World” by John Reed was a very accurate account of the October Revolution and was written in a more popular way. It is worth reading. But to dig deep into the analysis of people, conditions and strategies of the class struggle in imperialist Russia — this can be gleaned through reading Trotsky’s own words.

Much of the book is a detailed history of the nine months of dual power between the Provisional Government, representing the capitalist state, and the Soviets, representing the workers, soldiers and peasants. That is important stuff, but it is the political analysis which is so enlightening.

Many points that Trotsky makes are applicable to the struggles today. He explains why the revolutionary movement must be cognizant of the uneven development of the various nationalities which were part of the Russian Empire. Trotsky explains in a careful and thorough way the conditions that were unique to Russia.

Every country has its own distinctive history and problems. However, there is one thing which Trotsky as well as all the great revolutionaries agree upon: that Marxism is the best tool for the emancipation of the working class.

The love and confidence Trotsky has for the workers shines through. It is a commitment to study such a long book, but 30 minutes a day becomes a habit; and when Volume Three is “The Triumph of the Soviets,” the book becomes so exciting it’s hard to put down!

The ruling class in the current epoch of decaying capitalism is grossly misjudging the smarts and abilities of the workers and oppressed to organize themselves, just like how the czar and the lackeys of the capitalist class

sneered at the toiling masses and peasants in 1917.

In the concluding chapter of “The History of the Russian Revolution,” Trotsky responds to the comments of an arrogant bourgeois general:

“Who would believe,’ wrote one of the Russian generals, Zalesky, expressing his indignation at the workers running the country, that the janitor or watchman of the court building would suddenly become Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals? Or the hospital orderly, the manager of the hospital; the barber a big functionary; yesterday’s ensign, the commander-in chief; yesterday’s lackey or common laborer, burgomaster (mayor); yesterday’s train oiler, chief of division or station superintendent; yesterday’s locksmith, head of the factory?”

“Who would believe it? They had to believe it. It was impossible not to believe it, when ensigns routed the generals, when burgomasters (mayors) from the ranks of common labor put down the resistance of yesterday’s lords, [when] train oilers regulated transport, and locksmiths as directors revived industry.”

The working class of the USSR held power for 74 years. Workers and oppressed people of the world will unite and rise again. We have nothing to lose but our chains! □



The 1917 revolution began when women textile workers from the Vyborg side of St. Petersburg (Petrograd) went on strike March 8 (Feb. 23, old calendar) in protest against shortages of bread. By the end of the afternoon, 100,000 workers were on strike.

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WORKERS WORLD

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Vol. 64, No. 24 • June 16, 2022
Closing date: June 15, 2022
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A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.
Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.

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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Capitalism is killing our children

By Betsey Piette

It is incomprehensible that Washington politicians could sit through the hours of gut-wrenching testimony from the loved ones of victims of recent gun violence in Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas, and not be moved. Yet this seems to be the case.

Speakers included Uvalde teacher Arnulfo Reyes, who survived his own gun wounds. He tearfully described witnessing the shooter massacre 11 of his students. Pediatrician Dr. Roy Guerrero, who helped identify slain children including some who were decapitated, described one child identified only by her distinctive green sneakers. One 11-year-old student, Miah Cerrillo, tearfully described covering herself in another child's blood just to survive.

Garnell Whitfield Jr., whose 86-year-old mother Ruth Whitfield was a victim of the Buffalo massacre, pleaded with the politicians to do something: “You’re elected to protect us, to protect our way of life. I ask every one of you to imagine the faces of your mothers, as you look at mine, and ask yourself, is there nothing that we can do?”

So many witnesses asked the House representatives: “Why aren’t you protecting the people you were elected to serve?” Yet in truth they are.

Regardless of who voted for them, these politicians see their primary role as protectors of the profits of the capitalist class, in particular the interests of corporations and lobbyists, like those of the National Rifle Association who fund their campaigns. They are servants of the

capitalist state, and as such their job was never to protect the lives and well-being of the majority of people in the U.S.

As of 2020 guns became the leading cause of death among people ages 1 to 19 in the U.S., according to the Gun Violence Archive, which has documented at least 254 mass shootings in the U.S. so far this year.

What is needed is a ban on the sales of assault weapons, like the AR-15 used by the Texas shooter. Developed as weapons of war, they were never intended for domestic and civilian use, yet millions flood the market in the U.S. today. So why is a ban not likely to happen in the U.S. under its current capitalist economic system?

Regardless of who voted for them, these politicians see their primary role as protectors of the profits of the capitalist class, in particular the interests of corporations and lobbyists, like those of the National Rifle Association who fund their campaigns. They are servants of the capitalist state, and as such their job was never to protect the lives and well-being of the majority of people in the U.S.

Children as collateral damage

Even as mass shootings were increasing in the U.S., President Joe Biden and Congress hypocritically voted seven different times to spend hundreds of millions on weapons to be sent to Ukraine. U.S. weapons expenditures amount to \$135 million a day.

U.S. corporations have grown rich and powerful from imperialist wars. During the war in Vietnam, the image of a young Vietnamese girl badly burned by napalm helped fuel broader opposition to the war. Since then the imperialists have tried to

desensitize the population at home to the violence it carries out around the world.

The U.S. stopped allowing reporters to cover combat zones during the first Iraq war, unless they were embedded in U.S. battalions. They brushed aside the slaughter of children in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere as “collateral damage”—what happens in wars.

This policy now extends to schools in this country. Schools and neighborhoods are being turned into war zones, with children as collateral damage. This is the cost of allowing unfettered access to gun-sale markets for companies that produce weapons intended for war but increasingly sold to the public.

And the surplus of equipment produced for military conflicts abroad is increasingly made available for domestic use. Witness the police forces that used tanks and other combat equipment to attack activists protesting the police murders of George Floyd in 2020 and Michael Brown in 2014.

Biden and Congress want us to believe that state violence is disconnected from the violence carried out by individuals. In truth, foreign policy is the extension of domestic — and it’s a two-way street.

Mass outpouring in protests

On June 11, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators turned out in Washington, D.C., and in over 400 other U.S. cities for protests against gun violence. The rallies



Protest at the White House, February 2018.

were organized by March for Our Lives, first created by students who survived the 2018 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School mass shooting in Parkland, Florida.

It is clear that people want to be safe while buying groceries or attending places of worship. Students want to be safe at school. At the same time, workers and oppressed people have the right to self-defense against white-supremacist forces, such as the 31 masked Patriot Front extremists who planned to attack an Idaho Pride event June 11.

In an effort to undermine this movement, on June 12 news surfaced that a group of 20 senators may have struck a bipartisan agreement on gun-safety measures. Their emerging package could require extra scrutiny for gun buyers under 21, grants to states to implement so-called red flag laws and new spending on mental health treatment and school safety.

Even if this measure managed to pass a Senate vote, it would do little to address the fundamental problem. Jacqueline Lugman with Black Agenda Report said it well: “When the U.S. stops enabling the carnage all over the world as a business model, maybe then we’ll stop seeing the blowback on our streets.” (June 8) □

NYPD, hands off People’s Forum

The following is a press statement from The People’s Forum, which was attacked by the far-right, enabled by New York police, on June 3. Go to the Forum’s website at tinyurl.com/yckzx5dh.

Since our founding in 2018, our space, The People’s Forum (TPF), has been the target of multiple attacks by the far-right on both social media and in our location. We have managed to defend our space, which operates on values and principles of social justice and people power. Most recently a coalition of anti-vaxxers, Cuban and Venezuelan anti-communists, and other far-right



PHOTO: PEOPLES FORUM
NYPD and rightwing forces occupy The People’s Forum, June 3.

reactionaries have increased their attacks on TPF. Today, over a dozen officers of the New York Police Department (NYPD) entered TPF, uninvited, and acted as security for the far-right who carried out an illegal attack on our space.

We ground and pride ourselves in organizing our own safety and coordinating with other organizations to defend and protect each other. Today, as many of TPF staff and leadership are in Los Angeles building The People’s Summit for Democracy, this far-right coalition attempted to forcefully

occupy our space as part of a larger strategy against TPF’s politics and mission. The NYPD facilitated the attempted occupation by objectively preventing us from ejecting these far-right reactionaries. They allowed for the occupation attempt to continue for over an hour, while our staff and guests were physically assaulted and verbally harassed, and anti-vaxxers vandalized our space.

Today, this far-right coalition was driven out of the space by the strong stance and resistance of TPF staff and fellow comrades who protected the space. Rest assured, we will continue to uplift our socialist values and be a welcoming space for working people and all those who want to transform society for the better. □

Rayshard Brooks’ life matters

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

June 12, 2022. The second anniversary of the shooting death by Atlanta police of Rayshard Brooks was marked at the site of the Wendy’s restaurant where it took place. Scores of people from the community — young activists, leaders of multiple organizations, poets and drummers and other family members who have experienced the same loss at the hands of state agents — assembled with flowers, photos, balloons and signs.

Rayshard Brooks, 27-years-old, had fallen asleep at the wheel of his car as he was waiting in the drive-through line. The police were called, and after many minutes of

conversation between Brooks and the officer, where Brooks had offered to walk to his sister’s nearby home, a second cop decided to place him under arrest for driving under the influence. Brooks attempted to run away after grabbing the officer’s taser and was shot twice in the back.

At the time, thousands of people responded to this shooting of yet another Black man by shutting down the nearby interstate and occupying the Wendy’s location for weeks. Although the two police officers involved were indicted, no trial dates have been set. In fact two days ago, the cops filed a federal lawsuit charging they were illegally arrested and prosecuted.

The crowd pledged to get justice for Brooks’ family. Say his name: Rayshard Brooks! □



Mourners at the funeral of Rayshard Brooks, June 23, 2020.

Migrant construction workers demand safe working conditions

By Monica Moorehead
New York City

The day after May 1 — International Workers Day — a group of immigrant construction workers, mainly from Guatemala, launched the Cabricanecos campaign at an early morning action in Brooklyn, protesting dangerous working conditions they face daily throughout all New York City boroughs. This campaign represents 40 workers.

These courageous workers prepared a letter listing their demands. While their supporters looked on, the workers surrounded one boss’s car in an attempt to give him their demands. The boss refused to take the letter, but the point made by workers rang loud and clear: they want to be treated with dignity and respect like all workers. This May 2 action was only the beginning of a protracted struggle.

The workers are represented by the Laundry Workers Center, a majority-migrant organization, which, according to their Facebook page, “addresses the need for community-based leadership development geared toward improving the living and working conditions of workers in the laundry and food service industries, as well as their families. Our work aims to combat abuses such as landlord negligence, wage theft and hazardous and exploitative working conditions, all of which are endemic in low-income communities in New York City and New Jersey.”

While the LWC is not an official union, its main goal is to show low-wage workers that they have the right to organize and fight for better conditions, even if they don’t have a union.



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN
Mahoma López speaks along with Cabricanecos construction workers at May Day rally, Union Square, New York City, organized by Workers Assembly Against Racism (WAAR).

On April 30, Mahoma López, Co-Executive Director of the LWC, spoke to Workers World about the plight of these workers. Better salaries is a main demand, but just as important is the serious concern for the lack of protection on the job. Many of these construction sites don’t provide masks or respirators to protect the workers from asbestos and other debilitating and life-threatening chemicals that they face carrying out demolition cleaning at these sites.

These workers are also left without harnesses to protect them while working from heights. Any accidents can and have led to serious injuries and even death.

In June 2021 alone, over 300 construction sites in New York City — a third of them in Brooklyn — were shut down for numerous safety violations. (N.Y. Daily News, June 26, 2021)

López explained, “The workers suffer a lot of injuries, because the company doesn’t provide minimum help, safety protections and protocols. The company forces the workers to carry heavy materials. And the result is that the workers have a lot of pain in the shoulders, backs and knees.

“There is a lot of emotional stress, too, because they have to finish filling trucks in a very fast way. Sometimes they are carrying these materials from the sixth floor, seventh floor, with no elevator down to the main floor. They don’t even have brooms or other minimal things like garbage bags.

“This is an industry-wide problem, because a lot of contractors basically don’t even care about laws to protect the workers.” Providing these kinds of protections for these workers means cutting into their profits.

Another result of the inhumane

treatment by these contractors has been the stress suffered not only by workers but by their families, starting with their life partners. Many of these workers don’t want to return to work due to the potential breakup of families.

Significance of May 2

The workers decided to carry out their action on May 2, because construction sites were shut down on Sunday, May 1. López stated, “This is the International Day of the Immigrants here in New York. Our action on May 2 is called Liberation Day to show the employers that we are here; we are strong; the community is here with us, and we are demanding structural changes for the better.

“We say that nobody deserves to die on the job. May 2 is the continuation of May 1 especially in this huge industry, when workers die every day because of negligence by employers. This is a worker justice campaign, which means to come face-to-face with the employer, and basically to win a victory against the employer demands a lot of different resources. A campaign for these construction workers will expose all the problematic working conditions and exploitation in the fight to build a better future for these workers and their families.”

López emphasized the need for direct actions like the one on May 2 as a powerful tool to put pressure on the employer to negotiate with the workers and to build community support. This campaign is not only for the workers in New York City, it is a global struggle. You can get more information on the Cabricanecos campaign at bit.ly/3KvQwXm. □

AFL-CIO convention must unconditionally support Puerto Rico’s unions

COMMENTARY

This article is by a guest author who is a member of the construction trades and a member of the AFL-CIO. The 2022 convention of the AFL-CIO was held in Philadelphia June 12-15.

Every four years the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations meets in a convention to talk about its achievements and what must be accomplished in the near future. You will hear many speakers from the building trades, teachers unions, service workers, etc., in consonance when it comes to who they support politically, trade deals that affect them, infrastructure projects that they think are warranted and so on.

What you won’t hear even mentioned with a whisper is the union-busting activities in Puerto Rico by the Electrical Workers union (IBEW). Another topic that will not be brought up is the American Federation of Teachers’ failure to support Puerto Rican teachers in their fight against austerity measures, brought on by a dictatorial fiscal control board, to reduce pensions, sick pay, holiday pay and bonuses, which were hard-fought battles against anti-union governors on the island.

In the present struggle, both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win unions (which split from the AFL-CIO) have gone against the teachers’ union in Puerto Rico. Change to Win in the past refused to support striking teachers in Puerto Rico and instead favored the colonial



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE
Damage to power lines in Puerto Rico from Hurricane Maria, 2017.

government in Puerto Rico.

You will not hear at the AFL-CIO convention about Puerto Rico’s illegal debt and how it must be paid to Wall Street through pension cuts, privatization and reduction of services. Nor will it be mentioned that IBEW Local 222 members crossed picket lines of the outside line workers’ union in Puerto Rico, Electrical Industry and Irrigation Workers Union (UTIER).

You will not hear about the IBEW support of contractors like Luma Energy (subsidiary of Quanta Services and Atco), which has been given the contract to rebuild Puerto Rico’s electrical grid from damage caused by Hurricane Maria in 2017. Luma has not upgraded the electrical grid and has also not incorporated wind and solar power onto the grid. It is just reaping the profits of its contract.

Nothing will be said about Luma’s transparency issues, lack of quality

service and lack of sufficient workers to do the job. Luma has done such a poor job, and it has hiked electrical rates six times in less than a year of service.

One thing that will totally be ignored by the AFL-CIO is Puerto Rico’s political status as a colony of the U.S. and the need to support workers’ rights and end this abusive relationship.

Return to labor’s radical past!

Union organizing in the U.S. dates back to the early 19th century but gathered strength during the Great Depression of the 20th century. Leaders of the union movements then were from the far left — communist, socialist and anarchist. Government forces attacked union organizers, using violence as well going to the extreme of assassinating leaders. Unions would fight back by organizing and defending themselves from repressive forces, which they had a right to do.

Many of these unionists in the 1930s were sympathetic to the Bolshevik Revolution, in which workers took power away from the czar in Russia and put the wealth in the hands of the working class, which would transform the Soviet Union’s economy, as well as have an impact all over the world. With a strong, noncollaborationist approach toward the bourgeoisie, that labor movement created an environment which witnessed the eradication of child labor, and establishment of workers’ rights, collective bargaining,

benefits, job health and the eight-hour workday plus overtime pay.

These accomplishments of unions we applaud and bow our heads to. What we don’t applaud is where much of the union movement is going in this country. The union leaders no longer challenge corporate America, instead aligning themselves with either of the two corporate parties without realizing the dire consequences that this merger produces. The AFL-CIO follows the mainstream media’s position on war. There is no fundamental solidarity with workers in other countries.

The two labor federations adhere to the old Cold War mentality, denouncing communism when they should be denouncing capitalism and its exploitative policy toward the working class around the world. They refuse to challenge the police state as well as U.S. foreign policy, which has led to the decline of unions and organizing efforts worldwide. This has resulted in the labor movement’s docile leadership becoming vassals to capital and obstructors to progress.

Given how they treat Puerto Rican workers, imagine what African Americans and all other oppressed workers in this country must think about the leadership of the AFL-CIO. This is why it is time for new and progressive leadership within the ranks of the AFL-CIO. This can only happen when the membership stands up to its leadership, reverses course and returns to the radical days of the past. □

Labor turns out for Amazon union leader

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

Amazon Labor Union President Christian Smalls spoke to over 200 Cleveland unionists and allies June 9. The North Shore Labor Federation organized the solidarity meeting, held at United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 1250's hall. Cleveland was stop number three on the ALU's "Hot Labor Summer" tour.

The meeting was in a question-and-answer format, with Federation Executive Secretary Dan O'Malley asking questions and Smalls providing thoughtful answers. Audience questions followed.

What was the secret to a new, independent union beating a Goliath corporation like Amazon?

"Number one for us was building and earning trust, and that's something that Amazon fails at miserably," Smalls said. "We were doing things Amazon would never do. And the biggest thing was love. We showed that we cared, that we loved one another."

UAW Local 1250 President Wilma Thomas and American Federation of



Amazon Labor Union President Chris Smalls with United Auto Workers members, Cleveland, June 9.

Musicians President and North Shore Labor Federation Treasurer Leonard DiCosimo spoke, along with fired Amazon union organizer Joey Desatnik.

Desatnik began promoting unionism to his co-workers at the CLE2 Amazon warehouse in March. After signing up over 200 potential union supporters in May, Amazon fired him for an alleged "security infraction." The National Labor Relations Board is investigating Desatnik's complaint. Desatnik spoke on how inspired he was by the Amazon Labor Union's April 1 victory. □



Cleveland labor activists give a standing ovation to Amazon Labor Union President Chris Smalls, June 9.

March protests union-busters

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Island victory election.

ALU's lawyers have had to fight Amazon's lawyers just to keep the NLRB proceedings public, though all such hearings normally are. "The only thing that Amazon would accomplish by closing this hearing is to hide from the world how absurd, frivolous and bereft of evidence their 25 objections actually are," the union wrote.

The rally at Schultz's penthouse featured speakers and solidarity from other New York City workers' struggles, including Mahoma Lopez from the Laundry Workers Center and Brenda Stokely, former president of AFSCME District Council 1707 and a leader with the Million Worker March Movement.

WAAR leader Larry Holmes pointed out that the Starbucks boss's \$40-billion penthouse was formerly the site of St. Vincent's Hospital, once the epicenter of New York City's AIDS epidemic and an HIV center for the community. It was shut down in 2010 and is now a luxury residence for the ultrarich.

Along with Bezos and other CEOs, Schultz has earned his new identity as

a billionaire union-buster after years of crafting the image of a caring liberal. The day after the protest at his luxury Manhattan digs, he answered the question from a New York Times reporter — "Can Starbucks ever embrace the union?" — with one word: "No."

Observers pointed out that this answer is a violation of the National Labor Relations Act, since management is required to negotiate with unions in good faith. As of this writing, more than 130 Starbucks stores have voted to unionize.

In response to Schultz, Beto Sanchez, a leader of the Memphis 7, told Workers World: "An unfair labor practice charge has already been filed from that interview. Starbucks will always promise this or that or say that they will bargain in good faith, but Howard went up and said exactly how he felt — which is no surprise to us at Starbucks Workers United, having already dealt with them during bargaining calls." □



Philly celebrates Disability Pride

Disability advocates, the Philadelphia Freedom Band, and family, friends and allies joined together June 11 for the 10th annual Disability Pride PA parade to demand an inclusive society. MC Imani Barbarin, aka Crutches and Spice, with music by LACHI, 4 Wheel City, Gooch and the Motion and Danie Ocean, entertained the family-friendly event. There were vendors, food trucks and activities for children.

The photograph shows a marching

crowd of 100 diverse people, with a banner in the front that reads "Disability Pride Philadelphia, advocating for an inclusive world." To the left of the banner is Ms. Wheelchair Pennsylvania, Caitlin Chasar, and a person with a guide dog. To the right of the banner are two other people in wheelchairs, including Miss Wheelchair Pennsylvania USA, Anomie Fatale.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

The U.S.-led new Cold War ‘The Empire Strikes Back’

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

In a dynamic June 11 webinar, the Friends of Socialist China brought together a high-powered panel of speakers to explore the latest developments in, and increasing militarization of, the U.S.-led New Cold War.

"The Empire Strikes Back: Imperialism's Global War on Multi-Polarity" focused on desperate attempts by the U.S. to derail a realignment of nations in alliance with China. Multipolarity is a term related to the distribution of international power, in which more than two nation-states have nearly equal amounts of power.

Topics discussed included NATO, AUKUS (the alliance between Australia, the "United Kingdom" and the U.S.) and the military infrastructure of the New Cold War; the evolving China-Russia relationship and the West's response; President Joe Biden's administrative undermining of the One China Principle; the Solomon Islands and the West's plan for hegemony in the Pacific; NATO's plan for Ukraine and how this impacts China; and prospects for sovereign development in the Global South.

The webinar speakers included:

- Victor Gao, Vice President, Center for China and Globalization
- Ben Norton, editor of Multipolarista
- Li Jingjing, reporter, CGTN
- Jenny Clegg, author, "China's Global Strategy: Toward a Multipolar World"
- Danny Haiphong, author, "American Exceptionalism and American Innocence"
- Chris Matlhako, Second Deputy General Secretary, South African Communist Party
- Mustafa Hyder Sayed, executive director, Pakistan-China Institute
- Professor Ding Yifan, Senior Fellow, Taihe Institute, China
- Ju-Hyun Park, writer and organizer, Nodutdol for Korean Community Development
- Rob Kajiwar, President, Peace For Okinawa Coalition
- Sara Flounders, United National Antiwar Coalition, International Action Center
- Yury Tavrovsky, chairman, Russian-Chinese Committee for Friendship, Peace and Development
- Radhika Desai, moderator, the University of Manitoba and the International Manifesto Group.



The complete webinar "The Empire Strikes Back: Imperialism's Global War on Multi-Polarity" can be viewed at youtube.com/watch?v=n2Xplchk7g4

The carceral system: ‘an unspeakable atrocity’



By Sean Blackmon and Jacqui Luqman

The following is part one of an interview with Prisoners Solidarity Committee Co-chairs Mirinda Crissman and Teddie Kelly, which was conducted by Sean Blackmon and Jacqueline Luqman on the show “By Any Means Necessary” and broadcast on Sputnik Radio on June 11th. Listen to the full interview here: tinyurl.com/ypvsyrsz.

Sean Blackmon: Today we’re dealing with themes of exploitation and mass incarceration and issues with the racist immigration system here in the United States. We see that in particular in the case of 10-year-old Eliahna Cruz Torres, who was one of the victims, unfortunately, of the Uvalde shooting. Her father actually was not able to attend her funeral. Mirinda, I was hoping you could break down what happened here with Eliahna Cruz Torres and her father, and how this system has in a way really just poured salt in the wound wrought by this shooting.

Mirinda Crissman: Yeah, absolutely. Her father, Eli Torres, is behind bars in a penitentiary in rural Kentucky. And he was not granted release to go to the funeral of his slain daughter in this mass shooting that could have been prevented. He is an example of so many people who are separated from their loved ones because of prisons, jails and detention centers — just like Mr. Torres. People like the MOVE 9 or political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal. They are separated from their families when the passing of a loved one happens.

But the nature of these capitalist cages in general does this to so many thousands upon thousands of people, whether they’re in prisons, jails or detention centers, and particularly here in Texas. I definitely want to talk a lot about the detention centers in communities like

Uvalde and along the border.

Here in the United States, the border is considered anywhere within 100 miles of the lines drawn by imperialists, Border Patrol and other law enforcement agencies. They round up migrants on trespassing charges, particularly in Texas. I know Union Pacific Railroad has been collaborating with law enforcement and facilitated the arrests of over a thousand migrants in places like King County, Texas.

They will round up migrants under Governor [Greg] Abbott’s Operation Lone Star and put them in what have been Texas prisons that have been really redone to facilitate the caging of migrants, skirting all sorts of federal and international laws, just to hold people. Separating families is very much a colonial policy that’s been present on this continent since day one — the separation of families through chattel enslavement or residential schools of Native peoples. Here,

family separation very much is part and parcel of the United States settler-colonial project.

And it is infuriating what has happened to Mr. Torres and his family not being able to grieve over the loss of their daughter. But that is mass incarceration and modern-day enslavement here in the United States, which is why we have to abolish prisons, jails and detention centers. By their very nature, they are the enemy of working-class peoples.

Jacqui Luqman: I’m glad you raised the different issues regarding the Indian boarding schools and the prison-industrial complex. Because the idea of family separation and how that is used as a weapon against people

is not just one that we face here in this country and certainly not just related to or confined to North America. This is a

global issue. Just last summer, Khalida Jarrar, a Palestinian political prisoner and a leader in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was denied the opportunity to attend her daughter Suha Jarrar’s funeral.

When her daughter suddenly died at



Eliahna Cruz Torres, killed in Uvalde massacre, and Suha Jarrar, Palestinian freedom fighter pictured below, whose incarcerated parents were denied the right to attend their funerals.

the age of 31 and her funeral was conducted in her hometown of Ramallah, Khalida said, “the occupation robbed me. Israel’s occupation of Palestine robbed me of saying goodbye to my little bird, Suha, forcing me to say farewell with a flower from our lands instead of a kiss. When Suha came into the world, her father was incarcerated, and she is leaving it now with her mother behind bars.”

So understanding that the prison-industrial complex, the system of occupation, settler colonialism uses family separation as a weapon, how many family separations have there been over the centuries, and how are we still seeing that impact today?

Teddie Kelly: One of the first things I thought of when I heard about Eli Torres being denied the opportunity to say goodbye to his daughter, I thought of Khalida Jarrar. And like you mentioned, when her daughter, Suha — who was an amazing, amazing activist and environmental scientist, who studied the ecological and environmental effects of colonialism — passed away, Khalida was still in prison. And her father, Ghassan, who’s another leader of the Palestinian resistance movement, was incarcerated when she was born.

And we wanted to talk about Eli Torres, because this is a daily occurrence. Every day that families are separated because of the prison-industrial complex is an

ongoing atrocity. It is important that we talk specifically about the attacks historically against African people and the ongoing attempts to destroy organizing efforts of Black liberation organizers.

And one really can’t talk about the struggle of Indigenous peoples and nations against settler colonialism without talking about prisons. You alluded to the “Indian removal policies,” where the United States really pioneered the establishment of mass internment camps, what they called at the time in the 19th century, immigration depots.

We at the Prisoners Solidarity Committee maintain that U.S. prisons have been and continue to be concentration camps for the poor and the oppressed. And one function of this imprisonment is to prevent colonized people and oppressed people from fighting for their own national self-determination. And I think that the

history of the European and capitalist occupation of Texas is really brought to the fore.

But like Mirinda mentioned, Mumia Abu-Jamal, the MOVE 9, these are political prisoners who are right in my backyard in Philadelphia. This is true of Palestinian organizers. This is true of Leonard Peltier and Mutulu Shakur, political prisoners who are still behind bars for fighting for their right to organize and to determine their own fates.



Suha Jarrar

It’s something that, even in the face of an unspeakable atrocity, they still would not, in this extraordinary circumstance, let a father go to the funeral of his 10-year-old daughter — that speaks to the cruelty and the necessity for this system to maintain a carceral apparatus that we’re talking about here. □

Atlanta

‘What’s the Call? Free them all!’

Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

The defense committees for Mutulu Shakur, Imam Jamil Al-Amin (formerly H. Rap Brown) and Kamau Siddiqi, three Black liberation activists who have spent decades in prison under spurious charges, held a strategy session and a public rally in Atlanta June 11.

The common demand was for immediate release of these elders, who all suffer from chronic and life-threatening illnesses. The proposed campaign seeks to go beyond these three and address the large number of incarcerated older and infirm prisoners throughout the U.S. Prison conditions are bad for everyone, but medical neglect, deteriorating eyesight and hearing, mobility issues and cognitive loss create extreme dangers for

these elderly people.

Former political prisoners were some of those who traveled from other states to advocate elevating the pressure on state and federal officials to facilitate “compassionate release” allowed under current law.

A rally was held in West End Park, aka Malcolm X Park, later that day. Speakers included family members of the Panther prisoners, Atlanta activists, poets and musicians and defense committee members, several of whom are former political prisoners themselves.

Throughout the program, the crowd responded with enthusiasm to the emcee’s question: “What’s the Call? Free them all!” □



PA SCI-Greene

Hunger strikers protest solitary confinement conditions

By Betsey Piette

June 11 — Eleven incarcerated workers at Pennsylvania’s State Correctional Institution-Greene started a hunger strike June 7. As of this writing, their numbers have grown to 20. They are confined in what the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections calls the Intensive Management Unit (IMU), but prisoners call it “the hole.”

This is an even more restrictive isolation unit within the Restrictive Housing Unit (RHU) — an isolation section of the prison for individuals the state deems “uncooperative” for any number of reasons. Some individuals are on the Restricted Release List (RRL), started March 2021, which along with the IMU are permanent/indefinite solitary confinement units. The DOC uses these units to punish people who the DOC claims broke one of its many conflicting institutional policies.

In a statement sent to the Human Rights Coalition PA, one of the hunger strike leaders Michael Rivera explained their motivation. “Today they arbitrarily changed the procedures for us to go outside, and 90% of the men on my pod were denied their right to go to the yard. So, we’ve decided to stop cooperating on every level, until they start treating us like voluntary program participants, instead of RHU prisoners who are serving disciplinary sanctions.

“For weeks now they’ve been curtailing everyone’s privileges, simply because ‘the handbook says so,’ and we’re no longer

tolerating the weaponizing of this program against us. Just like before there are 11 of us that are actively resisting as of now, and we could use your help getting the word out, so that we can spotlight the abusive tactics we’re being forced to endure. As we already proved, sunlight is the best disinfectant when it comes to PIC [prison industrial complex] abuse.”

Rivera, a jailhouse lawyer, was moved to SCI Greene in retaliation for helping men with mental disabilities at SCI Phoenix file lawsuits. Since he has been at SCI Greene, Rivera filed several complaints about the nonexistence of a “handbook for guidance,” for the RRL program.

When the handbook finally came out, privileges were scaled back even if a prisoner had no disciplinary infractions. An attorney has picked up Rivera’s lawsuit challenging RRL.

Denial of access to legal resources

Striking incarcerated individuals have outlined their grievances. They raise that the strike was triggered by actions of staff. Rivera explained: “Every week they are taking [our] property, not allowing use of the law library/access to courts. It takes three weeks to get into the law library. [They are] telling us we can only have one legal box, despite the number of open cases.

“[The Department of Corrections] DOC is confiscating legal correspondence

from the courts — using wrong coding on envelopes. They are telling us even if we complete the program, there is no guar-



antee of [returning to] population, just ‘consideration’ [for returning to general population].”

The DOC is basically denying abuse complaints and not preserving any camera footage that would support prisoners’ claims. It is denying these incarcerated individuals access to parole, for which some are eligible. Solitary confinement makes it impossible for them to complete the necessary requirements for parole eligibility or consideration.

Other abuses

Prisoners have been stripped of two visits with families.

The prison provides inadequate, cold

and often uncooked food, while simultaneously denying access to food in the commissary. Even with that access, prisoners only obtain crackers and cookies rather than protein and other nourishing food.

When strikers missed their ninth meal, the prison retaliated by sending nurses to “check on” the prisoners, charging them \$25 per day for each visit regardless of whether they wanted the examinations. So far after four days, most strikers are doing well physically and don’t require medical attention. The “check” is clearly intended to financially penalize them for striking.

With limited outside support the men cannot afford these charges, which amount to a month of work

at prison wages of \$0.19 per hour. While they are in solitary confinement, individuals cannot work or receive any wages.

The Human Rights Coalition has a #SolidarityNotSolitary fund to put money on commissary for any individuals in “the hole.” This is an attempt to pay off the bogus fees for strikers, so “they can continue their righteous struggle without fear of financial retaliation from the institution!”

HRC urges people to call SCI Green Superintendent Michael Zaken at 724-852-2902 and George Little, Acting Secretary of Corrections, at 717-728-4109 on behalf of the striking prisoners.

Two years after a deadly COVID-19 outbreak and not one lesson learned

By Steve Brooks

This article previously ran as an op-ed piece in the Sacramento Bee.

For six and a half hours, the Greyhound-size prison bus bounced precariously along a highway from Chino north toward San Quentin. Incarcerated men in orange jumpsuits were tightly packed inside, with metal restraints uncomfortably wrapped around their waists and ankles. Some of them were coughing; others were sneezing. None of them knew that they were about to experience the worst epidemiological disaster in prison history.

On this two-year anniversary of the worst outbreak in prison history, I can still hear the sounds of incarcerated people kicking on cell doors screaming, “Let us out!” I still see visions of people collapsing on the stairwells because they couldn’t breathe. I can hear the alarms buzzing, the shuffling of boots, the jingling of keys and stretchers hitting the floor, the sirens from ambulances carting off residents. And I still remember thinking to myself, “Am I going to die?”

Since COVID-19 first arrived at San Quentin State Prison, infecting more than 2,000 incarcerated people and killing 29, lawmakers and the courts appear to be less concerned about the dismal conditions at the prison. Many of them contend that the vaccines are a game changer, but prisoners are still existing in a perpetual



Family members and prisoners’ rights activists gather in Sacramento to demand mass releases, August 30, 2020.

PHOTO: NO JUSTICE UNDER CAPITALISM

state of sickness.

Today, San Quentin has once again become the epicenter for another COVID-19 variant — the BA.2 subvariant of omicron. It’s a highly transmissible virus easily fueled by overcrowding and poor ventilation. As of today, 93% of the incarcerated population at San Quentin is vaccinated; yet this is the second time this year an outbreak has occurred.

Many of us are learning that vaccines are not enough to protect us.

As the rate of COVID-19 outbreaks accelerates, they hinder our way of life inside, through canceled visits with loved ones, lockdowns and no access to programming. The law library is closed, and

religious services and outdoor activities are severely limited. Despite this, incarcerated critical workers are forced to go to work — with the threat of dire consequences if they refuse.

Unvaccinated guards, incoming buses, overcrowding, poor ventilation, outbreaks and quarantines have all contributed to a general sense of unease. The San Quentin population now stands at almost 3,200, operating at over 100% capacity despite active COVID-19 outbreaks. More prisoners are transferred in from around the state every day.

There has been at least one COVID-19-related death of a prisoner at 33 of California’s 35 prisons. Yet the

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has not apologized for its failures, and Gov. Gavin Newsom neglects to issue urgent releases to protect the health and safety of those incarcerated.

We are seeing a defiant state of indifference, all while being caught up in a cyclical state of suspended animation in this COVID-19 matrix.

For those of us who still live here among the ruins and memories of the dead, this is our ground zero. Sometimes I wonder what it’s all worth — the heavy weight and constant quickening of my heartbeat triggered by sounds of screaming.

How long will lawmakers wait before they take action to address what’s going on inside our secret world? Will they wait until more of us are dead? We need lawmakers in power who are willing to take action to protect our lives, because COVID-19 isn’t going away.

What happened here at San Quentin — what continues to happen here, right now — is a violation of our humanity. When I see the prison buses roll in, full of incarcerated people dressed in orange, in each of our eyes is a vision of death. On this two-year anniversary of the worst outbreak in prison history, I can only say, “Here we go again.”

Steve Brooks is an award-winning incarcerated journalist who currently works at San Quentin News, a publication written and produced by the incarcerated.

Protest at the Piers

LGBTQ+ New York vs. right-wing DeSantis

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Outrage flared in New York City’s LGBTQ+ community with news that Florida’s ultraright-wing Gov. Ron DeSantis was scheduled to speak June 12 at a high-profile political event at Chelsea Piers in Manhattan. In March, he signed the infamous “Don’t Say Gay” bill that used sweeping language to prohibit or limit discussion of sexual orientation or gender identification in public schools.

In protest, the local community quickly organized a loud, moving picket line outside the Piers venue during DeSantis’ speech, with signs reading: “Say Gay!” “Not during Pride month — not ever” and “United against racism and fascism.”

Queer anger was strong, because DeSantis was scheduled to speak during Pride Month in a traditionally LGBTQ+ neighborhood and at the Piers — historically a site where defiant queer youth of color have socialized and organized politically, including during the groundbreaking Stonewall Rebellion era.

Even more outrageous was DeSantis’ appearance on June 12, the anniversary of the Pulse massacre in Orlando, Florida. In 2016, a bigoted gunman massacred 49 LGBTQ+ people, friends and family members and wounded 53 more, in a mass shooting at Puerto Rican dance night at the gay nightclub. Yet DeSantis blocked funding for mental health assistance for survivors of the massacre!

Other reactionary legislation signed by DeSantis bans abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, sets up investigations of nonexistent “election crimes,” redraws congressional maps to minimize voter impact by oppressed groups and prohibits public school instruction about racism and LGBTQ+ history — but requires the teaching of anti-socialist



LGBTQ+ community protests DeSantis’ speech, New York City, June 12.

propaganda in high schools. DeSantis continues his relentless attack aimed at LGBTQ+ people, organizations and issues. Most recently, he threatened to use Florida’s state child protective services to investigate parents for “sexual abuse of children,” if they “take their children to drag shows.” (nbcnews.com, June 9)

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Devin Cole, president of STRIVE (Socialist Trans Initiative) in Pensacola, Florida, commented on Facebook: “New rounds of laws being proposed in Florida

and Texas, trying to ban children from going to drag shows, would absolutely affect Pride events — an intentionally slippery slope toward the re-banning of ‘cross-dressing’ in public and the total criminalization of transgender people.”

While the right wing shouts the old lie that they are “protecting children” from queer people, hundreds of anti-LGBTQ+ hate bills being proposed and passed in some state legislatures are in fact endangering children.

A recently introduced Ohio bill would give legal permission for anyone to question the gender of a child athlete, who would then be forced to undergo an external and internal medical “genital inspection” to “verify” their gender before they could participate in sports activities. Opponents at a press conference June 9 named it “state-sanctioned sexual abuse.” (10tv.com)

Connection between LGBTQ+ and Palestinian liberation

Most corporate news sources identified the organization sponsoring DeSantis in New York as “the Jewish group Tikvah Fund,” or “a conservative Jewish group,” and described the event as a “Jewish

Leadership Conference.” This description is dangerously misleading as it implies “Jewish” is equal to “Zionist.” Why? Because the Tikvah Fund is a hard-line, pro-Israel, anti-Palestinian group that functions as a cog in the U.S. capitalist and military machine. The group’s goal — cloaked in euphemistic language on its web site — is to guarantee the continuation of the apartheid state of Israel and deny the liberation of Palestine. The chairperson of Tikvah’s Board of Directors is Elliott Abrams, who most recently served in former President Donald Trump’s State Department as U.S. Special Representative for Iran and Venezuela, with the goal of “destabilizing” those countries. The board includes Moshe Koppel, head of the right-wing Kohelet Policy Forum, which “strives to secure Israel’s future as the nation-state of the Jewish people” and which “quietly runs the Knesset.” (haaretz.com, Oct. 5, 2018)

Besides DeSantis, keynote speakers at the Tikvah conference included Mike Pompeo, former U.S. secretary of state and director of the CIA, and Ron Demer, former Israeli ambassador to the U.S. from 2013 to 2021.

Conference organizers tried to inoculate themselves against accusations of anti-LGBTQ+ bigotry by scheduling one speaker who identifies as nonbinary. (tikvahfund.org)

But DeSantis was the heavy hitter on LGBTQ+ issues with his speech, “The Florida Model and Why It’s Good for Religious Americans.” With it, he staked out his claim to right-wing reaction on the very site of the Stonewall Rebellion for LGBTQ+ lives. He is attempting to pave his way in furthering the unholy alliance of right-wing Christian nationalists and Zionist Jews, as he ramps up for a 2024 presidential campaign.

Our movement protests have to get bigger, louder, more militant and more fiercely driven by solidarity between oppressed groups to push back against rising right-wing aggression. □

Workers World celebrates LGBTQ2S+ Pride: ‘We won’t go back!’



A contingent from Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF), a youth affiliate of Workers World Party, at the 1974 New York City Pride march.

For over half a century, Workers World newspaper has covered the global struggle to end all forms of discrimination, persecution and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and gender-nonconforming communities.

WW consistently backed up our activist coverage with analysis. In the early 1970s, WW ran a series of articles that led to publication of “The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal” in 1976. Then in 1993, WW

the “Lavender & Red” series, which ran until 2008 in WW. A group of 25 articles from that series was later published as the book, “Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba.” Notify us if you want a free paper copy.

In 2012 Feinberg engaged in civil disobedience and wrote articles defending Black trans woman CeCe McDonald, who was charged with manslaughter after defending herself from a racist, bigoted attack.

In 2022 WW extensively covered

republished it as “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View,” with the first book’s original text and a new preface and afterword. (These and works below are available at workers.org/books.)

In 2004, WW managing editor and globally recognized transgender leader Leslie Feinberg began

resistance to the current storm of right-wing “Don’t Say Gay” and anti-trans, anti-youth laws sweeping the U.S. WW articles built resolve in the struggle for reproductive justice, pledging “We won’t go back,” and documented opposition to racist laws limiting the right to vote and the right to teach a people’s history of resistance to oppression.

WW reporters on the ground — from Buffalo, New York, to Portland, Oregon, to Brookwood, Alabama — celebrated the tremendous groundswell of worker organizing that won historic union victories against Amazon and Starbucks — victories fueled by the leadership and solidarity of young, multinational, queer, gender-nonconfirming workers.

Your help is needed!

If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program or renew your membership. The program was established 45 years ago so readers could help WW publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to fight for revolutionary change

leading to socialism. Since the early 1990s, the fund has helped sponsor the workers.org website. Throughout the pandemic when fewer print issues have been published due to staff health concerns, new articles have been posted daily, and the PDF of the weekly newspaper has been displayed at workers.org. Not one online issue has been skipped throughout this over two-year health crisis. For a donation of \$60 a year, or \$120 or \$300, you receive a subscription to WW newspaper and one, two or three free subscriptions for friends, depending on donation. A free download of the “What Road to Socialism?” book, published in 2020, is available at workers.org/books. Or notify us if you want a paperback book.

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

We are grateful for your help in building Workers World!

PRIDE in Cuba: ‘Bringing revolution’s humanity to all aspects of life’



#109

By Leslie Feinberg

The following is one installment of Feinberg’s “Lavender & Red” series on the intersection of LGBTQ+ and socialist history; this installment appeared Aug. 18, 2007, in Workers World newspaper. The 120-part series was published between 2004 and 2008 and can be downloaded free at workers.org/books. Some of the language that follows is from English translations that do not necessarily reflect current usage.

“I want to bring the revolution’s humanity to those aspects of life that it hasn’t reached because of old prejudices,” said Mariela Castro Espín — who has worked hard to eradicate prerevolutionary prejudices about same-sex love, transgender and gender variance in Cuba. (Reuters, June 29, 2006)

Castro Espín is director of Cuba’s National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), which has accomplished a great deal in a relatively short time to replace prejudices about same-sex love and transgender with positive attitudes.

CENESEX created its own internet website — www.cenesex.sld.cu — shortly after the 16th World Congress of Sexology met in Havana in March 2003. The Spanish-English site incorporates a section on sexual diversity, offers basic information and gives opportunities to consult with experts and to voice personal opinions.

The site gets right to the point about its objective — to “overcome the taboos and prejudices that persist about same-sex love: Being homosexual or bisexual is not a disease; it is not synonymous with perversity, nor does it constitute a crime.”

Homosexuality, the website makes clear, “is a sexual orientation that is not caused by seduction at any age; it is not contagious and is not acquired by educational defects or negative examples in the family environment. ...”

When asked by a BBC reporter in September 2006 whether perceptions about homosexuality had changed in Cuban society, Castro Espín answered, “I think so; it has changed very much.”

Work accomplished, work to do

Castro Espín said in the summer of 2004 that these developments are “the result of an effort of more than 30 years, and now we are seeing its fruits more clearly.” She told interviewer Eduardo Jiménez García: “I do believe that since the 1990s, there is greater acceptance of the presence of homosexuals by some portion of the population and public institutions. That does not mean that the contradiction has been resolved for all individuals at all levels of society.” (“Alma Mater,” *Journal of the University of Havana*, reprinted in *Green Left Weekly*, March 3, 2004)

Castro Espín added, “I think we are at a good moment to implement policies that are more explicit about the defense of the human rights of homosexuals, so that we are better prepared to confront any manifestation of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. I see this very humanistic attempt to achieve greater respect for the rights of homosexuals as the waging of a battle of ideas in our society. I believe this notion has to be part of the cultural and political battle, because that would mean a cultural, social and political strengthening for the Cuban Revolution. ...

“The Cuban Revolution has been possible because of the participation of all men and women, of all Cubans who have identified with the conquests and dreams of that social project. Among all those who have participated, there are also people of diverse sexual orientations.”

Don’t measure with imperial ruler

As earlier articles in this series documented, the CIA, Hollywood and corporate media try to deflect resistance to U.S. imperialism’s covert war against Cuba — and to the domestic discrimination, police brutality and bashing of same-sex-loving and gender-variant people commonplace in the U.S. — by focusing on the onerous tasks Cuba’s revolution faced in uprooting centuries of prejudice about same-sex love. Of course, each poisonous seed had been planted and cultivated by U.S. capitalism and, earlier, Spanish colonialism.

Today, the Cuban Revolution has made enormous strides in raising popular consciousness about sexual

liberation, including same-sex love. Building ties of unity between the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement in the U.S. and the Cuban Revolution requires conscious leadership of the most resolute anti-imperialist activists in the liberation movement for LGBT and other sexually, sex- and gender-oppressed peoples.

Yet some activists in the U.S. still argue that Cuba won’t have “passed the test” until lesbians and gays are “out” in Cuba with their own autonomous organizational formations.



Cuba’s National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), founded in 1988, based on a socialist and emancipatory paradigm, recognizes the right to sexuality as inalienable.

Lesbians and gay men in the U.S. and other capitalist countries are “out” in order to unite against shared and/or overlapping mechanisms of oppression.

Castro Espín stated categorically to journalist Mary Lamey via a translator, “There is no official repression of lesbians and gays in Cuba. What remains are social and cultural reactions that must be transformed, the same as in many other countries.” (Canada.com, *The Gazette*, July 29, 2006)

Cubans defining their own liberation

In a capitalist country, being “out” is not only an assertion of individual identity and personhood. The movement to end the oppression has to be “out” and independent as well.

That is because of the LGBTQ+ movement’s relationship to its own ruling class in capitalist countries. In the class struggle, it is imperative for the movement to break free of its own capitalist bosses and their ideology. In that case, the movement is only as powerful as it is independent.

But what about a socialist country in which the laboring class rules and is trying to build socialism in the liberated turf of a workers’ state? What would Cuban men who have sex with men, women who have sex with women, and bisexuals and transgender Cubans gain by identifying “away” from their own class?

Castro Espín addressed the question of organizing for change in Cuba in her 2003 interview with Eduardo Jiménez García. “I think the greatest difficulty is that there is no unifying and convincing project, because male and female homosexuals are as heterogeneous as heterosexuals,” she said. “Yet, I don’t see this as an obstacle; I see it as a complicated reality.

“I believe that male and female homosexuals should participate more in different loci of social and political discussion, despite the prejudices, so they can make their truth, their real need for equality, their beliefs known, in order to gain support from the scientific community, and in that way bring to bear arguments that can effect the changes that are necessary in society — and see that they are just.”

However, an international network of both LGBT social democrats — and those far to the right of them — has developed in the imperialist countries, particularly the U.S. and Britain. It makes an appeal to Cubans, and others in countries menaced by imperial powers, to identify first and foremost based on what is presumed to be

an identical and shared sexuality. In turn, this network asserts its readiness to defend gay and lesbian Cubans and others — but only against their own people, culture and national liberation struggle.

When aligned with overall and sometimes specific imperialist interests, such a position can offer a “left-cover” for regime change — through covert and/or military intervention.

Defend Cuba!

Cubans are defining their own liberation.

The Cuban Revolution merits the support of progressives and communists around the world, without demands that it measure up as “perfect” using an imperial ruler. A socialist revolution is a process, not a single act. Solving the economic and social problems that the capitalists cannot and will not tackle is the dynamic forward motion of revolution.

Regarding the revolution’s efforts to eliminate old prejudice against homosexuality, Fidel Castro concluded during a 1988 interview with a Galician television station: “Given that we can make mistakes, we obsessively follow the idea [of] what is just, right and best for the people and what is most humane for our people and our society. However, the task is not easy — I think that each time we get closer to the right criteria for making the world we want. Nonetheless, I think that we still have many faults, and that future generations will have to continue to perfect this new world.”

Bringing revolution’s humanity to all aspects of life

The whole population of Cuba — of all races, sexes, genders, sexualities, ages and abilities — does not need to be defended against its own culture or its own revolution. It needs and deserves defense against the U.S. blockade of its island and every other illegal act of imperialist war, overt and covert, which impedes revolutionary progress.

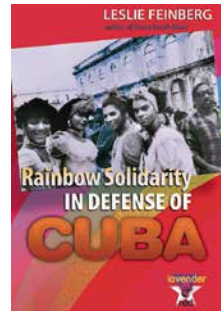
International support for Cuba’s right to sovereignty and self-determination will allow the island’s population to spend more time, energy and resources on socialist construction, rather than on defense.

It is the LGBT movements in the imperialist citadels that have to break with their own ruling classes in order to build bonds of genuine international solidarity. It’s a hard position to take. It requires ideological valor: the refusal to remain silent about the emperors’ “new” clothing.

In order to move forward toward their own liberation, the LGBTQ+ and other progressive movements in the U.S. and other capitalist countries have to combat anti-communism — which is, in the long run, a defense of capitalism — and develop a powerful anti-imperialist current that can extend its solidarity to Cuba and all countries fighting for their sovereignty and self-determination against finance capital.

The Cuban Revolution has had to take up the tasks that history presented it, including the eventual eradication of the legacies of racism, sexism and anti-gay bigotry. Revolutionary Cuba — the “hope of the hemisphere” — has done a better job dealing with its own tasks. □

Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba



By Leslie Feinberg, author of *Stone Butch Blues*

This book is an edited compilation of chapters 86 to 110 from the Lavender & Red series in Workers World newspaper that began in 2004.

Free PDF download available at www.workers.org/books/

Justice for Patrick Lyoya!

Continued from page 1

white people, although Black people make up just 13% of the U.S. population.

Lyoya could have easily become just another faceless statistic like the 1,000-plus people killed by police in 2021, according to data obtained by the Washington Post. But just as anti-police brutality protests exploded all over the country following Floyd’s murder, local protests supported by Lyoya’s family occurred daily in Grand Rapids and at the state capital, Lansing, demanding criminal charges be brought against Schurr.

Bringing any charges against police when there are civilian deaths is rare, especially when the victims are from oppressed communities. But that rare occasion did happen on June 9, when the Kent County prosecutor, Christopher Becker, brought a second-degree murder charge against Schurr, who had been on paid administrative leave since April 9.

This charge came as a surprise, since Grand Rapids, a working-class city, has a sordid history of police terror against young Black people. For example in 2017, the police drew guns on Black teenagers, ages 12 and 14, and

handcuffed an 11-year-old girl.

If convicted, Schurr could face a life sentence with the possibility of parole after serving 15 years. But this is a big IF. And who knows IF this charge would have happened at all, if the local protests had not shined a national spotlight on Lyoya’s murder in the first place.

Civil rights attorney Benjamin Crump, representing the Lyoya family, stated, “I think the biggest thing about today is that the prosecutor confirmed what we all knew was the charge — that this officer engaged in unnecessary, unjustifiable use of force when he executed Patrick Lyoya, an unarmed African immigrant, for a minor traffic violation.” (Washington Post, June 9)

Whatever demands come forward, Patrick Lyoya’s family and the Grand Rapids Black community should be supported. What they demand should be viewed as reparations for the police terror inflicted upon individuals and the community — to bring about some semblance of justice for this young man.

But ultimately the real justice will be won once the police — and the profit-driven capitalist system that they faithfully protect and serve — are abolished once and for all. □



Peter Lyoya and Dorcas Lyoya hold photo of their murdered son, Patrick.

Tijuana, Mexico

Workers’ Summit of the Americas

By Richie Merino

The Workers’ Summit of the Americas, a coalition of more than 50 trade unions and social organizations from North and South America, met in Tijuana, Mexico, on June 10-12. They gathered in response to the exclusion of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua from the Ninth Summit of the Americas, organized by the U.S. State Department. That summit was held in Los Angeles during the same time period.

Biden’s Summit of the Americas was a howling blunder, even in the view of the U.S. corporate media. Bloomberg News stated June 10: “President Joe Biden sought to put on a show of hemispheric unity at a Los Angeles summit this week, but boycotts, bluster and lackluster pledges instead exposed the shaky state of U.S. influence in Latin America.”

A different summit in Tijuana

Workers from across “Our Americas” gathered at the University of Tijuana to establish a permanent forum to advance the second emancipation of Latin America and the Caribbean in the face of the U.S. drive to impose economic and political hegemony in the region. Workers demanded an end to the unilateral coercive policies imposed by the U.S., including economic, financial and commercial blockades against the countries of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

“This Summit of the Workers raises the strategic purpose of combating labor and social violence applied to our peoples by U.S. and Canadian imperialism, warning of the current process of recolonization of our peoples expressed in the continuous exploitation of energy resources, environmental deterioration of our territories, the ongoing poverty, unemployment and job insecurity, gender violence, racism and the criminalization of migration,” said Enrique Ochoa, a core organizer of the summit and member of the Mexican Popular Revolutionary Front.

“This initiative aims to create a permanent forum of workers for solidarity and articulation of anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and anti-patriarchal struggles throughout Latin America, the Caribbean and North America to strengthen the bonds of friendship and international solidarity and to improve the



PHOTO: TERI MATTSO

Participants at the Workers Summit of the Americas, held in Tijuana June 10-12.

living conditions, [utilizing] the productive forces of our society,” said Benjamín Prado, another core organizer of the summit from Unión del Barrio, based in California.

Defense of peoples’ and workers’ sovereignty

Distinguished former presidents Evo Morales of Bolivia, Rafael Correa of Ecuador and Manuel Zelaya of Honduras — all of whose governments have been subjected to political subversion orchestrated by the U.S. and the Organization of American States (OAS), created by the U.S. in 1948 — made virtual appearances.

On June 11, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla questioned the results of the Ninth Summit of the Americas and its “Plan of Action on Democratic Governance,” calling it “unbalanced and biased,” because it “ignores the diversity and political and social pluralism of our region.” The Cuban diplomat recalled that both the United Nations and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) recognize that there is no single model of democracy, and that the right of nations to choose their own political, economic, social and cultural systems of development, free from U.S. interference, must be respected.

Regarding the “Plan of Action on Health and Resilience” signed at Biden’s Summit, Rodríguez Parrilla said that “because it

excludes, it becomes ineffective. The coordinated action of all states is essential to improve the health and welfare of [all] our peoples.”

Biden’s so-called Summit of the Americas was illegitimate, because the Americas include Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua. The Workers’ Summit gave a voice to the excluded by welcoming Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and former President of Bolivia Evo Morales to address the crowds virtually.

Cuba’s exclusion from the pandemic response plan is particularly egregious, given the island is internationally recognized as a powerhouse in health care. Not only are Cubans guaranteed high-quality health care as a human right, but their health care research capabilities are so advanced that Cuba has developed five different COVID-19 vaccines since the pandemic began. Furthermore, Cuba and China recently announced they are jointly developing a universal coronavirus vaccine, which would be effective against

multiple strains. But because of the U.S. blockade on Cuba, it will not be available to people living in the U.S.

Rally against U.S. border wall, blockades

The Workers’ Summit of the Americas concluded with a protest and rally at the Mexico-U.S. border wall, where activists denounced sanctions on Venezuela, the blockade against Cuba and the exclusion of these countries and Nicaragua from the summit. Fausto Torrez of the Asociación de las y los Trabajadores del Campo (ATC) of Nicaragua discussed the health, infrastructure and educational advances achieved by the Sandinista Revolution despite U.S. subversion attempts. He expressed solidarity with the Cuban and Bolivarian revolutions and sent a message repudiating the U.S./OAS Summit of the Americas.

Protesters at the border wall called for the freeing of U.S. political prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Julian Assange and Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab. June 11 marked two years since Saab was arbitrarily detained and kidnapped for defying U.S. sanctions, while on a humanitarian mission to acquire food and medicine for the people of Venezuela.

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In the end, Biden’s summit was overshadowed by the anti-imperialist, anti-colonial response to the exclusions, led by the Workers’ Summit of the Americas in Tijuana, Mexico, and the People’s Summit in Los Angeles.

At these two worker-organized summits, the problems facing the Americas were seriously debated, and solutions were proposed by the workers on the front lines against U.S. imperialism: the poor and marginalized majorities of the region.

For more information please visit official websites of the Workers’ Summit of the Americas (workerssummit.com) and The People’s Summit (peoplesummit2022.org).

A left-wing coalition shocks French politics

By G. Dunkel

While details and final results in France will have to wait until June 19 — when the second and last round of voting takes place — the results of the first round were clear enough to shock the French political establishment. The socialist electoral coalition Nouvelle Union Populaire Écologique et Sociale (New Ecological and Social People’s Union, NUPES) appears to have come in first, or nearly so, by a margin too close to call in the June 12 parliamentary elections. The semifascist Rassemblement National (National Rally, RN) came in a distant and dismal third. NUPES was created partly in response to the continuing threat by RN, known until 2018 as the National Front, so that French workers and militants would have a progressive option at the polls. NUPES consists of four parties: La France Insoumise (France Unbowed) led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Parti Socialiste (Socialist Party), Parti Communiste Français

(PCF) and Europe Écologie les Verts (EELV) — the Greens. While these four parties agreed to compete together in the elections and did put forth this common platform, they have still maintained their own political positions. NUPES’ common political platform is fairly bold. It aims to raise the minimum wage and freeze the cost of basic necessities. It proposes to raise the wages of civil servants like teachers, increase pensions and lower the age of retirement. It pushes for a change in taxation to make the wealthy contribute more, and for a 65% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, which would require major changes in goods production. These priorities are such that, under these changes, certain European Union treaty rules would not be followed, if those are considered a hindrance to progressive change. The parties to the platform agree that a new, sixth French Republic would probably be required to make all the changes. Mélenchon has stated his explanation of this program



Rachel Keke, Franco-Ivorian leader of the housekeepers union, speaks in Paris to striking supermarket workers, wearing the General Confederation of Labor’s red vest. Keke ran for a seat in the National Assembly under the banner of the new left-unity coalition, the Nouvelle Union Populaire Écologique et Sociale, NUPES.

in a book, “L’avenir en commun” (“The future in common”), available from the French publisher Seuil and worldwide as a download from kobo.com.

New situation for French left

NUPES is not the first left alliance in France. There was the Popular Front in the 1930s, the Programme Commun in 1972 and the Gauche Plurielle (Plural Left) in 1997, which ran the government from 1997 to 2002. But world politics have changed in the past 20 years, especially with the growing economic and political power of China. Mélenchon — as a result of his role as leader of La France Insoumise group in the National Assembly from 2017 to 2021 — was able to bring the left-wing parties into this new coalition. If the left coalition had been operating from the beginning of the presidential elections, it is very likely that Marine Le Pen, leader of Rassemblement National, would have finished third in the first round of the presidential vote and would not have had the opportunity to spread her hate at the highest levels of French politics. The week until the June 19 vote should witness an uproar of red-baiting, both the sophisticated kind that the French media specializes in and the crude, blunt attacks that the RN and the cops use. But French workers and French youth have made it clear that they will give their votes to political parties that defend their interests. □

Finnish protesters say No to NATO, yes to peace

By John Catalinotto

In response to U.S. attempts to take advantage of the war propaganda to expand NATO to include Finland and Sweden, the anti-war and anti-imperialist movements in both Scandinavian countries have taken to the streets. The photo is of a demonstration June 4 in Helsinki, Finland. The sign in front reads, “Yes to peace, no to NATO,” while the one right behind it reads, “Always reject NATO.” In both countries the conservative parties and the social democratic parties have fallen in line behind the U.S. offensive against Russia and have accepted membership in NATO. While the U.S. is trying to

rush the expansion of NATO, this is now being delayed by the Turkish government’s objections to the two Scandinavian governments. □



PHOTO: HEIKKI MÄNNIKKÖ, COMMUNIST LEAGUE, FINLAND

Demonstration in Helsinki, June 4. Banner in front reads: ‘Yes to peace, no to NATO.’



La clase obrera y la crisis capitalista mundial

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trabajadores, y eso afecta a otras campañas de organización, ¡y sus acciones han bajado! Eso plantea la posibilidad de que esas empresas cierren los almacenes de Amazon o cierren las cafeterías, ya sea directamente relacionadas con la lucha contra la campaña sindical o a causa de la economía. No hay ganancias permanentes en el capitalismo Así pues, ¿la crisis económica restará fuerza a la organización de los trabajadores? ¿O hará que los trabajadores se enfaden más, e incluso que sean más revolucionarios? Son preguntas que debemos tomarnos muy en serio. Y existe la esperanza de que esto último sea cierto: que la crisis económica no quite el vapor al movimiento obrero, sino que lo alimente, y eso haga que los trabajadores sean más revolucionarios. Ya lo veremos. Tras la profundización de la crisis capitalista a nivel mundial, es importante entender lo que Marx y todos los grandes teóricos marxistas nos han enseñado. Y es que la lucha de los trabajadores por mejores condiciones en su lugar particular es esencial para que se unan como clase en su conjunto. Porque, camaradas, tanto si suben como si bajan, tanto si ganan como si pierden, cualesquiera que sean las conquistas que los trabajadores consigan a través de la lucha, éstas nunca podrán ser permanentes bajo el capitalismo. A menos y hasta que el capitalismo sea derrocado, esas conquistas siempre serán algo que los giros, los cambios de las relaciones de clase y las crisis capitalistas pueden recuperar.

He estado revisando algunas de las posiciones sobre la guerra de Ucrania, la OTAN y el imperialismo estadounidense, enviadas por los partidos comunistas daneses y portugueses relacionadas con la crisis capitalista en desarrollo. Estos puntos de vista parecen cercanos a los nuestros. Ven la guerra como un catalizador que acelera la crisis económica mundial y como un problema para la clase obrera. Eso es un debate en sí mismo: los precios del combustible, los alimentos, etc. Al igual que nosotros, como comunistas en Estados Unidos, estamos, por supuesto, en contra del imperialismo estadounidense y de la OTAN, estos partidos están en contra de los imperialistas de sus países. Pero este es el problema: las clases trabajadoras de estos países en este momento no son capaces de resistir la propaganda y la postura de sus propias clases dominantes en relación con la guerra en Ucrania. Lo que finalmente ocurrirá es la capacidad de la clase obrera de entender que hay bandos y de tomar un lado. Y esos bandos se delinearán sobre la base de la clase, cuando la guerra comience a afectar económicamente a los trabajadores. Por supuesto que hay más factores que eso; hay un miedo a la guerra mundial, etc. Todas las cuestiones están ligadas entre sí Pero al problema — y esto es un problema histórico. La izquierda de este país, debido a las circunstancias históricas y a los acontecimientos que escapan a su control — he señalado este punto muchas veces, pero creo que es necesario repetirlo — se ha debilitado un poco en relación con el papel histórico de la clase obrera, tal como lo ve la teoría revolucionaria marxista y comunista. Esto se debe a que los movimientos de la clase obrera

han sido débiles en los EE.UU. Los movimientos sindicales han sido débiles, no sólo en términos de números, sino por no operar en la militancia. Y ahora es un momento en el que el desarrollo de la clase obrera debe ser visto como la única respuesta a estas crisis, ya sea la crisis económica, la crisis de la guerra imperialista de EE.UU. como en Ucrania o los peligros internos de EE.UU., como los crecientes ataques contra las mujeres, las personas LGBTQ+ y la gente de color. La crisis económica es un caldo de cultivo para el fascismo, que está en un nivel peligroso en términos de ese movimiento en los EE.UU. Eso es lo que se reflejó en el ataque de los supremacistas blancos a la comunidad negra en Buffalo, Nueva York. La teoría de la conspiración del “gran reemplazo”, sostenida por ese tirador, suena como algo sacado del Tercer Reich de la Alemania nazi, al decir que la población legítimamente “mayoritaria” de la “nación blanca cristiana” de Estados Unidos está siendo deliberadamente “reemplazada” por gente de color. Tenemos que fortalecer nuestro sentido del papel histórico de la clase obrera ideológicamente y, en la medida de nuestras posibilidades, poner en práctica esta perspectiva. Tenemos que influir en toda la gente que podamos, especialmente en los jóvenes revolucionarios potenciales. Ya no podemos permitirnos el lujo de limitarnos a los temas, por muy importantes que sean los temas individuales. Todos los temas están unidos. Y lo que los une es la lucha de clases. Debemos tener y perfeccionar una estrategia de clase obrera en el futuro. Porque esa estrategia de clase es la única capaz de derrotar la guerra y el fascismo y, en última instancia, de llevar a cabo la revolución comunista. □



Manifestación ante la pared en la frontera durante la Cumbre Obrera de las Américas, Tijuana, México, 12 de junio.

La Cumbre de las Américas de Biden está en graves problemas

Por Sara Flounders y Lyn Neeley

30 de mayo — Las grandes expectativas de Biden de que la celebración de la Cumbre de las Américas este año demostrará la influencia de Estados Unidos en el hemisferio occidental se están erosionando.

La mayoría de los países del hemisferio occidental se han retirado de la Cumbre tras la negativa de Biden a invitar a Cuba, Venezuela y Nicaragua. Quince países del CARICOM (Comunidad del Caribe) están boicoteando la cumbre.

El 27 de mayo se reunió en La Habana, Cuba, la 21ª cumbre de la Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América. El ALBA rechazó las medidas unilaterales contra Venezuela y Nicaragua y el bloqueo económico contra Cuba. El ALBA, creada por Venezuela y Cuba en 2004, es una coalición de 11 países latinoamericanos antiimperialistas

con acuerdos comerciales independientes que construyen la independencia, la solidaridad y la cooperación.

El presidente mexicano, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, anunció en la cumbre del ALBA que no iba a asistir a la cumbre de Biden, pero que en su lugar



El presidente cubano Miguel Díaz-Canel, a la derecha, con el presidente mexicano Andrés Manuel López Obrador en la Cumbre del ALBA en La Habana, Cuba.

podría enviar al ministro de Asuntos Exteriores de México.

El presidente de Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, calificó el encuentro como “un rechazo firme, contundente y absoluto a la visión imperial que pretende excluir a los pueblos de América”. (tinyurl.com/yc6phn8z)

Guatemala, Argentina, Bolivia y Honduras tampoco van a la Cumbre, por sus propios desacuerdos con la administración Biden. Esto subraya la incapacidad de Estados Unidos para ofrecer el tipo de acuerdos comerciales y el apoyo que esos países están recibiendo de China.

La Cumbre de los Trabajadores y la Cumbre de los Pueblos

Dos coaliciones se están organizando para oponerse a la cumbre de Biden: La Cumbre de los Trabajadores en Tijuana, México, es del 10 al 12 de junio, WorkersSummit.com; y la Cumbre del

Pueblo en Los Ángeles es del 8 al 10 de junio, PeoplesSummit2022.org.

La Cumbre de los Trabajadores es una coalición de líderes estadounidenses y canadienses de organizaciones sindicales, de justicia social y de trabajadores que se oponen a las sanciones y a la intervención de Estados Unidos. Entre los oradores de la Cumbre de los Trabajadores de Venezuela, Cuba y Nicaragua se encuentran el Vicepresidente de la Clase Obrera del Partido Socialista de Venezuela, Francisco Torrealba, y los Embajadores de Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba y México.

Ambas acciones planean transmitir su programa en vivo: la Cumbre de los Pueblos (peoplessummit2022.org/program) del 8 al 10 de junio en Los Ángeles en el Trade Tech College; y la Cumbre de los Trabajadores (workerssummit.com), del 10 al 12 de junio en Tijuana en el Campus Este de la Universidad de Tijuana. □

COMENTARIO DE WW/MO

La clase obrera y la crisis capitalista mundial

Por Larry Holmes

Los siguientes extractos son de los comentarios de Larry Holmes, Primer Secretario del Partido del Mundo Obrero, en una reunión de la sucursal de Nueva York el 19 de mayo.

La mayoría de los economistas burgueses predicen ahora una recesión, que es una fuerte caída de la economía. Una recesión solía considerarse cíclica, pero esto ha cambiado, al igual que la naturaleza de la crisis capitalista. Porque el capitalismo ha escuchado su toque de muerte y está en una crisis permanente.

No hay una definición científica del término “recesión”. Sólo significa que algo malo va a ocurrir durante la recesión: desempleo, austeridad, pequeñas y medianas empresas que cierran, etc., etc. O incluso algo peor, mucho peor. Estoy seguro de que algunos de ustedes han visto las salvajes oscilaciones del mercado financiero últimamente.

El gobierno capitalista de Estados Unidos está en el mayor aprieto que ha tenido en mucho tiempo. Han determinado que la única forma en que pueden ayudar al capitalismo, la única forma en que pueden restaurar los márgenes de beneficio, es subir los tipos de interés.

Esto plantea una discusión sobre la caída de la tasa de beneficios, y he visto a algunos compañeros leer lo que el camarada Sam Marcy escribió sobre eso hace 40 años. Esto es algo bueno para leer en este momento: “El carácter cambiante de la clase obrera”, capítulo 4 de “Alta

tecnología, Bajos salarios”. (marxists.org/history/etol/writers/marcy/hightech/chap4.html)

Subir los tipos de interés es algo que los capitalistas han temido hacer desde la crisis financiera mundial de 2008. Porque les preocupaba que los fundamentos de la economía capitalista a nivel mundial fueran tan débiles que si se subían los tipos, eso podría precipitar algo peor que una “recesión”.

Así que en vez de eso, para salvar el capitalismo, han estado bombeando billones y billones de dólares en la economía, particularmente en los mercados financieros. Y aún más durante la pandemia, para mantener la economía capitalista a flote.

Esto ha creado enormes “burbujas” — cuando el precio de algo, una acción, un activo financiero, etc., supera su valor fundamental por un gran margen — lo que lleva a una deuda increíble. Y cuando esa deuda empieza a llegar; mucha de ella está oculta, pero sigue siendo de billones de dólares. Los capitalistas no saben; ni siquiera están seguros, ni siquiera pueden imaginar, cuáles son las ramificaciones para la economía.

Estanflación

Se oye mucho la palabra “estanflación”. Así es como los economistas y políticos capitalistas llamaron a la crisis en la que se encontraba el capitalismo durante los años 70 y principios de los 80. Esa fue la mayor crisis capitalista desde la Depresión. Y la clase capitalista llegó a etiquetarla como “estanflación”.

Pero la “estanflación” es realmente el colapso de la economía capitalista. Es la incapacidad de la economía para funcionar en base a los supuestos y reglas capitalistas de cómo había estado funcionando hasta ese momento. Así que los



Larry Holmes habla frente al penthouse del CEO de Starbucks, Howard Schultz, el 1 de mayo de 2022 en la ciudad de Nueva York.

economistas y los políticos consideraron que lo que llaman estanflación es realmente una crisis capitalista, una amenaza existencial para el capitalismo.

Llegaron al consenso en la década de 1980 de que tenían que tomar medidas drásticas para salvar el capitalismo. De ahí surgieron conceptos y planes como la reestructuración, el neoliberalismo, la globalización y la alta tecnología, esencialmente una declaración de guerra de la clase dominante a la clase trabajadora. Se trata de romper el relativo “contrato de paz” que los capitalistas tenían con sectores de la clase obrera con respecto al sindicalismo.

Podríamos volver a la crisis económica, tomar los matices y las palabras, desmenuzarnos y estudiarlas. Todo esto es bueno si se aclara y no confunde. Pero quiero centrarme en lo que creo que es el aspecto

más importante de esta crisis económica en desarrollo.

La crisis política que genera esta crisis capitalista en desarrollo es de gran importancia para la clase obrera y para quienes luchan, como nosotros, en el corazón del

imperialismo mundial, para ayudar a ser la vanguardia de la clase obrera. Esta crisis económica llega en un momento muy singular. Llega cuando los trabajadores han empezado por fin a levantarse, cuando hay un incipiente levantamiento obrero en sus fases iniciales o intermedias. Como sea que se quiera caracterizar este levantamiento, está en un nivel que no habíamos visto desde la década de 1930, ese gran avance de la clase obrera en términos de organización. La pregunta ahora es la siguiente: ¿La crisis económica — con la perspectiva de los despidos, los cierres de plantas y todo lo que conlleva — restará fuerza a esta rebelión de los trabajadores? Nos fijamos en Amazon y Starbucks, dos enormes colosos capitalistas multinacionales. Y son los grandes objetivos de los

Continúa a página 11