



Follow us!

@WorkersWorld

/WorkersWorldParty

workers.org

Low-wage workers descend on D.C.

By Dante Strobino

Washington, D.C. — Tens of thousands of poor people, low-wage workers and their allies rallied here June 18 for the Poor People’s Campaign Moral March and Low Wage Workers Assembly against “poverty, systemic racism and voter suppression.”

From the stage, three blocks from the U.S. Capitol, speakers from nearly every state challenged Congress to address the immediate needs of over 140 million poor

people inside this country. The action sought to unite “the undocumented, women, men, seniors, children, gay, transgender, Black, Brown, Native, white and Asian” people into a mass movement targeting elected officials in Washington, but also statehouses across the country.

Many acknowledged the historic significance of such a multinational gathering on Juneteenth, the date that enslaved Africans were liberated.

“54 years ago, my father launched the Poor People’s Campaign to revolutionize

the economic landscape of our nation,” stated Bernice King, daughter of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Then, quoting Coretta Scott King, her mother, she stated: “Poverty is not only a long-standing evil but an actual act of violence against the actual dignity, livelihood and humanity of its citizens.”

After introducing King, the movement’s most visible leader, the Rev. Dr. Bishop William Barber II took the stage. He riled up the crowd, stating, “We won’t be silent any more, especially after they

denied 39 million people last year a \$15-per-hour minimum wage. When they block health care coverage and then call us essential, we won’t be silent anymore!”

Barber was referencing the dozen hold-out states, mostly in the U.S. South, that continue to refuse to expand Medicaid coverage after the passage of the Affordable Care Act over a decade ago.

Millions of workers across the South are still denied access to basic health coverage, mostly because they make around

Continued on page 5



Starbucks workers — including some of the Memphis 7 fired for organizing — came from Tennessee to join the Washington, D.C., Poor People’s Campaign protest, June 18.

FREE MUMIA!

By Leslie Feinberg

Feinberg gave these remarks at the historic Free Mumia rally, Madison Square Garden, New York City, May 7, 2000. (youtu.be/zV4rxNZaF9M)

My name is Leslie Feinberg, and we’ve come with Rainbow Flags for Mumia! We are here today to demand a new trial for Mumia. And we are here to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the family of Patrick Dorismond and all the victims of police brutality here today. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people are no strangers to police and right-wing violence.

When Matthew Shepard was murdered, we marched in the streets ten thousand-strong. And we made clear that we were no less outraged over the racist lynching of James Byrd Jr. in Jasper, Texas. Our march was viciously attacked. We were beaten and arrested by

the same New York Police Department that lynched our brothers Dorismond and Amadou Diallo.

An injury to one is an injury to all! That’s why we fight to free Mumia.

And Mumia stands with Rainbow Flags! Mumia, from death row, called for unity to stop anti-gay murders. It

Continued on page 6

Juneteenth ‘Freedom Day’	3, 10
Economic hurricane	4
Wide spectrum of class struggles	5
Puerto Rican Day & Alex Saab	10
Museum workers ready to strike	11
LGBTQ+ acts of resistance	3, 8
Editorial: The right to self defense	10

ALL OUT FOR MUMIA

JOIN US IN PHILLY! WE FREE HIM OR HE DIES!

JULY 3RD

40 YEARS AGO MUMIA WAS FRAMED AND UNJUSTLY SENTENCED TO DEATH. THEY'RE STILL TRYING TO KILL HIM.

1-5PM ET

THE TORTURE WILL ONLY END IF WE ACT. WE GOT HIM OFF OF DEATH ROW. NOW WE NEED TO BRING HIM HOME!

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA

MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING (BROAD AND JFK)

PHILADELPHIA, PA

ORGANIZE IN YOUR CITY: LOVENOTPHEAR.COM/40CITIES

LOVE NOT PHEAR

6, 7

Mumia – a hero for young people

Letters from behind the bars

End the death penalty!

Texas abolitionists march

Free Mumia! Free ‘Em All!

Support WW reporting

The U.S. has the highest percentage of its population in prisons — more than any other country in the world and disproportionately people of color. That’s not even counting detention centers for im/migrants who flee their homes to escape U.S. imperialist aggression and impoverishment. Here, they are brutally mistreated, detained, and families are separated.

Don’t let Fourth of July fireworks distract you from the streets and from formulating ways to dismantle the deadly, systemic oppression of Black, Brown and Indigenous people. Don’t let the hype mask the inequality, injustice and inadequate health care that are responsible for the disproportionate number of deaths of people of color from COVID-19.

What would really show solidarity with the already vibrant Black Lives Matter movement?

Raising the struggle to “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal” so it becomes a worldwide cry. The very reason why Mumia is in jail is that he used his voice and his pen to expose racism, especially the role of police terror in Philadelphia.

Then the system framed him, denied him a fair trial and attempted to kill him.

Those who understand how this racist, classist, capitalist system works were in the streets over the last four decades to save Mumia’s life and promote his message. Workers World was there, demanding his freedom from the get-go. Mumia has been a longtime reader of WW, noting that it had the best coverage he had read on the 1985 bombing of MOVE.

Now the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party is supporting the international call to Free Mumia. Mumia’s case personifies everything wrong with the U.S. — the world’s largest center of incarcerated 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 at workers.org, where the PDF of the weekly newspaper has been displayed. 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! □

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



GRAPHIC BY @SHELBYXSTUDIOS

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

Austin
austin@workers.org

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

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

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

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

Cleveland
cleveland@workers.org

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

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

Minnesota
minnesota@workers.org

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

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio
sanantonio@workers.org

West Virginia
WestVirginia@workers.org

MUNDO OBRERO

WORKERS WORLD

☆

this week

♦ In the U.S.

Low-wage workers descend on D.C.1

Juneteenth: emancipation, resistance, reparations. .3

Buffalo’s working-class Pride3

Portland Pride says ‘Ban the cops!’3

An economic ‘hurricane’ is coming4

Wide spectrum of class struggles5

Many histories converged at Stonewall. 8

The significance of Juneteenth.10

Museum workers demand fair contract 11

♦ Around the world

Antiwar protest planned for NATO Summit.9

Haiti suffers in U.S.-created turmoil9

General strike in Tunisia defies the IMF.9

Puerto Rican Day: End U.S. imperialist crimes! .10

Solidarity brought to migrant seafarers 11

♦ Tear down the walls

Rainbow Flags to ‘Free Mumia!’1

Mumia Abu-Jamal—a hero for young people6

Letters from behind the walls.6

Abolishing the death penalty—and capitalism ...7

Texas abolitionists march on Juneteenth7

♦ Editorial

The right to self defense10

♦ Noticias en Español

¡Orgullo significa Luchar de Nuevo!12

Trabajadores inmigrantes de construcción.12

Workers World

147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.

New York, NY 10011

Phone: 212.627.2994

E-mail: ww@workers.org

Web: www.workers.org

Vol. 64, No. 25 • June 23, 2022

Closing date: June 22, 2022

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

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

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

Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Sasha Mazumder

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, S. Hedgecoke

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

Mundo Obrero: Carlos Vargas

Copyright © 2022 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

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

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

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

INTERNATIONAL

BROTHERHOOD

OF TEAMSTERS

966

Juneteenth: emancipation, resistance and reparations

By Mirinda Crissman
Houston

This article, which appeared in the June 23, 2021, issue of Workers World, is being reprinted here to celebrate the victory of Juneteenth officially recognized as a federal holiday.

After decades of struggle for recognition, Juneteenth has been made a federal holiday by Congress and was signed into law by President Joe Biden June 17, 2021. Federal workers had Friday, June 18, off as a paid holiday, as June 19, the official date, falls on Saturday. This is the first new federal holiday since Martin Luther King Jr. Day was enacted and signed in 1983, although not officially observed until 1986.

Two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln, the news of freedom reached the still-enslaved people of Texas by way of Galveston on June 19, 1865.

Rebellions carried out by enslaved people had ultimately forced the signing of the 1863 Proclamation. Manisha Sinha states in “The Slave’s Cause: A History of Abolition”: “Prominent slave revolts marked the turn toward immediate abolition, and fugitive slaves united all factions of the movement and led the abolitionists to justify revolutionary resistance to slavery.” (NY Times, June 18, 2020)

Major General Gordon Granger and his Union troops marched through Galveston on June 19, 1865, reading General Order No. 3, which stated: “The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves the absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages.” (Galveston Historical

Foundation 150)
It took years for this message and Union troops to reach the hundreds of thousands of enslaved people in Texas — and even then, not all enslaved people were freed instantly. In fact the material conditions of Black people remained largely the same in many ways through the owning-class systems of sharecropping and convict leasing.

Prior to the general’s message, it was known that Texas was a safe haven for enslavers. Galveston, with its deep-water port, has the oldest known police force in



Juneteenth march, Ft. Worth, Texas, June 18.

the state. The police protected the property and wealth of the richest people. Like many early police forces on this continent, they served as slave patrols.

Henry Louis Gates explained: “Since the capture of New Orleans in 1862, slave owners in Mississippi, Louisiana and other points east had been migrating to Texas to escape the Union Army’s reach. In a hurried reenactment of the original middle passage, more than 150,000 enslaved people were moved west to Texas.” (“What is Juneteenth?” PBS.org)

After news of emancipation reached Texas, the rich still relied on the labor of those who were once legally considered their property. They did what they could to maintain that dominance and superexploitation.

Convict leasing = enslavement

That exploitation evolved into systems like sharecropping, where the formerly enslaved still worked in the same Texas fields under similar conditions. Another

way the ruling class carried out their will was through the system of convict leasing, which was designed to keep freed Black people in “legal” slavery. This was sanctioned through a clause which still exists in the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Under this system, the Texas Department of Corrections hired out incarcerated workers — who were often Black and had been arrested by law enforcement for little or no reason — to plantation owners as laborers. Convict leasing could be even worse in some ways than slavery, because those exploiting the labor of the leased people had no economic stake whatsoever in their well-being or even in keeping them alive.

According to historian Robert Perkinson in “Texas Tough: The Rise of America’s Prison Empire,” more than 3,500 leased incarcerated workers died in Texas between 1866 and 1912 — more people than the number lynched in that period.

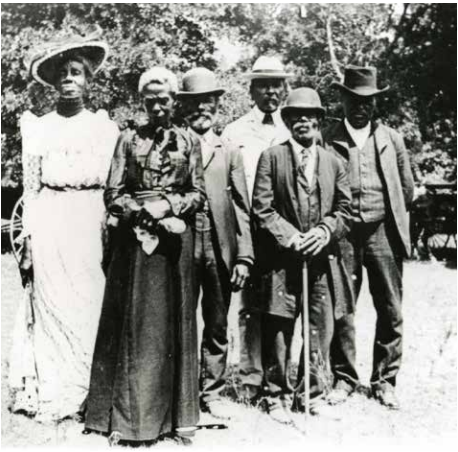
Despite all of this, Black people in Texas have celebrated Juneteenth in defiance of being branded as property and treated as less than human. They have carried the tradition of celebrating the day into the present.

Elizabeth Hayes Turner’s essay, “Juneteenth: Emancipation and Memory,” quoted a direct heir to the tradition of the holiday: “The 19th of June wasn’t the exact day the Negro was freed. But that’s the day they told them that they were free ... and my daddy told me that they whooped and hollered. ...”

Juneteenth celebrations through the centuries have featured rodeos, barbecues, family reunions, dramatic readings, parades, ball games and Blues festivals. And they have even been used as political rallies around voting rights. (Texas State Historical Association)

Attica Locke, a Houston-born writer, told the New York Times that her family would usually join community celebrations at local parks, where dozens of people would grab tables to share food and party to music. She explained, “The way our freedom is celebrated is by one of the greatest things that was robbed from us, which was connection.” (June 18, 2020)

In Houston, many of those same parks are still used to celebrate Juneteenth, including Emancipation Park in the Third Ward. The park land was purchased in 1878 by Rev. Jack Yates and his congregation at Houston’s oldest Black church, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church. Many church



CREDIT: AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER, AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY
Grace Murray Stephenson and family at an Emancipation Day (aka Juneteenth) Celebration in 1900.

members were formerly enslaved. At that time almost all Houston parks were segregated and off-limits to African Americans. (Workers World, June 18, 2014)

Historical revision: a form of violence

While the emancipatory holiday’s origins are in the Lone Star State, “The people from Texas took Juneteenth Day to Los Angeles, Oakland, Seattle and other places they went,” wrote Isabel Wilkerson in “The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration.” (Vintage, 2011)

Juneteenth is jubilant in its origins. It calls upon us to consider the promises of freedom that have not been realized in the United States — particularly in 2021, its first year as a federal holiday.

Meanwhile, in opposition to what is called “critical race theory,” many states have proposed legislation banning the teaching of the racist history behind Juneteenth.

The attempt to rewrite such a history of jubilation in defiance of white supremacy and colonialism is a form of violence. Also violent are the prisons still standing in Texas, which were constructed during the era of convict leasing and which still cage and kill disproportionate numbers of Black people. In Texas, 75 out of 104 state prisons do not have air conditioning in a place where summertime temperatures regularly top 100°F.

Incarcerated workers in Texas are still legally required to labor for free. The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston was experimenting on Texas prisoners as recently as the year 2000. (Prison Legal News, December 2002)

Juneteenth must come with reparations for Black people, for all the harm that has been done and continues to be done as the legacy of enslavement. Anything less than reparations is essentially symbolic and an affront to those who carry this true history. □

Buffalo’s working-class Pride

Workers World Party’s Buffalo branch kicked off its third annual People’s Pride event on June 14. Members and people from the community gathered for a cookout and a screening of “Pride,” a historic film made in 2014 about the London-based group “Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners,” which raised funds and support for the striking miners in Wales in 1984.

Statements were made by Arjae Red and Lydian Standeford, who stressed that racism, gender, sexual and other oppressions are integral to and indispensable components of class oppression. This

message was reaffirmed by the movie’s retelling of the dogged solidarity demonstrated by the lesbian and gay grouping to the miners. Both the miners and LGBTQ+ people were under attack by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s brutal, inhumane Tory government.

People’s Pride in Buffalo originated during the absence of the corporate Pride Parades in 2020 and 2021. With the return of the bank- and police-loving Pride Parade to Buffalo this year, WW members held their ground and kept the militant tradition alive.

— Report by Ryan Lockwood



Portland Pride says ‘Ban the cops!’

Thousands of loud and proud Portlanders lined the streets in the downtown area of Oregon’s largest city on June 19 to show that queer people will not be silenced. As Portland Workers World Party members marched down the sidewalk carrying radical signs, they were delighted to see the overwhelmingly positive reactions.

They were approached countless times by people wanting to take their photographs. The WW sign which read “Queer As In Fuck The Police!” attracted the most attention by far.

Over the last few weeks, Portlanders have made it clear that they do not want cops at Pride

events and have pushed for an official ban barring police from the city’s celebration. They know who their enemies are.

— Report by Madison Johnson



It's time for workers to fight

An economic 'hurricane' is coming

By Larry Holmes

This slightly edited talk was given by WWP First Secretary, Larry Holmes, at a New York City membership meeting on June 16.

The economic crisis that is unfolding is by far the biggest development right now. Bigger than anything I can think of, and a lot of important things are happening.

One of the things that makes it more dangerous, more combustible for capitalism and also for the working class, is that a number of other crises are developing at the same time, and they all impact on each other. There's the war crisis, which definitely impacts the economy. I'm not going to mention all the crises, but there's a political crisis in this country with the ruling class, and the Jan. 6 hearings now on television are a reflection of that.

It's not an overstatement to say that right now, even as distinct from a few weeks ago, Wall Street has been gripped by panic. Listening to these bankers and the "talking heads" and reading what they're saying, they're trying to tamp down demoralization and are freaking out like the world's coming to an end. That seems to be the mood, at least on the part of a lot of bankers and investors — and a lot of people associated with finance capital, not only in this country but around the world.

I'm not going to talk right now about how it impacts the working class, which is far more important to us than how it impacts the capitalist system. But it's important to look at how they see it and also to step back and take a view of how a capitalist crisis develops. The past is a prologue. Virtually every capitalist crisis is never really fixed but is somehow passed on, on the backs of the workers and the oppressed. It doesn't really go away. It's not resolved. And that tends to make the next capitalist crisis even bigger and potentially more explosive.

How capitalist crises evolve

In the 1980s, the working class was too weak to stop globalization, reindustrialization, job-killing technology — what the ruling class calls neo-liberalism — austerity and plant closings. By the time the 2008 financial crisis came, it was initially precipitated by a credit crisis in the housing market. But a crisis in one area of the economy can be just a catalyst to open the floodgates, letting everybody see the extent of the general crisis underneath.

The capitalists dealt with the financial crisis, after it almost crashed the financial markets. It was called the Great Recession, because of the jobs it destroyed and the austerity it brought in, and it particularly woke up young workers. There was a change of mood, of expectations, on the part of young workers. Perhaps the first expression of that was Occupy Wall Street.

The ruling class dealt with it in two ways. One was they got behind Barack Obama, a very attractive, first African American president. That was sort of a concession to the working class. We all know how he turned out. He was not a leftist but a protector of the interests of capitalism, all the way.

And the other was to start with so-called quantitative easing — and that was a number of things. The biggest was that the Federal Reserve printed a lot of money. And actually central banks



Larry Holmes speaks at protest in front of the New York City residence of Starbucks CEO, Howard Schultz, on June 9.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

around the world printed a lot of money and funneled it into the financial system, to the tune of trillions upon trillions of dollars. Also, keeping interest rates close to zero was part of quantitative easing. The problem with that was that it couldn't go on forever.

This creates inflation, in part, and creates a gigantic debt bubble, [where] all of this money is basically worthless, because it's not based on workers producing something. It's just phony, like Monopoly money. Try to imagine tens of trillions of dollars on top of the tremendous debt that already exists.

As Lenin explained in "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," at a certain point, finance capital, the banks — which in the earliest stage of capitalist development were sort of the middle-person making sure that big and small companies got the capital, so they could create means of production and exploit workers — got bigger and bigger in relationship to the economy. Today finance capital has become predominant over the productive side of the capitalist economy, basically turning it into a giant Ponzi scheme.

That's the situation that the global capitalist economy is in now, and that has created this tremendous bubble. And when there's a crisis like this, and the capitalists have run out of ways to fix it, that bubble, to one extent or another, begins to burst, and the economy can become a house of cards. Before long, companies, banks, even countries, are going bankrupt, collapsing.

What the bankers are saying

Jamie Dimon, [Chief Executive Officer] of JP Morgan, is the most powerful banker in the United States and in the imperialist world. Try Googling "the most important banker" or "the biggest banker

in the U.S.," and you'll get Jamie Dimon. It doesn't mean that all the other bankers aren't important. The head of the Federal Reserve, Jerome Powell, is an investment banker too. But the bankers who are on top of billions and trillions of dollars, they listen to JP Morgan.

An article about two weeks ago quoted Jamie Dimon as saying "We're headed toward a hurricane." Other investment bankers have been saying similar stuff. They're not showing up on television, maybe trying not to panic the financial community around the world. Another well-known popular investor, Michael Novogratz, said today after the latest reading of the stock market, which was way down, that the economy is "going to collapse."

Hypothetically, it's possible that the capitalists will find some genie or some rabbit in a hat somewhere to stave off this crisis, to do some version of what they did 12 or 13 years ago, or in the dotcom crisis of the 1990s, or back in the 1980s. But it's going to be much, much harder now, because they've run out of ammunition. And the fact of the matter is that they clearly say that they don't know what they're going to do if this thing gets out of control.

The only thing we can be sure of is the class struggle. The capitalists will try their damndest to have the working class and the oppressed — not only of this country but of the world, particularly the Global South — bear the brunt of this new crisis.

This is the situation we face — but there are good things happening. There is the upsurge of workers and the organizing drives, not only at Amazon and Starbucks but many, many more places. That's a sign of a long-awaited reawakening of primarily young workers.

This left coalition in France, including remnants of the Communist Party, some

socialists and others, practically won the first round of the recent parliamentary elections there. This is very important because, as many of you know, politics in France have for the longest time been strongly influenced by the neofascists.

As far as the role of the workers' assembly movement here, an economic hurricane is in the making. The job of the workers' assembly movement is to help as much as possible to get the working class ready to defend itself — and then go on the offensive. And that usually suggests not only gains, but even at some point down the road going on the revolutionary offensive.

Fight against fragmentation is key

Our class is always fragmented to one extent or another. But when the labor movement, when the revolutionary forces, or even the progressive forces in the working-class movement are weak and not a strong force of gravity pulling the workers together, then the forces of fragmentation and bourgeois ideology are all the more powerful. And in an economic crisis, there's a tendency for the fragmentation to go either one way or another. The fragmentation can be exacerbated in a way contrary to the working class coming together.

But if the struggle takes hold and class consciousness wins out, the fragmentation can be diminished. Class solidarity and class struggle can prevail.

Amazon is now in Phoenix, Arizona, with its high-paid lawyers. They've dragged the leadership of the Amazon labor unions to Phoenix, demanding that the [National Labor Relations Board] hearing they wanted not be held in New York. They thought New York was prejudiced in favor of the workers. And so they wanted to take it to the South, where they thought it would be more advantageous for them.

This hearing is meant to overturn the results of the historic election on April 1, when the union won at the Amazon facility on Staten Island. Amazon has sworn to crush that. And they're very serious about it.

I have no idea whether they're capable of doing it. I know that the Amazon Labor Union feels they can hold their own. But they're out there alone.

In the meantime, the AFL-CIO held a big convention in Philadelphia, and one of the workshops was on Amazon. But they did not even invite the leadership of the Amazon Labor Union or, for that matter, somebody from the Starbucks organizing drive to speak.

Look how strange this is. Biden invites the [ALU] leadership to come to the White House, but the AFL-CIO doesn't invite them to speak. They could have easily hooked up with someone from Starbucks. Someone from that union, wherever they were from, could have spoken.

This is an example of fragmentation. Everybody who follows this says, "This victory was historic, because it can bring more victories." Moreover, what the Amazon and Starbucks workers and others do will help transform the working class in a progressive, revolutionary way. This doesn't affect just Amazon workers and Starbucks workers, it affects the whole class.

It would be a great thing if the workers' assemblies could call days of action to demand that Amazon recognize the union. The question is are we capable

Continued on page 5



Labor Notes conference

Wide spectrum of class struggles

By Martha Grevatt
Chicago

The 2022 Labor Notes conference, sponsored by the magazine of the same name, brought 4,000 worker-activists to Chicago June 17-19. The multinational, multigendered, multigenerational gathering gave voice to a range of struggles, from union drives to strikes to building rank-and-file caucuses opposed to class-collaborationist union leaders.

A rally the night before featured Association of Flight Attendants-CWA President Sara Nelson, recently-elected Teamsters union President Sean O'Brien and incoming Chicago Teachers Union President Stacey Davis Gates. These union leaders spoke militantly to the crowd, which consisted mainly of Chicago Teamsters and people in town for the conference.

Nelson called for a general strike. She and O'Brien pointed out that Teamster truckers, united with flight attendants and other transportation workers, could shut the country down.

Conference plenary speakers included Amazon Labor Union President Chris Smalls, Starbucks Workers United representative Michelle Eisen, John



PHOTO: CAUSE

Amazon worker leaders at Labor Notes conference, Chicago, June 17. Left to right: Derrick Palmer and Chris Smalls from Amazon Labor Union; Rev. Ryan Brown, chairperson of Carolina Amazonians United for Solidarity and Empowerment (CAUSE).

Deere striker and Unite All Workers for Democracy representative Nolan Tabb, Minneapolis Federation of Teachers First Vice President Marcia Howard and Mexican General Motors worker Israel Cervantes from Casa Obrera del Bajío.

Among the over 200 workshops were many that featured Amazon and Starbucks workers, who are the vanguard of the working-class movement today. "A Union Brews at Starbucks" workshop featured Starbucks Workers United leaders from Boston; Phoenix; Jacksonville, Florida; Kansas City, Missouri; and

Buffalo, New York. They asked everyone to sign a "No contract, no coffee" pledge and voiced solidarity with fired Starbucks workers around the country, including panelist Laila Dalton from Phoenix and the Memphis Seven in Tennessee.

"Amazon Workers in Action" brought together representatives of the Amazon Labor Union, Carolina Amazonians United for Solidarity and Empowerment, Amazonians United and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). Amazon worker-organizers described long days, short and infrequent breaks, being watched and tracked constantly, excessive heat, unjust firings, lack of safety, failure to accommodate disabilities and overtly racist bosses.

"We are living a defining moment in history," said a Southern Amazon worker. "History will not be kind to Amazon."

The need for working-class solidarity

There were speakers from unions in other countries, including Starbucks workers from Chile, call center workers from the Philippines, Amazon workers from Poland and Germany and auto workers from Brazil and Canada as well as Mexico. However, anti-China "unionists" from Hong Kong

were given a workshop, which unfortunately gives credence to U.S. imperialism's hostile attitude to socialist China.

Throughout the conference, panelists emphasized the term "working class" as opposed to the misleading term "middle class," often invoked by the labor bureaucracy. Some speakers openly said capitalists or "the owning class" were the problem in society. A smaller number said workers could only get justice by getting rid of capitalism altogether.

The one speaker to get "rock star" treatment was Senator Bernie Sanders, whose campaigns for president in 2016 and 2020 excited millions of workers and youth and stimulated interest in socialism. However, his brand of "socialism" would bring progressive reforms while leaving capitalist property relations intact. Objectively his presence at the conference served to discourage a break with electoral politics and to keep the labor movement tied to the Democratic Party.

Overall, this year's Labor Notes conference was valuable. It promoted class-struggle unionism, and brought a wide range of class battles together under one roof. What working-class and oppressed people urgently need now is a global, classwide movement against capitalism.

Ben Carroll, Ed Childs, Otis Grotewohl and Dave Welsh contributed to this article.

Low-wage workers descend on D.C.

Continued from page 1

\$12 per hour and do not qualify for standard Medicaid, nor do they make enough to afford to buy health insurance. After years of pressure, the North Carolina State Senate in recent weeks voted to support expansion of Medicaid, a sign that the movement has won a strategic victory that may spread across the South.

Unions such as the Service Employees International Union have played a major part in the mobilization of low-wage workers in recent years. SEIU has funded several campaigns to organize workers to lift wages and establish new unions, such as the Fight for \$15, the Starbucks Workers United and many campaigns at hospitals and airports across the U.S.

Raise Up the South, the southern arm of the Fight for \$15, has mobilized hundreds of low-wage workers from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama as part of their continual push at all levels of government and corporate power to build a mass movement to lift wages to \$15 per hour.

"We shouldn't have to worry about how we're going to support our family from week to week. We need to open up the labor laws and get a union on every job, so we can live comfortably and be respected at work," said Taiwanna Milligan, a Dollar General worker and Raise Up member from Santee, South Carolina.

Many Starbucks workers — including some of the fired Memphis 7 organizers from Tennessee — joined the gathering under a banner with the slogan, "With Starbucks billions, Starbucks workers should not be poor." SEIU President Mary Kay Henry in her short speech made mention of the recent victory of the Memphis 7 with their store winning its National Labor Relations Board

union certification election. To date, over 160 Starbucks stores across the country have voted to unionize since Dec. 9, 2021, when the Buffalo, New York, Elmwood store was the first.

Municipal workers from across the South have been part of a major organizing wave, from New Orleans to Virginia. City workers in Charlotte, North Carolina, recently won a minimum wage for city employees of \$20 per hour and a 10% raise, after six months of consistent actions in front of City Council meetings led by the Charlotte City Workers Union chapter of UE Local 150.

"We know that the biggest tool to fight against systemic poverty and racism can be UNIONS!" stated Bryce Carter, Vice President of North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, UE Local 150, Steering Committee of the Southern Workers Assembly and street maintenance workers in the City of Greensboro. From the stage, Carter continued: "Down South, a region where nearly 60% of all Black people live and work, we are in a fight for our lives to organize workers and to overturn Jim Crow-era laws that ban workers from collective bargaining."

Last year, Virginia partially overturned their historic ban on public workers collective bargaining. Since then many unions, including UE, SEIU, AFSCME and NEA,

have been organizing to establish collective bargaining ordinances in local city, county and school boards.

In the day's rally, many spoke against the criminal justice system, including Dontae Sharpe, who had been falsely incarcerated in North Carolina prisons for 26 years until his release last year after movement pressure. Others spoke about the racist roots of the immigration system and the rampant wage theft faced by migrant workers. Still others spoke out against climate change.

At the end of the action, Dr. Barber encouraged the crowd not to go home and continue business as usual.

Rather, he put forth three action steps to declare an ongoing, committed "Moral Movement": Shift the moral narrative; build power; make real policies to fully address poverty and low wealth from the bottom up. □

An economic 'hurricane' is coming

Continued from page 4

of doing that? If we did that, it would be not only a place where people who wanted to be with the workers could come out. It would also open up a fight, a healthy and absolutely necessary fight, with the trade union bureaucracy.

Our trade unionists on every level could put pressure on them: "What are you doing? How come you're not doing this? How come central labor councils, Jobs Without Justice, aren't calling big demonstrations in support of the Amazon workers under attack, the Stop & Shop workers, and immigrant workers and all workers?"

I would argue for us as communists to open our eyes and see more clearly than anyone else what is actually unfolding. It's a global capitalist crisis. When the U.S. central bank, the Fed, lowers or raises interest rates, virtually all the central banks across the world do the same thing. It's a global crisis.

We must dig down deep. Be very objective, be sober and ask ourselves how we can transform ourselves to be of service to the working class in the midst of what looks like a historic economic crisis. □



PHOTO: SOUTHERN WORKERS ASSEMBLY

Members of Raise Up the South, Southern Workers Assembly and North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, UE Local 150 traveled from North Carolina to rally for poor people and low-wage workers, Washington, D.C., June 18.

Mumia Abu-Jamal – a hero for young people

By Scott Williams

This excerpted text was first handed out at a youth conference for Mumia Abu-Jamal in Philadelphia, December 2012. Some statistics have been updated.

George Washington. Abraham Lincoln. John F. Kennedy. Young people in the U.S. are taught in school to see these men as heroes. But this is the history of conquerors and the elite — these white men are not heroes. The real heroes of history are all too often left to rot in prison and left out of the history books.

Amongst the 2.5 million prisoners in the U.S. right now, one man, Mumia Abu-Jamal, has come to symbolize the struggle against mass incarceration and the struggle for Black freedom and liberation.

Yet Mumia is not talked about in schools. Most young people probably do not know who he is. We need to change this.

Mumia, revolutionary

Mumia was born in a north Philadelphia housing project in 1954. As a student at

Benjamin Franklin High School, he led a walkout against racism in education and for renaming the school after Malcolm X. By the age of 15, he helped found the

Young people have the most reason to fight. The capitalist system has offered us no future. Now we need to tear down the walls of injustice, the same walls which keep Mumia imprisoned and our communities in turmoil.

Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Philadelphia chapter. Given his skills to teach and explain, Mumia became the chapter's "Minister of Information," responsible for writing flyers and creating popular media. The Party grew quickly as Black people were tired of waiting for

freedom — it was time to take it back!

The Black Panthers came from a tremendous history of rebellion, including slave revolts, resistance to racism and oppression and struggles of heroes like Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X and Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. for human rights and liberation. According to J. Edgar Hoover, FBI director at the time, "The Black Panther Party, without question, represents the greatest threat to internal security of the country." The Panthers' militancy, discipline and strong political base in the Black community impacted millions of Black people, and especially Mumia.

Mumia organized with the Black Panthers in Philadelphia and across the U.S. Philadelphia was the scene of the historic 1970 Revolutionary People's Constitutional

Convention, organized by the Panthers, when 15,000 people from across the U.S. met at Temple University to discuss creating a new government, one for the people. The Philadelphia police, in an attempt to stop the meeting, raided all three local offices of the Black Panther Party hours before the event. □



Rainbow flags to 'Free Mumia!'

Continued from page 1

took courage for him to stand up against gay-bashing. But that's his mettle. That's why he's a leader who inspires so many communities.

Now we must also fight to free Imam Jamil al-Amin, formerly H. Rap Brown.



Leslie Feinberg speaks for Rainbow Flags for Mumia, May 7, 2000.

Georgia is seeking his execution — and why? In order to deal a blow to the rising progressive movement.

We must not allow ourselves to be divided. The Jewish Defense Organization tried to shut down this historic event. How dare this Klan-like group, that has bombed and murdered, claim to speak for Jewish people? Let the voices of all anti-racist Jews, of all progressive white people, be heard loud and clear.

For so long the Black and Latinx communities have suffered one police murder after another. We've seen mass demonstrations, even rebellions. But more white people need to protest. White people in particular have an extra responsibility to combat every manifestation of racism. We cannot allow the fight against racism to be the sole burden of the Black, Latinx, Arab, Asian and Native communities.

Since the murder of Amadou Diallo, more white people have protested racist police murders. Not enough! But a new day is coming. We can see it. That's what the government fears. And that's what they want to stop.

That's why we must unite as one fist, in greater numbers, in order to deal a death blow to racism, police brutality, right-wing violence, the death penalty and slave labor in the prison-industrial complex!

We who believe in Mumia's freedom shall not rest until it comes!

Patrick Dorismond was a 26-year-old Black father of two, murdered by two undercover NYPD officers March 16, 2000. His funeral in Brooklyn, joined by thousands of protesters, was attacked by the NYPD. The cops who killed Dorismond were acquitted by a grand jury, which ruled the shooting "accidental."

Matthew Shepard was a 21-year-old

gay college student at the University of Wyoming, tortured and killed in a homophobic hate attack Oct. 6, 1998.

James Byrd Jr. was a 49-year-old Black father of three, brutally lynched by avowed white supremacists in Jasper, Texas, June 7, 1998. Two of the killers were the first white men to be sentenced to death for killing a Black person in the history of modern Texas.

Amadou Diallo was a 23-year-old student and Guinean migrant, murdered by four undercover NYPD officers Feb. 4, 1999. The cops fired 41 shots at Diallo, who was unarmed, and were acquitted by a jury in Albany, New York, after a Bronx grand jury indicted them for murder.

Imam Jamil al-Amin is a political prisoner and former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee chair, framed for murder by police in Fulton County, Georgia. He has been incarcerated since 2002.

Letters from behind the walls

Workers World Staff,
I am incarcerated in SCI Albion in Pennsylvania. I came across an older newspaper and love the content. I saw an ad and was hoping to get a subscription. Keep up the great work please.

James G.
Albion, Pennsylvania

Greetings,
My name is Delfino H. I am a prisoner here in Texas. I just wanted to let you know that I do appreciate you sending me the Workers World paper, thank you. I will say this, someone really needs to look into the Texas Department of Criminal Justice system, especially their ad-seg [administrative segregation, or solitary confinement] or what they now say is the Restricted Housing Unit. Nothing changed but the name. But I guess it is so they can say they don't have solitary [confinement] in Texas anymore.

Sincerely,
Delfino H.
Beeville, Texas

Workers World,
Will you please send me a copy of "Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba"? I'm at SCI Forest in Pennsylvania. I have been receiving Workers World for some time, and I really enjoy reading it. You guys are doing a great job getting the word out. So keep doing what you do. I strongly believe that everyone needs to unite to make this world a better place for everyone. There should not be any hate or discrimination. Also, we all need free universal health care.

Peace, love and solidarity,
Carl Z.
Marienville, Pennsylvania

Dear Mundo Obrero/Workers World,
My name is Robinson M. T. The reason for this letter is because I want to be a part of the Workers World movement. I've been reading your paper from a friend by the name of Walter H. He went to some other prison. I miss reading the Workers World, so can you please make me a part of the movement! THANK you!
Robinson M. T.
La Bella, Pennsylvania

Dear Workers World staff,
I transferred from Shawangunk, Connecticut, a year ago. I've been in 15 years now; I'm innocent by all rights. I fought at trial to no avail and was found guilty and sentenced to 20 years to life. I'm going to appeal until my last dying breath. I like your information and look forward to reading your newspaper.

Donald D.
Sing Sing Correctional Facility,
New York

Workers World,
I'm writing this letter to bring attention to an injustice that was done to [me as] a 16-year-old juvenile in a Missouri courtroom. At 16, I was sentenced to an unconstitutional 241-year sentence while my adult co-defendant gets 30 years. In 1995, this 16-year-old and an older man committed two robberies. No one was seriously injured in these crimes.

My name is Bobby Bostic and I was sentenced to die in prison for the above crimes. The judge pronounced this at my sentencing hearing, when she said, "Bobby Bostic, you will die in the

Department of Corrections. You do not go to see the parole board until 2201; nobody in this courtroom will be alive in the year 2201."

I have been in prison over 25 years now, and I have rehabilitated myself. I have completed several college courses and obtained my associate of science degree. I am only 30 credits from obtaining my bachelor's degree in social work. I have written five nonfiction books and eight poetry books. I have blueprints for nonprofit organizations that would serve troubled teens. Furthermore, I have many goals that I am currently pursuing.

Please start sending me a subscription to your newspaper. Thank you in advance for listening to my story.

Bobby Bostic
Jefferson City Correctional Center
Jefferson City, Missouri □

WW COMMENTARY

Abolishing the death penalty—and capitalism

By Workers World Houston bureau

To understand the systemic cruelty and deep inequalities that persist in the criminal injustice system in the U.S., one need look no further than the death penalty.

The death penalty evolved from the rope to the chair to the needle. On this continent, it evolved directly from Indigenous genocide and enslavement of African people on stolen Indigenous lands. The death penalty persists, despite not deterring crime and despite the racist legal system getting fatal verdicts wrong so often. In practice, it is racist and anti-poor. Those without the capital, get the capital punishment.

The state of Texas has executed more people in the modern era than the next six U.S. states combined. The state has lynched 574 people since 1982.

The state that has executed the second largest number of people in the modern era is Virginia, with 113 executions. In 2020 Virginia was the first former Confederate state to abolish the death penalty, which is a big deal, as legal lynchings have historically been concentrated in the South, coinciding with a history of enslavement and genocide at the hands of colonizers.

Currently, there are 23 states with no death penalty, three with governor-imposed moratoriums and 24 states that have the death penalty. Public support for capital punishment is down, thanks in great part to activists all over the world, collectively fighting its inhumanity for decades.

Positive movement against the death penalty

Despite the SCOTUS ruling on May 17—denying two Arizona death row prisoners, David Ramirez and Barry Jones, the right to appeal ineffective counsel in federal court—there is still quite a bit of positive movement against

the death penalty, particularly in Texas.

According to the Death Penalty Information Center: “[I]n Harris County, prosecutors are challenging Houston Judge Natalia Cornelio’s refusal to schedule an execution date for death row prisoner Arthur Brown in order to provide a new lawyer in time to investigate whether he is ineligible for the death penalty because of intellectual disability. In Nueces County, the Texas Attorney General’s Office has intervened in county proceedings to oppose District Attorney Mark Gonzalez’s motion to withdraw a death warrant scheduling the execution of John Henry Ramirez for October 5, 2022. ...

“Gonzalez, a former defense attorney, was elected in 2016 on a platform of criminal justice reform. In response to an application filed by his office, the Nueces County District Court issued an order on April 12, 2022, setting an execution date for Ramirez. Two days later, citing his ‘firm belief that the death penalty is unethical and should not be imposed on Mr. Ramirez or any other person’ while he is Nueces County District Attorney, Gonzalez filed a motion to withdraw the death warrant.” (Deathpenaltyinfo.org, May 27)

Delia Perez Meyer, who has a brother on Texas death row, said at a rally in Harlingen, Texas, to free death row prisoner Melissa Lucio: “This system is so flawed. There’s tampering of evidence; there’s withholding of evidence; there’s collusion. A lot of terrible things go on in death row cases. Executions are wrong

and archaic. It doesn’t matter if a person is innocent or guilty, no one should be executed.” (Workers World, Feb. 9, 2022)

In reference to Lucio’s case, state representative Jeff Leach—staunch Republican supporter of the death penalty—recently said he supported a moratorium on capital punishment, due to his faith in the system carrying out these executions fairly being shaky. This is unheard of in the world of Texas politics and indicative of the changing tide of public faith in the so-called “justice system”—on our

official execution date—just slower.

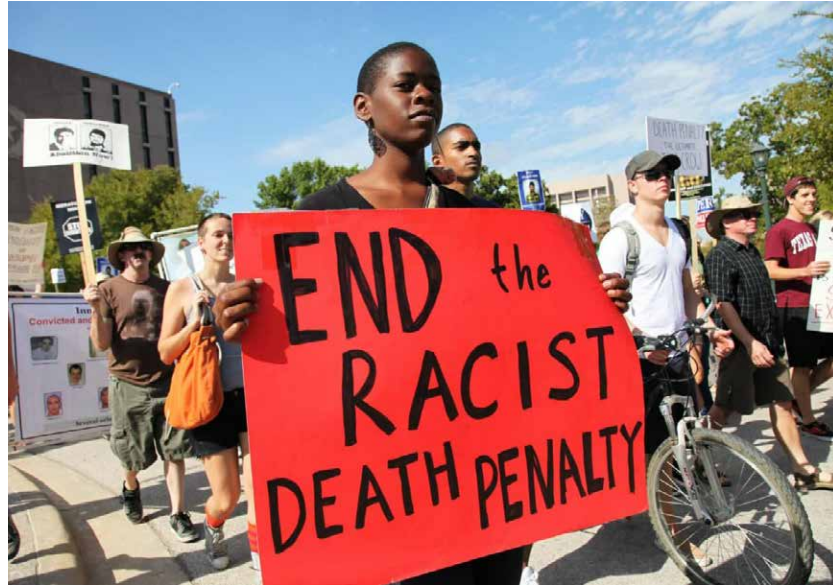
“Before America’s era of mass incarceration took hold in the early 1970s, the number of individuals in prison was less than 200,000. Today, it’s 1.4 million; and more than 200,000 people are serving life sentences—one out of every seven in prison. More people are sentenced to life in prison in America than there were people in prison serving any sentence in 1970.” (sentencingproject.org, Feb. 17, 2021, tinyurl.com/y3ehjbfu)

If we include the number of all members of the working class being held captive in prisons, jails and detention centers, that would bring the total number under carceral control to 1.9 million people in the U.S. (prisonpolicy.org, March 14)

In tandem with capitalist cages, we live in a country where over a million people have perished from a deadly respiratory virus, many dying within prisons. We live in a world where capitalist legislators are comfortable with massacres through gun violence against children in school, against people of color shopping for groceries or at worship. We live in a world where the U.S. spends billions of dollars for war in Ukraine but has no plan to feed a populace struggling in a new era of mass poverty.

We live in a world where the minimum federal wage is only double the price of a gallon of gas, and where many cannot afford to even drive to work if they don’t live nearby. We live in a world where—as Angela Davis says—we have the freedom to starve rather than have our human needs met.

Capitalism, as it has been for so many members of the working class throughout history, is much like a death sentence. Capitalism is racist, anti-poor and ableist in the way it operates and is an enemy of all the oppressed. As we work to abolish the death penalty, the abolition of capitalism is next on the horizon. □



2011 Texas annual march to abolish the death penalty

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

way to abolition. (“Inside Texas Politics,” wfaa.com, April 29)

On the way to abolition

The death penalty itself is part of the legacy of enslavement we contend with abolishing. From the rope to the chair to the needle—and methods such as death by lethal injection, firing squad and the gas chamber, still legal to use in places like South Carolina and Arizona—the capitalist state has many methods with which to kill the poor and oppressed.

Much like in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, there are hundreds of thousands of human beings imprisoned in the U.S. serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. Mumia calls this “slow death row,” because unsanitary conditions and extreme medical neglect behind bars often prove to be as lethal as an

Juneteenth

Death penalty abolitionists march

By Gloria Rubac

June 19—Yancy Balderas, an activist with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, led the call “Texas says death row!” Juneteenth marchers and parade watchers in Houston responded with “We say, hell no!”

Balderas carried a sign with a photo

of herself and her spouse that read, “My husband is innocent. Free Juan Balderas.” Activists marched behind Leonard Benton’s pickup truck decorated with photos and signs condemning the four Texas executions currently scheduled, as well as advocating for others on Texas death row and for freedom for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. While the adults marched, the youngest abolitionist, nine-year-old Jason Perez handed out candy to those along the sidewalks. In near 100°F heat, there were close to 150 spirited groups participating and almost a thousand people lining the route.

Texas declared Juneteenth a state holiday in 1979, and the U.S. made it a federal holiday in 2021. But African Americans celebrated Juneteenth for over 100 years before that. □



PHOTO: DELIA PEREZ MEYER

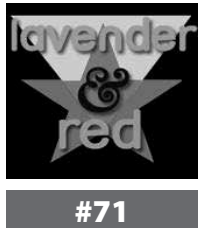
Abolitionists participate in Juneteenth, Houston.

SUPPORT OUR PRISONER SUBSCRIPTION PROGRAM AT patreon.com/wwp

Workers World newspaper provides free subscriptions to any of our readers who are currently incarcerated. Please consider donating at patreon.com/wwp to help cover the cost of sending newspapers every month to hundreds of our comrades behind bars.

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS!





Many histories converged to fight back at Stonewall

By Leslie Feinberg

Originally published Aug. 24, 2006, this is column 71 of Leslie Feinberg’s series of articles on the connections between LGBTQ2S+ and socialist history. The 120-part series “Lavender & Red,” which appeared in Workers World from 2004 to 2008, is available for free download at workers.org/book/lavender-red/.

Gay and lesbian historians who view history from a materialist vantage point have emphasized that, while same-sex affection and sexuality appear to have existed in all epochs of human society, the conditions of capitalism were required for the development of a distinct political and social minority identity: gay and lesbian.

But Stonewall was not just a product of capitalism but of national oppression as well.

The historians accurately point out that the ascendancy of capitalist production in the United States created a vast class of “wage slaves” — workers who owned nothing but their ability to labor. The organizing of a large-scale workforce also centralized laborers, creating large-scale industry and dense urban living, with same-sex living situations and relative anonymity.

They trace the devastating economic dislocation of the 1929 capitalist Depression that shook the working class and oppressed, creating a widespread exodus from rural areas and small towns to these cities in search of wage work.

World War II drew massive segments of the population into same-sex working and living situations and left large same-sex-loving populations in cities where soldiers were discharged and dumped from the ranks of the military. And 1950s Cold War repression inevitably generated resistance.

These overall conditions under capitalism, heated to critical mass by oppression, led to the development of LGBTQ+ communities and to a fight-back consciousness.

Liberation struggles and ‘Gay Power!’

National oppression was a key factor in the fight-back at Stonewall as well. It is no accident that the rebellion, which drew its leadership from the most oppressed, ignited in an era of national liberation struggles in the United States, Asia and Africa.

The Vietnamese people inspired youth of all nationalities, in the U.S. and all over the world, by demonstrating the determination of a people to fight for their sovereignty and right to self-determination, even in the face of Pentagon might.

The rising strength of national liberation struggles in the U.S. — Black Power, the American Indian Movement, the Young Lords, the Chicanx/Mexicanx movement and organizations of militant Asian youth — stirred great pride in the oppressed here and around the planet. The waves of these movements created

more room in their wake for women and LGBTQ+ people of all nationalities to struggle to fight oppression based on sex, sexuality and gender expression.

The youth of color in leadership in the sustained battles against the police in Greenwich Village on three hot summer nights in June 1969 — many of them homeless youth, who struggled to survive on the streets — fought for their right to define and defend their own bodies, sexualities and gender expressions. Their struggle was rooted in a long history of battles against capitalist colonization and imperialism for the right of self-determination and national liberation.



Workers World Party marches in New York City Pride, 1981.

WW PHOTO

In that sense, the Stonewall insurrection was not the culmination of one history, but of many.

Roots of same-sex oppression

Historically, the development of class divisions is at the root of same-sex oppression. But this was a class war with many battlefields between oppressor and oppressed peoples...

Gay American Indians (GAI) made a dynamic contribution to this understanding in its groundbreaking 1988 book: “Living the Spirit.” In this compilation, Indigenous peoples narrate their own histories of the diverse forms of organization

on this continent — many of them still pre-class, based on cooperative labor and matrilineal bloodlines — before the colonial military assault, which seized the land later used for white-settler farming, as well as railroads and other industry.

In an essay in the book, “Sex/Gender Systems in Native North America,” Midnight Sun (Anishinabe) emphasized that the 400-year history of colonial ethnographic research on Indigenous peoples on this continent omitted and distorted reports about the sex and gender relations they observed, “especially where these deviated from the bipolar European norm of the heterosexual

‘man’ and ‘woman’ and contradicted the European patriarchal world view.”

GAI’s History Project lists 135 Indigenous peoples on this continent who made room for many more sex/gender

roles than the European nations did.

Midnight Sun argued for a historical materialist view of sex/gender systems in these diverse Native societies, explaining: “Social, and specifically sexual, life is embedded in the economic organization of society — an organization that gives rise to a variety of cultural forms. The cultural construction of gender and sexuality must be seen in terms of the sexual division of labor, subsistence patterns, social relations and male-female relations. Within this context, ideology is not an arbitrary, discrete force — rather, it serves to reproduce and perpetuate social forms, behaviors and individuals suitable

to a particular mode of production.”

Colonization, Midnight Sun concluded, attempted to systematically destroy the diverse economic, ideological — and sex/gender systems — of Indigenous societies on this continent.

The cataclysmic impact of slavery

The history of African American youth who fought hand-to-hand combat with police at Stonewall is rooted in the historic struggle in this hemisphere against enslavement and for national liberation...

The tens of millions of African peoples who were taken prisoner, endured the horrors of the Middle Passage and were enslaved as laborers on this continent, came from diverse cultures with their own systems of economic organization, kinship, sex/gender and sexual and affectional expression.

The landed aristocracy of enslavers was hell-bent on reorganizing these social relations, like shackles, to meet its own inhuman economic greed. Historian Angela Davis reveals the contradictions in relations between the sexes/genders in the family lives of those battling the horrific conditions of slavery in her germinal 1983 book, “Women, Race & Class.”

Davis pointed out that in the pre-Civil War era, “As the ideology of femininity — a by-product of industrialization — was popularized and disseminated through the new ladies’ magazines and romantic novels, white women came to be seen as inhabitants of a sphere totally severed from the realm of productive work. The cleavage between the home and the public economy, brought on by industrial capitalism, established female inferiority more firmly than ever before.”

However, she explained: “The economic arrangement of slavery contradicted the hierarchical sexual roles incorporated in the new ideology. Male-female relations within the slave community could not, therefore, conform to the

dominant ideological pattern.”

By mid-19th century, she noted, seven out of eight enslaved Black people — female and male — were field workers.

Davis stressed: “Because husbands and wives, fathers and daughters were equally subjected to the slave masters’ absolute authority, the promotion of male supremacy among the slaves might have prompted a dangerous rupture in the chain of command. Moreover, since Black women as workers could not be treated as the ‘weaker sex’ or the ‘housewife,’ Black men could not be candidates for the figure of ‘family head’ and certainly not for ‘family provider.’ After all, men, women and children alike were all ‘providers’ for the slaveholding class.”

In terms of the division of labor within the home life of enslaved families, she added: “Moreover, from all indications, the division of labor between the sexes was not always so rigorous, for men would sometimes work in the cabin, and women might tend the garden and perhaps even join the hunt.”

Davis concluded, “This bears repeating: Black women were equal to their men in the oppression they suffered; they were their men’s social equals within the slave community; and they resisted slavery with a passion equal to their men’s.”

And centuries later, the descendants of those who resisted slavery were battling the police in the streets at Stonewall for the right to define their own sexuality, gender and sex.

Many histories, many identities

While colonialism and imperialism have used bullets and bibles to reshape social relations — including organization of the sexes and genders and expression of sexuality — and destroy the economies of oppressed peoples, the struggles of the nationally oppressed have also had a deep overall cultural impact on the oppressor nation.

The Stonewall Uprising, therefore, was not an articulation — as though from one throat — of one sexual minority that has existed in all places, in all historical epochs, without previous voice. Nor did it represent the emergence of a central identity that represents sexual liberation in a form so universal that its visibility can be used as a global marker for who is, or is not, “out of the closet” and proud.

The role of Latinx leadership in the Stonewall insurrection demonstrates that global roads of history led to the rebellion. Stonewall combatant Sylvia Rivera was a transgender teenager who had lived homeless on the streets of New York City since she was 10 years old. She was Venezuelan and Puerto Rican — and was one of many Latinx who fought in hand-to-hand battles with police at Stonewall.

I asked Sylvia Rivera in an interview before her death, “What do you say when people ask you if you fought the police at Stonewall because you were gay or trans? Because of police brutality or racism? Because of being oppressed as a youth, or because you were homeless?”

She answered with succinct eloquence: “We were fighting for our lives!”

The Stonewall Rebellion was living proof that when many histories converged in the streets of an imperialist metropolis — the capital of capital — people who did not share a common oppression wrote a new chapter of history, together, when they rose up to fight back against a common enemy. □

Antiwar protest planned for NATO Summit

By John Catalinotto

The most aggressive and powerful military alliance in the history of humanity, NATO is holding a summit June 29-30 in Madrid to plan its next confrontations with Russia and China — and to reinforce its domination of the world, despite contradictions within the imperialist camp.

In opposition to these plans, a coalition of international antiwar organizations will hold a countersummit June 24 and 25 and will march at the Atocha railroad station (Puerta de Atocha) in central Madrid Sunday, June 26.

The recent protest against Washington’s hemispheric “summit” in Los Angeles — where Biden refused to invite Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba — showed how progressive forces could highlight an imperialist flop.

Instead of disappearing at the end of the Cold War, NATO has been growing rapidly over the last 25 years, nearly doubling the number of member countries as it expands its area of operations. Despite

U.S. promises to the Soviet Union’s leaders not to move an inch eastward, the U.S.-led military alliance has absorbed most former members of the dissolved Warsaw Pact, including some former republics of the USSR and most of the minstates from the former Yugoslavia.

Some 50 delegations, including 30 heads of state, are expected in Madrid. NATO has recently invited Sweden and Finland to join and opened the door to Ukraine.

NATO operates worldwide

NATO has increased its area of operations beyond Europe and North America

to South America and the Caribbean, Africa, Central and South Asia and even to the Pacific. It has openly intervened with military force in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya and fed wars in Syria and now Ukraine.

Top representatives of Colombia, Israel and Japan will attend the summit. Despite these countries’ lack of geographic connection with the North Atlantic, they

already act as de facto members of NATO.

The U.S. and its closest imperialist allies plan to focus the hostility of the alliance on Russia and China. Washington has already used the war in Ukraine — which the U.S. and NATO provoked — to whip up war propaganda against Russia and whip its European allies into line against Russia, despite their contradictory interests.

While the competing interests of the various imperialist powers may undermine Washington’s plans at the NATO summit, workers and oppressed nations around the world have their own class interests in the outcome of the war talks. They have an existential interest in stopping the aggressive plans of the imperialist powers, for which the working class and all oppressed nations and people pay the greatest price.

That there exist contradictory interests between the U.S. rulers and those of Western Europe may open an opportunity for the working class on both sides of the Atlantic to intervene against their own ruling classes. For all workers in imperialist countries, the main enemy is



at home — that is, the bosses and bankers of the state that rules them.

The first line of struggle is the protest planned in Madrid, which will expose the crimes of NATO and begin a struggle to get the individual countries out of NATO — and get NATO out of the world. □

Haiti suffers in U.S.-created turmoil

By G. Dunkel

Haiti is in a process of collapse in its ability to function as a country on a daily basis. Half of its people don’t have access to clean water and have trouble finding enough food to feed themselves and their families. Social services — education, roads, public health care in this time of pandemic — and other types of social and physical infrastructure have nearly vanished.

Haiti had not recovered from a major earthquake in 2010 that devastated Port-au-Prince and left hundreds of thousands of people dead or homeless, when another earthquake hit southern Haiti in 2021. There was no adequate response to devastation from the earthquakes or that of the hurricanes and tropical storms. Workers and impoverished farmers were left facing a future they had little hope of surviving.

This chaos has now been intensified, because Haiti’s governmental structure has fallen apart. The assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021 — whose ultimate authors have still not been uncovered — and the inability of Haitian politicians, year after year, to call elections has deepened this uncertain drift. The menace has been increased by the ability of criminals to kidnap almost anyone for a profit, even forcing bus riders to pay a ransom.



U.S. President Joe Biden welcomes white Ukrainian refugee child. Haitian migrants of African descent, attempting to enter at the Texas border, are hunted down by U.S. Border Patrol agents mounted on horses.

On top of runaway corruption and the dissolution of the political system, daily reality has become even more punishing for the population, as inflation has spiked almost 27%, the highest in 19 years. When the “Five Second Gang” seized Haiti’s main courthouse by force of arms (and probably some inside help) and began selling its furnishings, such as air conditioners and computers, on the public market, the cops declined to act, claiming they didn’t have the heavy weapons they need to match the gang’s firepower.

U.S. role in Haitian catastrophe

The United States, with France’s assistance, has played a dominant role in creating Haiti’s current collapse, while the

presence of the U.N. in different guises has let the U.S. draw a veil over its role.

At the end of February 2004, with insurgent forces on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, the U.S. kidnapped democratically-elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide and his spouse Mildred Trouillot and flew them to the Central African Republic. U.S. troops, together with contingents from France and Canada, set up an interim government in

Haiti. This was then replaced that June by the U.N. mission MINUSTAH, an acronym of its name in French. Thirteen years and \$7 billion later, MINUSTAH was replaced by BINUH — a French acronym for the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti. Its mission was restricted to overseeing the cops and court system. BINUH’s mandate is now up for renewal by the U.N.

David Oxygène, secretary general of Moleghaf, told the Haitian news site AlterPresse June 17: “Under the control of the United States, the great imperialist powers still occupy Haiti. The question of renewing the mandate of BINUH falls within a logic of removing the sovereignty of Haiti, so that it is the international

organizations which organize the elections in the country and place satellites in political power.” Moleghaf is a progressive movement for liberty, equality and fraternity of Haitians.

There appears to be some maneuvering going on in relation to BINUH. Haïti-Liberté, a Haitian weekly out of Port-au-Prince and Brooklyn, reported a meeting between Helen La Lime, the head of BINUH and a former top U.S. diplomat, and former President Aristide.

Le Nouvelliste, Haiti’s daily newspaper, reported June 17 that Lavalas, Aristide’s political party, held a demonstration in Cayes, a major city in southwest Haiti, demanding that Ariel Henry, the current acting president, step down and that Aristide be appointed as interim president.

U.S. continues to deport or refuse Haitian refugees

The daily contribution of the United States to Haiti’s current catastrophe is hundreds of deportees. In May the U.S. deported over 4,000 Haitians, a record, bringing the total number of deportees during the Biden administration to over 25,000. These were deported to a country in the throes of crisis created by colonialism and imperialism — a country lacking food, potable water, shelter, health care, jobs and physical safety for most of its people.

These deportees are the ones that Immigration and Customs Enforcement determines to be not covered by the Temporary Protective Status, established for some Haitians living in the U.S. before July 29, 2021. TPS was granted then because of dangerous conditions in Haiti.

The Border Patrol agents mounted on horseback have driven back Haitian refugees at the Texas border. The U.S. Coast Guard is turning back and repatriating hundreds of poor Haitians fleeing by boat, generally overcrowded sailing boats.

A number of U.S. organizations, especially the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, have contrasted the racist treatment of Haitians to the Biden administration’s promise to welcome 100,000 Ukrainian refugees — who are overwhelmingly of white European descent. □

Labor union in Tunisia resists the IMF

By G. Dunkel

Tunisia’s President Kais Saied tried to stop the general strike, but 95% of the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) membership walked out June 16. This led



General strike in Tunisia, June 16

to closed airports, public transport, ports and government offices. The UGTT has about 3 million members.

Tunisia’s tourist trade — a large part of its economy — was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the war in Ukraine, the price paid for flour and wheat, to make the bread that’s an essential part of the Tunisians’ diet, has doubled and tripled.

Since Saied suspended the country’s parliament nearly a year ago, he has made concessions demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) — cutting subsidies and wages.

The UGTT disagreed — and backed up its “No” with boots on the concrete.

“We are still trying to find a compromise with the government,” Hedia Arfaoui, UGTT’s deputy secretary-general in charge of external relations, said at the main rally in Tunis. He suggested that some less painful economic reforms might be possible. (aljazeera.com, June 16)

The day before the strike, the UGTT explained that workers would “hold this strike to defend their economic and social rights, after the dithering of the government in the face of their legitimate demands.”

The union denounced the worsening social situation of workers in all categories “in light of low wages, rising prices [and] the deterioration of purchasing power.” □

The right to self defense

We were still reeling from the racist massacre at Buffalo, New York, the slaughter of children in Uvalde, Texas. Then came news of a June 11 attempt by white supremacists to ambush a public Pride in the Park celebration in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Over 30 white men of the Patriot Front came for the attack from states across the U.S., including Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. The hate group formed after the deadly neo-fascist "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017.

Faces masked and dressed in matching T-shirt, pants and baseball cap "uniforms," they drew the attention of a passerby, who said it looked like "a little army was loading up" in a van, which carried riot gear, smoke grenades, an "operations plan" and perhaps other weaponry.

The police were called, and they arrested the group. No attack. And here perhaps someone might say, "Oh good, the police were doing their job."

But this outcome is almost never — never! — what happens when the police are called to an incident involving an oppressed person or group.

Remember the Black vet in the grip of PTSD, out of touch with reality and stripped naked in Atlanta, nothing in his hands — who was shot dead by a cop? Remember when cops tracked down white-supremacist Dylann Roof

after he massacred nine African American people at worship in their Charleston, South Carolina, church — and arrested him without harming him at all, even treating him to a Burger King hamburger on the way to jail? These examples are endless. Endless.

Because protecting people is not the "job" of the police. The U.S. Supreme Court actually ruled June 27, 2005, that "police did not have a constitutional duty to protect a person from harm." That case concerned a woman who called police after her estranged husband violated a protection order, kidnapped their three young daughters, drove to an out-of-town location and killed them all. The woman had told the cops where he was, and they did nothing. (New York Times, June 28, 2005)

What is the role of police under the capitalist state? To protect property, bosses and reactionary institutions and organizations that sustain that capitalist system.

We cannot rely on the cops for protection from white supremacists, gender bigots, queer bashers, woman haters or disability attackers. Often it's cops we are having to defend ourselves against!

As Leslie Feinberg said in "The right to fight back": "Ever since the violent dismantling of revolutionary Black Reconstruction after the Civil War, the police, in large numbers, are called out to protect the right of white supremacists and fascists to assemble and publicly make their call for racist genocide." (Workers World, Dec. 7, 2012)

We as workers and oppressed people have the right to defend ourselves. The first line of self-defense — in the streets, on the job — is solidarity with each other.

The second is to have a plan with each other about what to do if attacked — whether by the boss with intimidation or threats at work, or by white supremacists at a PRIDE Day event. Plan ahead and communicate; be aware; be in solidarity; be prepared. It's our right to defend our lives.

The best preparation for self-defense is revolutionary consciousness. In "Seize the Time," Bobby Seale of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense said: "We do not fight racism with racism. We fight racism with solidarity. ... We fight capitalism with basic socialism. And we do not fight imperialism with more imperialism. We fight imperialism with proletarian internationalism." □



Emblem of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, Alabama, 1967.

CREDIT: LCFO

The significance of Juneteenth

By Monica Moorehead

This year marks the first anniversary of Juneteenth as an official federal holiday since it was signed into law June 17, 2021, by President Joe Biden.

The day is a recognition that on June 19, 1865, enslaved Black people were liberated in Galveston, Texas — two and a half years following the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation made by President Abraham Lincoln. Many Black people were either kidnapped to countries like Cuba or Brazil where slavery still existed until the late 1880s or even murdered by Texas enslavers.

Many Black people view Juneteenth as the "second day of independence" following the U.S. "independence" from Britain in 1776. Even before Juneteenth — also known as "Freedom Day" — was made a legal holiday, Black people celebrated this anniversary of their emancipation all over the U.S. with marches, rallies, along

with an array of social and cultural events. But the bourgeois media paid little to no attention to these celebrations.

The federal holiday will no doubt help to raise consciousness of the significance

WW COMMENTARY

of the day for millions of people who have very limited knowledge of the heinous crime of slavery and the heroic struggle to overturn it — with rebellions led by enslaved people like Denmark Vesey, Gabriel Prosser and Nat Turner, and white allies like John Brown.

It took a bloody Civil War, where the Confederacy was defeated on the battlefield in 1865, to eventually end chattel slavery, granting legal freedom but also opening the path to semi-slavery for Black people. These are important historic and political events that in one degree or another are absent from the mainstream history books.

What led to this federal holiday — similar to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday enacted in 1986 — was the

present-day mass struggle against racist police brutality and other forms of white supremacy under the banner of Black Lives Matter. This struggle reached its peak following the public lynching of George Floyd in May 2020, when millions of people took to the streets that summer with the main demand, "Defund the police!"

Of course, the liberation of Black people did not begin nor will it end with Juneteenth. The suppression of Black Reconstruction in the aftermath of the Civil War meant the goal of granting Black people full bourgeois democratic rights was abruptly cut short. The white-supremacist counter revolution laid the basis for today's reality of Black people in disproportionate numbers being relegated to a second-class status, with some of the worst housing, education, health care and nutrition in the country, along with being subjected to mass incarceration and police terror.



And now with Juneteenth being elevated on a national level, the ruling class and its media mouthpieces will attempt to co-opt this holiday by finding ways to make profits and by putting their own spin on "looking back at the past," as a diversion from granting full equality.

Instead, Juneteenth should be a clarion call for reparations for the descendants of once-enslaved people, whose unpaid labor was superexploited by white plantation owners. The inspiration of Juneteenth can inject a heavy dose of anti-racist solidarity to help move the classwide struggle forward by workers of all nationalities, ages and genders, uniting to organize for a liveable wage and more humane working conditions. □

Anti-imperialists march to end U.S. crimes

By Richie Merino

An Independence for Puerto Rico contingent marched two miles up Fifth Avenue in the 2022 National Puerto Rican Day Parade in New York City on June 12. The contingent included the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, Frente Independentista

Boricua, Las Lolitas de NYC and Workers World Party.

The contingent demanded the decolonization of Puerto Rico and an end to the subjugation and exploitation by U.S. forces of the peoples of the island and throughout the Caribbean. The NY-NJ Cuba Sí Coalition, which advocates for

stopping the deadly U.S. economic blockade on Cuba, joined the contingent, as all chanted, "Puerto Rico, Cuba, somos una sola!" ("Puerto Rico, Cuba, We are one!")

Despite attempts by police and corporate sponsors to divide the anti-imperialist contingent, activists waved the Grito de Lares, Cuban, Nicaraguan and Venezuelan flags to cheers from the crowd. Many spectators put their fists up in the air or gave a thumbs-up to show support for Puerto Rican independence and the other anti-imperialist struggles represented.

The Puerto Rican independence movement holds that the struggles for Venezuelan, Cuban and Nicaraguan sovereignty are connected to their own struggle resisting U.S. imperialism.

The kidnapping of Venezuelan Alex Saab

WWP marchers carried a "Free Alex Saab" banner provided by the Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera, who leads the struggle locally as the honorary chair of the Free Alex Saab U.S. Campaign.

June 12 marked two years since the kidnapping of Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab, while on a humanitarian mission to Iran to try to alleviate the effects of the U.S. economic warfare and sanctions against Venezuela.

While traveling to negotiate a deal for Venezuela to receive more fuel, food and medical supplies, Saab — an accredited diplomat protected under the Vienna Convention — was abducted in Cape Verde without an arrest warrant or Interpol alert and was taken to the U.S. in October 2021.

Cape Verdean authorities had kept him arbitrarily imprisoned for 491 days without due process, in violation of the laws of Cape Verde. During that time, Saab experienced torture. Alex Saab's abduction is an attack on Venezuela's sovereignty and a blatant violation of human rights and international law.

Free Alex Saab! Independence for Puerto Rico! End the U.S. blockades against Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela and everywhere! □



Puerto Rican Day Parade, New York City, June 12.

CREDIT: FUSER NEWS

Delegation brings solidarity to migrant seafarers

By Danny O'Brien
Portland, Oregon

The writer was part of the delegation that boarded the Otago Harbour ship.

Members of Workers World Party and the Pacific Coast Coalition for Seafarers boarded the Otago Harbour cargo ship on a Central Eastside port in Portland on May 23 to visit with migrant seafarers and deliver 22 care packages of COVID-19 tests, candy bars, ramen, deodorant, toothbrushes and other supplies.

The Coalition is celebrating its second anniversary this June. It was founded by a grouping of human rights, migrant, labor, faith-based and other community organizations situated along the Pacific Coast to offer solidarity and support for migrant seafarers, whose atrocious working conditions were greatly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the pandemic hit, crew changes were halted; workers were stranded at sea — and sometimes completely abandoned in foreign waters, despite an increase of profits from the shipping companies — and many had no idea about when they would return home.

In addition to Coalition members making frequent ship visits to bring care packages and give the workers a chance to talk about their conditions, the organization achieved something the \$150-billion shipping industry did not — starting a campaign that vaccinated about 4,300 seafarers along the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest. These vaccinations were given for free, while the shipping companies vehemently refused to vaccinate their workers.

The Otago Harbour, an 18-year-old bulk carrier ship, which sails under the flags of the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong, was seven months into its journey when it docked in Portland, until it left during the last week of May to continue to British Columbia, Canada, South Korea and Japan.

This ship is owned by Pacific Basic

Shipping Ltd., a multimillion-dollar private company based in Hong Kong. The corporation reported the highest earnings and net profits in 2021 in its 34-year history. (pacificbasin.com)

Workers exploited at \$2.90 per hour

Seafarers work on an arduous contractual basis and are at sea for many months at a time before they return home for a brief period. A Filipino seafarer can generally make around \$500 for a 172-hour work month; some agreements allot \$3.80 per hour for overtime work. Most migrant seafarers send a good portion of these wages home to support their families. These wages should be compared to



WW PHOTO: DANNY O'BRIEN

Migrant seafarers work in the pit of a cargo ship, with the financial district of Portland, Oregon, gleaming across the Willamette River, May 23.

those of U.S. seafarers, who can earn up to \$8,000 per month.

WW members talked to a seafarer from Iloilo in the Philippines, who estimated that 80% of the province's population find work as seafarers. He said that he had welcomed a new baby before starting out on this journey and then had to leave again, just weeks after the birth. His previous voyage lasted 11 months, one of the lengthier trips he had been on in his eight

years of seafaring.

Because of these long trips, many seafarers have to miss the birth of their children, as contracts must be taken which provide little rest between voyages. This work often turns into lifelong careers. Despite its unfair pay and unjust working conditions, seafaring is still a relatively safe way for migrant workers to earn steady money to send back to their families. In the Philippines, domestic jobs are not often a viable option, and migrant work like seafaring becomes necessary.

Since the pandemic, these long voyages have not guaranteed these workers any respite through shore leave. COVID-19 restrictions against going ashore are enforced by many countries' governments. But in the U.S., where shore leave is currently allowed, the shipping companies implement their own restrictions in order to avoid liabilities. Such liabilities could be avoided by simply taking the initiative to vaccinate their workers.

Because of this policy in the U.S., one of the seafarers still retained a traditional mythologized view of this country as some sort of "Land of Opportunity." He was shocked to hear of the many people experiencing homelessness on our streets and that working people struggle here, too.

Building unity among workers

The working crew members on board the Otago Harbour are mainly from Russia, Ukraine, Bangladesh and the Philippines. But despite their different nationalities and the fact that they must live in close quarters, the seafarers stressed that it benefits all of them to make tight bonds with the workers from different countries.

To overcome the language barrier, English is the official and required language on board. Signs in the hallways and the engine room mandate its use, even though it is not the native language of any of the workers on board.

WW interviewed a member of Migrante, an organization fighting for the rights and

welfare of Filipino migrant workers, and for genuine democracy in the Philippines. The group addresses the three root problems in the Philippines: U.S. imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism.

Migrante PDX is an active part of the Pacific Coalition for Seafarers, as one-third of these workers come from the Philippines, and the group helped with the Coalition's vaccination drive and fundraising.

When asked about some of the entrenched, material reasons that Filipinos constitute a majority of the population of migrant workers, Migrante PDX members explained that this development started in the 1970s, under the regime of dictator Ferdinand Marcos. He institutionalized the Labor Export Policy, which has been pushed further by each subsequent Philippine president, and has exponentially forced more and more Filipinos to move abroad to get work.

President Rodrigo Duterte furthered the institutionalization of this policy. He established the Department of Migrant Workers, which will require that more of its budget be allocated for administrative costs, rather than legal and welfare services for Overseas Filipino Workers.

As we left the ship and looked back across the Willamette River, we could see the downtown financial center gleam under the sun. This was in stark contrast to the pit several stories deep in which the seafarers shoveled cement. The class stratification in this view was shocking. This was especially so because the workers on board do not have much of a chance to see the interior of the city they must spend weeks looking at from the outside.

Seafarers are immensely important and essential laborers who shoulder a great burden to do the work they do. Yet the corporations which employ them and the capitalist media cast them into invisibility. The Pacific Coast Coalition for Seafarers strives to make their plight and their conditions visible, and the organization has worked tirelessly to do so since its founding. □

Museum workers demand fair contract

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

Hundreds of workers, labor activists and union officials from around the U.S. and other countries converged on the "Rocky" steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art June 14, to demand its Board of Trustees agree on a fair contract with its workers.

Many of the participants took time off from the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) national convention taking place a mile away to show their solidarity alongside museum workers fighting for

their first contract.

National AFSCME President Lee Saunders said: "The PMA Union is part of a rising grassroots movement of cultural workers, who are organizing with pride and passion, who are seeking the power and protections of a union. This young, dynamic workforce is bringing new energy to the fight. ... They represent the labor movement of tomorrow, but more importantly they represent the labor movement of today ... like Rocky, they kick some ass."

The PMA Union has been in contract negotiations with PMA management since October 2020. They've been negotiating for fair pay and affordable health insurance, for worker protections like job security and safety from harassment and for opportunities to build careers at one of the most prestigious museums in the U.S.

Museum worker Amanda Bock had to switch to a high-deductible plan when PMA doubled the cost of health care, leaving her with thousands of dollars in medical bills. "For far too long the PMA has capitalized on the prestige of working in a museum, but you can't eat prestige," she said.

While management delays responses to workers' proposals, distracts from the big issues and dismisses the union's proposed improvements, PMA workers keep showing up and doing the essential work that brings the PMA to life and makes the museum a world-class institution. PMA

Union members say they've waited long enough for necessary change.

"Management, you may not see us, but we see you. Your refusal to agree to a contract that compensates us like the professionals we are is a refusal to see us and recognize us for the significant work we do to sustain this museum," said PMA worker Jean Korey.

The high-energy event featured signs and frequent chants, speakers and other special guests, including President Liz Shuler, representing the national leadership of the

AFL-CIO; Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers; John A. Costa, International President of the Amalgamated Transit Union; PMA Union President Adam Rizzo; and others.

The PMA Union is part of AFSCME Local 397, a union of museum and cultural workers in the City of Philadelphia. At a meeting of the PMA Local in May, 98% voted to establish a strike fund. To donate to the PMA Union Strike Fund, go to: tinyurl.com/msd8knuc. It's time for a fair contract now! □



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

June 14 workers' rally, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Trabajadores inmigrantes de construcción

Continúa de la página 12

el trabajo. El 2 de mayo es la continuación del 1 de mayo, especialmente en esta enorme industria, en la que los trabajadores mueren cada día por la negligencia de los empresarios. Se trata de una campaña por la justicia de los trabajadores, lo que significa enfrentarse cara a cara con el empresario y, básicamente, conseguir una victoria contra el empresario exige muchos recursos diferentes. Una campaña a favor de estos trabajadores de la construcción sacará a la luz todas las condiciones de

trabajo problemáticas y la explotación en la lucha por construir un futuro mejor para estos trabajadores y sus familias".

López hizo énfasis en la necesidad de acciones directas como la del 2 de mayo como una poderosa herramienta para presionar al empleador a negociar con los trabajadores y para construir el apoyo de la comunidad. Esta campaña no es sólo para los trabajadores de la ciudad de Nueva York, es una lucha global.

Puedes obtener más información sobre la campaña de Cabricanecos en: bit.ly/3KvQwXm. □



La bandera inclusiva del Orgullo LGBTQ+

¡ORGULLO significa LUCHAR DE NUEVO!

¡Esta es una declaración del Caucus LGBTQ+ del Partido Mundo Obrero para los desfiles del orgullo, las marchas de lesbianas (dykes, en inglés) y las acciones de liberación trans en todo el país!

¡Un daño a uno es un daño a todos. Debemos unirnos y luchar juntos contra todos los ataques!

La violencia brutal de la guerra de clases es algo que la clase dominante ejerce contra nosotros a diario. Cuando una mujer no puede o elige no tener un hijo está forzado a dar a luz, cuando un hombre gay es desalojado y se le niega el acceso a los refugios para personas sin hogar debido a su sexualidad, y cuando a un niño negro se le prohíbe aprender su propia historia en el aula, extendiendo un legado de genocidio, estamos siendo testigos de la guerra de clases. La cuestión es cómo y cuándo empezaremos a luchar juntos como clase trabajadora.

Los reaccionarios, los racistas y los neofascistas de los Estados Unidos están lanzando ataques viciosos contra las personas más vulnerables. Este año se han presentado cientos de proyectos de ley anti-LGBTQ+. Los profesores se ven amenazados con enormes sanciones económicas por reconocer la existencia de personas LGBTQ+, mientras que los padres de



Orgullo de Nueva York, contingente del Partido Mundo Obrero, 28 de junio de 2017.

jóvenes transgénero se enfrentan a cargos de maltrato infantil por proporcionarles la atención sanitaria necesaria.

Mientras tanto, se está dando un golpe crítico a los derechos reproductivos, ya que Roe v. Wade podría ser anulado pronto. Los jueces federales han dado su aprobación a leyes mortales que criminalizan el aborto, el control de la natalidad e incluso los abortos. Y al mismo tiempo, el derecho al voto de la comunidad negra, conquistado tras décadas de lucha, está siendo destruido por las legislaturas estatales intolerantes.

La batalla por los derechos LGBTQ+, la lucha contra el racismo y la campaña por los derechos reproductivos no están separadas. Son frentes superpuestos en una sola lucha entre la clase trabajadora y la clase capitalista.

Los demócratas, a pesar de tener casi 50 años para codificar Roe v. Wade en la ley federal, no lo hicieron. ¿Por qué? Porque, al igual que el Partido Republicano, están en deuda con los capitalistas. Su incapacidad para actuar no es una cuestión de corrupción incidental; es un mecanismo fundamental dentro del capitalismo. Los ricos controlan la economía y, con ella, el poder político institucional. Es un ciclo monstruoso, y es la razón por la que muchas políticas que son muy populares entre los votantes no tienen ninguna posibilidad de ser aprobadas en el Congreso.

Así es como el patriarcado y la supremacía blanca siguen floreciendo. Se nos hace creer que el capitalismo es un sistema justo en el que el trabajo duro se traduce en éxito, pero esto es falso. El capitalismo es un sistema de opresión.

Dado que las opresiones se combinan entre sí, cuando se elimina la autonomía reproductiva, las personas negras, latinas e indígenas, las personas LGBTQ+ y los discapacitados son los que más sufren. Por eso no debemos pensar en nosotros mismos como elementos no relacionados de la sociedad, sino como una sola clase cuyos problemas surgen de la misma raíz. Si seguimos abordando los problemas uno por uno, sólo estaremos cortando ramas de este gran árbol venenoso. Debemos

derribarlo por completo.

El Caucus LGBTQ+ del Partido del Mundo Obrero DENUNCIA los ataques asesinos a nuestros cuerpos — los ataques racistas a la gente de color como la vil masacre en Buffalo, Nueva York, los ataques a las mujeres y a otras personas que pueden tener hijos negando la atención de salud vital, los ataques a las personas LGBTQ+ con armas legales que ponen en peligro nuestros cuerpos y mentes. RECHAZAMOS todos los ataques a los derechos reproductivos, de voto y de los homosexuales.

Pero las urnas por sí solas no pueden salvarnos ni lo harán. ¡Los derechos no se dan, se toman y se defienden!

Nos inspiramos en la heroica organización de los trabajadores que obtuvo victorias sin precedentes contra las gigantescas corporaciones Amazon y Starbucks. Una solidaridad de trabajadores multinacionales, multigénero, queer, jóvenes y mayores están afirmando "Nosotros somos el sindicato", y están ganando.

¡Ahora es el momento de la militancia, de afilar nuestras hachas de batalla y de FORZAR a la clase dominante a aceptar la dignidad humana y el poder de la clase trabajadora!

Recordemos Stonewall y las rebeliones de la cafetería de Compton. Salid a la calle. Nos negamos a permitir que nos vuelvan a meter en el clóset con las perchas. □

Trabajadores inmigrantes de construcción exigen condiciones de trabajo seguras

Por Monica Moorehead
Nueva York

Traducción: Deborah Rodríguez

Al día siguiente del 1 de mayo —Día Internacional de los Trabajadores— un grupo de trabajadores de la construcción inmigrantes, principalmente de Guatemala, lanzó la campaña Cabricanecos en una acción realizada a primera hora de la mañana en Brooklyn, en protesta por las peligrosas condiciones de trabajo a las que se enfrentan a diario en todos los distritos de la ciudad de Nueva York. Esta campaña representa a 40 trabajadores.

Estos valientes trabajadores prepararon una carta con sus demandas. Ante la mirada de sus partidarios, los trabajadores rodearon el coche de un jefe para intentar entregarle sus demandas. El jefe se negó a aceptar la carta, pero el argumento de los trabajadores sonó alto y claro: quieren ser tratados con dignidad y respeto como todos los trabajadores. Esta acción del 2 de mayo fue sólo el comienzo de una larga lucha.

Los trabajadores están representados por el Centro de Trabajadores de Lavandería, una organización mayoritariamente de inmigrantes que, según su página de Facebook, "se ocupa de la necesidad de desarrollar un liderazgo basado en la comunidad con el fin de mejorar las condiciones de vida y de trabajo de los trabajadores de las industrias de lavandería y de servicios alimentarios, así como de sus

familias. Nuestro trabajo tiene como objetivo combatir abusos como el abandono de los propietarios, el robo de salarios y las condiciones de trabajo peligrosas y de explotación, todos ellos endémicos en las comunidades de bajos ingresos de la ciudad de Nueva York y Nueva Jersey."

Aunque el LWC no es un sindicato oficial, su principal objetivo es mostrar a los trabajadores con salarios bajos que tienen derecho a organizarse y a luchar por mejores condiciones, aunque no tengan un sindicato.

El 30 de abril, Mahoma López, codirector ejecutivo del LWC, habló con Mundo Obrero sobre la difícil situación de estos trabajadores. La mejora de los salarios es

una de las principales reivindicaciones, pero igual de importante es la grave preocupación por la falta de protección en el trabajo. Muchas de estas obras no proporcionan máscaras o respiradores para proteger a los trabajadores del amianto y de otras sustancias químicas debilitantes y potencialmente mortales a las que se enfrentan mientras realizan la limpieza de las demoliciones en estas obras.

Estos trabajadores tampoco tienen arneses para protegerlos cuando trabajan en las alturas. Cualquiera accidente puede provocar, y ha provocado, lesiones graves e incluso la muerte.

Sólo en junio de 2021, más de 300 obras de construcción en la ciudad de Nueva York — un tercio de ellas en Brooklyn — fueron clausuradas por numerosas infracciones de seguridad. (N.Y. Daily News, 26 de junio de 2021)

López explicó: "Los trabajadores sufren muchas lesiones, porque la empresa no proporciona la asistencia, las protecciones de seguridad y los protocolos mínimos. La empresa obliga a los trabajadores a cargar con materiales pesados. Y el resultado es que los trabajadores tienen mucho dolor en los hombros, la

espalda y las rodillas.

"También hay mucho estrés emocional, porque tienen que terminar de llenar los camiones muy rápidamente. A veces llevan estos materiales desde la sexta planta, la séptima, sin ascensor hasta la planta principal. Ni siquiera tienen escobas u otras cosas mínimas como bolsas de basura.

"Este es un problema de toda la industria, porque muchos contratistas básicamente no se preocupan por las leyes para proteger a los trabajadores". Proporcionar este tipo de protecciones a estos trabajadores significa reducir sus beneficios.

Otro resultado del trato inhumano de estos contratistas ha sido el estrés que sufren no sólo los trabajadores, sino también sus familias, empezando por sus parejas. Muchos de estos trabajadores no quieren volver a trabajar por la posible ruptura de las familias.

Importancia del 2 de mayo

Los trabajadores decidieron llevar a cabo su acción el 2 de mayo, porque las obras de construcción se cerraron el domingo 1 de mayo. López declaró: "Este es el Día Internacional de los Inmigrantes aquí en Nueva York. Nuestra acción del 2 de mayo se llama Día de la Liberación para mostrar a los empleadores que estamos aquí; somos fuertes; la comunidad está aquí con nosotros, y estamos exigiendo cambios estructurales para mejorar.

"Decimos que nadie merece morir en

Continúa en la página 11



MO PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Mahoma López habla junto a los trabajadores de la construcción de Cabricanecos en la manifestación del Primero de Mayo en Union Square, Nueva York, organizada por la Asamblea de Trabajadores contra el Racismo (WAAR).