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World wants peace, Biden threatens war

By John Catalinotto

March 29 — Recent polls show that a majority of people in the U.S. fear that the current crisis might escalate to a war with Russia, a war they want no part of. (cbs42.com, March 28)

President Joe Biden’s comments made March 26 in Warsaw — threatening regime change in Moscow — certainly did nothing to alleviate those fears. The taste of danger remained even after his cohorts immediately walked back Biden’s comment. Biden later excused it as “moral outrage” and not a change in U.S. policy.

Moscow reacted with hostility, which is easy to understand. Washington has pursued policies intended to overthrow other governments around the world, succeeding in the last three decades in Panama, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Honduras, Libya and Ukraine, among others. These overthrows led to imprisonment and/or executions of the heads of state in Panama, Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya.



WW PHOTO: RICHIE MERINO

Despite avalanche of anti-Russia propaganda, revulsion for wider war exists among workers in U.S. Here, protest in South Bronx, New York, March 26. See page 2.

Even more dangerous than Biden’s words are the billions of dollars in weapons Washington is shipping to Ukraine in order to use Ukrainian people as cannon fodder against Russia. NATO itself is

steadily building up military strength in Eastern European countries surrounding Russia and Ukraine.

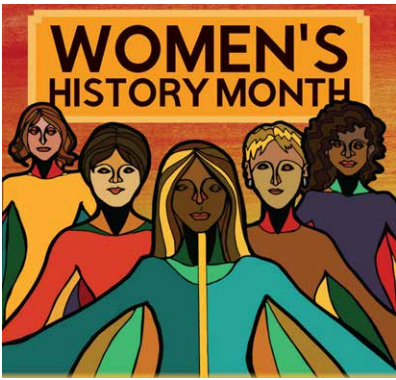
“Moral outrage” is an unfitting and hypocritical claim coming from Biden. Biden

is the head of state of the empire that first waged 20 years of war and occupation of Afghanistan and then, after finally admitting defeat, imposed deadly sanctions on the government in Kabul.

USA Today reported, “As a result of all this economic disruption [in Afghanistan], including the loss of billions of dollars of aid, 22.8 million people — more than half the population — are facing acute food insecurity.” (March 10) They include 3.5 million children in need of nutrition treatment support.

Much of the world feels moral outrage against Biden and the U.S. government.

Those in the U.S. who want to prevent a wider war must mobilize to protest both the words and the deeds of the Biden administration. As can be seen from additional articles in Workers World this week on pages 2 and 8-11, Washington is the main force responsible for the suffering in Ukraine — not to mention much of the rest of the world. □



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South Bronx coalition holds first antiwar action

By **Richie Merino**
Bronx, New York

Bronx residents rallied March 26 in the Mott Haven/Melrose neighborhood in the South Bronx. Their goal was reviving the movement to shut down police and military recruiters in poor and working-class high schools and to call for a reallocation of the \$750 billion U.S. war budget to fully fund public schools, jobs, universal health care, citizenship and housing for all.

This was the inaugural rally of the “Bronx Anti-War Coalition.” Speakers included community activists from La Peña del Bronx, The Ghetto Brothers and About Face, and Puerto Rican antiwar poet Mariposa María Teresa Fernández.

According to organizers, the coalition was formed in the heart of the South Bronx to revive the workers movement to remove military and police recruiters from poor and working-class high schools. The South Bronx is home to some of the most oppressed people in the country. In 2019, the South Bronx was composed of 97% nonwhite households, with a median income of \$25,500. About



Nieves Ayress Moreno from La Peña del Bronx speaking at inaugural Bronx Anti-War Coalition rally, South Bronx, New York, March 26.

WW PHOTO: RICHIE MERINO

40% of families in Mott Haven/Melrose are living in poverty. (See furmancenter.org for neighborhood statistics.)

Organizers say the New York Police Department has served as a domestic occupying force committing violence against this majority Black and Latinx immigrant community for decades. Speakers at the rally sought to draw connections between the NYPD and the U.S. military as tools of white-supremacist and imperialist domination.

Speeches discussed how military recruiters specifically target and prey upon the most oppressed and disadvantaged youth, luring students with the fewest opportunities into fighting imperialist wars on behalf of Wall Street. Poor and working-class youth are deceived by false promises of easy money, “adventure” and an “escape” from the downtrodden lives they currently live.

According to the groups involved, there exists a school-to-military pipeline the same way there’s a school-to-prison pipeline — and both prey on the poor. The warmongers running the U.S. government continue to deny workers free college, universal health care and a homes guarantee, because it would destroy military recruiting and the military-industrial complex — and

that’s exactly why principled anti-imperialists should agitate for these popular programs now more than ever.

The new coalition says: “Police and military recruiters out of our schools! We will no longer be used as tools for imperialist aggression! We will no longer be used to fight and kill working people like ourselves! Money for jobs, not for war!” □

MUNDO OBRERO **WORKERS WORLD** *this week*

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Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Bessemer, Alabama, Amazon

Workers’ second organizing drive has ‘more momentum’

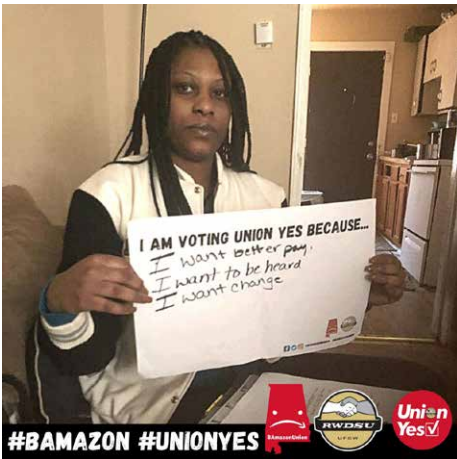
By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Centreville, Alabama

Workers at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, cast final votes March 25 in a second historic attempt to win representation by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). The workforce at the facility is majority Black and more than half female.

Almost exactly one year ago, worker “yes” votes fell short after blatant union-busting tactics by Amazon. The National Labor Relations Board ordered a new election, due to company actions that made a “free and fair election impossible.”

According to RWDSU, around 6,100 workers were eligible to vote in this round, about 350 more than last year. The union estimates that a little more than half the current workforce was employed at the facility during the 2021 election.

Workers Jennifer Bates and Darryl Richardson, both leaders in the previous



Amazon worker in Bessemer, Alabama, participates in the ‘I am voting yes’ union drive in 2022.

union mobilization, say there is more momentum this year.

Richardson notes: “We’ve got more employees involved. They’re doing more speaking out. They realized during the first election that Amazon wasn’t being

true in what they promised.” (al.com, Feb. 1)

As for last year’s “no” vote, Bates commented, “How can you say that a majority of the workers voted ‘no,’ yet you’re using all these tactics to prevent us from forming our union?”

Photos and video posted on Twitter during the current campaign showed union supporters interrupting and refuting Amazon management during mandatory worker meetings that pushed anti-union messages. RWDSU ran an inspiring social media campaign that highlighted Bessemer workers holding signs with their handwritten reasons why they were voting “yes.” The union was backed by other union and community members who phone-banked and went door to door to win support.

The outcome of the vote is uncertain, due to the huge number of workers to be reached, the high turnover and the fact that the vote is by mail-in ballot. Worker participation rate by mail is usually 20%

to 30% lower than in-person voting, according to the NLRB.

Dangerous work at Amazon

The need for unionization at all Amazon facilities is crucial. The Bessemer workers say the grueling conditions in company warehouses are most similar to those faced in meat processing plants: fast, repetitive, heavy assembly-line work, standing in place for long periods with almost no break, frequent injuries and no respect — especially for workers who are Black, Latinx and women or gender-nonconforming.

There is the continuing danger from a management that will always put profits before worker safety. On March 25, a malfunctioning machine at the Bessemer facility sprayed out unidentified vaporized oil that rapidly spread throughout the giant Bessemer warehouse. Workers eventually self-evacuated, with no guidance from managers. Stuart Appelbaum,

Continued on page 7

On the picket line

By Marie Kelly

Teachers take bosses to ‘Strike School’

Teachers across the country are still reeling from the topsy-turvy pandemic world of virtual classrooms, COVID-19 outbreaks and mask naysayers. It’s no wonder these essential workers are giving out failing grades to school administrators for the lack of coherent policies to protect students and teachers. Minneapolis teachers just ended a 13-day strike after winning “major gains ... on pay for education support professionals, protections for educators of color, class-size caps and mental health supports,” according to the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers. The union is expected to vote on the contract in the very near future.

Sacramento City Teachers Association and support staff began a strike just as the strike in Minneapolis ended. Low staffing seems to be the primary grievance, as a sixth-grade teacher on the picket line asserted: “Jobs are posted but they stay posted. [Administrators]

are not following through to get those people interested in being teachers in our classroom or support staff in our classroom. We need that. Our students need that.” (CBS Sacramento, March 24)

Coffee shops are waking up the labor movement

Salute to all those baristas out there who are giving a caffeine-infused jolt to the U.S. labor movement. The Starbucks union drive started in Buffalo, New York, with the first union vote win in December 2021. Since then, over 150 Starbucks across the country have begun or won union organizing campaigns. OTPL reported recently on the drive at the five Pittsburgh Union Coffee Tree Roasters shops. There are still more small coffee shops jumping into the worker-led movement to gain bargaining rights and a voice determining workplace conditions.

Baristas at Colectivo Coffee at 15 locations in Chicago and Wisconsin just won a National Labor Relations Board decision, when the Milwaukee-based company attempted to challenge the union vote. The majority of the 400 employees, including workers in the production and shipping facilities, voted for representation by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). After the NLRB decision, the corporation folded with this statement: “We have decided not to continue our legal appeal and will commence to prepare to bargain in good faith with the union.” (Wisconsin Examiner, March 25)

Finally, let’s support the baristas and cooks at Great Lakes Coffee Roasters in midtown Detroit, who began

a strike in February after the company ignored worker complaints, including safety issues following a COVID-19 outbreak that infected 20 out of 24 employees. Calling themselves “Comrades in Coffee,” the workers organized with UNITE HERE Local 24. The strike demands that management recognize the workers’ union affiliation and their bargaining rights as union members. Great Lakes Coffee Roasters workers are demanding a fair wage and benefits, proper safety measures and sick time to protect workers, stable working schedules and a “seat at the table” to better communicate with management.

Workers using strikes to communicate their demands

Workers at Chicago TV station WTTW went on strike March 16. IBEW Local 1220 represents around two dozen workers at the station, including technicians, graphic artists and floor crew members. The workers have filed multiple grievances over the past four years against management’s attempts to hire nonunion labor. Arbitration through the NLRB resulted in decisions that favor the union, but the tone-deaf bosses refused to listen.

Maximus call center workers chose March 23, the anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, to walk off the job. Communications Workers of America was involved in organizing the strike. Maximus employs around 10,000 people who work at 11 federal Medicare and ACA call centers in nine states. The irony is that these workers are fighting for a living wage and health benefits. □

Historic vote

Victory to the Amazon Labor Union!

By Martha Grevatt

Workers at Amazon’s JFK8 warehouse in Staten Island, New York, are voting March 25-30 in a historic union representation election, supervised by the National Labor Relations Board. If the Amazon Labor Union (ALU) wins the vote, it will be either the first or second — depending on results of a union election in Bessemer, Alabama — U.S. Amazon facility with a union.

To convince a majority of JFK8 workers to vote yes, the ALU has assembled a dedicated phone-banking team of members and supporters, including Workers Assembly Against Racism (WAAR) volunteers Toni Arenstein and Tony Murphy.

Arenstein told Workers World: “Yesterday I spoke to a young woman, she had only been working at Amazon for

a few months and said she didn’t really have any problem with Amazon as yet and wasn’t sure how she was going to vote. She said that because of the meetings organized by Amazon, she was going to vote ‘No,’ but then said, ‘Thank you for explaining so much about what having a union could bring. I will vote yes.’

“There was another call with a man who has been working for Amazon for seven years. We had a very long discussion, and he said ‘We really need the union!’ He said he is well liked by his manager but has been told he has hit top hourly wage — \$21.50 an hour — and will never go higher. He put his friend on the phone as well, who said he will vote for the union. They both said another friend there was undecided about the union, but they will work on getting him to vote ‘Yes.’

“The rules of NLRB-supervised union elections favor the bosses, giving them greater access to workers to push an anti-union narrative,” added WAAR volunteer Murphy. “That’s why it’s a critical act of solidarity for the allies in New York’s workers movement to come to the aid of the union, helping with phone banking to thousands of workers. They’ve been subjected to constant anti-union propaganda by this multi-billion dollar global company — the bosses even try to keep ALU members out of the captive audience meetings, and their leaders have been arrested more than once on bogus charges.

“The Staten Island warehouse is majority African American — and international, with workers from Pakistan, the Middle East, Latin America and elsewhere. In our calls, we’re finding a lot of rejection by



Amazon Labor Union rally outside JFK8 warehouse, Staten Island, New York, March 20.

the workers of Amazon’s union-busting rhetoric.”

Results of this and the Bessemer election will be released after the NLRB counts all the ballots, probably some time in April for both.

Victory to the ALU! □

Groups back progressive law for Rikers Island prisoners

By Gloria Rubac

When an incarcerated worker is doing time in a prison and finally makes parole, it is usually a cause for celebration. But being on parole puts a person under restrictions that can send them back to prison in a heartbeat. And if that parolee is in New York City, they go to Rikers Island jail.

Rikers Island jail can cause anyone living in New York City to get goosebumps or even PTSD attacks when they hear that name. Rikers has a long and horrific history of racism, violence, suicides and death. It is a filthy, disgusting place that isn't fit for animals.

Now, there is a bit of good news for parolees in New York City and the state.

Last summer the New York State Assembly and the State Senate passed a bill in June 2021, known as the Less Is More Act. In September, Gov. Kathy Hochul signed it into law, and it was to be in full effect by March 1, 2022.

The bill is meant to radically lessen the number of parolees put back in jail for minor violations, like missing a meeting with their parole officers or failing to report a new address or a new job or missing a curfew.

The progressive new law required that anyone picked up for a parole violation had to be in a courtroom before a judge, not a hearing room on Rikers Island or any other jail, within 24 hours.

But the Department of Corrections

and Community Supervision (DOCCS) decided the law didn't apply to cases that began before the law was passed.

The Legal Aid Society took this denial of law to court on behalf of 91 detainees at Rikers Island jail for parole violations, filing papers in the Bronx Supreme Court. They argued that the law was retroactive. In March the Legal Aid Society won a victory.

"The law is clear: These New Yorkers were entitled to a release hearing as of March 1, 2022, and DOCCS had no legal authority to deny them," said Lorraine McEvelley, Director of the Parole Revocation Defense Unit at The Legal Aid Society.

According to the March 23 New York Daily News, "In the decision issued Tuesday, Bronx Supreme Court Judge David Lewis ordered the new hearings 'forthwith' and directed that they be held in regular courthouses rather than in special hearing rooms on Rikers Island.

"Legal Aid lauds this ruling, which upholds the explicit intent of Less Is More to facilitate the decarceration of local jails," reported McEvelley.

The DOCCS reported it was complying with the judge's decision, and their spokeswoman issued this statement:



New York City protest targets Rikers Island jail.



many dozens were part of it successfully being enacted.

Kevin Perez, an organizer with the New York City Brown Berets, said: "The Less Is More Act is a breath of fresh air for hundreds of New Yorkers who have been suffering from the effects of mass incarceration. Overpolicing does not keep communities safe — if it did we'd be one of the safest cities in the world. Public safety can only be achieved when we increase the resources available for underserved communities and when we transition from being a system focused on punishment to one focused on rehabilitation. We ask that Governor Hochul ensures that #LessIsMoreNY is implemented fully and effectively."

More than 31,000 people are on parole in New York State. As of September 2021, New York held the distinction of imprisoning more people than any other state for noncriminal "technical violations" of parole rules. As in most states in the U.S., the entire parole process is marked by systemic racism, with Black, Latinx, Indigenous and other people of color much more likely to be re-incarcerated for parole infractions than their white counterparts.

This new law will be helpful for New York, but the solution to the unimaginably horrifying conditions at Rikers Island jails, as well as prisons, jails and detention centers all over the country, is to abolish them. Crime can only be lessened by creating a new society, a socialist society, that values every single person and provides not just the basics to survive but bread and roses too. □

Assata Shakur is a modern-day Harriet Tubman

By Monica Moorehead

The following slightly edited article first appeared online on May 7, 2013.

I had the distinct honor of meeting Assata Shakur in person at the 1997 World Youth Festival in Havana, Cuba. I was all the more surprised when she recognized me as the 1996 presidential candidate for Workers World Party. A year later, in 1998, during a New York City memorial for Workers World Party Chairperson Sam Marcy, Assata sent a moving message of condolence to our organization. Assata has been living in political exile in Cuba since 1979.

So when the FBI posted a \$2 million bounty May 2 for the return of Assata to the U.S., not only did it anger me and countless others, but it also reminded me of another a bounty put on the head of another freedom fighter over 160 years ago — Harriet Tubman.

Both of these courageous women sacrificed much in their lives, including any kind of a normal family life, to join important movements to free humanity from oppression. Harriet was born into slavery, only to escape to join the Underground Railroad, where, as a conductor, she brought hundreds of enslaved people of African descent to freedom in the North, including to Canada. She was so hated by the slavocracy that a \$50,000 bounty — big money in those days — was put on her head for capture, dead or alive.

During Tubman's era, the slavocracy had at its disposal the federal government,

with the Supreme Court refusing to recognize escaped formerly enslaved people as citizens based on the 1857 Dred Scott decision. The Constitution counted Black people as "three-fifths of a human being," and the Dred Scott decision encouraged armed white vigilantes, who were paid to recapture those trying to escape the slave masters. This kind of terrorist atmosphere did not impede Harriet Tubman from her political activism until she died 107 years ago in 1913.

Assata's political journey

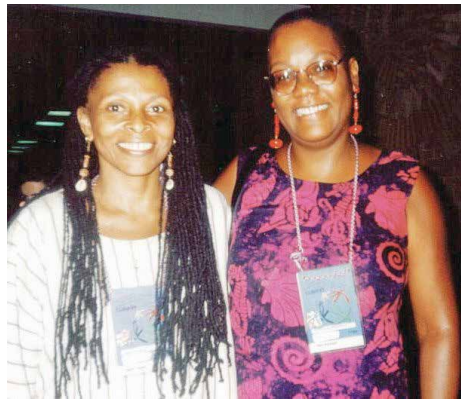
Born in New York City in the late 1940s, Assata moved to Wilmington, N.C., to live with her grandmother when she was three years old until her teenage years. She eventually joined both the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army.

The Panthers were beloved and respected within numerous poor Black urban communities where they provided free breakfast programs, health clinics and other vital services, while at the same time promoting the right to armed self-defense against police terror and state repression. The Panthers were forerunners with their call for community control of the police.

COINTELPRO or Counter-Intelligence Program was created by the FBI, then led by the notorious J. Edgar Hoover in the early 1950s. The aim of COINTELPRO was to use every dirty tactic, including demonization in the media, to discredit and eventually destroy national liberation movements like the Panthers and their leaders. Assata, for instance, was harassed, arrested and falsely accused of several

bank robberies beginning in the late 1960s. She was acquitted each time of the bogus charges.

Then on May 2, 1973, Assata and two other Panther members, Sundiata Acoli and Zayd Malik Shakur, were stopped by



Assata Shakur (l.) with Monica Moorehead.

white state troopers on the New Jersey Turnpike. Shots were fired, which resulted in the death of Shakur and Assata being shot multiple times. One of the troopers died. Assata and Acoli were charged with murder and convicted by all-white juries.

Both were railroaded to prison based on their political beliefs and convictions. Assata spent more than six brutal years in men's and women's prisons before she was able to escape to Cuba, where she was welcomed with open arms. Acoli has been imprisoned for almost 50 years.

There are now posters in post offices and even a huge billboard in New Jersey calling for the arrest of Assata as a "terrorist." The CIA has falsely accused Cuba of

"exporting terrorism," since soon after, its revolutionary leadership defeated the U.S.-backed invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and declared the country to be socialist.

It is important for the progressive movement here and worldwide to expose the U.S. as being the biggest exporter of terrorism. Its deadly weapons, including drones, maim and kill to protect the profits of the bosses and bankers.

The bounty on Assata will boomerang and eventually help to introduce her inspirational story to a whole new generation of younger activists, who are already disenchanted with capitalism and all its ills. And it will bring about a deeper solidarity with Cuba.

Black activists pay homage to Assata at many movement events with her own words: "It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love and protect each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains."

U.S. hands off Assata and Cuba!

Moorehead saw Assata again in June 2000, as part of a U.S. delegation that met with Fidel Castro on the cases of political prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal and the martyred Shaka Sankofa. The delegation also participated in a Cuban TV panel on the growth of the U.S. prison-industrial complex.

The following link is a two-hour meeting Assata Shakur held with activists during the World Youth Festival in Havana in 1997, taped by People's Video Network founding member, the late Key Martin: tinyurl.com/y625j2we/.

Women revolutionaries speak truth to power

By Monica Moorehead

The Women and Gender-Oppressed Caucus of Workers World Party sponsored a webinar on March 24 entitled “Global Solidarity with Women and Gender-Oppressed Workers.” The webinar was part of a commemoration of Women’s History Month and International Working Women’s Day.

The panelists included Norma Pérez from A Call to Action on Puerto Rico and a former teacher; Marie Kelly, a registered nurse and at-large member of National Nurses United; and Stephanie Tromblay, who is a lifelong union activist and Communications Workers member, and is of Huron and mixed Southeast Indigenous nations heritage.

The co-facilitators of the webinar were mYia X, member of WWP’s Disability Justice and Rights Caucus, and Ted Kelly, a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer+ Caucus of WWP. Palestinian activist and writer, Susan Abulhawa, recorded an inspiring message for the webinar. Deborah Rodriguez, a WWP candidate, created a beautiful slideshow with music, showing many struggles led by women and gender-oppressed people from around the world.

Ted Kelly’s opening remarks focused on a historical overview of International Working Women’s Day. She quoted from an article written by Kathy Durkin, a longtime fighter for reproductive rights: “At an International Women’s Socialist Conference in Copenhagen held 112 years ago, radical activists called for the annual celebration of an International Working Women’s Day to broaden global solidarity and strengthen ties among women workers.

“These socialists deplored the terrible working conditions faced by women workers as they poured into factories. A million women marched in Europe to protest during the first commemoration of IWWD on March 8, 1911. Later that month, in New York City, 146 workers — 123 of whom were women, mostly immigrants between the ages of 14 and 23 — were killed at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Radical working women called strikes and demonstrations and kept the

struggle in the streets. “In less than two years, March 8 also became synonymous with anti-imperialism. Women throughout Europe demonstrated against their own imperialist governments who plunged the world into war in 1914.

“It is essential to extend solidarity to workers superexploited by global capitalism, including millions of women migrant workers, incarcerated workers and all people demanding economic, social and political rights.

“Workers World supports struggles against racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and physical and sexual abuse on and off the job. We call for reproductive justice everywhere. We adamantly support Indigenous women worldwide, leading the fight against corporate destruction of the planet.

“We applaud the fights for unionization, with workers of color, women and gender-nonconforming people in the forefront, including Starbucks and Amazon workers here in the U.S.”

Connecting all the issues

When asked why every issue is a woman’s issue in the struggles against capitalism and imperialism, and how important is the need for global solidarity, each of the panelists provided unique answers. Pérez stated, “Women are leading the liberation movement while still facing gender oppression. Women were the first to suffer from the current pandemic economic crisis, forced out of jobs with no childcare, working from home where faced with anti-woman attitudes.

“This global crisis of capitalism has no concern for the survival of people, while women suffer at work and are at risk, especially as teachers and health care workers. We women are the first to face food and water shortages and war. We are on the front lines, leading the fight. The revolutionary movement needs to continue to grow. The face of struggle around the world is a woman’s face. We are the ones facing oppression; we are the ones fighting back!

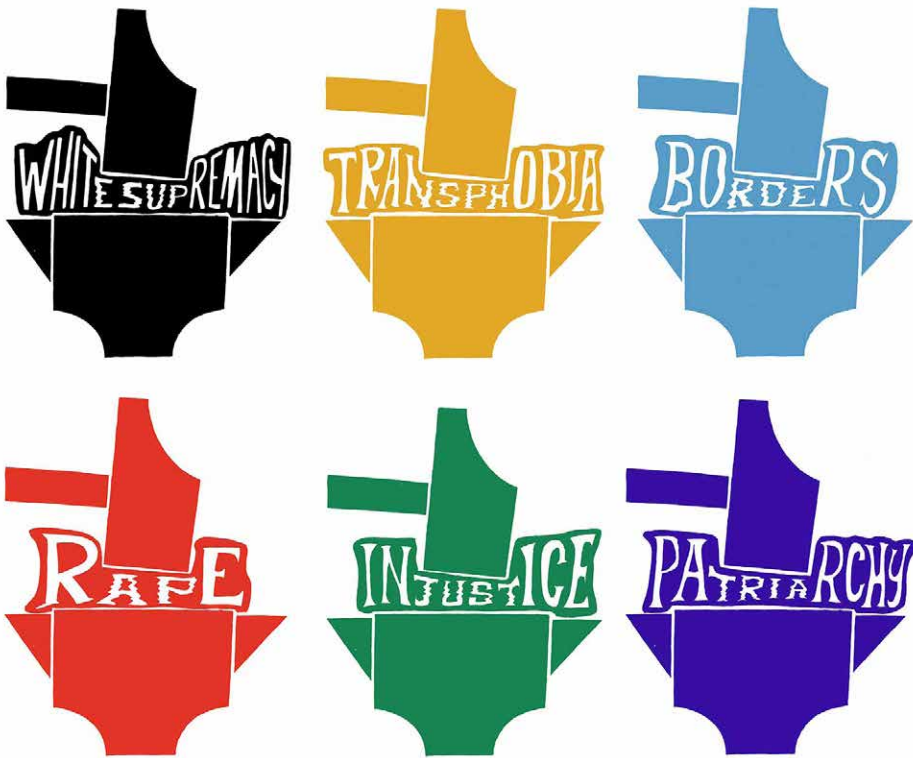
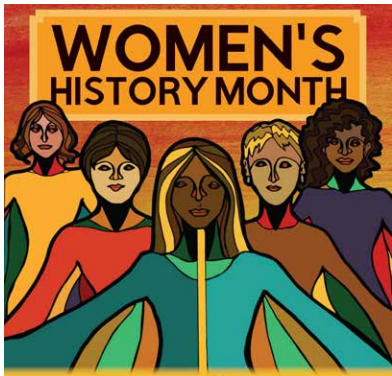
“It is urgent to continue the feminist anti-capitalist struggle until we free ourselves from patriarchy, imperialism and reactionary local regimes. For example, in Puerto Rico, women earn between 20% and 39% less than men who have the

same training and do the same job. The more education and age, the greater the wage gap.

“Although women prepare more academically and are the majority of the population, they are the minority in the workforce (40%). In administrative positions, the majority are men. Some 86% of sexual harassment and abuse is perpetrated against women; femicides have been on the rise.”

almost 1 million COVID-19 deaths in this country.

“Now is the time to be active in campaigns against for-profit health care and advocate for nurses in their fight for safe patient-to-nurse staffing ratios. Nursing is still a profession predominated by women. Nurses experience misogyny and the oppression of patriarchy, despite being the essential workers caring 24/7 for the sick and dying.



GRAPHIC BY JOSH MACPHEE FOR JUSTSEEDS.ORG-

Perez concluded: “Everything is continuously changing. I am under continuous construction to gain knowledge of what I didn’t even know was changing, what the younger ones are teaching me and what I can share and be open to learning about different perspectives. This is not a time for waiting; now we are fighting. We have to share our experiences, what we are suffering, and be humble and listen and learn from others and build community. It is because I am a teacher; I always have faith that we can change thinking and find the points in common.”

A salute to women workers

Tromblay remarked: “For women of color, the threat remains whether they, their families and their children will be safe from the police, from racist attacks, along with the global threat of femicide.

“And for Native women, the threat of violence overall we see manifested in the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two Spirits and all Indigenous Persons. There are boys and men missing and murdered too.

“The treatment of women and all working people—who under the profit system give up one-third to one-half of the hours of their daily lives to the corporate bosses—has worsened to where we saw teachers nationally walk out on wildcat strikes before the pandemic. And workers are fighting for unions again! The Starbucks workers, who are often LGBTQ+, women and gender-oppressed workers, are on a roll filing for union elections.”

Tromblay emphasized: “We salute all the Amazon workers, working in horrible, even killing conditions, fighting for a union. And I’d like to give a shout out to the 150 Meow Wolf Workers Collective/CWA here in Santa Fe, who are bargaining this week for their first contract.”

Marie Kelly responded with: “The pandemic has made it impossible to hide how broken the profit-driven U.S. health care system is, but nurses working in hospitals knew it firsthand, well before the

“The so-called nursing shortage is not due to a lack of nurses but is a result of hospital administrations’ deliberate understaffing in order to maximize profits. Nurses see the dangers here and are furious that they are being forced to either provide inadequate patient care or leave the profession.”

She went on to say, “It is a fact that the U.S. population has poorer health than most industrialized countries, and this is directly linked to the for-profit health insurance industry, big pharmaceutical companies and hospital capitalists. Only a universal single-payer system will guarantee that health care is a right that everyone is able to claim.”

Deborah Rodriguez commented: “I realized how important it is to normalize the point about women being the face of the struggle. But even the ones who are not in a movement are literally struggling to get by day to day, regular working women, Black and oppressed women, incarcerated women.

“I’m reminded that it’s just a lot of women out there who are struggling to get by day to day. And they may not have all the analysis and all the depth that is being shared here today; but only if they knew, I wish they knew and would join in. So the struggle for us is just to get them on our side.”

mYia X stated, “I’ve had the ‘Women of Vietnam’ book in arm’s reach. Madame Nguyen Thi Binh talked about political consciousness. She mentioned that [the Vietnamese] organized village by village. Those who knew how to fight taught others.

“And when we say brick by brick, block by block, you know how vital it is that each one of us really do that political education to become internationalist. As we sit in the belly of the beast or wherever we may be, when imperialism tries to make us think like we have amnesia, like what we’re seeing them do right now; we haven’t seen this before.” □



Go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDvYi-S22ts to view the webinar.

Idaho

Say NO to abortion bans! Reproductive justice now!

By Kathy Durkin

Hundreds of people demonstrated at the Idaho State Capitol against anti-abortion Senate Bill 1309 on March 19 in Boise. Freeing Idaho, a community-based reproductive rights coalition, organized the action and is determined to continue to fight this attack.

Both houses of the state legislature have passed the legislation. Although the protesters pressured Gov. Brad Little to refuse to sign this awful bill, he signed it anyway on March 23, in violation of fundamental human rights to bodily autonomy and decision-making on medical matters.

Like Texas Senate Bill 8, this law bans abortions after the sixth week of pregnancy, before most people know they are pregnant. It is the first state law to copy the Texas bill implemented Sept. 1, 2021. Texas now bans all abortions after state officials’ declared deadline, with no exceptions for rape or incest victims, even children.

However, Idaho’s law would allow later abortions for rape or incest victims, but only if the abortion seekers provide a police report to prove their eligibility to obtain the procedure! Only one-third of rapes are reported.

The Texas and Idaho laws are similar in that they turn over legal authority for enforcing these bans to members of the public, not state or city officials or courts.

In Texas, anyone can sue an abortion provider, clinic, doctor

or staff member for \$10,000, which is legally similar to a “bounty hunter” scheme.

Idaho outrage

The abhorrent, inhumane Idaho law allows anyone “related” to the fetus, “including a rapist’s family members, the right to sue health care workers and doctors for performing an abortion and allotting \$20,000 for each successful lawsuit.” (KTVB7, March 19)

The Republican right wing has proposed anti-abortion bills in several state legislatures. Arizona, Florida and Mississippi are enacting 15-week bans. Missouri, Tennessee and Ohio’s legislation stands out for the severity and cruelty of their proposed anti-abortion bills, say reproductive rights activists. (The Insider, March 24)

Missouri’s proposed House Bill 2810 calls for a 10-week abortion ban with no exceptions, even for ectopic pregnancies, which are life-threatening if untreated. A seller or user of abortion drugs or devices could be incarcerated for 15 years. A medical professional who performs an emergency abortion on a patient with an ectopic pregnancy could face a 30-year



Boise, Idaho, March 19.

imprisonment; so would the patient.

Proposed bills in Ohio and Tennessee would ban all abortions, including in cases of rape and incest. The states would award \$10,000 to winners of lawsuits against doctors, abortion patients and anyone who helps someone obtain an abortion.

Reproductive rights advocates decry the terrible problems brought on by the repressive Texas law and are concerned about the millions of people around the country who would be affected by such archaic laws and outright abortion bans. The impact would be strongly intensified if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns its 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade, which legalized access to abortion.

Texas nightmare

The Texas ban has been a nightmare for pregnant people who have traveled hundreds or thousands of miles out-of-state to obtain abortions. It is particularly harmful for low-income individuals and those who are Black, Latinx, Indigenous, women, migrants, disabled, youth, rural residents and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Abortion seekers have to take time off from work, find childcare and transportation and raise funds. While a number can obtain medication abortions, some have no options.

Anti-abortion politicians and other reactionary forces are determined to overturn reproductive rights any way they can, through legislative action, court rulings and even violence. At the root of the zealous right-wing campaign against reproductive rights are racism, misogyny and class oppression.

The attacks on this fundamental human and medical right expose the U.S. health care system’s inequities and

racial injustice. All of the prohibitions, restrictions, obstacles and abortion bans fall the hardest on oppressed people and those already discriminated against in the health care system.

We say fight back!

Millions of people across the country who will be impacted by these attacks are awaiting the Supreme Court ruling in June in the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization case. The justices could overturn the right to access abortions, upending the top court’s approval 49 years ago, or they could further limit access to the procedure.

Democratic Party officials, including those in the White House, say they will oppose the abortion bans. But they can’t be counted on to protect this right.

It was the power of the people through a mass movement that won legalization of abortion in 1973, despite a majority Republican-appointed Supreme Court. It was the historic Civil Rights Movement that won the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. The LGBTQ+ movement won the Marriage Equality Act. The working class and labor unions have won workers’ rights, not the politicians.

From now until June, every person in every progressive organization and in every community should join in a united movement and loudly protest and demand their right to reproductive justice. And if there is a setback, then we have to redouble our efforts to beat back the right-wing attacks and adamantly fight for our rights.

Additional source: Letter from Planned Parenthood President Alexis McGill Johnson.

Heat waves melt ice at both poles of Earth

By G. Dunkel

The climate crisis is real. Millions of people throughout the world are suffering and dying from floods and rising sea levels, droughts, stronger hurricanes and more intense tornadoes — several out of their normal season. Wind and ice storms, blizzards, heat waves, cold snaps, wildfires and mudslides are more frequent. Melting or structurally disintegrating “rotten ice” threatens the livelihood of Arctic people who rely on ice to hunt.

While many of these weather events occurred before global warming became established, their intensity and frequency are certainly due in great part to the atmospheric heat generated by capitalist production’s reliance on fossil fuels.

On March 25, the youth organization Fridays for the Future held 778 demonstrations and protests worldwide to “strike for climate reparations and justice.” Their website asserts “The catastrophic climate scenario that we are living in is the result of centuries of

exploitation and oppression through colonialism, extractivism and capitalism.” (fridaysforfuture.org/march25/)

Heat wave in the Antarctic

The heat wave on the Antarctic eastern coast saw temperatures rise by 70 degrees the second week of March, which led scientists on-site to take a picture of themselves in shorts and T-shirts. They were flabbergasted by this rise, since the Antarctic was entering its fall season. In the 100 or so years of meteorological observation in Antarctica, this was the first heat wave.

According to the Washington Post, “Satellite imagery and computer models indicate significant snow, rain and melting also occurred. During the heatwave, the ice sheet experienced its fourth-wettest day in more than four decades.” (March 22)

Along with this heat wave, the 1,200-square-kilometer Conger Ice Shelf, slightly larger in area than New York City, collapsed completely. It had been tottering before, but the heat wave was the last straw. These ice shelves surrounding the Antarctic continent keep the thick glaciers covering its land from melting more rapidly.

According to the AP, if all the glaciers in Antarctica melted, the seas would rise by 160 feet. (Yahoo News, March 25)

The Arctic heat wave

The Arctic experienced a heat wave at the same time as the Antarctic, which is surprising since it is in a different hemisphere and since its

winter lasts until late April.

The Arctic is home to a number of Indigenous nations who depend on ice for transportation between communities, which are not linked by roads, and for hunting and fishing which supply much of their food.

There are at least 60 words in Inuktitut, the Inuit language, to precisely identify ice in its various stages.

Andrew Arreak is an Inuit scientist with SmartICE, a community-based enterprise that offers tools to adapt to climate change, integrating Inuit knowledge of sea ice with monitoring technology. It has branches in 32 communities in the Canadian North.

Arreak lives in Pond Inlet on Baffin Island in Nunavut. His community has had to confront the way ice responds to the ice breakers used by the iron ore mines on the island. He told Bloomberg News, “Sea ice is coming a little later, and melting a little earlier, each year.” He went on “It’s not just the thickness of the ice, it’s also what type of ice it is, whether it’s imported ice or newly formed ice.” (March 23)

The Arctic is warming much more rapidly than the rest of the planet, except perhaps Antarctica. The Inuit, whose ancestors moved into the area thousands of years ago, want to have a say in what happens there.

The rapid changes and climatic gyrations taking place at both Poles are due to global warming throughout the world.



WW PHOTO: PADDY COLLIGAN

Inuit celebration July 4, 2016, in Utqiagvik the northernmost community in Alaska before the ice had broken up.

While the capitalists see the chance for big profits — for example, when the big oil and gas interests in the U.S. see they can use sanctions on Russia to make billions in profits from the German energy market — all their protestations on renewables are ignored in the blink of an eye.

The changes in the Arctic and Antarctic cause major changes for the rest of the world. The vanishing ice cover in the Arctic means more heat is absorbed and more energy made available for storms to intensify. The warmer Antarctica gets, the quicker its ice shields go, the quicker its ice cover melts, and the quicker seas rise throughout the world.

Renewables won’t solve all the problems of global warming. But adopting them quickly will give the world time to develop other, more comprehensive solutions. □



Glacial collapse

Ketanji Brown Jackson & the U.S. Supreme Court

By Monica Moorehead

If Ketanji Brown Jackson is confirmed as the newest member of the U.S. Supreme Court, replacing the soon-to-be retired Justice Stephen Breyer for whom she once clerked, she will become the first African American woman to occupy the highest judicial seat in the U.S.

Jackson will be the third Black person and the sixth woman to hold this office. Her confirmation would be almost equivalent to Barack Obama’s election as the first Black person to become U.S. president — but on a judicial level.

Why did Joe Biden pick Ms. Jackson as his nominee? She has been a federal judge for almost 10 years, mainly on the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals. She is a Harvard University graduate and a Harvard Law School graduate. She has been a corporate lawyer and served in the U.S. Sentencing Commission, a congressional agency that examines disparities in sentencing based mainly on nationality.

As a public defender, Jackson has represented clients accused of terrorist acts who are serving time at Guantanamo Bay and also some accused of promoting child pornography. She has been praised by both the Fraternal Order of Police and the International Association of Police.

Based on these credentials alone, an objective person would think that Ms. Jackson would meet bourgeois standards for a Supreme Court Justice, who will no doubt follow capitalist law to the letter. Additionally, her becoming a justice would not change the SCOTUS political balance of power related to the decade-long dominance of majority conservative versus minority liberal voting pattern of 6 to 3.

But though Ms. Jackson was very clear in her March 21 opening statement before the Senate Judiciary Committee that she will uphold the laws of the U.S. Constitution, some of the most ultra-right, racist senators, who happen to be

Republicans, belittled her credentials and viciously attacked her political stance.

Other bigots questioned how she “managed” to graduate from Harvard University, using that as an excuse to attack the right to affirmative action and political representation systematically denied to Black people since the violent end of Reconstruction. The Republican National Committee has labeled her as a “radical, left-wing activist.”

The ultra-right wing, including Senators Ted Cruz and Marsha Blackburn, have accused her of having a “hidden agenda” when it comes to racism. For example, they pointed to the 1619 Project of the New York Times magazine, which references the year the first enslaved Africans arrived in the then-colony of Jamestown, Virginia. Ms. Jackson characterized the 1619 Project as a “provocative study.” (Washington Post, March 24) For this mild response, she was attacked as reaffirming that the U.S. was founded on a racist basis.

Ms. Jackson was praised by Black women friends and contemporaries, along with members of the Black Congressional Caucus, most notably Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), before and during the hearing. Mazie Hirono, the Japanese-American senator from Hawai’i, also defended her.

But most of the scathing accusations of Ms. Jackson have gone unanswered by white Democrats. Even Joe Biden admitted that he has not viewed any of the hearings, being occupied with ratcheting up the war threats against Russia.

Ironically, the outcome of the hearing is scheduled for April 4, the 54th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Reactionary role of the Supreme Court

In the interests of the workers and oppressed peoples, racism in any form must be fought and condemned. This does not preclude exposing the limitations and contradictions within the struggle,

especially if within a bourgeois-established institution. In this case, that institution is the Supreme Court.

The U.S. presidency, Congress and Supreme Court were established in 1789 within the framework of the U.S. Constitution. This document was written by the white “founding fathers,” many of whom were rich property owners, enslavers and proponents of genocide of Indigenous nations. These three entities developed into the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the capitalist government. All three were to share the power of upholding class rule—to protect the private property of big landowners and bosses.

In a Feb. 22 Workers World article, “Dred Scott to Daunte Wright: same repression, same fight,” I wrote: “At the height of the economic dominance of slavery in the U.S., Black people were legally viewed as three-fifths of a human being and treated no differently, or even worse, than any animal. Their ability to work and their entire being were owned and super-exploited by their owners.

“This relationship was codified by the highest court in the country, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a historic 1857 landmark decision, when the enslaved Dred Scott decided to sue for his freedom, after his enslaver died while they were on a visit to the free state of Illinois in 1847.

“After losing court decisions through various legal state and federal appeals, Scott took his case to SCOTUS. But Scott never had a chance of winning, considering that out of the nine justices, seven were appointed by pro-slavery presidents from the South; and of these, five were from slaveholding families.

“Chief Justice Roger B. Taney—a staunch supporter of slavery—wrote the ‘majority opinion’ for the court. The decision stated that because Scott was Black, he was not a citizen and therefore had no right to sue. Therefore, Scott and his family remained enslaved.” ([workers.org/2022/02/61974](https://www.workers.org/2022/02/61974))

The late chairperson of Workers World Party, Sam Marcy, in a political report to



Ketanji Brown Jackson

a 1989 party conference, wrote: “Alongside this bourgeois democratization of the political process [expansion of the right to vote], there has been a simultaneous social and economic process which is superior in strength. That is the process of the concentration of power in undemocratic bodies. It comes from the concentration of the means of production in the hands of a ruling class which holds the power and distributes it in areas most conducive to them. So it’s not an accident that power should ultimately be exercised by the Supreme Court. That’s most reliable to them, most conservative, responsive only to those who have appointed them.

“So much talk goes on about democracy, about the rights of the people to vote and to elect, but when it gets down to the really critical issues, political power is concentrated in undemocratic bodies that are removed from the control of the masses.” (tinyurl.com/bdctjm74)

Whether or not Ketanji Brown Jackson is confirmed as the next U.S. Supreme Court Justice will not alter the entrenched white supremacy that permeates every aspect of U.S. society. The fact that the Black masses and the working class in general have been directly shut out of the process of deciding who sits on this court, which makes decisions that will impact their daily lives—from the right to organize to access to reproductive justice—is another example of why capitalist relations must be overturned to lay the basis of a true workers’ democracy—socialism. □

Portland Starbucks: unionizing on the rise

By Lyn Neeley
Portland, Oregon

A rowdy crowd rallied March 26 outside a Starbucks store in Portland, Oregon, where workers are trying to unionize. Workers from a number of other unions spoke in support of the Starbucks workers; they included representatives of Oregon Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and mechanics at Jim Fisher Volvo, who are working toward an election to be represented by the International Association of Machinists (IAM). The mechanics held their own rally earlier that day.

Pam Gordon of the Oregon Nurses Association drove 90 minutes to join the demonstration. She told the crowd, “I didn’t know I was a victim of wage theft until I became aware of the power of unions.”

Starbucks stores in Seattle and Mesa, Arizona, are the seventh and eighth locations across the country to win union representation elections. On March 22, workers at Seattle’s Capitol Hill Starbucks store voted unanimously to join Workers United. Two days later, workers at a Mesa store voted 11 to 3 to unionize, making theirs the second unionized store in that city. A barista at the Mesa location, Bradley Logue said, “This is our opportunity to speak up and have a voice for ourselves. We’re doing this not only

for us, but for future generations, too.” (tinyurl.com/3kdtsr7k)

There are at least 157 Starbucks locations in 27 states engaged in unionizing efforts, making it almost certain more workers will join the union. (tinyurl.com/muuan6es) In Portland, there are now eight Starbucks stores trying to unionize, and in Seattle nearly half a dozen. Workers at the Cooper Point Village Starbucks store in Olympia, Washington, walked out March 24, demanding, “Fair contract; Don’t cut our hours; Stop Union Busting.” □



WW PHOTO: JIM WALLACE

Rally for Starbucks union drive, Portland, Oregon, March 26. Pam Gordon of the Oregon Nurses Association is second from right.

Bessemer, Alabama, Amazon Workers’ second organizing drive

Continued from page 3

RWDSU president, issued a March 26 statement that said in part:

“Amazon knowingly kept workers at their stations for hours during the incident, failed to properly evacuate the facility and told workers to go back to work before any clarity on the safety of the vapor in the air was known. It is unconscionable that Amazon would keep workers at their stations when there is a known health and safety issue. Workers’ lives should never be put in jeopardy for profits, something Amazon has an inexcusable history of doing.

“Workers did the right thing leaving when they felt unsafe yesterday and in reporting this to OSHA, who must investigate this fully. Amazon must be held accountable for this. We hope the substance workers were inhaling for hours has no long-term harmful effects, but the simple fact that workers were in that situation demonstrates Amazon’s blatant disregard for the health and safety of their employees.”

Despite Amazon’s might and Alabama’s reactionary “right-to-work-for-less” laws, there is a militant tradition of worker organizing in the state, especially for Black workers, going back to the

19th century. Black Civil Rights actions in Alabama were the starting point in the 20th century of a movement against racism that continues throughout the country today.

Alabama workers fighting for a union at Amazon are the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those movements. They are well aware of how freedoms are won and how working-class history gets made. Whether the official vote is “yes” in Bessemer this time around, there’s no doubt that they will continue to organize for victory. □



WW PHOTO: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

Support for Amazon workers in the Four Points neighborhood of Centreville, Alabama — population 2,800 and 35 miles from Bessemer, March 27.

Immigration: the racist double standard

By Martha Grevatt

President Joe Biden’s March 25 announcement made in Brussels, Belgium, where he was attending a NATO meeting — that the U.S. would accept up to 100,000 Ukrainian refugees — is all over the news. His welcome exposes again the racist hypocrisy of Washington’s immigration practices.

The number may be small considering reports that 3.5 million people have left or are trying to leave Ukraine — although most apparently prefer to stay in Europe and eventually return to Ukraine. However, Biden’s stance toward Ukrainians contrasts sharply with his refusal to accept refugees and migrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and Africa.

Since President Biden took office, over 20,000 Haitians have been deported, many of whom had lived in the U.S. for years. Most are being flown back to Haiti under former President Donald Trump’s Title 42, which calls for expeditious deportations on the dubious grounds of reducing COVID-19 spread. Biden has left Title

42 in place, and it has been applied to Haitians apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border, deporting them instead of allowing them to apply for asylum.

The Haitians are forced to return to conditions of dire poverty, low access to COVID-19 vaccines and political instability since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse last July. In March hundreds of Haitian migrants, many of them children, arrived by sea in the Florida Keys and were immediately taken into custody by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Other migrants from Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa have fared no better. Since its enactment, Title 42 has been used to deport 1.7 million people, 70% of them under Biden. Flights were just increased in March with a program to “repatriate” Colombians. The president has rejected calls by Democratic senators and representatives to end Title 42.

Pew Research reports: “Overall, nearly four-in-ten Latinos (39%) say they worry that they, a family member or someone close to them could be deported.” The figure is double for Latinx immigrants without legal status. (pewresearch.org)

Title 42 has been used to deport Black immigrants in disproportionate numbers, from Africa as well as the Caribbean. In some cases they have been restrained and shackled. A Cameroonian deportee has charged in a lawsuit that a restraint device known as a WRAP “held his legs tightly straight and together while pulling his head and chest down towards his knees at a sharp angle.” The WRAP has reportedly only been used against Africans. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Oct. 13, 2021)

The millions of crimes against Black, Brown, Indigenous and Asian migrants certainly did not begin with Title 42. When Biden was vice president during the Barack Obama administration, there were some 3 million deportations. Most of those deported had been fleeing brutal political repression and extreme poverty — created by U.S. foreign policy and corporate domination.

For Ukrainians to now be welcome



Haitians protest mass deportations, Miami, Sept. 22, 2021.

exposes a blatantly racist and xenophobic double standard. It also exposes crass political opportunism since the Russia-Ukraine war began. Before the war, many Ukrainians had trouble getting a U.S. visa. Now Washington’s foreign policy includes using the people of Ukraine, including the refugees, as political pawns against Russia.

No one should be fooled by any fake “humanitarian” gestures by U.S. imperialism, whether in the form of “assistance” or special status for a particular group of immigrants. Remember, all 50 states consist of lands stolen from Indigenous peoples. □

Sanctions on Russia boomerang Biden promises food shortages

By Sara Flounders

“Food shortages — it’s going to be real,” President Joe Biden said in Brussels March 25. “The price of the sanctions is not just imposed upon Russia. It’s imposed upon an awful lot of countries as well, including European countries and our country as well.”

This ominous warning, reported around the world, was delivered at a NATO press conference.

As Biden spoke, workers’ actions in Spain, Greece, Italy, France and Germany confronted soaring prices for fuel and food. From truckers to farmers on tractors, roads were blocked. Fishing people organized on boats. The price of fuel has already become unbearable.

This resistance is just a glimpse of what is to come, as the economic unraveling of Europe, due to U.S. and European Union sanctions, boomerangs back on those countries who acceded to U.S. demands.

This economic catastrophe for millions of working people in Russia, Ukraine and throughout Europe, Africa and the U.S. was well understood, long before the U.S. announced the harshest sanctions ever passed. This is what economic sanctions are designed to do — create suffering and foment dissent against governments targeted for ‘regime change.’

This economic catastrophe for millions of working people in Russia, Ukraine and throughout Europe, Africa and the U.S. was well understood long before the U.S. announced the harshest sanctions ever passed. This is what economic sanctions are designed to do — create suffering and foment dissent against governments targeted for “regime change.”

The growing economic integration of Russia and China with Europe is the greatest threat to U.S. corporate domination.

The EU is the largest investor in Russia. EU trade with Russia is \$260 billion a year, 10 times its trade with the U.S. Forcing the EU to cut its trade with Russia is creating shockwaves and not only for the working class. The ruling class, the oligarchs in Germany and throughout the EU are being hit hard, as lucrative markets with Russia are ripped away.

All of this is quite acceptable to U.S. corporate power if the U.S. will benefit. And it will for a time. But in the long run, the economic unraveling will undermine U.S. capitalism.

Capitalism is shortsighted

Because capitalism is based on the drive to relentlessly maximize profit and to ruthlessly compete, long-term planning — even with the best strategists and think tanks — comes up against what Karl Marx termed “the anarchy of production.”

For over 100 years, based on its powerful economic position, U.S. imperialism has been in a position to arrogantly call the shots. Any country resisting U.S. corporate control faced a complete cutoff in access to technology, industrial development, investment and trade.

U.S. economic sanctions, combined

with assassinations, military threats and political destabilization have been applied since the 1804 Haitian Revolution. The 1917 Russian Revolution faced 70 years of sanctions and isolation. For decades the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has faced the harshest sanctions, and the U.S. has blockaded Cuba.

Sanctions have stretched to more than 40 countries covering a third of the world’s population. The demand to comply with these onerous U.S. conditions creates economic havoc in surrounding countries.

But as the number of countries struggling to survive sanctions has grown, the ability and willingness to circumvent the sanctions and continue trade has likewise grown.

This month, after Washington expanded sanctions on Russia, U.S. imperialism arrogantly expected world compliance. The imperialist partners of the U.S. in the EU, Canada, Japan and Australia acquiesced.

To the shock of U.S. strategists, however, most of the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America refused. This is a substantial trading bloc. China’s Belt and Road investments have opened new possibilities globally.

Sanctions backfire on U.S., EU

The sanctions confiscated \$300 billion in gold and foreign exchange assets Russia held in Western banks and removed Russian banks from the SWIFT international fund transfer arrangement among banks. This blocked all dollar transfers to Russia in international trade.

In response, Russia has announced that all countries taking part in U.S./EU sanctions would continue to receive Russian natural gas and oil, in volumes and prices agreed to in previous contracts, but are now obligated to pay for the commodity in Russia’s national currency, rubles.

Most of Europe and Japan are dependent on gas and oil from Russia. In the EU 40% of gas needs are supplied by Russia. Japan, South Korea and Taiwan import liquefied natural gas from Russia’s Sakhalin-2 and Yamal LNG projects; Japan is the biggest importer of Russian LNG in Asia.

U.S. and EU bankers reacted with outrage and frustration. These countries who

had collaborated in seizing Russia’s assets and imposing economic strangulation could be left without fuel if they refuse to pay in Russia’s currency.

The ruble has jumped to a three-week high against the U.S. dollar since Russia’s announcement.

Faced with the EU and U.S. threats to close all companies operating in Russia, Russia responded by threatening to seize the assets of and nationalize all Western countries who pull out. Corporations, from McDonald’s, Burger King and Starbucks to Shell and BP, face enormous losses.

A desperate move

U.S. imperialism is making a desperate effort to reassert its economic dominance. The encirclement of Russia, by expanding the U.S.-commanded NATO military alliance, along with the arming of fascist military units in Ukraine, was a threat against Russia. It was designed to disrupt the growing EU trade with Russia and China.

But it cannot restore U.S. imperialism to its previous status.

Up until 2001, 80% of the world traded more with the U.S. than with China. However, today, 128 out of 190 countries trade more with China than the U.S., with 90 countries trading twice as much with China as the U.S. (tinyurl.com/3eckejry)

These are the countries which are refusing to abide by U.S. sanctions on Russia. They now have other options.

At home, the U.S. has dramatically reduced investment in civilian infrastructure, factories and machinery for more than 50 years. Despite Biden’s Build Back Better bill — which lacks support of the Senate — funding continues to flow to the Pentagon budget. Military spending is more immediately profitable to the ruling class, but the workers and oppressed pay the price.

The very real threat of a wider war remains. As Lenin explained in his classic work — “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism,” written during World War I — wars in the imperialist era are fought for control of markets.

How far will the Pentagon go to uphold global U.S. domination? The crisis calls for a mass, global, working-class response to push back the empire’s aims. □

Latest U.S. ‘war for oil’ fuels global warming

By Betsey Piette

Is the U.S./NATO-instigated war with Russia, taking place on the battlefield of Ukraine, yet another “war for oil” — or a war over control of global sales of natural gas?

At an emergency NATO summit in Brussels March 25, President Joe Biden announced the U.S. will accelerate liquified natural gas (LNG) exports to Europe, sending an additional 15 billion cubic meters (bcm) of LNG shipments on seagoing tankers in 2022, on top of 2021 exports of 22 bcm. Biden said U.S. exports of LNG will continue to grow through 2030, averaging 50 bcm to Europe annually.

Before Biden’s NATO address, the U.S. Department of Energy issued two long-term orders March 16 giving Cheniere Energy projects in Louisiana and Texas “additional flexibility to export the equivalent of 0.72 bcm of LNG per day” to “any country with which the U.S. does not have a free trade agreement, including all of Europe.” Despite the fact that U.S. LNG exporters were already at or near maximum capacity, the DOE approval allows every U.S. LNG project to export to any country not under U.S. sanctions.

Fracking and the 2014 Ukraine coup d’etat

In 2014, the U.S. financed and armed a right-wing coup in Ukraine. Even before that, the U.S. was promoting exports of U.S. liquified natural gas to Europe as the way to wean the European Union from its dependency on Russian gas imports. The U.S. moved to secure global markets for its more expensive and more environmentally hazardous fracked gas, even before infrastructure was fully in place to accommodate this trade.

For years, with limited success, the U.S. energy industry pressured Ukraine and other European countries to open up for fracking. With domestic overproduction of fracked gas, and U.S. earnings around \$3 per mmBtu (million British thermal unit), the industry was eager to export LNG to markets with higher rates of return. In 2013, natural gas in Europe sold from \$11 to \$13 per mmBtu and in Southeast Asia \$18 per mmBtu or higher. (tinyurl.com/mrxn3m4b)

Energy industry public relations firms pushed the message that people in the U.S. had to accept the environmental risks stemming from fracking in order for the U.S. to achieve “energy independence.” Yet in April 2014, following the February Ukraine coup, two bills were introduced in the U.S. Congress seeking to fast-track U.S. LNG exports to Europe.

Pressure blocked Nord Stream 2 pipeline

In 2011, Russia and Germany cooperated to begin construction of a large, direct, natural gas pipeline from Russia’s northwestern border to Germany. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline would have cemented growing economic relations between Russia and Germany, both U.S. economic competitors.

Completed in September 2021, the Nord Stream 2 pipeline was scheduled to open in early 2022. In late 2021, the U.S. began ramping up pressure on Ukraine to join NATO, simultaneously issuing daily

announcements about Russian plans to invade Ukraine. By imposing the most extreme economic sanctions against Russia and demanding compliance from EU countries including Germany, the U.S. successfully blocked the Nord Stream 2 opening, further compelling Russia’s defensive war.

LNG exports a setback for limiting global warming

In calling for increased LNG exports to Europe, the Biden administration abandoned any pretense of enacting major climate legislation. Bowing to energy industry pressure, it issued a “fact sheet” promoting expanding LNG exports to the EU, claiming this is “not in conflict with the net-zero climate goals that we’re shooting for” and that LNG is a “catalyst” for doubling down on investments in clean energy.

Biden’s March 25 pronouncement was met with immediate concerns from global climate activists, who see it as a serious setback for efforts to phase out fossil fuel usage to limit global warming. Miles Jones, managing director of policy at Food & Water Watch, called on Biden to “firmly reject any plans to fast-track gas export terminals here in the U.S. Corporate polluters are brazenly seizing on this crisis to secure decades of dependence on dirty energy, which will further devastate frontline communities and abandon any hopes for bold climate action.”

Liquified natural gas production generates higher levels of carbon emissions than any other energy source, except for coal. While Russian gas would have been sent through the already constructed Nord Stream 2 pipeline, U.S. LNG shipments will require the construction of new gas terminals and pipelines. These fossil fuel infrastructure projects will take years to build and would be used for a long time.

Somini Sengupta, Global Climate Correspondent for the NY Times, wrote: “U.S. gas export buyers are under long-term contracts. Export terminals are already shipping out all the gas they can. Not all EU countries have import terminals to take in more LNG. If they had to build more, it could lock in reliance on gas for 10-15 years.” (March 25, 2022)

Promoting LNG exports would leave Europe more dependent on U.S. energy, while prolonging global reliance on a fossil fuel sourced by hydraulic fracturing or “fracking.” Fracking releases toxic and carcinogenic chemicals into the

environment, wastes millions of gallons of vital water resources and contaminates air and water in communities adjacent to fracked wells. Serious health issues and deaths have been linked to exposure to fracking chemicals and waste products.

Increasing LNG exports would greatly push back efforts to move away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy sources — solar and wind power. Compared to renewable energy, producing LNG emits 14 times the amount of carbon as does solar power and 50 times as much carbon as wind power. Resources invested in more fossil fuel production and distribution mean less funding on research, development and distribution of renewable energy sources.

Methane gas emissions more potent than CO₂

When natural gas in any form is burned for energy, it releases carbon into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. But environmental activists see LNG as especially problematic for the climate.

“In every step of its life cycle — from extraction to processing to storage to transportation — LNG emits methane,” said Marisa Guerrero with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) which found methane (CH₄) 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the first 20 years after emissions.

LNG must be chilled to temperatures of minus 259 F and held to that extreme temperature throughout its entire transport — whether by ship, rail or truck — a very energy-intensive process. Warming it back to normal temperature requires yet more energy. All told, LNG is responsible for nearly twice the greenhouse gas emissions as ordinary natural gas.

A Feb. 4 study by Duke University detected hundreds of very large and previously unreported methane leaks, released at oil and natural gas production sites around the world. In 2021 Duke’s Drew Shindell, writing for a United Nations climate report, found that reducing methane emissions was the most cost-effective way to slow global warming. (tinyurl.com/y2ydydjt)

Risks to communities of color

Fossil fuel facilities, including those built to process and ship LNG, are disproportionately located near low-income neighborhoods and in communities of color. They range from locations in the

Delaware River Basin in New Jersey and Maryland to Gulf Coast cities in Louisiana and Texas, where the majority of LNG ports were built with little regard for local communities’ safety and well-being. The NRDC found: “Fourteen percent of the climate footprint of LNG comes from gas leaks, flaring or intentional venting during production and transport.”

These export terminals handle large quantities of other fuels even more volatile than LNG. With the large quantity of gas stored in just one LNG tank, any breach by fire would become an unimaginable catastrophe.

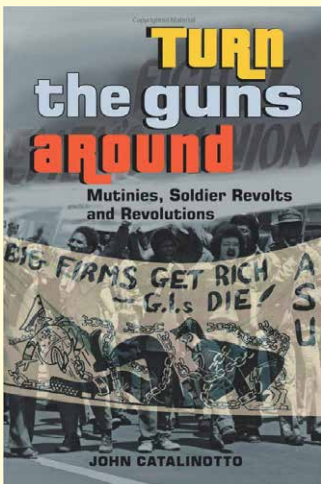
LNG transport to and from export terminals is risky. The Trump administration allowed highly explosive LNG to be moved by rail. Trains with up to 100 specialized cars carrying LNG move through major metropolitan areas on a daily basis, endangering millions of people along the routes. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration has delayed reversing Trump’s policy and has yet to permanently ban LNG “bomb trains.” The more the Biden administration promotes LNG exports, the less likely the ban will happen.

However, sabotaging Russian gas exports to Germany was never the U.S. endgame. Ultimately controlling Russia’s vast natural resources is the goal. U.S. strategists, war planners, corporate media and politicians created a situation where the people of Ukraine were put in harm’s way to serve the interests of Pentagon-armed corporate warmongers. Ukraine’s sovereignty was never the main issue.

For decades, fracking has put U.S. workers and communities in harm’s way. Expanding LNG exports, on top of the war, makes matters worse for everyone. □



‘Bomb train’ transporting liquified natural gas rolls through Hudson Valley, New York, community as school bus passes nearby.



Turn the Guns Around

By John Catalinotto

Draftees and enlistees — eighteen-year-olds from the South Bronx, factory workers from Buffalo, miners’ sons from Kentucky, unemployed youth from Watts — hate the military and the Vietnam War. They throw a wrench into the Pentagon’s war machine, becoming leaders of the anti-war movement and organizing a union in the conscript military to battle war, racism and their officers.

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Madeleine Albright, war criminal

The main job of an imperialist diplomat is to lie. And to lie with conviction. If lucky, they don't get caught in a flagrant lie.

Strangely enough, career diplomat Madeleine Albright, who died March 23, is most infamous for her one slip up when, caught off guard, she told the truth. And she exposed just how criminal U.S. policies are.

To be U.S. secretary of state means being the chief liar of world imperialism. It's true; people in this post may help plan wars, subversion, interventions, anything and everything to try to keep the U.S. and its monopolies atop the world. John Foster Dulles in the 1950s and Dean Rusk in the 1960s advised. Others just obeyed.

But they all lied.

Gen. Colin Powell, who succeeded Madeleine Albright as secretary of state in 2001, had the task of telling one Big Lie with a straight face. Before the United Nations and to the whole world, he swore that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. This created a pretext for the March



Protest calls Madeleine Albright 'war criminal' at Syracuse University, 2016.

2003 U.S.-British invasion and destruction of Iraq.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright did her share of lying. She defended every bomb and rocket launched by the Pentagon and any of the other NATO war machines against Serbia in 1999, including those that hit bridges, schools and television studios, calling them military targets. She lied about the alleged crimes of the leaders of Serbia. And she praised the gangsters leading the

Kosovo terrorists.

Unembarrassed by her lies, she was upended the one time she told the truth. On the interview show "60 Minutes," May 12, 1996, host Leslie Stahl asked Albright, who was then U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, "We have heard that half a million [Iraqi] children have died [from U.S. sanctions]. I mean, that is more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?"

"I think that is a very hard choice," Albright answered, "but the price, we think, the price is worth it."

Like the imperialist strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski, Albright's roots were in Eastern Europe, hers in Czechoslovakia, and she was a confirmed anti-communist, anti-Russia diplomat all her academic and diplomatic life. She was especially active in the U.S. campaign to destroy multinational Yugoslavia and expand NATO eastward. One can argue today that the war in Ukraine is part of Albright's legacy.

But she could never live down her moment of truth. U.S. imperialism aimed to crush Iraq; and if it took the untimely death of a half million Iraqi children, Albright showed she was tough enough to do it. Being a world-class war criminal is part of the job description for the U.S. secretary of state, no matter what obstacles — even patriarchal bias — one had to overcome to get appointed. It goes with the territory. □

U.S. sanctions are a form of warfare

Part 2

By Sara Flounders

Sanctions are not a deterrent to war or a substitute for war. They are in fact an escalation of the war.

Using the dominant role of the dollar in the world economy, Washington has imposed over 5,500 sanctions on Russia and is forcing other countries to reconfigure their economies to abide by these extreme economic penalties. The sanctions on Russia are the world's most extreme economic war measures. (tinyurl.com/2p95893c)

Sanctions create hyperinflation, artificial famines, social upheavals and health crises that punish civilian populations. As deadly as bombs, sanctions are an act of war. They are correctly labeled a Crime Against Humanity.

Will sanctions succeed in restoring the position of U.S. imperialism? That is clearly the calculation.

International Monetary Fund senior deputy managing director Gita Gopinath gave an authoritative view of this expectation that financial sanctions will drive Russia into "deep recession," and "shift global economic order. ... It has implications for the global economic order as we know it." (tinyurl.com/2chjw8fe) Other news articles predict that the Russian economy is "going down the ice chute," will "tumble," "go into free fall," etc.

Several economists warn that it will impact the global economy. To the bankers and financiers, the pain of millions, even within the U.S., is of no concern, as long as they can pick up the pieces afterwards.

Speculators predict "defense" industries and energy companies will prosper. All financial predictions in the U.S. and Europe are that this will hit the European economy much harder.

Third of world sanctioned

Today more than 40 countries, encompassing one-third of the world's population, already suffer under economic

measures imposed by Washington. The U.S. has sanctioned Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, China, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Sudan and others. Countries that trade with targets of U.S. sanctions face heavy fines. This deadly form of economic warfare impacts all the nearby countries and destroys regional development.

Many of these countries, however, are finding ways to survive through complex barter and exchange programs that are developing as the number of sanctioned countries grows.

China's Belt and Road development loans are far more attractive than U.S. weapons systems and the harsh austerity plans that are attached to IMF and World Bank loans.

Almost all of the countries hit by these harsh U.S. destabilizing measures and asset confiscation sanctions have signed up with China's Belt and Road Initiative development programs. Many of the sanctioned countries, including Venezuela, Cuba and Syria receive reliable shipments of needed fuel and grain from Russia. These new forms of exchange,

developed through necessity, are beginning to weaken the intended economic strangulation. Russia still has a strong market for its exports beyond the reach of U.S. sanctions.

Russia is also a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This is an economic and security alliance that is the world's largest regional organization, covering approximately 60% of the area of Eurasia, 40% of the world's population and more than 20% of global gross domestic product (GDP). Of the 14 members of this trading bloc, six are already under U.S. sanctions but continue normal economic relations.

Countries refuse to comply

To the shock of Washington's war strategists, many countries not currently under U.S. sanctions are refusing to comply with the U.S. and European Union sanctions imposed on Russia. To date India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia,

South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, and other countries with smaller economies have refused to comply with U.S. measures that damage their own trade relations.

These are nations with growing economies and large populations. Several countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union and are now part of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) — Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan — are not likely to comply.

Several countries, not willing to openly confront U.S. economic wrath, have vaguely stated they would only comply with sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council, where a Russian or Chinese veto would make such a vote unlikely.

U.S. economic and political pressure on all these countries to comply will intensify in the coming period.

Threatening China

China's top banking regulator, Guo Shuqing, says: "We will not participate in such sanctions, and we continue to maintain normal economic and trade and financial exchanges with relevant parties." (New York Times, March 11) After Mastercard and Visa stopped their operations, Russian banks turned to China's UnionPay, which offers payment options in 180 countries.

China has not yet given economic or military assistance to Russia. It has simply refused to cut off its normal economic relations. This is infuriating the Biden administration.

The U.S. publicly threatened China for helping Russia evade sanctions. China was reminded that two of its biggest trading partners are the U.S. and European Union. China needs access to those markets.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan threatened China directly, stating: "We are communicating directly and privately to Beijing that there absolutely will be consequences" if China helps

Russia "backfill" its losses from the sanctions. "We will not allow that to go forward and allow there to be a lifeline to Russia from these economic sanctions from any country anywhere in the world."

Sullivan said China and all countries are on notice that they cannot "basically bail Russia out ... give Russia a work-around to the sanctions," with impunity. (tinyurl.com/j35ueywt)

If such brazen and insulting threats are being openly made to China, then harsher threats are being raised to other countries.

New forms of trade and exchange do challenge the dominant power of the U.S. dollar. But extreme measures imposed on Russia will create intense economic pain of spiraling inflation and unemployment on a global scale.

The U.S. ruling class, the U.S. Congress and the U.S. corporate media are at this time unanimously in support of an economic war and even a military confrontation, regardless of how destructive they would be to human life, as long as they would break open new markets and destroy their rivals.

The Democrats quickly dropped Build Back Better promises and a COVID-19 health package in order to saturate Ukraine with weapons. Working people in both the U.S. and Europe will pay the price.

The growing danger is that a U.S. imperialist war on this scale, combined with the demand that the whole world participate, could dangerously escalate.

Read both parts 1 and 2 online at www.workers.org/2022/03/62628/

WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

"By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity."

— Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009; Foreign Minister of Nicaragua's Sandinista government.



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The war in Ukraine and its effects on Latin America and the Caribbean

By Carlos Mauricio Ferolla and Marcelo Depieri

March 23, 2022 — On Feb. 24, war broke out in Ukraine after the invasion of the Russian army. The war has a global impact on a multipolar international system, hyperconnected and in a critical state, undergoing a process of hegemonic transition from the West to the East. The military conflict adopts new configurations, what Ignacio Ramonet calls a new type of war, taking the form of an economic, media, cultural, political, etc. war. In addition to the economic effects of the military conflict, there is the global impact of the sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies on the export of products from the Russian Federation. The shock wave of the war will be felt all over the world. It is known how a war begins but not when it ends; and its consequences on a region in permanent movement, such as Latin America and the Caribbean, are uncertain.

From pandemic to war

The social and economic structure of Latin America and the Caribbean has been shaken by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The deepening of inequalities, the concentration of wealth, the increase in poverty, the food, migratory, health and environmental crises, the contraction of GDPs and the increase in the countries' indebtedness were some of the main consequences of the pandemic. According to ECLAC's Social Panorama of Latin America 2021 report, social indicators are even worse than before the outbreak of the coronavirus. In 2019, in Latin America, 30.5 million people lived in poverty and another 11.4 million lived in extreme poverty. In 2021, 32.1 million people were in poverty and 13.8 million in extreme poverty in the region.

As if this were not enough, the pandemic has been followed by a significant rise in international food prices, which has had an enormous impact on the populations of the countries. At the same time, a few oligopolistic companies benefited from the increase in the value of commodities through exports.

In this context, Russia and Ukraine are major producers of oil and gas, which will have a global impact on the supply and price of energy. They have several metals that are imported by many countries, such as aluminum, copper, iron, titanium, among others. And foodstuffs such as wheat, sunflower oil and corn.

According to estimates made by the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), in a March 2022 report entitled Economic and Social Impacts and Policy Implications of the War in Ukraine, since the beginning of the war, international oil prices have increased by 33% and coal prices by 80%; gas prices rose 85% in Europe, 10% in North America and 20% in the rest of the world; metal prices rose 11%; fertilizer prices rose 30%; and food increased by an average of 6%, while wheat prices rose 90% — Russia and Ukraine account for 30% of world wheat exports.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations warned in its report on the food crisis resulting from the war: "Potential disruptions to agricultural activities of these two major commodity exporters could

seriously increase global food insecurity, when international food and input prices are already high and volatile." The price of food products not only depends on the value of commodities but is affected by rising fuel and especially fertilizer prices, as Russian production accounts for 15% of world trade in nitrogen fertilizers and 17% of potash fertilizers.

In addition, the conflict will have an impact on tourism in the Caribbean region, especially in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, which were destinations for Russian tourists. Other sectors that are being affected by the international economic context are the technology industry — for example, the production of microchips — and the automotive industry, the latter having a certain relevance in the generation of employment and income in many Latin American countries.

Therefore, we observe three immediate dynamics or effects that will have an impact on Latin America: price increases or restrictions on access to imported products; the opening of new markets for food and hydrocarbon exporting countries in the region; and the increase in international oil, gas and food prices, which will generate a rise in energy and food prices in the domestic market. Depending on how these variables intertwine and the policies adopted by governments, we will see how this affects the economies of the countries and their populations.

The pandemic and the war will have a negative effect on the economies of the most unequal countries.

The dilemma of Latin American governments

The countries of the continent do not have a relevant role in the geopolitical dispute triggered by the conflict in Ukraine. Although most governments have taken a position against the Russian invasion in Ukraine, and others have chosen not to take sides, the most interesting thing is to analyze the debates and policies that these countries will have to face in order to cope with the new economic context that is beginning to take shape with the war, which — as we have already pointed out — in some cases are a continuity of the trends present with the pandemic.

International prices are in the spotlight, and concern is focused on the inflationary escalation that this could lead to. The increase in energy, transport and fuel prices, as well as in the price of basic foodstuffs, are setting off the urgent alarm bells of governments.

How to contain the escalation of prices and decouple international prices from domestic prices are at the forefront of the debate, since governments will have to deal with concentrated sectors of the economy. The increase in the price of wheat flour and other inputs has a direct impact on the price of bread, which is affecting several countries. An example is the Brazilian case, which imports more than half of the wheat it consumes. With regard to fuel, significant increases have been detected in recent days in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, among other countries.

In Argentina, the war is already hitting the pockets of the poor, and the government announced measures aimed at curbing the inflationary escalation: the increase in withholding taxes on soybean meal and oil; and the creation of a wheat stabilization fund to mitigate the impact

We observe three immediate dynamics that will have an impact on Latin America: price increases or restrictions on access to imported products; the opening of new markets for food and hydrocarbon exporting countries in the region; and the increase in international oil, gas and food prices.

of the international price increase and guarantee the supply of domestic demand. These policies were adopted after several tensions with the agribusiness chamber of commerce.

Regarding fuels, President Honduras Xiomara Castro urged the Finance Secretariat to absorb 50% of the increase in diesel to mitigate the price escalation. What is happening in Brazil is very different. Since Temer's government, in 2016, the fuel pricing policy follows the international price of a barrel of oil. This was exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine and impacted the increase in gas station prices.

President Jair Bolsonaro and Paulo Guedes (Minister of Economy) did not change the domestic pricing policy, they only exempted part of the fuel taxes, which has a very small impact compared to the price increases of the products.

Venezuela, for its part, besieged by coercive U.S. sanctions, is resisting the increase in food prices, while its oil production has increased in recent days. The search for Venezuelan products is likely to increase if the conflict continues.

Final considerations

The negative socio-economic effects of a war, such as the one in Ukraine, are magnified for Latin American countries. The aggravating factor of the conflict for these countries occurs in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e., the war occurs at a time of social and economic fragility, when unemployment, hunger, poverty and extreme poverty levels are very high.

In the midst of so many social and economic problems, the challenges of Our America are enormous, but every crisis also implies an opportunity to deepen debates and generate policies that guide countries toward energy self-sufficiency and move toward food sovereignty, for this regional integration is urgent and necessary.

If the workers of Latin America and the Caribbean are not to pay the costs of the crisis, governments will have to take forceful measures, and the dilemma between being complacent with the 1% or favoring the 99% will have to lean toward the great majorities. In a continent in permanent movement, everything remains to be seen.

Carlos Mauricio Ferolla and Marcelo Depieri write for Observatorio de Coyuntura de América Latina y el Caribe del Instituto Tricontinental. Source: Resumen Latinoamericano – Buenos Aires

La guerra en Ucrania y sus efectos en América Latina y el Caribe

Continúa de la página 12

de los internos están en la primera línea de debate, ya que los Estados tendrán que lidiar con sectores concentrados de la economía. El aumento en el precio de la harina de trigo y otros insumos inciden directamente en el precio del pan, lo cual está afectando a varios países. Un ejemplo es el caso brasileiro que importa más de la mitad del trigo que consume. En lo que respecta al combustible, se detectaron aumentos importantes en los últimos días en México, Brasil, Argentina y Uruguay entre otros países.

En Argentina, la guerra ya golpea el bolsillo

En Argentina, el gobierno anunció medidas que buscan frenar la escalada inflacionaria: la suba de las retenciones a las harinas y aceite de soja y la creación

de un fondo de estabilización del trigo para atenuar el impacto de la suba de precio internacional y garantizar el abastecimiento de la demanda interna. Estas políticas son tomadas tras varias tensiones con la cámara empresarial del agronegocio.

En lo que respecta a los combustibles, la presidenta de Honduras, Xiomara Castro, instó a la secretaría de finanzas a absorber el 50% del aumento del Diésel, para mitigar la escalada de precios. Muy diferente es lo que sucede en Brasil. Desde el gobierno de Temer, en 2016, la política de precios de los combustibles sigue el precio internacional del barril de petróleo. Esto se agudizó por el conflicto en Ucrania e impactó en el incremento de los precios de las gasolineras.

Bolsonaro y Paulo Guedes (Ministro de Economía) no cambiaron la política interna de precios, solo exoneraron parte

de los impuestos a los combustibles, lo que tiene un impacto muy pequeño frente a los aumentos de precios de los productos. Venezuela, por su parte, asediado por las sanciones coercitivas de EE.UU. resiste al aumento de los precios de los alimentos, mientras que su producción de petróleo se ha incrementado en los últimos días. La búsqueda del producto venezolano tiende a aumentar si el conflicto continúa.

Consideraciones finales

Los efectos socioeconómicos negativos de una guerra, como la que se vive en Ucrania, se potencian para los países latinoamericanos. El agravante del conflicto para estos países ocurre en medio de la pandemia del Covid-19, es decir, la guerra se da en un momento de fragilidad social y económica, en el que los niveles de desempleo, hambre, pobreza y pobreza extrema son muy altos.

En medio de tantos problemas sociales y económicos, los desafíos de Nuestra América son enormes, pero toda crisis también implica una oportunidad para profundizar debates y generar políticas que orienten a los países hacia el autoabastecimiento de energía y caminar hacia la soberanía alimentaria, para esto la integración regional se presenta urgente y necesaria.

Para que los trabajadores y trabajadoras de América Latina y el Caribe no paguen los costos de la crisis, los gobiernos deberán tomar medidas contundentes, y el dilema entre ser complacientes con el 1% o favorecer al 99% deberá inclinarse hacia las grandes mayorías. En un continente en permanente movimiento, todo está por verse.

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FOTO: UNIONE SINDACALE DI BASE

Personas protestan en Pisa, Italia, el 19 de marzo, contra la decisión del gobierno italiano de enviar armas al gobierno de Ucrania.

Los trabajadores del aeropuerto italiano se niegan a cargar armas para Ucrania

Por **Alessio Arena**
Fronte Popolare, Italia

Los trabajadores del aeropuerto Galileo Galilei de Pisa -un aeropuerto civil- denunciaron el 12 de marzo que habían participado en la carga de un avión de carga con lo que supuestamente era ayuda humanitaria destinada a Ucrania. La ayuda resultó ser armas y municiones destinadas a las tropas del régimen de Zelensky.

Tras conocer el contenido real del cargamento, los trabajadores se negaron a completar las operaciones de carga e informaron a su sindicato de base, Unione Sindacale di Base (USB), que denunció públicamente el incidente.

“Desde el Cargo Village, situado en el aeropuerto civil, despegan vuelos “humanitarios”. Se supone que están llenos de alimentos, provisiones, medicinas y cualquier otra cosa útil para el pueblo ucraniano atormentado por semanas de

bombardeos y combates. Pero no es así: Cuando aparecieron bajo el avión, los trabajadores encargados de la carga se encontraron con cajas llenas de diversos tipos de armas, municiones y explosivos”, dice el comunicado de la USB. Y más adelante: “Denunciamos enérgicamente este auténtico fraude, que utiliza cínicamente la cobertura “humanitaria” para seguir alimentando la guerra en Ucrania”.

Papel del régimen italiano

El gobierno italiano está en primera línea en la guerra indirecta luchada en territorio ucraniano por el ejército ruso contra las tropas del gobierno de Zelensky, armadas, entrenadas y financiadas desde hace casi una década por Estados Unidos y la OTAN.

El papel de Italia ha llegado al punto de que el país se ve cada vez más excluido de las iniciativas del eje franco-alemán que lidera la Unión Europea. Estas iniciativas han tenido como objetivo tratar de frenar

la crisis, recientemente materializada en una discusión de alto nivel entre el presidente francés Emmanuel Macron (presidente de la UE), el canciller alemán Olaf Scholz y el presidente chino Xi Jinping.

La propaganda de los medios de comunicación ha machacado, impulsando un compromiso italiano cada vez más activo en apoyo del régimen ucraniano de Kiev. Los líderes del ejecutivo italiano, encabezados por el primer ministro Mario Draghi, han despotricado contra Moscú.

El país está siendo llevado de la mano a un paroxismo de rusofobia completamente ajeno a sus tradiciones y al sentido común de la población.

Se prodiga un impresionante aluvión de información distorsionada, una retórica hipócrita sobre los derechos humanos y un anatema de redes unificadas contra el execrable demonio del “pacifismo” para legitimar el envío de armas al teatro de la guerra. Hacerlo es un paso peligroso para generalizar y agravar una

crisis que amenaza con arrastrar al continente y al mundo entero al abismo.

El episodio del aeropuerto de Pisa demuestra que el intento de imponer sentimientos pro-guerra al pueblo italiano está encontrando resistencia, a pesar del esfuerzo concertado que han realizado casi todos los partidos con representación parlamentaria. En las últimas semanas, los medios de comunicación han llevado a cabo un linchamiento contra el principal sindicato italiano, la Confederación General Italiana del Trabajo (CGIL) y contra la Asociación Nacional de Partidarios de Italia (ANPI).

La ANPI es “culpable”, junto con muchas otras organizaciones populares, de negarse a conformarse con la voz única de la propaganda de guerra. Aunque se oponen a la “operación militar especial” ordenada por Putin, también se oponen al envío de armas al ejército ucraniano y, en el caso de la ANPI, a la expansión de la OTAN hacia el este. □

La guerra en Ucrania y sus efectos en América Latina y el Caribe

Por **Carlos Mauricio Ferolla**
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(OBSAL — *Observatorio de Coyuntura de América Latina y el Caribe del Instituto Tricontinental*) Resumen Latinoamericano el 23 de marzo, 2022

El 24 de febrero inició la guerra en Ucrania tras la invasión del ejército ruso. El conflicto bélico impacta globalmente en un sistema internacional multipolar, hiperconectado y en estado crítico, atravesando un proceso de transición hegemónica de occidente a oriente.

El conflicto militar adopta nuevas configuraciones, lo que Ignacio Ramonet denomina guerra de nuevo tipo, al adoptar la forma de una guerra económica, mediática, cultural, política, etc. A los propios efectos económicos del conflicto militar, se le suma el impacto global que alcanzarán las sanciones impuestas, por Estados Unidos y sus aliados, a la exportación de productos de la Federación Rusa. La onda expansiva de la guerra se hará sentir en todo el mundo. De una guerra se sabe cómo comienza, pero no cuándo termina, y sus consecuencias sobre una región en permanente movimiento, como América Latina y el Caribe, son inciertas.

De la pandemia a la guerra

La estructura social y económica de América Latina y el Caribe se vio sacudida por las consecuencias que está dejando a su paso la pandemia del Covid-19. La profundización de las desigualdades, la concentración de la riqueza, el incremento de la pobreza, las crisis alimentaria, migratoria, sanitaria y ambiental, la contracción de los PBI y el incremento

del endeudamiento de los países, fueron algunos de los principales coletazos que dejó la pandemia.

De acuerdo con el informe Panorama Social de América Latina 2021, de la CEPAL, los indicadores sociales aún están peores que antes del estallido del coronavirus. En 2019, en América Latina, 30,5 millones de personas vivían en la pobreza y otras 11,4 millones vivían en la pobreza extrema. En 2021, 32,1 millones de personas se encontraban en situación de pobreza y 13,8 millones en extrema pobreza en la región.

Pero como si esto fuera poco, tras la pandemia se ha visto una importante alza en el precio internacional de los alimentos, lo que repercutió enormemente en las poblaciones de los países. A la vez que unas pocas empresas oligopólicas se vieron beneficiadas por el incremento del valor de las commodities mediante las exportaciones.

En este marco, Rusia y Ucrania son importantes productores de petróleo y gas lo que afectará a nivel global al abastecimiento y precio de la energía. También poseen varios metales que son importados por muchos países como son el aluminio, cobre, hierro, titanio, entre otros. Y también alimentos como el trigo, aceite de girasol y maíz.

Según estimaciones realizadas por la OCDE, en un informe de marzo de 2022 titulado Economic and Social Impacts and Policy Implications of the War in Ukraine, desde el comienzo de la guerra los precios internacionales del petróleo han aumentado un 33% y los precios del carbón un 80%; los precios del gas aumentaron un 85% en Europa, un 10% en América del Norte y un 20% en el resto del mundo;

los precios de los metales subieron 11%; el precio de los fertilizantes creció 30%; y los alimentos aumentaron en un promedio del 6%, mientras que los precios del trigo aumentaron en un 90% — Rusia y Ucrania representan el 30% de las exportaciones mundiales de trigo.

La Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO, siglas en inglés), alertó en su informe sobre la crisis alimentaria producto de la guerra: “Las posibles interrupciones de las actividades agrícolas de estos dos principales exportadores de productos básicos podrían aumentar gravemente la inseguridad alimentaria a nivel mundial, cuando los precios internacionales de los alimentos y los insumos ya son altos y volátiles”.

El precio de los productos alimenticios no sólo depende del valor de las commodities, sino también se ve afectada por el alza de los combustibles y sobre todo de los fertilizantes, ya que la producción rusa representa el 15 % del comercio mundial de fertilizantes nitrogenados y el 17 % de fertilizantes potásicos.

Además, el conflicto impactará en el turismo de la región del Caribe, sobre todo de Cuba y República Dominicana quienes eran destinatarios de turistas rusos. Otro de los sectores que se están viendo afectados por el contexto económico internacional son la industria tecnológica —por ejemplo la producción de microchips— y automotriz, esta última tiene cierta relevancia en la generación de empleo e ingresos en muchos países de América Latina.

Por todo esto, observamos tres dinámicas o efectos inmediatos que repercutirán en Latinoamérica: incremento de precios o restricciones para el acceso a productos

importados, apertura de nuevos mercados para países de la región exportadores de alimentos e hidrocarburos y el incremento de los precios internacionales del petróleo, gas y alimentos, lo que generará una suba de los precios de la energía y alimentos en el mercado interno. De acuerdo a cómo se entrecruzan estas variables y las políticas que tomen los gobiernos se verá cómo afecta esto a la economía de los países y a sus poblaciones.

La pandemia y la guerra tendrán un efecto negativo para las economías de los países más desiguales.

El dilema de los gobiernos latinoamericanos

Los países del continente no tienen un rol relevante en la disputa geopolítica desencadenada con el conflicto en Ucrania. Si bien la mayoría de los gobiernos se posicionaron contra la invasión rusa en Ucrania y otros han optado por no tomar partido, lo más interesante es analizar los debates y las políticas que deberán encarar estos países para hacer frente al nuevo contexto económico que se comienza a configurar con la guerra, que — como ya hemos señalado — en algunos casos son continuidad de las tendencias presentes con la pandemia.

Los precios internacionales están en la mira y la preocupación está puesta en la escalada inflacionaria en que esto puede derivar. El aumento de la tarifa de energía, del transporte, de los combustibles, así como de productos alimenticios de primera necesidad prenden la alarma de urgencia de los gobiernos.

Cómo contener la escalada de precios y desacoplar los precios internacionales

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