

WW COMMENTARY

We won't go back!

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

People are mobilizing in the streets to face and fight the likely overturning of the Roe v. Wade decision by the Supreme Court that legalized access to abortion in the U.S. in 1973.

A SCOTUS draft opinion in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization — recently leaked — indicates the votes are there to end federal abortion rights protections, leaving this essential health care a matter of "states' rights."

I grew up under segregated "states' rights" in Alabama, so I know what that phrase is code for: white supremacy, subjugation of women, anti-immigrant persecution and the primacy of business profits over people's needs.

This isn't the first time SCOTUS has been a machine of extreme reaction. Its 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision was the death knell to gains for Black liberation won during and after the Civil War, setting up the state system of apartheid segregation under which I was raised as a white girl.

When I hear "states' rights," I see



Philadelphia, May 7. More on reproductive justice on 2, 3.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

judges who slip their black robes over the white sheets of the Ku Klux Klan before they walk in to sit on the bench.

Seems like an exaggeration? But

consider this. The "second" KKK — which flourished throughout the U.S. from 1910 to 1925 — persecuted, whipped, tortured and murdered thousands of people who

deviated from "Christian" white nationalism based on patriarchal rule. At its height this KKK, numbering in the millions, held majority power in statehouses from Alabama to Indiana to Oregon. At least one sitting Supreme Court justice, Hugo Black, developed his political career as a Klan leader.

This KKK set out to "purify America" and "flogged Mexicans, tarred and feathered doctors who performed abortions and strong-armed politicians. They lynched Black people, showed up on night rides to terrify prostitutes, bullied Jews and lashed young women found riding in cars with men." (theatlantic.com, Dec. 4, 2016)

The current U.S. Supreme Court would legalize the violent racist and woman-hating bigotry of the vigilante KKK, when that terror group "made towns clean" by stripping and literally tarring and feathering women who were sexually independent.

If Roe is overturned, many acts of violence against women and gender-oppressed people — with people of color

Continued on page 3

On the picket line	4
Supersized union busters	4
Jamming up gentrification	4
First Black RN in Alabama	9
Tainted drugs & Big Pharma	9
Editorial: COVID capitulation	10



Fired Starbucks workers speak out 5

Breaking news: Political prisoner Sundiata Acoli, a member of the revolutionary Black Liberation Army, will soon be released on parole after spending more than 49 years in a New Jersey prison. More to come.

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

Pennsylvania's 'compassionate' release

A poem for Mumia

1971 — Women prisoners rebel

8

Antiwar rumbles

Propaganda and censorship	6
Victory Day over Nazism	7



Red Army flag raised over Reichstag, liberated Berlin, May 9, 1945.

PHOTO: YEVGENY KHALDEI, RED ARMY

Abolish SCOTUS, not Roe v. Wade!

By Joanna Straughn

The Supreme Court of the United States has the votes to overturn Roe v. Wade, the landmark 1973 case legalizing abortion access in the United States. This was revealed in a draft opinion by Justice Samuel Alito that came to press without the Court’s permission. The historically unprecedented leak was an act to alert the public of SCOTUS’ planned attack.

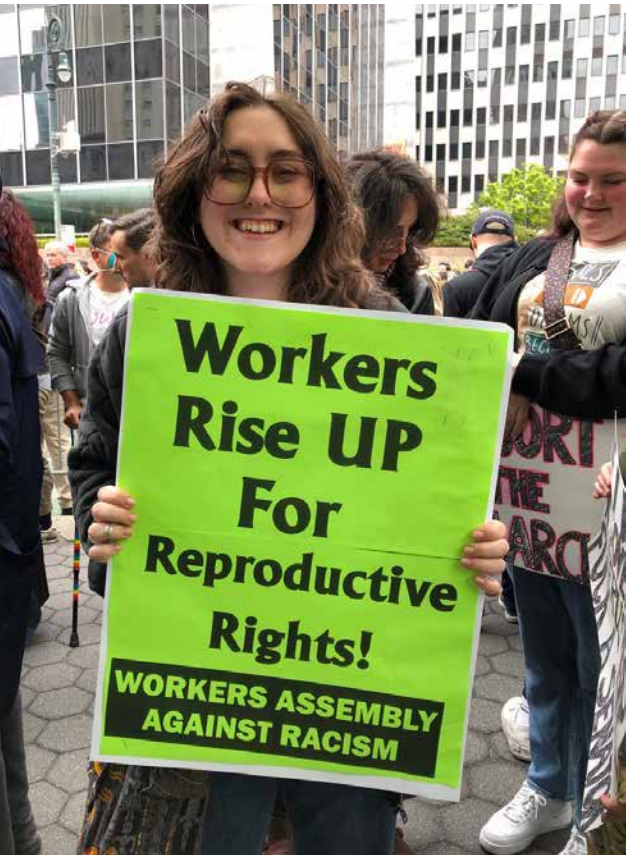
According to the draft opinion, overturning Roe v. Wade is justified and would end federal abortion rights protections, allowing states to dictate abortion laws. While the majority opinion refers to states’ laws as reflecting “the will of the people,” a May 2021 Gallup poll shows the U.S. public’s support for abortion rights in all or most cases at 80%.

Yet half of the states would ban abortion immediately if the Supreme Court overturns Roe v. Wade. Others would further restrict abortion. Moreover, states such as Texas and Oklahoma have passed laws that deputize the population against abortion seekers and clinicians, by offering bounties of \$10,000 to anyone who identifies and sues someone they believe is assisting with providing an abortion. Thirteen states have “trigger laws” that automatically implement an abortion ban.

A few states have pledged to be a “haven” for people needing an abortion, but their efforts may be rendered futile if other states announce laws that prohibit crossing state lines to seek an abortion. A restriction that both forces and simultaneously forbids the crossing of state lines to seek an abortion intensifies barriers and all the oppressions associated with criminalization.

Many fear that a precedent like this could overturn other progressive Supreme Court rulings, with no end in sight to the repeal of rights and the criminalization of the population.

The intensity of outrage at the prospect of losing the last shred of protection for reproductive rights has ignited a spreading protest movement. Rallies spontaneously broke out in cities across the U.S. May 3, hosted by many groups. Wider and wider majorities of youth,



One of thousands of protesters at an emergency demonstration in Foley Square, New York City, May 3.

whose lives these laws most deeply affect, see this assault as another breaking point in a whole series of breaking points — union busting, caging of migrants, attacks on trans youth, racist police brutality and more.

The prospect of Roe v. Wade being overturned is leading to calls for an end to the U.S. Supreme Court itself — an unelected, appointed-for-life body, created to serve the interests of the ruling class.

Abolish SCOTUS, not reproductive rights! ☐

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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MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD this week

♦ In the U.S.

We won't go back!	1
Abolish SCOTUS, not Roe v. Wade!	2
'Post Roe? Hell no!'	3
On the picket line	4
The Amazon model: union busting	4
Squirrel Hill neighbors win	4
Interview with fired Starbucks' workers	5
Pauline Bray Fletcher, Black RN	9
Harm reduction struggle	9

♦ Around the world

U.S. & EU propaganda, censorship	6
Sudan: Three No's of resistance	6
Victory Day 1945 celebrated in Madrid	7
Cuba: Millions march May Day	7
Cuba: Ricardo Alarcón, ¡Presente!	7
U.S. excludes Cuba from Summit	11
'Workers Summit of Americas'	11

♦ Tear Down the Walls!

PA 'compassionate relief'	8
Poem: All Stadiums Ain't Full	8
1971: Imprisoned women rebel	8

♦ Editorial

COVID-19 deaths mount	10
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♦ Noticias en Español

¡Abolir a la Corte Suprema!	12
Exclusión de puertorriqueños del SSI	12
¿Se está estancando la 'recuperación'?	12

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We won't go back!

Continued from page 1

suffering the most acutely — will become legal in the U.S.

Under some state laws — pending or passed — women and even underage children who are raped will be forced to carry resulting pregnancies to term. In some states under vicious laws like one proposed in Louisiana, people seeking or assisting abortions could be charged with felonies, even with homicide, given prison sentences of life — or death. If Roe is struck down, women and gender-oppressed people will die from the return of “backroom” or self-induced abortion.

We are looking at criminalization of a basic health care procedure in half the states in the country. Half of the states would ban abortion immediately, and others would further restrict abortion. (workers.org/2022/05/63851/)

Did you know —

How very, very recently women in the U.S. have had any say about whether we would bear children — or if the children would indeed be “ours”?

This is especially true for Indigenous women, Latinx women and women of African descent who historically and to this day face dreadful discrimination in bearing children and being able to keep and raise their children.

Did you know, for instance, that the U.S. so-called “Father of Gynecology” performed tortures of reproductive “experiments” on enslaved Black women without giving them anesthesia? That in the 19th century, even white women were denied anesthesia for childbirth pain, because they were “under the curse of Eve” and punished for her “sin”? That until the late 19th century, children were considered the property of their father (or their mother’s enslaver), and even white mothers had no custody rights?

Did you know that into the late 20th century, mothers were still losing their children at divorce, if the woman was considered “immoral” for being sexually independent? I know, for I lost custody of my two small children in 1975 for living as a lesbian.

A militant women’s liberation



About 100 demonstrators marched from Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh's house in Chevy Chase, Maryland, to Chief Justice John Roberts' home, May 7. Kavanaugh was unmasked as a rapist during the Senate hearings for his nomination to the Court.

movement won improvement for some circumstances of health care, sexuality, abortion access, reproductive rights and child raising for women and gender-oppressed people in the U.S. The victory in the now-embattled Roe v. Wade was won by that mass movement.

Needed: mass mobilization, interlinked struggle

The right-wing forces fueling SCOTUS have worked for the last 50 years to reverse reproductive justice in the name of “life” — while at the same time backing the death penalty and life imprisonment, denying im/migrants entry to better their lives and refusing to make health care, including lifesaving care, available and affordable to all.

Meanwhile, the U.S. maternal death rate is the worst of all industrialized countries, with the ratio for Black women (37.1 per 100,000 pregnancies) 2.5 times that for white women (14.7). (commonwealthfund.org, Dec. 16, 2020)

Why is the anti-abortion attack intensifying now? White supremacists are arguing the need for more “white children” to counter their racist theory of a “Great Replacement” of the U.S. white population by immigrants who are people of color.

Right-wing “Christian” patriarchs want to see women returned to the rule by men. And Big Business capitalists — looking at the overall declining U.S. birth rate — need more young workers in the

The current U.S. Supreme Court would legalize the violent racist and woman-hating bigotry of the vigilante KKK, when that terror group “made towns clean” by stripping and literally tarring and feathering women who were sexually independent.

reproductive pipeline, to ensure a steady supply of labor they can exploit to produce surplus value and profit. All these forces have coalesced in at least five of the Supreme Court justices sitting on that bench.

abolition of prisons, cops and the death penalty; people fighting against homelessness and for housing rights; those who desire health care for all, with subsidies and support for child care; disability advocates for rights and justice; those organizing workers for safe conditions, adequate pay and health care benefits that fully cover access to reproductive health; those fighting to build the way to socialism.

We demand!

In a reinvigorated struggle for reproductive justice, the Women and Gender-Oppressed Caucus of Workers World Party supports these demands:

Abolish SCOTUS, not abortion! We won’t go back!

Abortion is health care, which is a right for all people. Abortion bans are state violence against women and any persons who become pregnant. Fund health care, instead of criminalizing abortion and funding war!



Philadelphia protest of over 2,500 people, the day after the Supreme Court leak, who marched from City Hall to Federal Building, May 3.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

There is well-founded apprehension that a SCOTUS vote to overturn Roe would begin a reversal of earlier progressive rulings — from the right to contraception, the overturning of sodomy laws targeting lesbians and gay men, the right to same-sex marriage, protection for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people on the job or at school, and possibly even the right to interracial marriage.

The Republican Party may be the machine behind the current attack on access to abortion and reproductive justice. But the Democratic Party has held a Congressional majority many times since the Roe decision — and has never codified that judicial right into federal law.

Now is the time for those seeking reproductive justice to come together in a militant, mass, independent movement. Let us unite in this common cause — we who work for liberation for women and gender-oppressed people; those fighting all forms of racism, including under the banner #BlackLivesMatter; those who are for

Reproductive justice includes jobs and living wages, housing, health care, child care, schools and a healthy, climate crisis-free environment.

Reproductive justice includes trans people and gender-nonconforming people. Reproductive justice must cover incarcerated people, including a ban on shackling people in labor and an end to other medical abuse.

The proposed Supreme Court ruling is sexist, anti-poor and racist. Defend people of color, and fight the white-supremacist SCOTUS position on abortion! Demand union wages and benefits — like family leave and coverage for abortion and contraception costs. Workers can rise up for reproductive justice!

To stop the war on women and gender-oppressed people, build an independent fight-back movement of interconnected struggles.

Down with patriarchy, misogyny and capitalism! Socialism can and will liberate women and people of all genders. □

Cleveland

‘Post Roe? Hell no!’

By Martha Grevatt

May 6-8 was a weekend of demonstrations for reproductive justice in Cleveland. Women’s March Cleveland held a march and rally May 6 outside the site of the now-razed “house of horrors” — where three young women were held captive for years by a sexual predator. May 6 marked the anniversary of their escape.



Cleveland, May 7

WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

The leaked Supreme Court opinion would allow anti-abortion state laws to force someone in a similar situation to carry their abuser’s child to term.

The next day hundreds of young women, gender-oppressed people and allies marched through downtown Cleveland, chanting “Post Roe? Hell no!” Party of Socialism and Liberation called this demonstration; the news of it spread quickly on social media. More came out May 8 for a third action on Mother’s Day, sponsored by Rise Up 4 Abortion Rights.

This is a life-and-death issue in Ohio. The current federal court-ordered stay on a “heartbeat bill” passed in 2020 — criminalizing abortion after roughly six weeks of pregnancy — would be lifted if Roe v. Wade is overturned. Governor Mike DeWine has said he would go even further and sign a bill banning abortions altogether. □



Philadelphia march from Rittenhouse Square to the Federal Building organized by Party for Socialism and Liberation, Socialist Alternative and Workers World Party, May 7.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

On the picket line

WHEN WE FIGHT WE WIN!

By Marie Kelly

Stanford nurses win big contract gains following week-long strike

The 5,000 nurses at Stanford Health Care and Packard Children’s Hospitals have accepted the terms of their new three-year contract by a 93% majority. Following a week-long strike in Palo Alto, California, the nurses agreed to return to work. Stanford Health Care and Packard Children’s nurses are represented by the union Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement (CRONA). The new contract includes a \$1,000 contribution to a health savings account as a nod to improving the mental health of nurses who withstood the mental stress and physical strain of the pandemic.

Over the course of the contract, nurses will receive four

payroll increases: a 5% immediate increase retroactive to April 1; 2% on Dec. 1; 5% on April 1, 2023; and 5% on April 1, 2024, along with incentive pay for nurses caring for the most acutely ill. The contract guarantees an additional week of paid time off. The pay increases, health care benefits and time off are important to retain staff and fill vacancies. California is the only state that mandates safe nurse-to-patient staffing ratios. (tinyurl.com/yjbt9mxt)

Minor league baseball players win court ruling

In March, a federal court ruled that Minor League Baseball players are year-round employees. The Advocates for Minor Leaguers gathered over 1,000 players’ signatures in a petition to the Major League Baseball (MLB) organization demanding pay for spring training. Currently, minor league players are not paid during the off season or for spring training. Salaries range from \$4,800 for a three-month season to \$14,000 for a five-month season, even though, as professional athletes, they must train throughout the year to maintain their abilities.

“Minor league baseball players have not received a full paycheck in more than six months,” said Tampa Bay Rays Triple-A catcher Joe Hudson, a member of the Advocates for Minor Leaguers player steering

committee. “Since reporting to spring training two to three months ago, we have been working full time, wherever our MLB team has required us to be. We deserve pay for that work.” (ESPN, April 28) Some see the petition as the first step to unionizing the players.

UAW strike

United Auto Workers (UAW) is in negotiations with CNH Industrial, as a collective bargaining agreement expired May 2, without any sign the company would meet union demands for higher wages and improved safety conditions. So workers at plants in Racine, Wisconsin, and Burlington, Iowa, took to the picket line. More than 1,000 workers belonging to UAW Locals 180 and 807 are on strike at the plants where Case Magnum tractors and other agricultural machines are made. (AGCanada.com, May 5)

“We just went through a pandemic where we were considered critical essential infrastructure workers, and the union didn’t believe the company did everything that they could to protect our workers,” Richard Glowacki, president of the UAW CNH council said, “We still have people coming down with COVID; we still have those issues; we pretty much have dropped all of our safety protocols — it’s very lax in the plant; so they think it’s all over, but in reality, it isn’t.” (Wisconsin Public Radio, May 6) □

The Amazon model: union busting on steroids

By Martha Grevatt

Amazon Labor Union (ALU) President Christian Smalls garnered widespread attention May 5 when he raked Senator Lindsay Graham over the coals at a Senate Budget Committee hearing. Senator Bernie Sanders called the hearing to raise the issue of companies like Amazon having government contracts despite engaging in illegal union busting. The Republican from South Carolina accused Sanders of having “determined Amazon is a piece of crap company.” (cnbc.com)

“It sounds like you were talking about more of the companies and the businesses in your speech, but you forgot that the people are the ones who make these companies operate and that we’re not protected,” Smalls retorted. “We cannot allow Amazon or any other employer to receive taxpayer money if they engage in illegal union-busting behavior and deny workers’ rights. We cannot provide federal contracts to these employers. We cannot allow them to receive taxpayer subsidies from our state and local governments.”

The hearing followed a meeting Smalls, along with organizers from Starbucks Workers United and others, had with Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh. Right after the



Amazon Labor Union President Chris Smalls testifies at Senate hearing, May 5.

meeting, President Joe Biden renewed a \$10 billion contract with Amazon for cloud computing.

Smalls testified that the ALU had filed 40 Unfair Labor Practice charges against Amazon with the National Labor Relations Board. The NLRB informed the union May 6 that the charges had merit. The ULPs include mandatory “captive audience” meetings, disguised as “trainings,” taking place around the clock during working hours.

Amazon has spent millions of dollars on the anti-union consultants who develop the material for these meetings. The company has no qualms about making misleading and blatantly false statements, such as claiming that having a union at Amazon would mean workers would be fired if they don’t pay union

dues. Workers have been threatened with loss of benefits or warehouse closings if the majority votes for the union.

Smalls was fired two years ago for organizing workers at Amazon’s JFK8 warehouse in Staten Island, New York — the first in the U.S. to vote a union in. ALU won the NLRB-supervised election April 1. Now two ALU organizers have just been fired.

The ALU’s loss in a second election at a Staten Island sorting facility has to be viewed in the context of the extreme union-busting tactics employed by Amazon.

NLRB toothless

It was very hard for workers and unions to get any kind of help from the NLRB under President Donald Trump, who appointed members of union-busting law firms to the five-person Board. Now three of five board members are Democrats, one appointed by former President Barack Obama and two by President Joe Biden. NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo was appointed by Biden after he fired Trumpite Peter Robb from the position.

But guess what? It’s still nearly impossible to get the NLRB to really do anything about the illegal union busting going on every day at Amazon, Starbucks and

countless other employers.

Abruzzo has recommended making mandatory captive audience meetings illegal, because they interfere with the right to organize, recognized since 1935 under the National Labor Relations Act that created the NLRB.

So why hasn’t the NLRB, with its Democratic majority, voted to implement Abruzzo’s recommendation? Maybe it’s the same reason the federal government does business with anti-union companies, even under a Democratic administration — that both parties uphold the capitalist system of exploitation which unions pose a threat to.

Besides, even if the NLRB were to enact a ban on these intimidating meetings, the agency has no teeth when it comes to enforcing the law. While the 1935 law enshrined the right to organize as a basic protection, it contains no penalties for companies that violate workers’ rights.

Think about it. If a person breaks a window in someone else’s house, for example, there are consequences. But not when a company breaks unions!

Nevertheless the ALU is undeterred in its mission to organize Amazon. In fact, Chris Smalls told Bloomberg Technology after the hearing May 5, “We’re going nationwide.” □

Squirrel Hill neighbors win against gentrification

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Supporters of Protect Squirrel Hill, a neighborhood coalition in the Squirrel Hill section of West Philadelphia, celebrated a victory May 3 when Court of Common Pleas Judge Anne Marie Coyle ruled in their favor. Coyle reversed the June 2021 Zoning Board of Adjustment’s approval of a variance that would have allowed the building of luxury apartments at 48th Street and Chester Ave.

The ruling highlights the latest chapter in an over 16-month-long grassroots campaign to keep neighborhood rental costs affordable.

Coyle found that the zoning board “failed to clearly identify any factual evidence” that not granting variances for the building would result in “unnecessary hardship” for the developer.



Protesters dressed as squirrels gather after a rally against gentrification of Squirrel Hill neighborhood, April 3, 2021.

(WestPhillyLocal.com, May 6).

The developer, Meir Gelley, planned to construct the market-rate, luxury, 76-unit building on the site of a former dog park. He hoped to combine several adjacent land parcels he owns, including the site

of an existing nursing home.

Neighbors in Squirrel Hill first became aware of Gelley’s plans to build the luxury apartments in December 2020. They contested the proposal at multiple community meetings, including one in March 2021 with a vote of 64-to-5 against the building.

Protect Squirrel Hill was led by low-income renters, most of them LGBTQ. The all-volunteer group circulated a petition, which they submitted to the zoning board, with hundreds of signatures of neighbors opposing the project. Sixty-three of those who signed live within 250 feet of the proposed project.

Residents canvassed door-to-door talking with neighbors. They hosted a cookout and speak-out for neighbors to share concerns about the impacts of gentrification and rising rents. They

Continued on page 10

WW speaks with fired Starbucks workers

‘We were able to stoke the fires of workers everywhere’

On April 30, WW managing editor, Monica Moorehead, interviewed 25-year-old Beto Sanchez and 22-year-old LaKota McGlawn, two of the seven fired Starbucks workers based in Memphis, Tennessee. The two young workers were in New York City to speak at the May Day rally and march initiated by the Workers Assembly Against Racism (WAAR). The other fired workers are Nikki Taylor, Nabretta Hardin, Kylie Throckmorton, Emma Worrell and Florentino Escobar. Go to @memphisseven901 on Twitter and memphis_seven901 on Instagram. This is part one of a three part interview. Go to workers.org to read the entire interview.

WW: When were you hired by Starbucks?

Beto Sanchez: I was hired in April 2021, and I would have almost made a year if I hadn't been fired.

WW: What made you want to work at Starbucks in the first place?

BS: It was before COVID had happened. I was a music producer. I was part of the music industry. And that took a big blow when the pandemic happened. I was losing all my gigs, all my festival jobs, recording jobs — all of the above. It was a pretty bad time to be a live musician when COVID hit. But I had bartending experience, and I saw that Starbucks was needing people. So, I threw my hat in there. I was like, yeah, why not? I'll go for it. And by the time I had applied, I was already immediately pushed in to be a shift manager there. I have experience teaching and coaching people. So I can definitely see what happens there. And now fast-forward to almost a year later, I'm now on the front lines trying to help baristas everywhere.

WW: You were raised in South Central Los Angeles?

BS: Yeah, that's where that's where I was born. That's where my mom raised me. That's where I had my first experiences with capitalism, of poverty and at such a very young age. It came to the point that even growing up, obviously I would see a lot of crime. I would see people doing their best to survive. But then I guess it would kind of hit me in the head later on; you thinking, this person that's having to sell drugs to put food on the table, the mothers that are having to shoplift baby formula or diapers.

It took me a while to understand why it needed to be that way. And I guess it's between living in Memphis, living in Chicago, where these problems are exacerbated by poverty, by homelessness, and how wide the gap is between a living wage and your normal wage.

I don't want to say it's radicalized me because it's kind of sad to think that wanting respect, wanting living

necessities is something that's considered radical. I feel that being able to afford something that's good for your humanity, for your living, like food, like some place to live, like necessities of life — I feel like that shouldn't be something radical and something that we need to fight for to begin with.

WW: LaKota, tell me about yourself and how you came to work at Starbucks and including how long you had worked in Starbucks before being terminated?

Lakota McGlawn: I was hired in December of 2020, and then I was eventually promoted to shift supervisor. It was a time where I just needed a job. because I was kind of just stagnant; and I had a kind of almost romanticism of being a Starbucks barista. It looks kind of cool. I know I'm going to have to mop floors and wash dishes, but I went ahead and applied and got hired, and I really enjoyed it.

WW: You said you were from Arkansas, so what brought you to Memphis in the first place?

LM: It was about a 30-minute drive. I know a lot of people, depending on where they live, 30 minutes feels like an eternity. But being raised in the suburbs, I'm used to taking those drives.

‘It's about accountability’

WW: What brought about the seven of you being fired?

LM: We originally had a news crew come in. They had heard our story, and they wanted to do an interview with us before our store closed. But Starbucks created these lies about how we broke dozens and dozens of policies over safety. And they brought in an investigator from our partner resources and actually didn't even tell us that we were being investigated, because we're supposed to sign a document. None of us were given a document to sign. And despite us not hearing about most of these policies, like not being allowed to go into the back when you're off-duty or not wearing a mask while off-duty, we were just terminated like three weeks later.

BS: One of the biggest issues between this fight that we're part of is the accountability part, because a lot of the things that they were trying; and we had suspected this from the very beginning when we unionized.

Nikki, one of the Memphis Seven, the organizing committee, and I would always joke maybe they're going to fire me for this or that because we were always suspecting, that once we went public with the unionization, they would try anything to get rid of us, because we were a very outspoken group. We were very stubborn, I'll tell you that. And which is probably why Starbucks was so aggressive with us, because we knew exactly where we



WW PHOTO

Left to right: Monica Moorehead, LaKota McGlawn and Beto Sanchez at the New York City Solidarity Center, April 30.

stood. We weren't afraid and we knew what we were doing was right. So we were strong on our feet.

And I guess for the entire time we knew that Starbucks would try to find any reason to fire us; things that were never enforced in the beginning, all of a sudden everything was being enforced. Nikki was fired for going behind the line while not on the clock yet. Every single day, every single shift she's had for the past three years at this point, because I opened, she always comes to the back line to tell me what's up and how's it going.

For three years nothing was ever enforced. All of a sudden, now that she's a union leader, it's enforced and they fire her for it. And that could be said for all of us. It's about accountability. I was fired for having a mask off while off duty, which doesn't make sense.

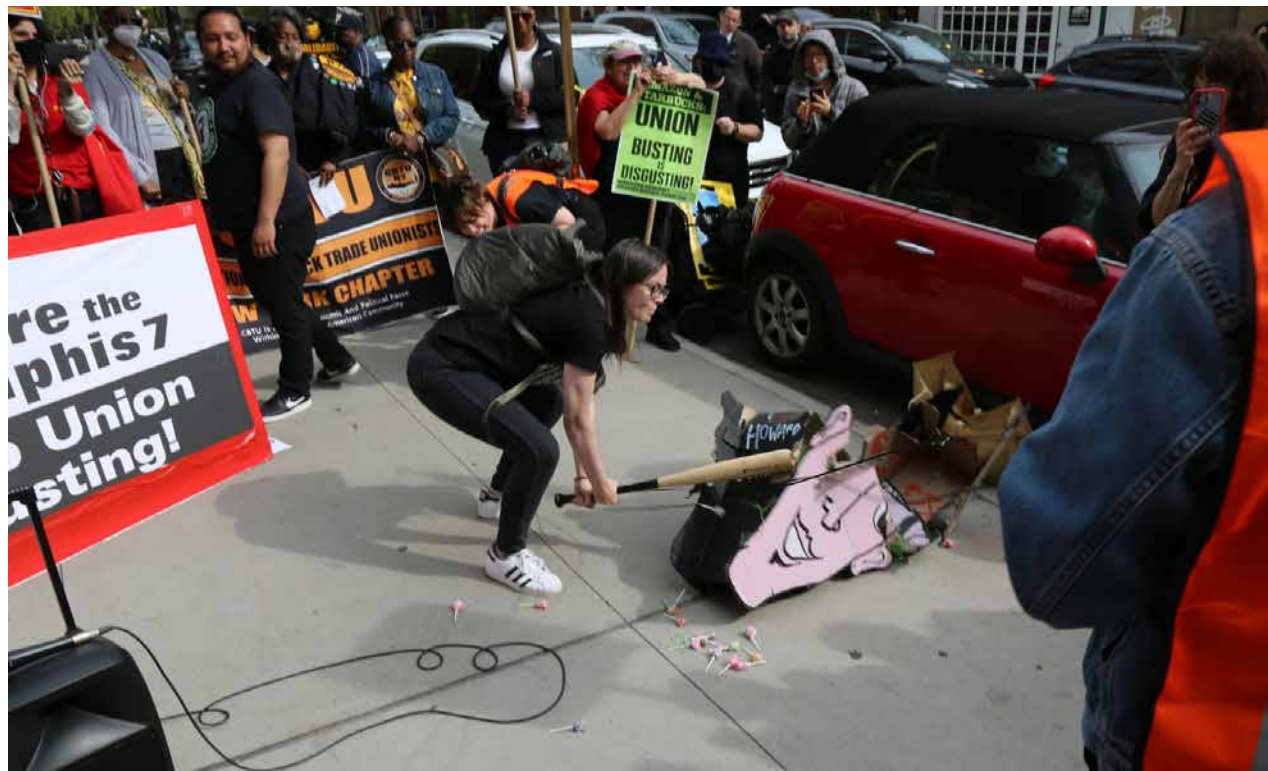
Now, Bretta was fired for locking the door or opening a closed door, and that wasn't the case. I've heard about 10 different versions of how we were fired at this point. Starbucks loves to misinform people. Our store was not closed. It was 6:00 p.m. And they keep saying that we opened the closed door, when that, in fact, it couldn't be farther from the truth. You know, we were still serving customers. There were still customers inside that we were serving. Tina, Narita and the rest of them were all fired for things that were never enforced to begin with.

And all of a sudden they decide to botch an investigation and pick very stupid reasons to sign up on terminations. And at that point, we were afraid that this would happen to other workers around us. And it has been you know; we have Cassie Flesher, Leila Dalton, Alyssa Bill.

BS: I could keep going on and on about the workers that are slowly being fired, and all of them surprisingly are fired the same way we are. None of us have had write-ups or previous things, and they skipped every step of discipline when they decided to fire us. They didn't give us a warning. They didn't give us the write-up or any written warnings or coaching. So they went straight to termination.

While at the same time, since we're talking about accountability, we had a shift manager at our store who was being investigated because he was sexually harassing our co-workers and minors at the store. Yet Starbucks decided to give him the benefit of the doubt. So it's very obvious, when you get to see what they choose to enforce or not to enforce. And at the end of the day, what they choose to terminate people for and what they choose not to do.

Next: *Intolerable working conditions.*



LaKota McGlawn smashes piñata showing Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz's face in front of his \$40 million New York City penthouse, May 1.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Ukraine

U.S. & EU use propaganda and censorship as weapon

By G. Dunkel

May 8 — When Jill Biden, sent by Washington, met Olena Zelenska, the spouse of the Ukrainian president, in Uzhhorod, a small city in western Ukraine a few miles from Slovakia, on Mother’s Day, she said to the world that “the people of the United States stand with the people of Ukraine.”

Right now, what is true is that U.S. imperialism is feeding weapons and military trainers to the Kiev regime, with the full backing of the administration, Congress and the Pentagon. The U.S. ruling class is lined up supporting the use of Ukraine and its people against Russia.

A big part of that offensive is the propaganda war. All the vast public relations apparatus of the U.S. government and its allies in the European Union have undertaken a vigorous and intensive campaign, on multiple levels, to present Jill Biden’s claim as truth. That is, the campaign aims to keep the public in tune with the U.S. aggressive moves, even if it risks a major war between the U.S., along with its European allies, and Russia.

Examining how U.S. television covered Jill Biden’s visit is instructive. It showed a warm and friendly encounter, mixing up kids and compliments, with plenty of hugs and handshakes. The next story, which got nearly three minutes, was about a tragic attack on a school-bomb shelter

that left 60 people dead. Television news attributed it to Russian forces, without any attempt at verification, but mainly focused on the suffering of the Ukrainians who survived the attack.

The May 8 visit of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin to the city of Mariupol got a few seconds. Khusnullin is in charge of construction and urban development for Russia and posted on the Telegram platform, “Restoration of peaceful life begins in the regions. There’s a lot of work to be done. We will help, in particular ... with providing humanitarian aid.” (Reuters, May 8)

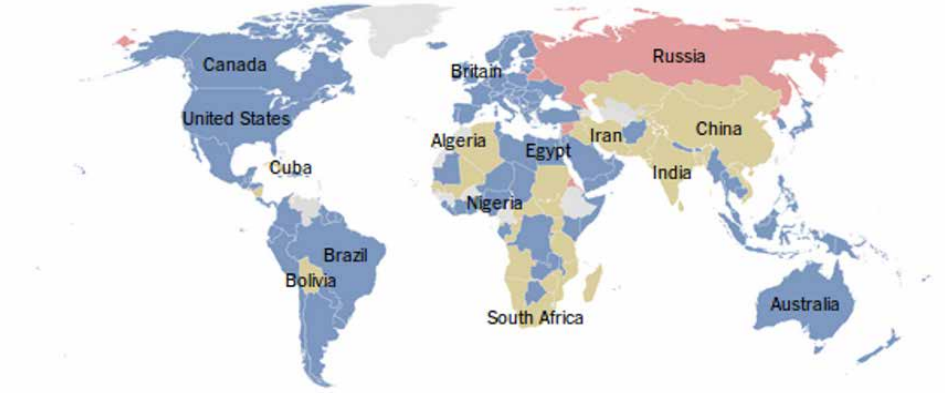
This is a typical presentation in U.S./European media: the conflict with all its tragedies, suffering and deaths is presented from the viewpoint of the Ukrainian regime, which coincides with that of U.S. imperialism. How the Russian side views these events — important to present in a fair and balanced report — is ignored.

The New York Times, which has had overwhelmingly anti-Russia news articles and commentary on the crisis in Ukraine, has recognized that many of its readers are skeptical about the justifications the U.S. and European corporate media give for the war against Russia.

To address this question, the Times has run articles — one on March 11 updated April 20, with another on April 20 devoted to the maps the Times creates — on how it verifies facts and creates reports and

Votes on UN resolution to condemn Russian invasion

■ Yes ■ No ■ Abstain



Notes: Vote took place on March 2, 2022. Some countries did not formally submit votes. Source: United Nations • By The New York Times

China and India, each with a population of around 1.4 billion people, abstained on the U.N. vote condemning Russia.

photographs. The Times described how it devoted much care and resources to this process, but it interviewed no Russian soldiers. Nor did it interview residents of Lugansk and Donetsk, who have struggled against the Kiev regime’s attacks since 2014, experiencing war and suffering during the past eight years.

The New York Times did run a story April 18 about the countries in the world which are not “arming Ukraine and punishing Russia.” Surprise — they are most of the countries in the world. (See accompanying map.)

Notice particularly that China with a

population of over 1.4 billion people and India with nearly 1.4 billion people both abstained on the U.N. vote condemning Russia. Even in the European Union, where Washington’s close imperialist allies like France and Germany firmly support an embargo forbidding members of the EU from buying Russian energy, Hungary, which is landlocked, has vetoed this embargo.

Censorship

RT began in 2005 as Russian TV, an English-language broadcast from Moscow. Five years later, RT America was set up in Washington, even though it still got Russian state funding. RT America produced thousands of hours of programming designed to present Russian life, attitudes and policies to a U.S. audience.

Al Jazeera news agency is a similar media company funded by Qatar, an oil-rich emirate in the Persian Gulf.

RT America distributed its reports over channels on YouTube and other, smaller streaming services. Immediately after the conflict between Russia and Ukraine began, YouTube management ejected RT from the YouTube platform and the other smaller networks. While it is still possible to find some RT reports on alternative sites, its main archive and main channel have been closed down.

Google, Twitter and Facebook banned all content that presented the Russian point of view beginning in early March, claiming that they were protecting their users from “disinformation.” They could do this in the United States because they are private companies.

In the European Union, the diffusion of RT and another Russian news source, Sputnik, was banned. And of course the decisions of Google, Facebook and Twitter stood there also.

The question raised by all this censorship and distortion that the United States and its powerful media companies, joined by the EU, are carrying out, is: What crimes, what power grabs and what aggression are they trying to hide? □

Sudan: The three No’s of popular resistance

By Carlos Lopes Pereira

Article published in Avante, weekly newspaper of the Portuguese Communist Party, May 5. Translation: John Catalinotto

Following the upsurge of violence in the Western Darfur region, where “ethnic conflicts” have been registered, the situation in Sudan is getting worse. The political forces that oppose the military junta in power charge that such confrontations show the “failure” of the coup government to “fulfill its duties toward its citizens.”

At the same time, moves are underway to “resolve” the Sudanese political crisis.

In late April, envoys from the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway, senior officials from France and Germany, and representatives of the European Union began talks in Khartoum, Sudan’s capital, with parties to discuss a return to civilian rule. The Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) and the Resistance Committees, made up of the Sudanese Communist Party, refused to take part in the negotiations with the coup authorities.

Western delegations held meetings with parties and the military to discuss the political crisis and the possibility of economic “aid.” The nature of such “aid” — outright blackmail — became clear when it was learned that if the formation of a “credible” civilian government did not move forward, any financial support to Sudan would be “conditioned by the international community.”

Without such support, the country could lose billions of dollars in “assistance” from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and debt



Sudanese protest military coup, Khartoum, Oct. 25, 2021.

relief would be “at risk.”

North Americans and Europeans also met with members of the United Nations tripartite initiative, made up of its Integrated Mission for Transition and Assistance in Sudan (UNITAMS); the African Union (AU); and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional bloc of eight East African countries, including Sudan.

The FFC and the Resistance Committees have rejected joining the dialogue proposed by the tripartite mechanism (UNITAMS, AU and IGAD), which will take place between May 10 and 12.

Jafar Hassan, leader of the FFC, clarified that they will only participate in a dialogue that clearly identifies the parties responsible for the crisis and gives a correct reading of the situation. He stressed that they will not be part of talks that legitimize the coup. He criticized the tripartite mechanism’s willingness to negotiate with the military responsible for the October 25 coup and with parties that were allied to dictator Omar al-Bashir, overthrown three years ago by the force of popular demonstrations.

Hassan confirmed the revolutionary forces’ categorical rejection of any offer to sit at the table with groups that supported the 2021 coup. And he insisted that the proposed dialogue would be a dialogue among coup plotters, in which the forces that reject the coup would not participate.

Similarly, the Resistance Committees, deployed mainly in Khartoum, have made public their firm refusal to engage in the dialogue sponsored by UNITAMS, AU and IGAD.

Speaking for the Resistance Committees, Fadhil Omar, explained that the Resistance Committees stand for three no’s — no to negotiations, no to partnerships and no to legitimizing the coup plotters.

Omar stated that the people have lost confidence in the military authorities and consider any agreement with the generals to be the legitimization of the coup and the legalization of violence. And he argued that the solution to the crisis in Sudan is to overthrow the coup regime and install a democratic government. □



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.
Available at major online booksellers.
PentagonAchillesHeel.com

Victory Day 1945 celebrated in Madrid

In light of the war against Russia

By Ángeles Maestro
Madrid

Message from WW editors: We publish the article below about a demonstration in Madrid as part of celebrating the anniversary of the May 9, 1945, victory of the Soviet Union against Nazi-ruled Germany, marked by Germany's unconditional surrender. Clarifying the history of World War II is always important for the working class, because the role of the world's first socialist state was essential in victory over Nazi domination. It is even more important now because of the conflict provoked by the major imperialist powers, the U.S. at their head, against Russia.

Anyone who reads history or even historical novels knows that the Soviet victory in Stalingrad, where its defenders fought against the German offensive for 200 days between 1942 and 1943, was the first major setback for the Nazi-led German military and was the turning point of World War II. The Soviet victory in Stalingrad inspired resistance throughout all of German-occupied Europe.

Despite the loss of tens of millions of lives, the Soviet Red Army under communist leadership was able to open an offensive that pushed the German Wehrmacht out of lands it had occupied—first out of Soviet territory, including Russia and Ukraine, and then out of Eastern Europe. The U.S.-British alliance did not open

Anyone who reads history or even historical novels knows that the Soviet victory in Stalingrad, where its defenders fought against the German offensive for 200 days between 1942 and 1943, was the first major setback for the Nazi-led German military and was the turning point of World War II. The Soviet victory in Stalingrad inspired resistance throughout all of German-occupied Europe.

a second front in Normandy until June 1944. At that time, U.S. and British imperialism had to fear that the Red Army might not stop at defeating Germany but might, with the help of local partisans, liberate Paris—and why not Madrid, too?

Today's capitalist Russia is no longer the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the peoples of Russia — along with many of the people of Ukraine — made their share of sacrifices for victory over Nazi Germany and have good historical reason to fear the surrounding of their country by NATO imperialism.

Report from Madrid

May 8. We have lived a historic day in Madrid.

This Sunday, May 8, for the seventh consecutive year, the March of the Immortal Regiment was called by the Russian community of Madrid and, this time, with the support of various political organizations and social movements.

The March, as every year, aimed to commemorate the Day of the Victory of the Red

Army against fascism, concretized in the signing of the unconditional capitulation of the German army to the Soviet Union, as well as to honor the memory of the heroes and the 27 million deaths with which the Soviet people paid for their gigantic feat.

This year was very special.

The war propaganda and the denigration of everything Russian carried out by the “progressive” government [Socialist Party, Podemos, Environmentalists], repeated time and time again by all the major media, were creating a charged atmosphere.

All this was used by the large group of Ukrainian fascists, who, following the path of their counterparts in Ukraine, had been harassing with all kinds of threats anyone who defended and considered themselves part of the Russian culture and its language.

All this was exacerbated in the days prior to the March, which had been communicated to the Government Delegation and received a positive response, despite the pressure from the fascists, which even reached Queen Leticia (sic).

The Nazis called for a concentration at

the place where the March was to begin, at the same time that it was forbidden.

The frenzy that was generated and the Russophobia carefully fabricated by the authorities dissuaded many people from attending. Even so, about 1,000 people, filled the Paseo del Prado, tense and joyful and, above all, with the feeling of having fulfilled our duty. We were all conscious that we were putting into practice the ideals and objectives of those who preceded us and gave their lives in the struggle against fascism.

We were not just a handful of people from Madrid and from other cities of the Spanish State. We paraded proudly carrying the banner with the photo of the numerous Republican (anti-fascist) fighters fallen in the ranks of the Red Army, while we tried to accompany the beautiful songs of the Great Patriotic War.

Many things unite our peoples. Today, once again, we are united by the struggle against fascism and imperialism. □



Victory Day March (over Nazi Germany), Madrid, May 8.

Cuba

Millions march May Day

By Kathy Durkin

Five million people joined events around the island of socialist Cuba to celebrate International Workers Day — May Day. Large marches in Havana and the provincial capitals affirmed the commitment of the Cuban people to socialism. The mass gatherings showed the unity of the island's people in opposing U.S. imperialism and its media, which has become increasingly vociferous and menacing in recent months.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez and General Raúl Castro Ruz, military leader in the 1959 Cuban Revolution, led the march, which began in Havana's Plaza de la Revolución. Cuban flags flew everywhere, interspersed with rainbow LGBTQ flags. People carried posters with images of the revered former President Fidel Castro, the visionary who directed Cuba's victorious path toward socialist revolution, and José Martí, leader in Cuba's liberation from colonial Spain.

This is the first in-person May Day celebration in Cuba since 2019, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The commemoration recognized the island's health care system, free and available to all. Dedicated to all Cuban workers, this

May Day put particular focus on health workers and scientists.

Scientists and doctors who developed and produced effective anti-COVID-19 vaccines were praised for their remarkable work in dealing with the crisis.

Because of the dedication and meticulous efforts of these and other health workers, 87.8% of the population has been inoculated with Cuban-produced vaccines. In acknowledgment of their heroic work, the Havana march was led by 50,000 representatives of the health and science sectors.

The people in this Caribbean nation have lived with a crushing 60-year blockade imposed by the U.S., causing great hardship. Yet, with their revolutionary determination and creativity, they have developed many resources to support their country in surviving and thriving. The Cuban people continue to defy the U.S. corporate media's lies and distortions about their country.

On this workers' holiday, the people showed their devotion to the Cuban Revolution was as strong as ever, supported by thousands of energetic young people. In solidarity with the heroic Cuban people, delegations from over 200 organizations from 60 countries joined the festive celebration, including a representative of Workers World Party.

Cuban Foreign Affairs Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla tweeted, “It has been a day of joy and commitment to the unity and continuity of the Revolution.”

Sources: Granma
English Facebook,
Telesur, Resumen
Latinoamericano English



May 1, Havana

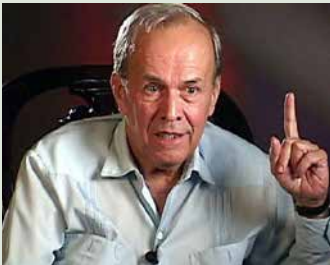
PHOTO: GRANMA

Hero of the Cuban Revolution

Ricardo Alarcón ¡Presente!

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Workers World Party members participated in conferences and other events with Ricardo Alarcón in many parts of the world and are proud to have heard his strong analysis and to have worked on common efforts.



Ricardo Alarcón

A monumental force in the development of a socialist Cuba, Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada died in Havana April 30, at age 84.

Born in Havana in 1937, he entered the University and became active in 1955 in the 26th of July Movement — the guerrilla campaign led by Commandante Fidel Castro, eventually leading to the overthrow of the U.S.-supported Batista dictatorship in Cuba.

In 1959, the year of the Cuban Revolution, Alarcón was elected president of the University Student Federation. In 1962 he was appointed director of the Americas division of MINREX (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores/Ministry of Foreign Affairs). He was later Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations.

In 1992 Alarcón served as Minister of Foreign Affairs until he was elected president of the National Assembly of People's Power in 1993, then serving in that position for 20 years.

Alarcón was praised by President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in a May Day message on social media:

“Last night has died in Havana, Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, great patriot and brilliant diplomat of the #CubanRevolution, whose work he defended with passion and solid arguments, making our people proud. All of #Cuba feels his departure.”

(cubanews.acn.cu/cuba/)

Alarcón was a member of the Central Committee of the Party and of its Political Bureau.

Current Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla tweeted: “All our tribute to dear Ricardo Alarcón — in loyalty to the Revolution, the Party, foreign policy and the glorious tradition of @CubaMINREX.” (cubanews.acn.cu/cuba/)

Argentinian journalist Stella Calloni praised Alarcón's legacy as brilliance and tenacity in facing today's “global challenges, such as the imperialist and colonizing pretensions of some nations.” (Prensa Latina, May 6)

Calloni, who specializes in international issues, defined Alarcón as “an authentic communist militant, whose work will remain in the history of resistance in the world.” She particularly noted his “constant condemnation of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba.”

In relation to this violation of human rights, she said, “Due to Cuba's deep and creative diplomatic work, the number of countries calling for the lifting of that coercive policy is renewed and increased.” □

Pass compassionate release legislation in Pennsylvania

By Barbara Chavous-Pennock

“David Ohl of Spotlight PA (April 2022) wrote about the plight of the incarcerated ill in Pennsylvania’s prison system and the fallacy of Pennsylvania’s Compassionate Release Legislation that would cause an inmate to choose death in order to be able to be released and go home.

This was the plight of Bradford Gamble who, at age 65, was notified by a slip of paper a guard placed in his cell that he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. He was provided no other information. In time, after much pain and confusion, he learned that he had metastatic colon cancer that had already spread to his liver. His choice was to receive treatment or to use a little-known law allowing him to be released based on his age and diagnosis of a year or less to live. He chose to go home and die.

Bradford Gamble is not the only person who has gone home to die. The Prison Society shared information about Mr. Howard White who, like Mr. Gamble, only became aware of his condition when he had reached a stage 4 diagnosis of cancer. To make matters worse, while he lay dying in the prison infirmary, it is reported that he was not receiving his medication and was not

being properly cared for to prevent bedsores.

The family of Howard White petitioned for his compassionate release. On March 17, 2022, the hospital doctor gave him two weeks to live. This diagnosis automatically qualified Mr. White for hospice care. However, he was not discharged to hospice but to a facility that lacked adequate support and needed care for a patient in such dire medical need.

Hospice, the service provided for the terminally ill, is dependent upon medical health insurance approval, unlikely to be approved for someone who has spent 35 years in prison. In addition, to be released, one must have support on the outside upon release.

Pennsylvania’s Compassionate Release Legislation, as reported, is narrowly written. To compound matters, in the case of Mr. White, Mr. Gamble and others, incarcerated people must be at death’s door before they can be released; and even then, in some instances, release has been denied. In Pennsylvania’s Prison System, persons have spent their lives in prison; and despite their age or terminal illness, only 31 were released in the past 13 years. Since 2016, eight people have died waiting for a medical transfer.

This is a travesty and must change. It is unjust, inhumane, and the financial and emotional toll on the Commonwealth, families and individuals is staggering. Does a prison life sentence mean that one should have to die in prison from an illness for which a person if properly treated in a timely professional manner, with adequate health care and service, could be healed and recover? Does our prison system need to take months allowing older, infirm individuals to waste away inside, when they have loving families willing and waiting to take care of them at home?

We encourage everyone to join our efforts to bring much needed attention to this matter. Senator Sharif Street has legislation SB 835 addressing this broken system. Write letters; make calls; send fax letting all elected officials know the Compassionate Care Legislation for Pennsylvania must be changed.

Mr. Howard White returned home on April 6, 2022, with bedsores on his body and the heels of his feet. He died on April 14. Our elderly, sick, infirm offenders who are in decline deserve better. □



ALL STADIUMS AIN’T FULL: Pam and the Party didn’t buy tickets

By the Underground Poet
for Mumia’s 68th birthday

Today we sang the National Anthem
To celebrate the opening of baseball season
And the 75th anniversary of Jackie Robinson
breaking the color barrier

Man, we felt so included . . .
so red, white, and blue!

Now comes your B-day
beloved brother in Black skin like our own.

You’ve been red-baited by the red, white, and the blue
and red-lined,
too!

Your name circled in green (and green-lighted)
for nefarious reasons.

They used war-talk and war-moves against you:
charging you first with a crime before committing a crime against you.

They cordoned you off with crime scene tape:
Yellow ribbons reading “police line, do not cross.”

We know that their ultimate goal is to leave you somewhere sprawled
And outlined in white chalk,
But the people are watching.

“Fuck!” they exclaim in frustration
Because they can’t get us all to go to the games.

Man! Between you and Jackie Robinson, I swear
We are truly “Black” and “American.”

Written by an activist in total solitary confinement on Texas death row for the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement’s event for Mumia Abu-Jamal’s birthday.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Imprisoned women rebel in West Virginia

By Ellen Pierce

The following article first appeared in the Sept. 30, 1971, issue of Workers World in the aftermath of the Attica Prison Uprising. It has been slightly edited.

The county, state and federal jails that dot the map of the U.S. are filled with women prisoners as well as men. Alderson Federal Reformatory for Women in West Virginia is the showcase of these women’s concentration camps. There are “cottages” instead of cells and surrounding mountains instead of bars at this minimum security jail.

But the prisoner struggles which have swept the concentration camp system have touched Alderson too. Women there held a memorial service for the murdered Attica prisoners. Prison authorities responded by transferring 66 “ringleaders” — 10% of the population — to maximum security jails.

A transfer doesn’t just mean a change of scenery. It means being condemned to do time in terrible state and county jails. Although county jails can legally be used only for short-term prisoners, the women transferred out of Alderson could be forced to serve their sentences, no matter how long, under inhuman county jail conditions.

When 37 women refused to be transferred, tear gas was used to force them onto a bus. A spokesman for the prison called the sisters: “the type who take things in their own hands . . . spark plugs in this sort of thing, the more vocal, more outspoken, more revolutionary types.” His description was meant as an insult to the sisters, but it is really a tribute to strong and courageous women who dared to honor the dead of Attica and defied their own prison-keepers.

The 66 women were sent to the

Federal Youth Center, where they will be “screened” and shipped out to maximum security prisons. The government has contracts under which it pays state and county jails to house federal prisoners. The Alderson rebels will be sent to these institutions, where conditions are extremely bad. Often there are no facilities at all for women prisoners. They spend 24 hours, day and night, crammed into their cells while the county collects a large fee.

Maryann Weissman of Youth Against War & Fascism and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee served a six-month sentence, partly in Alderson and then in Passaic County Jail, which received \$22.50 a day for keeping her under the contract system.

“After a week in Southern county jails with double bars, Alderson looked much like an all-girl campus,” she recalled. “There is sunlight, grass, trees, the beauty of the West Virginia mountains. . . I could hardly wait for the freedom of moving out of a locked cell, without my bands cuffed and locked to a chain around my waist. . .



Recently, protests targeted Alderson prison for its handling of the COVID-19 crisis. It was the site of a rebellion in 1971.

“But their basic principle for ‘reforming criminals’ is still to dehumanize you. The favorite game of the cops is to find out what you want and then not let you have it.”

The small rebellion at Alderson in response to the Attica massacre gives the lie to the theory that newer and better jails are a solution. The women at this “model” prison identified with the Attica rebels, because they, too, are the poor, the Black and Puerto Rican people who fill all the U.S. jails for the “crime” of being poor. □

National Nurses Week

Remember Pauline Bray Fletcher, RN

By Marie Kelly

Pauline Bray Fletcher was the first Black registered nurse from the state of Alabama. Born in 1884, she studied nursing at the Huntsville Normal School, which is now Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University. The school is a public, historically Black land-grant university in Normal, which the state of Alabama founded in 1875.

Fletcher graduated in 1904 and then spent the next few years in Decatur, Alabama, where she served as both general and head nurse at Sterrs Hospital, which was founded by Black physician Dr. Edwin Sterrs in 1900. When she resigned in 1906, she took charge of the Birmingham Children’s Home for Negroes Hospital.

Over the course of her career, Fletcher also worked for the Jefferson County Department of Health and the Anti-Tuberculosis Association (later known as the American Lung Association). She saw firsthand the suffering of the Black community in Alabama.

Health care for Black Alabamans was subpar, due to poverty, segregation and white supremacy. Fletcher became convinced that Black children needed an outdoor camp to provide a temporary escape from the poor, unsanitary conditions they were forced to endure. Using personal funds from mortgaging her home, along with donations, Fletcher purchased acres of woodland in Bessemer, Alabama.

Camp Fletcher honors founder

With donations Fletcher procured lumber from local companies, which she and her team used to build sturdy cabins. The camp was originally named after Margaret

Murray Washington, the spouse of Booker T. Washington. Its name was changed to Camp Fletcher in 1942, to honor the nurse who made her dream a reality.

Le Tanya Scott, education director of the Cahaba River Society and former camp counselor said: “[Fletcher’s] dream was that she wanted to bring children out into the woods. Get them out of Birmingham, out of the pollution into some fresh air to learn how to swim, to learn how to love nature, to not be afraid. She did that, and she exemplified that in so many different ways. What nurse Fletcher did for her community was groundbreaking and monumental.” (Birmingham Times, April 20)

The camp remains vital today. On 300 acres of woodland, 800 children from varying backgrounds come together. Camp administrator Dean Cowser put it this way: “They may not understand the significance of the history now, but the goal is for them to grow up and say, ‘Hey, when I was a kid, I spent time at a camp with history so ahead of its time, and I want to make that same contribution to the world.’” (Birmingham Times, April 20)

Celebrate National Nurses Week

The week to recognize nurses is taking place May 6 to 12. Events typically commemorate Florence Nightingale’s May 12th birthday. Nightingale, remembered for her hospital work during the Crimean War in the mid-19th century, is considered the founder of professional nursing schools.

Lesser-known Mary Seacole was a Black nurse who learned her healing skills from her mother in Jamaica. She was a contemporary of Nightingale and also went to the Crimea to care for sick

and wounded British soldiers.

Despite her well-documented health care experience and knowledge, Seacole’s numerous attempts to join government-sanctioned contingents of nurses were denied. Instead, with her own resources, she established a hospital/hotel in Balaklava in Crimea and frequently traveled to the battlefield to nurse the wounded.

End racism in nursing!

Why is it that every nurse in the U.S. is familiar with Florence Nightingale, yet knows nothing of Pauline Bray Fletcher or Mary Seacole? The answer is shamefully clear. The nursing profession has a long history of white supremacy and racism. This writer, who is an RN, says it is not something she is proud to admit, but denying it is not an option.

Nursing scholars have begun to explore this stain on the “caring” profession, as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement. Nursing historians have “discovered” nurses like Seacole and Fletcher and are adding their stories to provide a richer telling of the history of nursing in the U.S. and worldwide.

Nurses advocate for an end to the health care disparities seen in patients who are Black, Latinx, Indigenous and from other communities of color. However, professional nurses must reckon with the inequality within their ranks. According to a report summarized by the Oncology Nursing Society, Black and Brown nurses are subjected to discrimination by their peers and by the institutions that employ them.

Student nurses from communities of color are more likely to be considered



Pauline Bray Fletcher, RN.

incompetent by their professors. Wage disparities and lack of advancement opportunities are common for Black and Brown registered nurses. In fact, less than 1% of university deans of nursing schools and hospital chief nursing officers come from diverse backgrounds. According to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, while Black people in this country represent 13% of the population, only 7.8% of nurses are Black.

The number of Black nurses must be increased in order to eliminate disparities in health care. Racism in the nursing profession is part of its shameful past, but it must be driven out in order to guarantee a more inclusive future.

Marie Kelly is a registered nurse and at-large member of National Nurses United.

Harm reduction must be accessible and free

By Princess Harmony

In many areas of the United States and Canada, the illicit and prescription drugs being sold on the street now contain dangerous and toxic cuts. Instead of getting painkillers or ADHD medications on the street, a user could get xylazine or various drugs related to fentanyl.

An analogue of fentanyl is a drug related to but not exactly fentanyl. Examples include furanylfentanyl, acetylfentanyl, butyrfentanyl, ohmefentanyl and carfentanyl. The horse tranquilizer xylazine is unrelated to opioids. Called “tranq,”

COMMENTARY

xylazine has quickly overwhelmed the street drug supply in the Philadelphia region and elsewhere in the United States. And not only heroin has been tainted, but cocaine, methamphetamines and pill presses like fake M-Box 30s and Xanax. Xylazine can cause ulcers and abscesses when injected intramuscularly or intravenously.

A big reason people turn to illicit drugs is because they have become addicted to the legal pharmaceuticals first prescribed to them. Companies like Purdue Pharma, Johnson & Johnson and Teva Pharmaceuticals, driven by profits, lied to the public about the addictiveness of

their opioid drugs and rewarded doctors who pushed their product and ignored the consequences. The target of legal suits, pharma companies must now pay billions in damages to people who became addicted, to families of the deceased and to pay for treatments — although these amounts are still inadequate.

Harm reduction a necessity

The kind of treatment available doesn’t serve every person in need. Some need to be able to continue to use drugs in a safe way. Harm reduction assumes that addicts and other drug users are human and deserve to have their lives preserved, even if they use drugs. It includes teaching drug users and addicts how to use drugs relatively safely.

One form of harm reduction is providing users with test strips that check to see if drugs contain the deadly adulterants grouped together as fentanyl. There are two other major forms of harm reduction: One is expanding access to methadone (Methadose, Diskets) and buprenorphine (Suboxone, Subutex, Sublocade and Zubsolv) to replace illegal drugs. The other is to provide untainted drugs directly to users.

Both these two forms are highly controversial, even among recovery communities, and not without problems. But they are both necessary for safety at this stage of widespread inundation of addiction.

Methadone and buprenorphine programs need expansion and reform in order to meet the needs of people living in active drug use and abuse. A waiver

known as the X-Waiver is required to provide buprenorphine. This medication, known as one of the primary tools in opioid addiction treatment (the other being methadone), has tighter restrictions on its use than the opioids that caused the opioid epidemic!

Doctors can prescribe drugs like oxycotin yet cannot prescribe buprenorphine without the X-Waiver. There are some exceptions; doctors and others with Drug Enforcement Agency registration can provide buprenorphine to up to 30 patients without a waiver. This is a good step, but only a baby step, in the right direction.

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, some reforms in methadone treatment were begun, though they risk being undone as the epidemic appears to some to be ending. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) gave states the permission to dispense up to 28 take-home doses to patients who were stable on the medicine. Patients just starting the medicine, however, would need to come to the opioid treatment program (OTP) for observation.

It is important for people just starting methadone treatment to be observed by OTPs, as a methadone overdose can be deadly quickly, but for patients established and stable they should have their doses provided to them by a pharmacy, as is the case in Canada. Some see methadone reform as totally getting rid of the OTP model, and others see it as the

Continued on page 10



Protest at Staten Island Ferry, New York City, demands politicians stop their attacks on harm reduction programs.

COVID-19 deaths mount while Biden funds war

The numbers are staggering. In the two-year period from the start of the coronavirus pandemic in January 2020 through December 2021, the World Health Organization estimates that 15 million people have died from COVID-19 globally. WHO officials admit that in several countries, actual death totals are much higher than officially reported. WHO numbers include people who died as a result of COVID-19’s impact on overwhelmed health care systems — people needing other medical treatments but unable to access care. Most of the deaths were in South Asia, Europe and the Americas, where the U.S. accounts for 1,020,854 and Brazil 663,567 as of May 2. In China, with a population of 1.402 billion people — four times greater than the U.S. — WHO reported 5,092 deaths. Yet because of its unrelenting, interventionist approach to COVID-19 containment, China has actually been the target of heavy criticism and scorn from Western media pundits — spokespeople for the capitalists who ignore the sobering

death tolls, so business can get “back to normal.” Most COVID-19 deaths have occurred despite advances in modern medicine, including vaccines. Unable to gain access to vaccines available in the U.S. and other Western countries, many low-income countries have fully vaccinated less than 2% of their population. Meanwhile, the big pharmaceutical companies Pfizer, BioNTech and Moderna made a combined pre-tax profit of \$34 billion in 2021, according to the Peoples Vaccine Alliance. Despite these companies receiving over \$8 billion in public funding for vaccine development, less than 1% of the vaccines they produced were made available to low-income countries. The pandemic is far from over, with new cases rising steeply and hospitalizations increasing in many U.S. states. Scientists predict case numbers are undercounted, because more people who test positive at home don’t report their infections. Health experts warn of a coming wave

from the new BA.2 variant of the coronavirus, thought to be 30% more contagious than omicron. Yet public funding to pay for the basic means of protecting people during the pandemic — medications, vaccines, testing and reimbursement for care — has seemingly dried up. Money is available related to the COVID-19 crisis. Many states will get another round from President Joe Biden’s \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan funds in May. However, this money is slated for infrastructure “recovery” spending — not COVID-19 prevention! But left up to the discretion of state legislatures on how to allocate these funds, proposed projects range from cleaning contaminated water, boosting tourism and projects from highway construction, as proposed in Florida, to building new prisons as planned for Alabama. Not one dime will go to preventing more COVID-19 deaths. In April, Congress allocated \$13.6 billion for the war in Ukraine. Biden

recently requested an additional \$33 billion — larger than the entire defense budgets of many countries. This money will pad the already exorbitant profits of major weapons manufacturers Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Raytheon. The same legislators who readily vote for money for war balk when it comes to spending for health care in general and COVID-19 in particular. Why? In allocating more funding for testing and treatment, the government is acknowledging that the pandemic has not “gone away.” This is exactly the opposite message from what U.S. corporations controlling Congress want to convey. Therein lies the dilemma. More people will die — in the U.S. and globally — while capitalist politicians and pundits maintain their silence and refuse to open their moneybags for people’s health needs. But China, Cuba and Vietnam have proven that there is a viable option — that saving lives is possible. □

Squirrel Hill neighbors win against gentrification

Continued from page 4

continued the pressure through phone calls to politicians and press releases. In April 2021, the coalition staged a rally of 75 people speaking out against the luxury apartment building and prepared neighbors to testify at the Zoning Board of Adjustment’s hearings. The main concern of residents in this vibrant, diverse neighborhood was that the proposed exorbitant rents for the luxury apartment building would end lower rents prevalent in the neighborhood. Cindy Lou is a resident in a 40-unit apartment building constructed in 1925, directly across the street from the site of the proposed development. At the rally she said: “I see myself and others in my building being displaced if this gets built. Most people I’ve spoken with in my

building pay around \$750 per month for a one-bedroom. The monstrosity they’re proposing across the street will charge twice that. “Once they start leasing for those prices, other landlords will follow,” she explained. “Older, long-term residents like myself will get pushed out. I’ve been in this neighborhood for 35 years. I’m organizing with my neighbors because none of us can afford this.” **Zoning board shuts down opposition** Despite the overwhelming opposition to the project by neighbors, in June 2021 the zoning board approved the requested variances. At the hearing, developers promoting the project were given unlimited time to speak, while the board chair repeatedly silenced, denigrated and patronized community members who

attempted to voice opposition to the development. The coalition responded to this setback by getting a lawyer to challenge the ruling. The May 3 ruling has not ended the project for ever. The court remanded the case back to the zoning board to conduct additional fact-finding proceedings. Still, Squirrel Hill neighbors see this as a win. Quoted in a press release issued by the coalition, Susanna Martin, who has rented an apartment in Squirrel Hill for 16 years, said: “This ruling is an important victory for our neighborhood and for anyone in this city who benefits from or cares about affordable housing. New high-rent apartments would drive up housing costs for all of us, pushing out low-income tenants and disproportionately impacting elders and people of color, especially long-term

Black residents. The zoning board now has a second chance to do the right thing and stop this project.” Squirrel Hill neighbors aren’t leaving it up to chance. Through organizing and lobbying efforts of the Project Squirrel Hill and its allies, a Charter Change Referendum regarding the zoning board will be on the ballot in the upcoming Philadelphia May 17 primary. The coalition urges people to vote “YES,” noting that passage will help ensure that the zoning board will no longer treat residents “with the disrespect and dismissal that we experienced at our hearing last year.” Protect Squirrel Hill supports the principles of community care, nondisplacement and protecting the vibrant, diverse neighborhood of Squirrel Hill from the atrocities of gentrification. They can be contacted at ProtectSquirrelHill@gmail.com. □

Harm reduction must be accessible and free

Continued from page 9

continuation of COVID-19 relaxed rules. SAMHSA’s definition of “stable” is as follows:

- Absence of recent abuse of drugs (opioid or nonnarcotic), including alcohol
- Regularity of clinic attendance
- Absence of serious behavioral problems at the clinic
- Absence of known recent criminal activity, e.g., drug dealing
- Stability of the patient’s home environment and social relationships
- Length of time in comprehensive maintenance treatment
- Assurance that take-home medication can be safely stored within the patient’s home
- That the rehabilitative benefit the patient derived from decreasing the frequency of clinic attendance outweighs the potential risks of diversion

This impossibly strict criteria is dangerously out of reach for many methadone patients and unfairly so. For instance,

alcohol is not always “abused” by those who drink it, even those with addiction or substance abuse history. “Stability of the patient’s home environment and social relationships” is one of the most difficult criteria to meet; addicts and substance abusers tend to have lost family as a result of their disorder, and their friends tend to be addicts themselves. To judge a person’s stability on whether or not their relationships have healed in the face of addiction is cruel. **Programs must be free** The danger of methadone diversion for monetary gain is overblown. It is a fact that many who divert methadone give it to addicts in dire straits, to addicts who are facing the hell of withdrawal. This writer would say that the diversion of methadone is itself a form of harm reduction, because the rules of entrance into an OTP are so high. Many OTPs in Pennsylvania, for instance, require that one actively uses drugs. In other words, if you quit using on your own but need to get into methadone (and buprenorphine) programs, due

to withdrawal or Post-Acute Withdrawal Syndrome, you have to go back out, risk your life and come back high. Methadone and buprenorphine programs must become free to all with addiction to opioids, paid for by reparations from Big Pharma, the creator of this crisis. There must be fairer criteria for “stability” on methadone. Instead of demonizing diversion, we should see it as a symbol of the failure of the current methods used to get people into those programs. People in the U.S. should look to our northern neighbors for ways to approach the problem of drugs and the problem of tainted products. The Drug User Liberation Front, the Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society, British Columbia Association of People on Opiate Maintenance and other organizations do the most radical and revolutionary work on the ground to serve people who need diacetylmorphine (heroin), cocaine and/or methamphetamines and provide it to them. Of course, drugs are a scourge, a ruling-class weapon against the proletariat, but it’s important to remember that at

present, many people still need them. Drug manufacturers like Johnson & Johnson, Teva Pharmaceuticals and Purdue Pharma all deceived the public about the addictiveness of painkilling drugs. They pushed drugs into villages, towns and cities without remorse. This has caused an unforeseen and unfortunate problem: People cannot tell the difference between real prescription drugs and fake pill presses. Two students at Ohio State University overdosed and died because they thought they were getting the drug Adderall. Little did they know that it was fentanyl instead. Drug manufacturers are responsible because they pushed and pushed opioids, causing legitimate doctors and other medical practitioners to fear prescribing medications people need. For everyone who died because of the actions of pharmaceutical companies and a federal government that’s failing to modernize its OTPs and its methadone/buprenorphine treatments, we must take action. We can’t allow this massacre via addiction and overdose of workers and oppressed people to continue. □

U.S. excludes Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua from Summit of the Americas – Will it boomerang?

Published May 5 in Cuba Debate.
Translated by Walter Lippmann for CubaNews and edited by WW.

Holding the Summit of the Americas is at risk, warned Ronald Sanders, the ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda, in Washington on May 5. Sanders stressed that if the United States insisted on excluding Cuba, this could be an immediate cause for the nations of the Caribbean to skip the event.

Sanders spoke at a webinar in which several panelists examined the policy of the Biden administration towards the Caribbean in its first year in the White House. He said that “if the United States insists on not inviting Cuba to this meeting, it will immediately cause 14 CARICOM countries not to attend, despite the fact that it will be a stage to bring the region’s positions closer to Washington.

“This is not a meeting of the government of the United States, it is a summit of all the heads of state of the Western



Cuba had attended the Summit of the Americas held in Peru in 2018.

Hemisphere,” said the diplomat. He pointed out that “it’s the same if [Juan] Guaidó [U.S. puppet and the pretender to run Venezuela] continues to be recognized—several Caribbean states will not go. The Summit of the Americas is not a meeting of the United States, so it cannot decide who is invited and who is not.” This week, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel supported the complaint about the possible exclusion of the island

nation from the Summit of the Americas, scheduled for June. “The great challenges of humanity are not solved through confrontation and violence, but through solidarity and cooperation,” he asserted. Likewise, the president of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, spoke out for the inclusion of all countries in the Summit. “How is it that we convene a Summit of the Americas,

but we don’t invite everyone? So where are the uninvited from? From what continent? From which galaxy? From what satellite?”

President Arce joins objections

Bolivian President Luis Arce called for not excluding any country from the IX Summit of the Americas, because there is a risk that the objectives pursued by the forum will not materialize: “If pluralism

is ignored, the principle of self-determination is ignored and the participation of sister countries is vetoed.”

Arce took this position after the head of U.S. diplomacy for the region, Brian Nichols, reported on May 2 that the United States would not invite Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela to the Summit of the Americas, to be held in Los Angeles in June.

“The IX Summit of the Americas proposes building a sustainable, resilient and equitable future, a challenge that will not materialize if pluralism is ignored, the principle of self-determination is ignored and the participation of sister countries is vetoed,” Arce said in one of his messages on Twitter.

The Bolivian president added that “there is no excuse at all that justifies the exclusion of the peoples and voices in Our America.” This is why Arce urged that all the countries of the region be invited to the Summit – to strengthen dialogue and integration based on respect for the dignity and sovereignty of peoples. □

Call for ‘Workers Summit of the Americas’

The following is posted on the website tinyurl.com/workerssummit2022.

The Workers Summit of the Americas meeting, in Tijuana, Mexico, offers a space to join with all the peoples of “Our Americas.” We will counteract the OAS Summit of the Americas organized by the U.S. Department of State in Los Angeles. The countries of the continent besieged by the USA (Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, among others) will not participate in the OAS farce.

The Workers’ Summit gives us the opportunity to invite our comrades in struggle from North America who want to participate. Tijuana is a meeting place with the progressive forces of the South and the North at a moment when the working class is facing the most unprecedented challenges in the history of humanity.

The Workers Summit will provide an ideal opportunity to report on and discuss the effects of the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the U.S. on Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and now on a third of the world’s population who are being strangled by U.S. sanctions. The Workers Summit will bring together U.S. and Canadian leaders from the trade union movement, social justice organizations and peoples movements that oppose sanctions and any type of USA intervention.

Keynote speeches on Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua will include the Vice-President of the Working Class of the Socialist Party of Venezuela, Francisco Torrealba, and the Ambassadors of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba and Mexico.

1. Denounce the Summit of the Americas, as an instance that seeks to exploit the countries of the South with neoliberal measures that respond to the corporate interests of North America (USA and Canada).
2. Denounce the economic blockade policy against Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua.
3. Denounce the kidnapping of diplomat Alex Saab by the U.S. Treasury Department.
4. Denounce the shameful border wall between Mexico and the U.S., which constitutes an anti-immigrant and racist policy of the U.S. against the peoples of the South.
5. Denounce the necropolitics in which

- the U.S. government has embarked on the future of our planet.
6. Establish direct relationships with advanced political actors within Mexican, American and Canadian society, who are fighting for a new world where the environment, nature and human beings are the priority.
 7. Twinning with trade union organizations in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada.
 8. Police brutality in the U.S.
 9. Regional integration (CELAC vs. UNASUR).
 10. The struggle of the Indigenous peoples of our America.
 11. NATO an embarrassment in our continent. □

Initial Mexican participation:
The following are Mexican organizations that up to now endorse this activity: Movimiento Magisterial Popular Veracruzano, Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de Educación, Movimiento Social por la Tierra-MST, Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE) de Baja California, Sindicato Independiente Nacional Democrático de Jornaleros Agrícolas (SINDJA), Partido del Trabajo de México y el Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas.

Initial U.S. & Canadian grassroots organizations:
Alliance for Global Justice; Task Force on the Americas; International Action Center; Chicago ALBA Solidarity; All-African People’s Revolutionary Party; United National AntiWar Coalition; Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice; Frente Hugo Chávez para la Defensa de los Pueblos-Canada; International Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Committee to Stop FBI Repression; Samidoun NY/NJ; Sanctions Kill Coalition; Fuerza de la Revolución; 1199 SEIU, United Healthcare Workers East, 498 7th Avenue, New York, New York 10018. □



Cumbre de Trabajadores de las Américas

La reunión de la Cumbre de Trabajadores de las Américas, en Tijuana, ofrece un espacio para unirnos con todos los pueblos de “Nuestra América”. Contrarrestar la Cumbre de las Américas de la OEA organizada por el

Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos, en Los Ángeles. Los países del continente asediados por EE.UU. (Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba,) no participarán en la farsa de la OEA.

La Cumbre de los Trabajadores nos da la oportunidad de invitar a nuestros compañeros de lucha de América del Norte que quieran participar. Tijuana es un lugar de encuentro con las fuerzas progresistas del Sur y del Norte en un momento en que la clase trabajadora enfrenta los desafíos más inéditos en la historia de la humanidad.

La Cumbre de los Trabajadores es una oportunidad ideal para informar y discutir los efectos de las medidas coercitivas unilaterales impuestas por los EE.UU. a Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua y ahora a un tercio de la población mundial que está siendo estrangulada por las sanciones de los EE.UU. La Cumbre de los Trabajadores traerá a líderes estadounidenses y canadienses del movimiento sindical, organizaciones de justicia social y movimientos populares que se oponen a las sanciones y cualquier tipo de intervención estadounidense.

Los discursos principales sobre Venezuela, Cuba y Nicaragua incluirán al Vicepresidente de la

Clase Obrera del Partido Socialista de Venezuela, Francisco Torrealba y los Embajadores de Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba y México.

1. Denunciar la Cumbre de las Américas, como una instancia que busca explotar a los países del Sur con medidas neoliberales que responden a los intereses corporativos de América del Norte (EE.UU. y Canadá).
2. Denunciar la política de bloqueo económico contra Venezuela, Cuba y Nicaragua.
3. Denuncian el secuestro del diplomático Alex Saab por parte del Departamento del Tesoro de EE.UU.
4. Denunciar el vergonzoso muro fronterizo entre México y EE.UU., que constituye una política antiinmigrante y racista de EE.UU. contra los pueblos del Sur.
5. Denunciar la necropolítica en la que se ha embarcado el gobierno de Estados Unidos sobre el futuro de nuestro planeta.
6. Establecer relaciones directas con actores políticos avanzados de la sociedad mexicana, estadounidense y canadiense, que luchan por un mundo nuevo donde el medio ambiente, la naturaleza y el ser humano sean la prioridad.
7. Hermanamiento con organizaciones sindicales de México, Estados Unidos y Canadá.
8. Brutalidad policial en los Estados Unidos.
9. Integración regional (CELAC vs. UNASUR).
10. La lucha de los pueblos indígenas de nuestra América
11. La OTAN una vergüenza en nuestro continente. □

Capitalism on a Ventilator The impact of COVID-19 in China & the U.S.

An anthology contrasting the effective Chinese response to COVID-19 with the disastrous response here in the U.S. It pushes back against the racist anti-China campaign in the media.

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Filadelfia, el 7 de mayo.
¡Manos fuera de mi cuerpo!

WW/MO FOTO: JOE PIETTE

¡Abolir a la Corte Suprema! ¡Proteger a Roe v. Wade!

Por Joanna Straughn

La Corte Suprema de Estados Unidos tiene los votos necesarios para anular el caso Roe contra Wade, que marcó un hito en 1973 al legalizar el aborto en Estados Unidos. Así lo revela un borrador de la opinión del juez Samuel Alito que llegó a la prensa sin el permiso del Tribunal. La filtración, sin precedentes en la historia, fue un acto para alertar al público del ataque que planeaba el SCOTUS. (La Corte Suprema de EE. UU.) Según el borrador de la opinión, la anulación de Roe v. Wade está justificada y acabaría con las protecciones federales del derecho al aborto, permitiendo a los estados dictar las leyes sobre el aborto. Aunque la opinión mayoritaria se refiere a las leyes de los estados como reflejo de

“la voluntad del pueblo”, una encuesta de Gallup de mayo de 2021 muestra que el apoyo del público estadounidense al derecho al aborto en todos o en la mayoría de los casos es del 80%. Sin embargo, al menos 23 estados prohibirían el aborto inmediatamente si el Tribunal Supremo anula el caso Roe v. Wade. Otros restringirían aún más el aborto. Además, estados como Texas y Oklahoma han aprobado leyes que diputan a la población contra los solicitantes de abortos y los médicos ofreciendo recompensas de 10.000 dólares a quien identifique y demande a alguien que crean que está ayudando a una persona a abortar. Trece estados tienen “leyes de activación” que aplican automáticamente la prohibición del aborto.

Algunos estados se han comprometido a ser un “refugio” para las personas que necesitan un aborto, pero sus esfuerzos pueden resultar inútiles cuando otros estados anuncien leyes que prohíben cruzar las fronteras estatales para buscar un aborto. Una restricción que obliga y a la vez prohíbe cruzar las fronteras estatales para buscar un aborto intensifica las barreras y todas las opresiones asociadas a la criminalización. Muchos temen que un precedente como éste pueda anular otras sentencias progresistas de la Corte Suprema, sin que se pueda ver el fin de la derogación de derechos y la criminalización de la población. La intensidad de la indignación ante la perspectiva de perder la última pizca de protección de los derechos reproductivos ha encendido un movimiento de protesta

que se extiende. El 3 de mayo estallaron manifestaciones espontáneas en ciudades de todo Estados Unidos, organizadas por muchos grupos. Una mayoría cada vez más amplia de jóvenes, cuyas vidas se ven más afectadas por estas leyes, ven este ataque como otro punto de ruptura en toda una serie de puntos de ruptura: la eliminación de los sindicatos, el enjaulamiento de los migrantes, los ataques a los jóvenes trans, la brutalidad policial racista y más. La perspectiva de que se anule el caso Roe v. Wade está dando lugar a llamamientos para que se ponga fin a la propia Corte Suprema de Estados Unidos, un órgano no elegido y nombrado de por vida, creado para servir a los intereses de la clase dominante. ¡Abolir a la Corte Suprema, no los derechos reproductivos! □

Corte Suprema dictamina exclusión de puertorriqueños del SSI

Por Richie Merino

El Tribunal Supremo de EE.UU. ha confirmado una ley federal que niega los beneficios por discapacidad a los ciudadanos estadounidenses que viven en Puerto Rico. En un fallo de 8 a 1 del 21 de abril, el tribunal estuvo de acuerdo con el argumento de la administración Biden de que el gobierno federal tiene derecho a excluir a los residentes de Puerto Rico del Ingreso de Seguridad Suplementario (SSI), un pago mensual en efectivo para personas mayores, ciegas o discapacitadas de bajos ingresos. La ley que estableció el SSI, aprobada en 1972, concedía la elegibilidad sólo a los residentes de los 50 estados y el Distrito de Columbia y excluía a Puerto Rico. La decisión del Tribunal Supremo revocó las sentencias de los tribunales inferiores que se pusieron del lado de José Luis Vaello-Madero, un ciudadano estadounidense

nacido en Puerto Rico, que empezó a cobrar las prestaciones del SSI mientras vivía en Nueva York, después de que desarrollara problemas de salud debilitantes. Sus beneficios fueron cortados, después de que el gobierno descubriera que se había mudado de nuevo a Puerto Rico, y los EE.UU. demandaron para recuperar aproximadamente \$28.000 dólares en beneficios de SSI que recibió mientras vivía allí. El fallo racista y discriminatorio del Tribunal Supremo contra los puertorriqueños se produjo justo una semana antes de que el gobierno de Biden anunciara un paquete de ayuda de \$33.000 millones a Ucrania, que incluye pensiones y otros pagos de ayuda social a los ciudadanos ucranianos.



Acabar con el colonialismo en Puerto Rico.

Si el tribunal hubiera fallado a favor de Vaello-Madero, más de 300.000 residentes de Puerto Rico serían elegibles, con un coste estimado de \$2.000 millones anuales para el gobierno estadounidense. A pesar de ser ciudadanos estadounidenses y de pagar impuestos en Estados Unidos, el pueblo de Puerto Rico nunca ha recibido los mismos derechos que los ciudadanos estadounidenses que viven en el continente, y ha sufrido bajo el yugo colonial impuesto por Estados Unidos desde su invasión en 1898. La sentencia del Tribunal Supremo llega en un momento de aumento de la inflación en Puerto Rico, en el que los medicamentos se hacen inasequibles para las personas mayores y los discapacitados.

Algunas ciudades y pueblos, como Vieques, todavía carecen de un hospital local después de que el huracán María destruyera la infraestructura vital en 2017. El pueblo de Puerto Rico tiene derecho a la soberanía y a la autodeterminación. Solo con la independencia total del dominio colonial de Estados Unidos, incluida la liberación de las trampas de la deuda y los planes de privatización, el pueblo de Puerto Rico puede avanzar hacia una sociedad con un sistema más justo que trate a todas las personas como iguales. El movimiento para liberar a Puerto Rico del imperialismo estadounidense necesita urgentemente la solidaridad internacional. Abolir el Tribunal Supremo racista de EE. ¡Estados Unidos fuera de Puerto Rico! ¡Cancen la deuda! ¡Liberar a Puerto Rico ahora con reparaciones! □

MUNDO OBRERO editorial

¿Se está estancando la ‘recuperación’?

Pocas lágrimas se derramaron cuando la odiada Amazon anunció el 28 de abril que perdió \$3.800 millones de dólares en el primer trimestre del 2022. Esta fue la primera pérdida que reportó desde 2015 y se compara con la enorme cifra de \$8.100 millones de dólares de beneficios en el primer trimestre de 2021. La noticia provocó una respuesta en Wall Street, ya que las acciones de Amazon cayeron un 10%. Hay otros indicios de que la llamada recuperación económica se tambalea, como el inesperado informe de que el producto interior bruto cayó un 1,4% en los tres primeros meses del 2022, tras un sólido crecimiento del 5,7% en 2021. Los economistas admiten que el crecimiento del segundo semestre se debió menos al gasto de los consumidores que a la necesidad de reponer los inventarios agotados. Los enormes proyectos de ley de estímulo COVID-19 de Washington dieron un impulso al gasto de los consumidores, pero ¿por cuánto tiempo? Esos fondos se están agotando. La contradicción es que, con una inflación del 8%, el Banco de la Reserva Federal está subiendo los tipos de interés

para frenar aún más la economía y, con suerte, tener los precios bajo control. Todas las fluctuaciones económicas señalan la inestabilidad inherente al capitalismo. ¿Qué está en juego para los trabajadores? La clase obrera no tiene por qué compartir el regocijo de los explotadores cuando sube la toma de ganancias. No se filtra hacia abajo. Pero estas tendencias importan a los trabajadores, porque una recesión significa una pérdida de puestos de trabajo. Entonces los trabajadores se vuelven más dependientes de mantener los empleos que tienen. La “Gran Resignación” y la supuesta escasez de mano de obra podrían estar terminando. Si eso sucede, podría ser más difícil para los trabajadores hacer valer sus demandas de salarios que se mantengan al día con la inflación. Normalmente, una empresa como Amazon -o incluso una empresa sindicalizada como General Motors- aprovechará cualquier noticia económica negativa para justificar un ataque a los trabajadores. Los recortes salariales (incluida la eliminación de la “paga a los héroes”), los recortes de beneficios, la reducción del tiempo libre remunerado, los aumentos de velocidad, la

subcontratación y la reducción de personal son todos trucos sucios de los capitalistas. Luego, cuando se recupera la rentabilidad, los trabajadores tienen que luchar para recuperar lo que han cedido. Cuando los trabajadores de Amazon en Staten Island intenten negociar un buen primer contrato, es probable que la empresa empiece diciendo: “Bueno, ya sabes, hemos perdido mucho dinero en el primer trimestre”. Los economistas de los think tanks tropiezan Los economistas capitalistas no pueden explicar las contradicciones intrínsecas del sistema que defienden. Por ejemplo, Ian Shepherdson, economista jefe de Pantheon Macroeconomics, escribió: “Esto es ruido, no señal. La economía no está cayendo en recesión”. (cnbc.com) Este tipo de optimismo precede a toda recesión y puede volver a escucharse antes de que una recesión se convierta en una depresión. Pero a medida que los antagonismos de clase se agudizan, la conciencia de clase aumenta y nuestra clase puede oler el hedor de la decadencia capitalista: itodo el sistema está podrido hasta la médula! Esa es la verdad de clase que los

Karl Marx, nacido el 5 de mayo de 1818, explicó las contradicciones intrínsecas del capitalismo y por qué la clase obrera tenía que librarse de ese sistema de explotación.



economistas burgueses están pagados para oscurecer. Porque cuando los trabajadores toman conciencia, comienzan a organizarse, y los sindicatos son la expresión más elemental de la conciencia de clase. Los trabajadores de Amazon y Starbucks -cuyos beneficios han caído por debajo de las expectativas recientemente- están liderando el camino. Afortunadamente, en el siglo XIX, hubo un verdadero economista cuyas teorías científicas siguen siendo las que mejor explican la contradicción irreconciliable entre el trabajo y el capital. Señaló que el beneficio es la “plusvalía” que la clase trabajadora crea para la clase propietaria. Una parte de la jornada laboral se dedica a trabajar por un salario, mientras que la otra parte se dedica a generar riqueza. El cumpleaños de este economista es el 5 de mayo de 1818. ¡Saludo rojo a Karl Marx! □