

PRIDE means FIGHT BACK!

This is a statement from the LGBTQ+ Caucus of Workers World Party to Pride Parades, Dyke Marches and Trans Liberation Actions all over the country!

An injury to one is an injury to all. We must unite and fight back together against all attacks!

The brutal violence of class war is something waged against us daily by the ruling class. When a mother cannot or choses not to have a child is forced to give birth, a gay man is evicted and denied access to homeless shelters because of his sexuality, and a Black child is prohibited from learning their own history in the classroom, extending a legacy of genocide, we are witnessing class warfare. The question is how and when we'll start fighting back together as the working class.

Reactionaries, racists and neofascists across the U.S. are launching vicious attacks on the most vulnerable people. Hundreds of shocking anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced this year. Teachers are threatened with enormous financial penalties for acknowledging the existence of LGBTQ+ people, while parents of transgender youth face child abuse charges for providing them with necessary health care.

Meanwhile, a critical blow is being struck against reproductive rights as Roe v. Wade could soon be overturned. Federal judges have given their approval to deadly laws criminalizing abortion,



New York City, June 28, 2017. More Pride coverage p. 7, 8.

WW PHOTO: NEW YORK CITY BUREAU

birth control and even miscarriages. And at the same time, voting rights for the Black community, won after decades of struggle, are being gutted by bigoted state legislatures.

The battle for LGBTQ+ rights, the fight against racism and the campaign for reproductive rights are not separate. They are overlapping fronts in one struggle between the working class and the capitalist class.

Democrats, despite having almost 50 years to codify Roe v. Wade into federal law, failed to do so. Why? Because they, like the GOP, are beholden to capitalists. Their failure to act is not a matter of incidental corruption; it's a fundamental

mechanism within capitalism. Those with wealth control the economy and, with it, institutional political power. It's a monstrous cycle, and it's why so many policies that are wildly popular with voters stand no chance of passing in Congress.

This is how patriarchy and white supremacy continue to flourish. We are led to believe that capitalism is a fair system where hard work translates to success, but this is untrue. Capitalism is a system of oppression.

Because oppressions compound with one another, when reproductive autonomy is stripped away, Black, Latinx and Indigenous people, LGBTQ+ and disabled people suffer at the highest rates.

This is why we must not think of ourselves as unrelated elements of society, but as a single class whose problems grow from the same root. If we continue to tackle issues one by one, we'll only be cutting branches from this great, poisonous tree. We must topple it completely.

The LGBTQ+ Caucus of Workers World Party DENOUNCES the murderous attacks on our bodies — the racist attacks on people of color like the vile massacre in Buffalo, New York, the attacks on women and other people who can bear children by denying vital health care, the attacks on LGBTQ+ people with legal weapons that endanger our bodies and minds. We DENOUNCE all attacks on reproductive, voting and queer rights.

But the ballot box alone cannot and will not save us. Rights are not given, they are seized and defended!

We take inspiration from the heroic worker organizing that won unparalleled victories against mammoth Amazon and Starbucks corporations. A solidarity of multinational, multigender, queer, young and older workers are asserting "We are the union," and they are winning.

Now is the time for militancy, for sharpening our battle axes and FORCING the ruling class to acquiesce to human dignity and working-class power!

We remember Stonewall and the Compton Cafeteria rebellions. Take to the streets. We refuse to allow them to push us back into the closet with the clothes hangers. □



Anti-racists topple Confederate statue, Durham, N.C., Aug. 14, 2017.

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TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

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

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

WW consistently backed up our activist coverage with analysis. In the early 1970s, WW ran a series of articles that led to publication of “The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal” in 1976. Then in 1993, WW republished it as “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View,” with the first book’s original text and a new preface and afterword. (These and works below are available at workers.org/books.)

In 2004, WW managing editor and globally recognized transgender leader Leslie Feinberg began the “Lavender & Red” series, which ran until 2008 in WW. A group of 25 articles from that series was later published as the book, “Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba.” Notify us if you want a free paper copy.

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

In 2022 WW extensively covered resistance to the current storm of right-wing “Don’t Say Gay” and anti-trans, anti-youth laws sweeping the U.S. WW articles built resolve in the struggle for reproductive justice, pledging “We won’t go back,” and documented opposition to racist laws limiting the right to vote and the right to teach a people’s history of resistance to oppression.

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

Your help is needed!

If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program or renew your



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

WW PHOTO

membership. The program was established 45 years ago so readers could help WW publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to fight for revolutionary change leading to socialism.

Since the early 1990s, the fund has helped sponsor the workers.org website. Throughout the pandemic when fewer print issues have been published due to staff health concerns, new articles have been posted daily, and the PDF of the weekly newspaper has been displayed at workers.org. Not one online issue has been skipped throughout this over two-year health crisis.

For a donation of \$60 a year, or \$120 or \$300, you receive a subscription to WW newspaper and one, two or three free subscriptions for friends, depending on donation. A free download of the “What Road to Socialism?” book, published in 2020, is available at workers.org/books. Or notify us if you want a paperback book.

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

We are grateful for your help in building Workers World!

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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From racist attacks to abortion bans

Fight fascist terror

By Monica Moorehead

Social developments — political and economic — are interconnected. They reflect the same rotten, inhumane system of U.S. capitalism.

The horrific attacks on Black, Brown, Asian and Jewish people, trans youth, women and the gender-oppressed — from the massacres in the Tops market in the Black community in Buffalo, New York, May 14; at the Taiwanese church in Las Vegas, Nevada, May 15; at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, in 2019; at a Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018, to the SCOTUS and right-wing attacks on abortion — do not occur within a political vacuum. They are tied to the current and long-term global economic crisis.

Marxists refer to repressive apparatus like the police, courts, prisons, or extralegal forces that promote and uphold class antagonisms and divisions, as the superstructure. The inner operation of the capitalist economy, be it a boom or a bust cycle, is the structure upon which policies are carried out to keep the majority working class powerless.

Sam Marcy, the late chairperson of Workers World Party, wrote an article June 8, 1995, entitled “Notes on the present economic and political period.” It serves as a guide on how revolutionaries should analyze any phenomena. Here is an excerpt:

“What is the nature of the present period? It can’t be analyzed on the basis of the current political situation. That is altogether inadequate. We have to look at the broader world economic situation in order to not only understand this period but be able to put into effect an appropriate political program.

“There is always a great temptation for Marxists to paint the current situation in terms of imminent economic or political collapse. But that is a poor guide for a mature political party, whose members seriously regard the party’s prognosis as a guide to action. The party’s political conclusions are derived from its economic analysis. This takes priority in considering not only broad political initiatives but more immediate, local ones.” (tinyurl.com/2p8w7asx)

White supremacy and youth alienation

Similar to the senseless 2015 killings of nine Black parishioners in Charleston, South Carolina, by white supremacist Dylann Roof, the massacre in Buffalo was not spontaneous but was well-planned for weeks and months, by another teenage white supremacist, Payton Gendron. He was influenced by the “great replacement theory,” a vile racist doctrine promoted during the 1930s by the Democratic Mississippi Senator Theodore Bilbo, who preached violence against interracial relations between Protestant whites and people of color, Jewish people, Italians, etc.

It should be taken note that heavily armed racists like Roof, Gendron and Kyle Rittenhouse, who killed two anti-racist white activists in Wisconsin in 2020, were peacefully brought into custody by the police; they were not fatally shot by police as Black and Brown people are in disproportionate numbers. These examples show how legal and extralegal forces work hand-in-hand.

Individual acts of domestic terrorism reflect the alienation of mainly white youth, whether racially motivated or not, who, consciously or unconsciously, see no future under capitalism. These youth can become more susceptible to a white-supremacist or fascistic ideology of violently and randomly targeting others for their woes, and not the capitalists. Instead of targeting the system that has poisoned them, they blame those they should be allied with.

The Occupy Movement in 2011, which sought to unite the majority of people against the richest 1%, was a direct, although short-lived, effort to address this alienation.

In response to a Ku Klux Klan march in Washington, D.C., in November 1982, Marcy wrote in his book, “The Klan and the Government,” on the root cause of this alienation, saying, “It is the symptomatic importance of the rise of the KKK and neo-Nazis, which is of greatest moment in apprehending the direction that events are surely taking. The Nazi-KKK menace in the U.S. is a symptom of a profoundly significant disease which has become congenital to the entire social system of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

“If the growth of the KKK and the Nazis were an isolated phenomenon divorced from the degenerative effects of monopoly capitalism, if these groups had no ties to and were not supported, encouraged and promoted by formidable sections of the ruling class, they would be merely



Protest against white-supremacist march in Charlottesville, Virginia, August 2017.

WW PHOTO

a sterile and stagnant combination of racist thugs, even though they are oriented to prey upon growing unemployment, economic dislocation, skyrocketing prices and the cost of living. But that is not at all the case.

“The growth of fascism everywhere has been securely tied to big business; that is its lifeline. A case might be made for the liberal apologists’ view under the following conditions: if there were a prolonged softening of the class struggle rather than its growing acuteness on a world scale; if a swift and protracted economic recovery on a truly high level of production were in the wind; if an easing instead of an aggravation of international tensions were to come; if a sharp drop rather than a tremendous hike in swollen defense expenditures were really to take place in the immediate period ahead. Such conditional ‘ifs,’ however, are wholly unwarranted by the very grim realities of the present situation as it continues to develop.” (workers.org/marcy/klan)

These words written 40 years ago are more profound today than ever before, regarding this unprecedented social crisis.

Racism and attacks on abortion

Ironically, the massacre of 10 Black people at Tops happened the same day an estimated 1 million people took to the streets around the U.S. May 14 to defend abortion rights. Coincidence or not, these two events are bound together by the same oppressive system.

White supremacy, along with the oppression of women

and gender-nonconforming people, is the underlying driving force behind the current wave of anti-abortion bills, which disproportionately target poor women of color.

The leak of the SCOTUS draft ruling calling for overturning the right to access to abortion on a federal level will bring back states’ rights, reminiscent of the days of the pro-enslavement Confederacy. Almost half the extreme misogynist, ultra-right wing-led state legislatures are criminalizing abortion to one degree or another. These are the same politicians who don’t give a damn about raising healthy children, as the baby formula crisis exposes.

The Democratic Party is attempting to co-opt protests expressing outrage over the assault on women and others who can become pregnant into votes for the midterm elections and away from class struggle. The repressive state is being put on notice for any “violent” protests, once SCOTUS makes its final ruling on abortion sometime this summer.

White supremacy doesn’t just target people of color but women, gender-oppressed people, LGBTQ2S+ people, Jewish people, Muslims, im/migrants and others. White supremacy, while influencing every capitalist institution, is in every way anti-working class.

This relationship illustrates an important connection between all the struggles. White supremacy serves to keep the entire working class down by using divide-and-conquer ideology, like racism and patriarchy, to scapegoat the most oppressed in order to safeguard the fragile, out-of-control capitalist system.

When one section of our class is under siege by the ruling class and its repressive state, whether it’s Black and Brown lives in Buffalo, Charleston or El Paso, whether it is the right to abortion, defending

trans youth in Florida, or the right to organize and not be retaliated against with firings of young workers at Starbucks and Amazon, the lack of a classwide response weakens the entire class. Every struggle, large and small, domestic or global, needs a classwide fight-back response.

Biden going to Buffalo to proclaim that white supremacy is a “poison” pays lip service to the crisis but offers no solution. Only a united fight for socialism can and will eventually overturn all class relations based on white supremacy to liberate our class, especially youth, from racism and all forms of capitalist exploitation. □

Syracuse, N.Y. Black community speaks out against Buffalo massacre

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Syracuse, New York

Dozens of people gathered at the Tops grocery store on Pond Street in Syracuse for a May 15 vigil honoring those who died in the May 14 white-supremacist attack in Buffalo. The 10 Black people who died were shopping or working at the Tops supermarket in the Eastside Black community there.



Organizer Haz Bloodworth speaks at a May 15 vigil in Syracuse, New York, for those killed in the white-supremacist attack on the Black community in Buffalo.

The killer, who was from a small community near Binghamton — about an hour south of Syracuse — left records showing he considered targeting Black neighborhoods in Syracuse, among other locations, before choosing Buffalo. Such neighborhoods include the Pond Street area and the Southside of Syracuse, where residents were interviewed on their response to the murders. (syracuse.com, May 20)

Interviewed by the Syracuse Post-Standard while shopping at the Southside Price Rite supermarket, Black residents — who had family, friendship and community connections with some of those killed — expressed shock but not surprise at the racist massacre. Cherelle Wynn emphasized: “People are still raised to hate. He had to learn it.” Maria Cooper added: “They’ll plead insanity. That boy knew what the f*** he was doing.” (syracuse.com, May 20)

The head of the Syracuse National Action Network chapter, Rev. H. Bernard Alex, said he personally knew two of those killed through his church work. The local chapter of NAN is sponsoring a march May 25 in Syracuse. Planned to mark the two-year anniversary of the killing of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis, the march was expanded to commemorate victims of the Buffalo massacre. □

WW speaks with fired Starbucks workers Part 3

Legacy of May Day: Making sacrifices

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 three of a three part series. Go to workers.org/2022/05/63983/ to read the entire interview.

WW: The two of you all flew here from Memphis to New York City to be here for May Day, International Workers Day. The eight-hour day was won because of that particular struggle through so much sacrifice, similar to the sacrifice that you all are making right now. Why is it important for you all to be here on May Day 2022?

Beto Sanchez: It takes movements like this that you get to see parts of history right in front of yourself. It's honestly like picking up where they left off. Every day that I was in Memphis, we lived so close to the Civil Rights Museum. There's so much rich history there about the many people that had to give their lives for sacrifices, for people that they will never meet in the future. Some of the biggest criticisms and questions I receive is why are you doing this for a part-time job? Why don't you just get a better job? Why don't you get an education? Why don't you do this?

It comes down to a level of selflessness. One needs to have to be able to maintain a fight like this, because I could have gotten a different job at any time. I do have an education. I have a degree. I have many things that I could have ignored and just left it like that. But like Howard Schultz, there's a lot of people out there who are selfish with the money that they have, with what they do. They don't want it to be easier for other people because it was hard for them. Or sometimes like billionaires, it was always easy for them, and they don't care about workers.

I care too much for workers. I care very, very strongly about workers, because when it comes to the point that I have to see the people that I am calling my family being mistreated by billionaires, being mistreated by corporations, not given the dignity and respect that they need as a worker, it makes my blood boil just a little bit. It makes me fight harder and harder every day to be able to make sure that everyone is able to live without having to worry about having food on the table, about being able to live in peace and knowing that they are respected as workers.

It's about having people with a common cause, being able to have something to fight against. It's a lot of times in history that unfortunately, there's a lot of people that put down their lives for things like this. But at the same time, when you give people something to fight for, they will go the full mile for it.

Being able to be here at Union Square, being able to have the Memphis Seven here in New York, it's honestly a wonderful thing to be able to inspire people, because even though we were fired for wanting to make the world a better place, even though we want things to be better for workers, it goes to show that no matter how much Starbucks wanted to make martyrs of us and scare people by firing us, instead we were able to stoke the fires of workers everywhere.

We had so many stores immediately filing for unionization a week after we were fired and talking about sharing our story. And that's the biggest fight that we can be a part of as workers, by fighting with information, letting them know that no matter how much corporations like Starbucks want to scare you, want to say that you're going to lose benefits. You can lose this. You know that it's not true. You have workers everywhere here, no matter how much they want to call us a "third party."

The union is the workers; I am a partner. I was a former partner of Starbucks. And thankfully, I'm going to be reinstated and so will the Memphis Seven and hopefully so will the rest of the workers that were wrongfully terminated, because unfortunately, there are a lot of people out there like us who were fired from their jobs for unionizing. They're not getting the same attention that we are. And this is for those workers everywhere. And I'm hoping that we



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Left to right: Beto Sanchez and LaKota McGlawn speak at May Day rally in New York City, May 1, 2022.

"It takes movements like this that you get to see parts of history right in front of yourself. It's honestly like picking up where they left off. Every day that I was in Memphis, we lived so close to the Civil Rights Museum. There's so much rich history there about the many people that had to give their lives for sacrifices, for people that they will never meet in the future." —Beto Sanchez

could at least be a source of inspiration for them.

WW: Well, you certainly are. The Memphis Seven are the perfect example of an injury to one is an injury to all.

LaKota McGlawn: I really feel like Beto. We were lucky to have our case rushed by the NLRB. A lot of other workers who go to court for the same situation can wait up to about 10 months for them to get their job back. We still want to show support for those workers and even show that billionaires can't keep getting away with this union busting and the exploitation of their workers who they treat as disposable. I really just want to show that the working class is not disposable. And you can't replace us all with robots.

WW: Cool. That's great. Do you want to say anything more on the kind of support you all have been getting around the country and to build on this support forward?

LM: We've had a tremendous amount of support from our community and from other unions as well. We've had other union leaders offer to give us a space if we need a place to make posters or to congregate and have meetings. Even my mom asked me to give her pens and shirts for her co-workers, because she's also a member of a union. She was also wrongfully terminated, and she was with her union and her union reps, who are still her co-workers. She was able to get her job back.

But seeing the support from other people, who walk by us and even just like see our shirt and say like, hey, I support the fight. It really makes me emotional.

'There's a power in numbers'

BS: The community has been an important part of keeping us going. Being able to fight a Fortune 100 company like this, it does take a lot out of you. There's been times where I find myself exhausted, seeing how sometimes it seems like an uphill battle, but at the same time keeping track with all these stores that are unionized, being able to meet these leaders everywhere, being able to talk to these workers one-on-one, it rejuvenates me.

And as well as being able to see the tremendous amount of support that the community has been able to show us, even when I was still working at Starbucks and part of the organizing committee, the first time that we had announced the organizing, there were so many customers that would show us support. They would write notes for us. They would tell us to put their order in for Union Strong. They would show their support through the drive-through.

There are so many media that at this point it's important to be able to take a moment to just think about everything that has been going on and to be able to properly show my gratitude for people everywhere who are

understanding this. Because what we're going through is unfortunately something that's not new. It's happening to workers everywhere, in many trades, many disciplines, many industries.

I've always said that the coffee industry has always been a great place for unionization, because what's happening to us is unfortunately happening to the coffee farmers. It's happening to the supply-chain workers. It's happening to the manufacturers. So the warehouse is where all of us have been underneath the same scrutiny from the same managers, from the same corporations.

And it's something that I was able to relate with every single time I met another union leader from a different union or different trade. The moment that we had the AFL-CIO or UFCW [United Food and Commercial Workers] or any of the food-workers union people seeing what was happening to us, they said what's happening to union leaders back in the '60s, back in the '80s — that is happening now. It's unfortunately an old story, the story of workers being exploited for profit. But thankfully, the community has been able to help me see that there's a power in numbers.

There's always going to be more of us than there will be of them. There is a great power whenever workers unite, because we are able to move mountains, whenever we find we have something that we need to fight for. And in terms of direct support you're always able to send a message to any of us on social media. We're everywhere.

And I'm sure there's going to be a lot of support for a lot of the union leaders out there everywhere, because these are just kids. A lot of times there's so much going in their head that sometimes makes them want to just fall down and cry. But being able to just say a word, just say something or show any type of support, it means the world to us. And I'm glad to be able to keep doing this for workers everywhere.

But there's definitely many out there, for several workers that have been fired. There's a GoFundMe for us, for the workers in Seattle, for Layla, for Lisa, for Cassie, for many of the workers out there that I had the pleasure to meet. And thankfully, it'll be going to people that are out there to help workers.

WW: This is a global struggle too. Starbucks is exploiting workers all over the world just like Amazon is.

BS: And Amazon was a big one too, and I'm very eager to be able to ever meet Chris Smalls. I definitely want to point out how significant something like that is, because Jeff Bezos, unfortunately, is a heavy fighter in exploitation. Being able to have a victory like that over a company like Amazon, if that doesn't give you hope, I'm not sure what would. Yeah. □

On the picket line

WHEN WE FIGHT WE WIN!

By Marie Kelly

Game developers vote union despite union-busting tactics

The Raven Software quality assurance testers have organized under the Game Workers Alliance union in association with the Communications Workers (CWA). The National Labor Relations Board reported May 23 that a majority voted to join the union.

Raven Software of Madison, Wisconsin, is a subsidiary of Activision Blizzard, a video game holding company based in Santa Monica, California. The parent company declined to voluntarily recognize the union in January; but instead they engaged in various union-busting techniques that are becoming all too familiar. First they fired several quality assurance testers and brought in new hires. Next, they integrated the Quality Assurance team throughout the company's departments, in an attempt to undermine solidarity among employees attempting to organize.

The NLRB shot down another union-busting attempt, when the company tried to dilute the pro-union pool by having all 230 Raven employees vote. The Board recognized that the quality assurance testers constituted an

appropriate, separate bargaining unit. The same day the election results came out the NLRB ruled that Activision's social media policy illegally intimidated workers.

In January, Microsoft's announcement that it was buying Activision caused the latter company's stock to jump 40%.

Hawai'i mental health providers strike over critical worker shortage

The pandemic has increased the burden for mental health services everywhere, even in the "island paradise" of Hawai'i. The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Hawai'i released a statement calling for support of mental health care providers, due to the great stress put on them because of workforce shortages.

The psychologists and other mental health workers at Kaiser Permanente are frustrated by the company's disregard for the well-being of the workers and their patients. Contract negotiations have dragged on for four years. One patient, Carlos from Maui, reported waiting four months for an appointment with a mental health provider, even though he was in crisis.

The mental health workers at Kaiser Hawaii took action May 18 by calling a three-day strike to demand the company increase staff numbers and retention incentives. The 47 full-time mental health care providers are members of the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW). "None of us wanted to do this," said Kaiser Maui Lani Primary Care Clinic psychologist Rachel Kaya. "We've really tried everything we could do first and found that management is not interested in offering us an incentive to not strike." (tinyurl.com/2p957tzm)



Kaiser mental health workers in Hawai'i hold three-day strike, May 18-21.

Disabled janitors win NLRB ruling

Janitors at an acute care facility of Sinai Hospital in Baltimore prevailed in their drive to join Service Employees International Union (SEIU) United Healthcare Workers East, despite attempts by the hospital to deny they are employees. The janitors hired through the Vocational Service Program (VSP) have disabilities, and Sinai Baltimore attempted to characterize them as rehabilitative associates rather than employees. This classification allows companies to pay disabled workers less than the minimum wage.

However, the NLRB ruled against Sinai Baltimore and determined the VSP janitors are lawful employees and eligible for collective bargaining rights through union representation. The VSP janitors do the same work and are subject to the same employee policies as janitors hired by the hospital directly. □

After years of struggle

Women's soccer team players win equal pay

By Otis Grotewohl

A landmark moment for gender equality was made when the U.S. Women's National Team Players Association and the U.S. National Soccer Team Players Association ratified two historic collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) May 18 with the U.S. Soccer Federation that will ensure pay equity. This victory was won by a decades-long struggle for equal pay by the women players.

These CBA ratifications are a huge victory for the working class as a whole, particularly for women and gender-nonconforming and nonbinary people. Both contracts go into effect June 1 and continue until 2028. The language on benefits is identical in both contracts.

According to a statement from the National Soccer Team Players Association, released on their website the day of the agreements, "The two CBAs ... achieve equal pay through identical economic



U.S. Women's National Team members, fighters for equal pay, at 2020 Olympics.

terms." The announcement also states that "the new CBAs improve noneconomic terms, including player health and safety."

The ratified CBAs feature strong language that make them a first of their kind. Under the new contracts, "U.S. Soccer will pay members of both unions a share of the revenue from tickets sold at U.S. Soccer-controlled home matches and a bonus amount for those games that are sellouts." There is now equivalent language on child

care and parental leave, as well as improvements on retirement. Staffing and workplace security are also addressed.

Unity and solidarity key to win

One reason the groundbreaking CBAs were reached between the unions and the Soccer Federation bosses was the solid unity and solidarity between members of the women's team players association and the men's team players association. As Becca Roux, executive director of the Women's National Team Players Association publicly stated, "We don't get here without collective action," in reference to the recent achievements. (Forbes, May 19)

The new CBAs were attained at a time when workers and oppressed people, especially youth, are challenging the profit-driven capitalist system. They are fighting back as the profiteers are trying to raise prices on commodities, while squeezing every bit of labor power out of workers

without providing additional compensation. Amazon and Starbucks employees, among other low-wage earners, are collectively organizing and winning.

The contracts were negotiated at a time when the far right is viciously trying to attack trans people who participate in professional sports and to divide athletes in all competitions. Unity among soccer players of all nationalities and genders was key in making history.

It is still common in most, if not all, industries in the U.S. for cisgender men to make higher salaries than women and gender-oppressed people. Workers and oppressed people are realizing from their own experiences that when they collectively fight for better working conditions and pay, they have a much better chance at winning.

Solidarity and raised class consciousness can give our class the ability to smash the sexist and transphobic glass ceiling, one roof at a time! □

Protests as U.S. tries to drag Finland, Sweden into NATO

By John Catalinotto

May 22 — Under heavy pressure from U.S. imperialism to aid its anti-Russian offensive as part of the Ukraine war, the governments of Sweden and Finland applied to join the NATO military alliance. President Joe Biden is attempting to rush through acceptance of their membership as part of the hybrid war against Russia.

This rush is further evidence of the belligerent aims of U.S. imperialism in this period and its willingness to use the Ukrainian people as a battering ram — and as cannon fodder — in the anti-Russian offensive. Such an expansion would place 10 enemies surrounding Russia's access to the Baltic Sea.

Only the refusal of the Turkish government to accept the two countries is postponing what might have been a lightning-quick expansion of NATO. The Erdogan regime's response is based

mainly on the non-hostility of Sweden and Finland to Kurdish migrants and their organizations, whom the Turkish rulers consider "terrorist."

In a report to Workers World, Mike Powers — a U.S. war resister from the 1960s who emigrated to Sweden — wrote that in 20-odd cities and towns throughout Sweden, protesters joined rallies and marches over the May 21-22 weekend to oppose the government's decision to apply for membership in NATO. He wrote that the formal decision to abandon the more than 200-year official policy of neutrality came in the midst of a frenzy of fear whipped up by propaganda about the armed conflict in Ukraine and a threat to the security of Europe.

Speakers at the Stockholm protest included Thomas Hammarberg, a former socialist MP and European Council Commissioner for Human Rights; Kajsa Ekis Eknman, a well-known writer and



Banner at demonstration in Stockholm, May 21, reads, 'We don't need NATO for peace! NATO needs us for war!'

journalist; as well as representatives from the NO to NATO group, Folket I Bild (People in Pictures); Women for Peace; and the Revolutionary Communist Youth (RKU).

According to Powers, the Swedish government is trying to avoid a referendum on joining NATO. Despite the overwhelming government and media propaganda against Russia and for militarism, polls have shown that a majority of the people

either opposes Sweden joining NATO or has grave doubts about that choice.

In Finland too, there was a demonstration against NATO membership in the past week, writes Tommi Lievemaa of the Communist League. But in the parliament, the decision to apply for NATO membership was passed by 188 to 8 votes. The leftist parties in the government, the Social Democratic Party and the Left Alliance, both accepted NATO membership. Only a handful of representatives of the Left Alliance opposed it.

Lievemaa writes that anti-Russian propaganda has been strong in Finland for years, but after the Ukraine war it reached a whole new level with the government's aim of persuading the Finnish people to accept NATO membership. It is beyond ridiculous that Russian cats were barred from attending a cat show in Helsinki and Russian violinists were barred from the Sibelius violin competition. □

The working class and the global capitalist crisis

By Larry Holmes

The following excerpts are from remarks by Larry Holmes, Workers World Party First Secretary, at a May 19 New York City branch meeting.

Most bourgeois economists are now predicting a recession, which is a sharp downturn in the economy. A recession used to be considered cyclical, but this has changed, just as the nature of the capitalist crisis has changed. Because capitalism has heard its death knell and is in a permanent crisis.

There is no scientific definition of the term “recession.” It just means something bad is going to happen during the downturn: unemployment, austerity, small and mid-size and large businesses going out of business, etc., etc. Or maybe even something worse, something far worse. I’m sure that some of you have seen the wild financial market swings lately.

The U.S. capitalist government is in maybe the biggest bind that it’s been in for quite some time. They have determined that the only way they can help capitalism, the only way they can restore profit margins, is to raise interest rates.

This raises a discussion of the falling rate of profits, and I saw some comrades reading what Comrade Sam Marcy wrote about that 40 years ago. This is something good to read at this time: “The Changing Character of the Working Class,” Chapter 4 in “High Tech, Low Pay.” (marxists.org/history/etol/writers/marcy/hightech/chap4.html)

Raising interest rates is something the capitalists have feared doing since the 2008 global financial crisis. Because they were worried that the underpinnings of the capitalist economy on a global basis were so weak that if rates were raised, that might precipitate something worse than a “recession.”

So instead, in order to save capitalism, they’ve been pumping trillions and trillions of dollars into the economy, particularly into the financial markets. And even more so during the pandemic, to keep the capitalist economy afloat.

WW COMMENTARY

In the wake of a deepening capitalist crisis on a global level, it’s important to understand what Marx and all the great Marxist theoreticians have taught us. And that is that the fight of workers for better conditions in their particular location is essential to them coming together as a class as a whole.

This has created enormous “bubbles” — when the price for something, a stock, a financial asset, etc., exceeds its fundamental value by a large margin — leading to incredible debt. And when that debt starts to come, a lot of it’s hidden, but it’s still in the trillions of dollars. The capitalists don’t know; they’re not even sure, can’t even imagine, what the ramifications are for the economy.

‘Stagflation’

You’re hearing the word “stagflation” a lot. That is what capitalist economists and politicians called the crisis that capitalism was in during the 1970s into the early ’80s. That was the biggest capitalist crisis since the Depression. And the capitalist class came to label it “stagflation.”

But “stagflation” is really the breakdown of the capitalist economy. It’s the economy’s inability to function based on capitalist assumptions and rules of how it had been functioning up to that time. So economists and politicians considered what they call stagflation to really be a capitalist crisis — an existential threat to capitalism.

They came to the consensus in the 1980s that they had to take dramatic steps to save capitalism. So that’s where you got concepts and plans like restructuring, neoliberalism, globalization and high tech — essentially a ruling-class declaration of war on the working class. This was them tearing up the relative “peace contract” the capitalists had with sections of the working class with respect to unionism.

We could go back to the economic crisis, take the nuances and the words, break them up and study them. This is all good if it clarifies and doesn’t confuse. But I want to focus on what I think is the most important aspect of this developing economic crisis.

It’s the political crisis that this evolving capitalist crisis generates that’s of great importance to the working class and to those who are struggling, like ourselves, at the heart of world imperialism, to help



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Larry Holmes speaks in front of the penthouse of Starbucks CEO, Howard Schultz, on May 1, in New York City.

be the vanguard of the working class.

This economic crisis comes at a very unique time. It comes when workers have finally begun to rise up, where there is an incipient worker uprising in its early or intermediate stages. However you want to characterize this uprising, it’s on a level we haven’t seen since the 1930s, that big move forward for the working class in terms of organizing.

The question now is this: Will the economic crisis — with the prospect of layoffs, plant closings and all that comes with that — take the steam out of this worker rebellion? We’re looking at Amazon and Starbucks, two huge multinational capitalist behemoths. And they are the big targets of workers, and that affects other organizing drives, and their stocks are down! That raises the prospect of those companies closing Amazon warehouses or shutting down coffee shops, whether directly related to fighting the union drive or because of the economy.

No permanent gains under capitalism

So will the economic crisis take the steam out of the worker organizing? Or will it make workers more angry, maybe even make them more revolutionary? These are questions that we have to take very seriously. And there is a hope that the latter is true — that the economic crisis won’t take the steam out of the workers’ movement but will fuel it, and that will make workers more revolutionary. We shall see.

In the wake of a deepening capitalist crisis on a global level, it’s important to understand what Marx and all the great Marxist theoreticians have taught us. And that is that the fight of workers for better conditions in their particular location is essential to them coming together as a class as a whole.

Because, comrades, whether it’s up or down, whether they win or lose, whatever gains the workers achieve through the struggle, those can never be permanent

under capitalism.

Unless and until capitalism is overthrown, those gains will always be something that the gyrations, changes of class relations and capitalist crises can take back.

I have been reviewing some of the positions on the Ukraine war, NATO and U.S. imperialism, sent out by Danish and Portuguese communist parties related to the developing capitalist crisis. These views seem close to ours. They see the war as a catalyst hastening the global economic crisis and as a problem

for the working class. That is a discussion in itself — fuel prices, food, etc.

Just as we as communists in the U.S. are, of course, against U.S. imperialism and NATO, so are these parties against the imperialists of their countries. But this is the problem: The working classes of these countries at this point are not able to resist the propaganda and the stance of their own ruling classes in relation to the war in the Ukraine.

What ultimately will happen is the ability of the working class to understand there are sides and to take a side. And those sides will be delineated on the basis of class, when the war begins to affect workers economically. Of course there are more factors than that; there’s a fear of world war, etc.

All issues tied together

But to the problem — and this is a historical problem. The left in this country, due to historical circumstances and events beyond their control — I’ve made this point many times, but I feel it’s necessary to repeat it — has been rendered somewhat weak in relation to the historical role of the working class, as Marxist and communist revolutionary theory sees it.

That’s because the working-class movements have been weak in the U.S. The union movements have been weak, not only in terms of numbers, but by not operating in militancy. And now is a time when the development of the working class must be seen as the only answer to these crises, whether it’s the economic crisis, the crisis of U.S. imperialist war such as in the Ukraine or dangers internal to the U.S., such as growing attacks on women, LGBTQ+ people and people of color.

The economic crisis is a breeding ground for fascism, which is at a dangerous level in terms of that movement in the U.S. That’s what was reflected in the white-supremacist attack on the Black community in Buffalo, New York. The “great replacement” conspiracy theory, held by that shooter, sounds like it’s something out of the Third Reich of Nazi Germany — spouting that the lawful “majority” population of the “white Christian nation” of the U.S. is being deliberately “replaced” by people of color.

We have got to fortify our sense of the historical role of the working class ideologically and, to the best of our ability, put this perspective in practice. We must influence as many other people as we can, particularly young potential revolutionaries. We can no longer afford to be merely issue oriented, as important as any individual issues are.

All the issues are tied together. And what ties them together is the class struggle. We must have and perfect a working-class strategy going forward. Because that class strategy is the only strategy capable of defeating war and fascism and ultimately bringing about communist revolution. □

‘Cleveland to Jenin, justice for Shireen!’

Members of Cleveland’s Palestinian community kept up militant chanting for hours during a May 20 demonstration to demand justice for martyred Shireen Abu Akleh. The Israeli military killed the Palestinian-American journalist May 11 in Jenin.

The mostly youthful crowd also commemorated Nakba — the catastrophe — the 1948 expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians from their homeland to create the Zionist state of Israel. Chants included “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” and “Revolution until victory.”

Organizers voiced solidarity with the victims of white-supremacist terror in Buffalo.

— Report and photo by Martha Grevatt



STONEWALL MEANS FIGHT BACK!

Transgender rights now! Our 10 point program

The rights of transgender people to live in safety and dignity have never been respected by the capitalist system, but they are currently facing a renewed and vicious attack by the reactionary forces in control of the U.S. government. It is the responsibility of the working class to fight for its most vulnerable members, as none of us can be liberated until we are ALL liberated. Nothing will be granted to us; our rights must be seized and protected.

Gender is not defined by genitalia. It is the right of all people to define their own gender and gender identity and make their own decisions about their body.

Understanding this, the LGBTQ+ Caucus of Workers World Party demands the recognition and preservation of the following rights for EVERYONE, but especially Black and Latinx transgender, nonbinary and gender-variant people and Indigenous Two-Spirit people who are under attack:

1. **Employment:** Guaranteed employment with a thriving wage, no discrimination in the workplace, full respect for gender identity, the right to a union and the abolition of “at-will employment.”
2. **Housing:** Decommodify and guarantee housing. End discriminatory housing practices and unequal access to shelters and social services.

3. **Health care:** Free, universal health care, including gender-affirming care and surgeries, medication and mental health. Ban all conversion therapy. Make trans-competent reproductive care and fertility preservation counseling available.
4. **Parental rights:** Prohibit anti-transgender discrimination in family court, adoption agencies and the foster care system. Each of these systems must be free and accessible. Recognize the legal rights of transgender families.
5. **Children:** Stop all anti-trans laws, especially the attacks on youth. Support the right of young people to live their gender identity. Protect access to hormone therapy and gender-affirmative counseling for minors. Allow trans youth to compete in sports appropriate to their gender realness. Any attacks on gender-affirming care constitute child abuse.
6. **Education:** Teach LGBTQ2S+ history, especially the historical landmark moments played by the transgender community, and comprehensive sex and gender education. Protect expression of gender identity at school of education workers and students, and prohibit policies that require teachers to out LGBTQ2S+ students to their parents.

7. **Incarceration:** Stop the violence, oppression and targeting of transgender prisoners. Stop misgendering and wrongly assigning prisoners to prisons that don't align with their gender. Full access to medical care including hormone treatment and all requested corrective surgeries.
8. **Immigration:** Grant transgender people immediate asylum solely on the basis of gender oppression. Abolish ICE, and stop all deportations.
9. **Identification:** Abolish any mandated surgery as a requirement for gender recognition. Allow transgender, nonbinary, Two Spirit and other gender markers, including nondisclosure, to be used in all government documentation.
10. **Hate crimes:** Expand hate crime laws everywhere to include crimes of violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

We demand Congress pass the Equality Act now! But we must continue to fight in the streets for all of our rights! ☐



Early gay liberation: anti-racist solidarity

By Leslie Feinberg



The following is excerpted from Part 76 of Feinberg's “Lavender & Red” series on the intersection of LGBTQ+ and socialist history, which appeared Oct. 7, 2006, in Workers World newspaper.

The 120-installment series was published between 2004 and 2008 and can be downloaded at workers.org/books.

One particularly militant action by a multi-national group of gay men took place during the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention in fall of 1970, convened by the Black Panther Party. It included a demonstration of anti-racist unity.

During the convention, a group of four gay men — two Puerto Rican, one African American and one white — at least one of whom was reportedly wearing “a bit of makeup,” went out to eat at an area restaurant.

Management at the restaurant, which reportedly catered to a white clientele, refused to serve the group. The four left and returned with 30 or more gay men. The restaurant boss ordered them out.

According to a report in the Advocate: “A fight erupted when management, security guards and several patrons attacked one Puerto Rican and two [B]lack Gays. Glasses were thrown, windows broken and other damage done in the free-for-all which developed.” (Donn Teal, “The Gay Militants”)

The other gay men of various nationalities came to their aid and fought alongside them.

After the group left the restaurant, police stopped 12 of the gay men as they drove away and charged them with assault, illegal entry and destruction of property. The defendants later won an important legal precedent — the right to vet prospective jurors about their prejudices against same-sex love. Ultimately the charges were dropped.

More solidarity

As early as November 1969, left-wing gay liberationists actively organized in support of Chicanx/Mexicanx grape pickers who were trying to organize a union — the United Farm Workers (UFW) — in the fields of California. The “Radical Caucus” at the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations won a resolution in support of the farm workers, even though the convention had drawn more moderate forces.

Renowned labor leader César Chávez continuously



WW PHOTO: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT



Left: Leslie Feinberg at Syracuse, New York, Pride, June 15, 2013. Right: Sylvia Rivera (left) and Marsha P. Johnson, Stonewall combatants and trans liberation leaders in the 1980s, New York City.

PHOTO: DIANA DAVIES

on the fourth floor of the Tombs prison in lower Manhattan. That was the floor where gay and trans prisoners were locked up.

Prison officials claimed Moore took his own life. But gay prisoner Richard Harris courageously came forward with his eyewitness account of the beatings Moore sustained from guards preceding his death.

The Young Lords charged that the administration had killed Moore. Gay liberation activists formed the Gay Community Prisoner Defense Committee after Moore's death. On at least one occasion, Gay Liberation

Front in New York provided bail money for two jailed Young Lords members.

Support for Panthers

Not all Black Panther Party leaders supported gay rights, and not all gay activists supported the Panthers. But many left-wing gay liberationists — Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous and white — worked hard to build and widen solidarity for the Panther Party.

The “Radical Caucus” at the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations also won a resolution in support of the Black Panther Party; and when the conference leadership tried to overturn the measure, a wider vote sustained the resolution.

A GLF representative spoke at the huge May 1970 rally in New Haven organized to free Panther co-founder Bobby Seale.

The case of the Panther 21 drew demonstrative support from gay liberationists of all nationalities. The 21 were arrested in New York on April 2, 1969, in a pre-dawn police raid and charged with conspiracy to bomb the Botanical Gardens, department stores and other sites. They were finally acquitted of all charges on May 13, 1971, after 45 minutes of jury deliberation following what had been the longest political trial in the city's history.

During the long trial, gay activists, including members of the Gay Liberation Front, had organized in support of the Panther defendants. The GLF Marxist study group — Red Butterfly — organized a gay liberationist contingent at a massive rally to “Free the Panther 21 and All Political Prisoners.” And the New York GLF donated \$500 — quite a sum for activists in those days — to the Committee to Defend the Black Panthers. ☐

extended his hand of solidarity to gay liberation, as well.

In summer 2005, when the National Executive Board of the United Farm Workers — a predominantly Latinx union — announced its principled stance in support of the right of same-sex marriage, UFW Southern California Political Director Christine Chávez restated her grandfather's support of gay rights.

She recalled: “Beginning in the 1970s, before there was widespread public acceptance of gays, especially among Latinos, my grandfather, César Chávez, spoke out strongly for gay rights. He attended gay rights rallies and marches. He brought with him the UFW's black-eagle flags and farm workers who wished to participate.” (ufw.org)

Chávez helped carry the lead banner in the 1979 march on Washington for lesbian, gay and bisexual rights.

Early gay liberation won support from Puerto Rican revolutionary youth as well, particularly from the Young Lords Party.

Shortly after Huey Newton issued his powerful statement of support for the gay and women's liberation movements in The Black Panther newspaper on Aug. 21, 1970, the Young Lords Party formed an internal gay caucus. One of its first members was Latinx trans Stonewall combatant Sylvia Rivera.

Rivera described joining in autumn 1970: “It was just the respect they gave us as human beings. They gave us a lot of respect. It was a fabulous feeling for me to be myself — being part of the Young Lords as a drag queen — and my organization [STAR — Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries] being part of the Young Lords.” (Feinberg, “Transgender Warriors”)

The Young Lords Party held its own inquiry into the death of a Black gay prisoner — Raymond Lavon Moore — after he was found dead in November 1970

No new jails!

WW COMMENTARY

By Mirinda Crissman

The prisons, jails and detention centers in New York City have long been evolving in service of capitalism. From their inception to warehouse poor workers to a current plan being pitched to specifically house gender-oppressed people, it is clear that “reforms” to make these cages more “humane,” throughout their entire history have failed to bring more humane conditions.

Humane would be to provide for basic needs for all people, like housing, food and protection from a global pandemic, rather than criminalizing acts of survival — especially for people disproportionately targeted by the criminal punishment system. These include but are not limited to poor people, Black, Brown and Indigenous people, LGBTQ2S+ people, disabled people and those who find themselves at the intersections of multiple class-based oppressions.

The deadly jail of Rikers Island

“A precursor to the modern jail, New York’s first city-run ‘charitable’ institution, charged with ‘caring for the poor, the beggars and the dependent sick’ was a workhouse established in 1736. An almshouse, Bellevue, Blackwell’s Island and Ward’s Island all followed suit in the middle of the 19th century. The Department of Public Charities and Correction was established in 1860 to oversee the city’s institutions of

social welfare and crime control.

“The city designated Rikers a carceral island in 1884, one year before the Department of Correction split from the Department of Public Charity under pressure from reformers who wanted a clearer division between the ‘deserving’ virtuous poor and the ‘vicious’ ‘criminal’ poor. The project to open Rikers finally came to fruition a half-century later [in 1932] in part because conditions in the city’s existing workhouses and jails had been deteriorating for at least 20 years, generating numerous reports on the poor conditions in which incarcerated people languished.” (Current Affairs, March 15, 2021)

Conditions on Rikers Island — where, like most jails across the country, upwards of 70% of people are held pretrial simply because they cannot afford to pay bail to get out and await their day in court — have long been abhorrent. People have experienced all sorts of physical and psychological abuses, faced extreme medical neglect, and died. Complaints as to the conditions at Rikers have been raging for decades, and every shot at reform has just reformed the way violence is enacted there and allocated resources to further incarceration, rather than the services that people need to live.

A growing movement to close this notorious and deadly jail has put pressure on elected officials to address the brutal conditions inside. In October 2019, former Mayor Bill DeBlasio announced and the New York City Council members approved a plan to close the Rikers Island jail complex by 2026 and open four new borough-based jails, at a total cost of \$8.7 billion — despite outrage at the fact new jails would be built. The city has since officially delayed the plans, with completion projected well into 2027.

Inadequate reforms to reduce the amount of solitary confinement and calls to the federal government to investigate the human rights abuses have failed to stop the immense harms inflicted by sites of brutality like Rikers. (City & State New York, April 17)

In October 2021, 70 women and transgender people being held at Rikers Island signed a petition condemning the plan

of Gov. Kathy Hochul and Mayor Bill de Blasio to transfer them to Bedford Hills Correctional Facility or Taconic Correctional Facility. (Workers World, Nov. 10, 2021)

The petition decried the proposed transfer to state prisons that are farther away as a so-called solution to the overcrowding and made the connection between state and interpersonal violence. “How does making female detainees more isolated and less able to meet with counsel, court advocates and visitors address the emergency? ... If you’re going to declare an emergency, we insist that the government shoulder the burden, not the women who are already subjected to lengthy detention.” (Bronxdefenders.org, Oct. 18)

A “special” jail for women and gender-nonconforming people is one of the proposed solutions to some of the abhorrent conditions faced by thousands held captive at Rikers in a plan by the Women’s Community Justice Association, the Prison & Jail Innovation Lab at University of Texas at Austin, the Justice Lab & Center for Justice at Columbia University and the real estate developers HR&A Advisors. (tinyurl.com/4juu3s46) The jail is proposed for the site of the old Lincoln prison on 110th street in New York City. (tinyurl.com/4vkhjrxz)

More or ‘special’ jails never the answer

This plan is an inadequate and violent response that will not dramatically improve the material conditions women and gender-oppressed people face as we are experiencing the collapse of capitalism.

Particularly in an era where the rollback of legal abortion is a very real threat for millions, the increased criminalization of reproductive autonomy is a very real possibility — with the result of an increasing incarceration of women and gender-nonconforming people for “crimes” for asserting their bodily autonomy.

“In hundreds of cases [in the U.S.] over the past 50 years, pregnant people have faced criminal punishment for the outcomes of their pregnancies. In some instances, police and prosecutors have exploited the law in inventive ways or gone



outside its bounds, flexing the power of the state over the bodies of pregnant people in the name of ‘protecting’ the unborn,” reports the May 5 New Republic. “National Advocates for Pregnant Women has identified at least 1,600 such cases since 1973 involving arrests or other deprivations of liberty, according to executive director Lynn Paltrow. The wide net cast by criminalization — profiling, surveillance, arrests and incarceration, along with the cascade of consequences that follow — has already snared hundreds of people, even with the protections of Roe v. Wade in place.” (The New Republic, May 5)

In place of Rikers, a new “gender-responsive” jail would expand the capacity to brutally warehouse poor women and gender-oppressed people and threaten to further obstruct real public safety, while draining resources from city and state programs and services that people in New York need to live. Sites of incarceration have been detrimental to our collective public health, which has been made even more apparent during the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. (uclacovidbehindbars.org/)

We don’t want more “gender-responsive” prisons, jails or detention centers; we want to dismantle the apparatus that criminalizes survival for the poor and oppressed. We want to abolish the conditions that enabled the growth of caging human beings. As the capitalist state increasingly will not and cannot provide to meet basic human needs in a pandemic and beyond — only providing endless war instead — we want decarceration and investment in making sure people have adequate food, housing and other necessities, rather than sites of incarceration that reproduce a violence akin to the enslavement of those once deemed property.

In moments like these, we look to the resistance shown by abolitionists in New York City fighting jail expansions and to groups like Californians United for a Responsible Budget, which have successfully pushed for decarceration. (tinyurl.com/CURBPrisons) Expansion plans like the one in New York City to build a so-called more “gender-responsive” jail have been defeated in the past and can be defeated again now.

No new jails! Invest in people, not prisons and police! □



BY JOSH MACPHEE

The sickness that simmers at the core of the ‘American’ soul

By Mumia Abu-Jamal
March 18, 2000

After several brutal anti-LGBTQ+ murders, including 21-year-old gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard in 1998 and the beheading of 39-year old gay and homeless man Eddie Northington in 1999, Mumia Abu-Jamal wrote a letter to Workers World from Pennsylvania Death Row on the link between racist and anti-LGBTQ+ violence.

The sickening attacks on gay people in cities across the nation recently is a reflection of the sickness that simmers at the core of the American soul. It is here that a truly perverse hatred is bred, and, from here that all attacks are launched

against all who are seen as Other.

This violence, which seems psychosexual in nature, is an attack on the self, that seeks to destroy a part of the self that threatens the self. From Matthew Shepard, to Alabama, to that bloody American ground that was once the seat of the Confederacy, Richmond, violence, spawned by the dark pit of hatred and fear, is unleashed by men who claim a false and twisted “purity.”

More often than not, those who find themselves attacking gay folks violently are replaying a violence that they grew up with, or that they continue to act out of, against their family or children.

Is it a coincidence that Richmond, the city where a Black man was burned to death and decapitated, follows several months later with the decapitation and

torture of a gay man? I think not.

This cruel and savage violence must be stopped — but it won’t be the cops that stop it, for they are the agents of legalized state violence. The brutality that occurs in their own homes daily, the recent spate of cops who kill their wives and kids, more than proves it.

The people are the solution! So my thanks to the Rainbow! On a Move! To Freedom! Free the Move 9! □

SAVE THE DATE!
On July 3rd We Demand:

FREEDOM
FOR
MUMIA!

Join us in Philly or attend an event near you.
To organize an action in your city go to:
lovenotphear.com/40cities



After 50 years of imprisonment Sundiata Acoli is granted parole

By Judy Greenspan

The New Jersey Supreme Court did what the parole board refused to do since Sundiata Acoli was first eligible for parole in 1993. It granted Acoli, a Black political prisoner and U.S. prisoner of war, parole on May 10. Acoli, now 85 and suffering from dementia and other serious health problems, plans to live with his daughter and grandchildren in New York City upon release.

The story of Acoli's near 50-year incarceration is unfortunately an all too familiar one. Acoli, a former Black Panther Party member, was first arrested and incarcerated in 1969 as a member of the Panther 21, a FBI-fabricated conspiracy case against the New York Branch of the BPP. Acoli and the others were incarcerated for two years. Although the charges were eventually dropped, he and other Panther Party members faced constant FBI surveillance, harassment and intimidation. These provocations drove Acoli and others underground. (sundiataacoli.org)

In May 1973, Acoli and his comrades were

ambushed by New Jersey state troopers on the New Jersey Turnpike. State police have a well-documented hundred-year history of racism and terrorist attacks on Black and Brown people. During this attack, Zayd Shakur was killed and Assata Shakur was injured and captured. A state trooper was killed and another wounded. Acoli was captured three days later. Assata Shakur later escaped from prison and is living in safety in Cuba.

Needless to say, after a highly sensationalized and biased trial, Acoli was found guilty and sentenced to N.J. state prison for life plus 30 consecutive years. In New Jersey, even those with a life sentence are eligible for parole after 20 years. This former Black Panther was placed in a specially constructed lockdown unit and eventually moved to a maximum security federal prison.



Sundiata Acoli

When Acoli was finally eligible in 1992 for his first parole hearing, he was not even allowed to attend in person. In fact, true to the racist and vindictive nature of the New Jersey injustice system, Acoli received an unprecedented "20 year hit" due to his prior membership in the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army.

Acoli is internationally recognized as a political prisoner and prisoner of war by the International Jurist and other organizations. Thousands of people have written letters and signed cards over the past four decades demanding immediate parole and freedom for Acoli.

In fact, it was only the legal intervention of the New Jersey Supreme Court two weeks ago, overruling the refusal of the parole board to grant parole, that finally opened the door to Acoli's freedom. The

legal decision granting Acoli parole was finally won. In its opinion, the majority of Supreme Court justices stated, "Acoli must be released because the statutory standards for granting parole have been met." (Sundiata Acoli v. New Jersey State Parole Board)

There are many elderly and infirm political prisoners in U.S. prisons who are more than overdue for immediate release. Dr. Mutulu Shakur, who has been incarcerated for nearly four decades, is suffering from life-threatening bone cancer and was recently turned down for federal parole. Mumia Abu-Jamal, former BPP member and internationally acclaimed author and journalist, has been imprisoned for over 40 years and now has severe cirrhosis of the liver and hypertension. Indigenous political prisoner Leonard Peltier, falsely incarcerated for over 40 years, has been in declining health and tested positive for COVID-19 in January.

It is time to release these three men and all U.S. political prisoners back to their communities. In 2022, it's time to finally free them all! □

Death row prisoner Reed challenges Texas law before SCOTUS

By Gloria Rubac

Finally. The U.S. Supreme Court announced the petition of death row prisoner Rodney Reed would be heard, regarding the constitutionality of Texas laws on DNA testing of crime-scene evidence, on April 25.

For decades Texas courts denied such testing, including of the murder weapon, in Reed's case. The federal courts said Reed waited too long in asking for DNA testing. Now a decision will be made as to time limits if DNA testing is sought.

The answer to this legal issue on DNA testing could open the door for Reed to finally prove his innocence and have his 1998 death sentence be lifted. Reed has insisted he is innocent of the murder of Stacey Stites, a young woman with whom he was having a consensual relationship.

Jane Pucher, a senior staff attorney at the Innocence Project, said in an April 25 statement that Reed's legal team was looking forward to arguing his case before the Supreme Court:

"Rodney Reed has steadfastly maintained his innocence for more than 20 years, and a substantial body of evidence



Rodney Reed's mother Sandra Reed and sister-in-law Wana Akpan at March press conference.

has emerged supporting his innocence. Mr. Reed, who is Black, was convicted in 1998 by an all-white Texas jury of the murder of Stacey Stites, who is white.

Among other things, new evidence of innocence points to Stites' white fiancé, Jimmy Fennell, as the perpetrator.

"But Texas and the Texas courts have refused to allow DNA testing of key crime-scene evidence, including the ligature handled by the perpetrator in the commission of the crime. And when Mr. Reed sought access to DNA testing in federal court, the federal courts wrongly threw out his claims as untimely, reasoning that he could have started his federal action while the state-court proceedings were still pending. We look forward to having the Supreme Court consider our arguments." (InnocenceProject.org)

Reed does not have an execution date. His last date in November of 2019 was indefinitely stayed, after an outpouring of political and legal support from attorneys, celebrities, religious leaders and the general public. Millions of people signed an online petition in support of Reed. His mother, Sandra Reed, and his brother, Rodrick Reed, have built and led a movement of activists from around Texas and the country. They have challenged the Bastrop District Attorney and local cops, exposed the faulty trial testimony and questioned

why the actual evidence has been ignored by the state for almost 24 years.

According to CNN Supreme Court analyst Steve Vladeck, "The basic question is a technical one about when the clock starts running for federal lawsuits by prisoners who seek DNA testing of newly discovered evidence that might exonerate them. But the implications could be much broader, especially for prisoners in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi, where the current law makes it exceedingly difficult to bring such claims."

Unlike on television shows, crime-scene evidence in this case — including the belt used to strangle Stites and her clothing — was never tested for DNA. Prosecutors have fought the efforts, arguing that possible state mishandling of the evidence might mean the DNA could be contaminated and testing results unreliable.

Reed contends that testing will prove that he had nothing to do with Stites murder and could prove who the actual killer is.

The real question is, who are the cops and the DA trying to protect? Possibly her fiancé Jimmy Fennell, a local cop who told people Stites would "have to pay" for having an affair with a Black man. □

Release Mumia now!

Special to Workers World

July 3 will mark 40 years since Black Panther Party member, activist and revolutionary journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal was given the racist death sentence for the alleged murder of a Philadelphia cop. As a result of police, prosecutorial and judicial misconduct in a highly contested trial, Abu-Jamal has been incarcerated since December 1981 under inhumane and illegal imprisonment — which included almost 30 years in solitary confinement on Pennsylvania's death row.

Despite numerous appeals, in July 1995 then-Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge signed Abu-Jamal's death warrant to be carried out on Aug. 15 — in the midst of Black August. An international movement responded, filling the streets of Philadelphia and other cities with

thousands of protesters and forcing the state to back down. Workers World Party was key among organizers of that protest and many since.

The Fraternal Order of Police and their reactionary supporters have pushed for Mumia's murder since his unjust conviction, never failing to hide their white-supremacist views. As a nationally recognized Black journalist, Abu-Jamal found himself in their crosshairs when he confronted racist Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo, former head of the police department, over his brutal and bigoted handling of the August 1978 confrontation with the MOVE organization.

The FOP was dealt a major blow when — after nearly two decades of international protests — Mumia's death sentence was overturned by a federal court ruling in December 2001. After another

10 years on death row, in 2011 he was given a just as cruel, life in prison without parole sentence. But this wasn't good enough for the reactionaries. They wanted him and all other Black political prisoners to suffer and die.

The movement said: Hell no! Mumia Abu-Jamal will be free!

The struggle to free our brother has only grown stronger throughout the last 10 years. In 2016 a door opened in the legal struggle for his case to continue on appeal, based on the U.S. Supreme Court ruling: Williams v. Pennsylvania. In December 2018 Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge Leon Tucker allowed Mumia's original appeals to be reheard.



Mumia Abu-Jamal

His next court appearance is scheduled for Philadelphia's Common Pleas Court June 29.

The movement, determined to win Mumia's release, must continue to grow — despite every effort by the FOP, the courts and other capitalist state forces to block his

liberation. To mark the 40th anniversary of the sentencing, there will be demonstrations in at least 40 cities around the globe. Come to Philadelphia, or plan a protest where you live.

Over recent years political prisoners including the MOVE 9, Russell Maroon Shoats, Jalil Muntaqim, David Gilbert and Sundiata Acoli have been freed. Let's make Mumia next! □

Fund formula, not war

Finding \$40 billion for weapons to expand the U.S./NATO-fueled war in Ukraine was no problem for the Joe Biden administration or for the U.S. Senate that voted overwhelmingly for money to fill the pockets of the military industry last week. The bill to release these funds for weapons was treated as so urgent, it was rushed to South Korea, where Biden is on tour, so he could sign it.

Getting these same politicians to expand funding to combat the resurging COVID-19 epidemic appears to be nearly impossible, even as the virus-related death toll in the U.S. has surpassed 1 million people.

Federal funds for uninsured COVID-19 patients have dried up as hospital costs rise. And the virus is far from contained. The program that provided vaccine treatment for uninsured people ended in March, and Congress repeatedly turned down Biden’s requests for \$20 billion more. That areas of the U.S. are experiencing new spikes in virus cases cannot be denied or hidden by corporate-controlled

media, which would rather people just get back to business as usual.

A recent step by the U.S. Postal Service to release more home testing kits, while welcome, provides no real solution. If one tests positive for COVID-19 but has no access to health care, where does that leave them?

And to add to Biden’s woes, there is the baby formula shortage crisis.

Baby formula has been in short supply around the country for several months, and the problem is only getting worse. That a vital necessity for raising a healthy infant is out of reach of millions of parents serves to expose the hypocrisy of the ultra-right wing, which is virulently anti-abortion on one hand but doesn’t care when it comes to children’s needs once they are born.

Corporate pundits seek to blame the global supply chain for the crisis. Others lay the blame on parents for “hoarding” formula during the early days of COVID-19.

But with only three

companies — Abbott, Gerber and Reckitt — producing nearly 100% of the formula consumed by babies in the U.S., the supply shortage is basically monopoly driven. It is a problem of capitalists starving babies, even as they demand more be birthed.

The Women, Infants and Children program helps pay for formula for low-income children. But what help is it if the shelves are empty?

This is not dissimilar to the problem of vaccine production, which is also controlled by just three major pharmaceutical corporations in the U.S.

Abbott Nutrition, which makes Similac, controls 47% of formula production in the U.S. It is a subsidiary of Abbott Labs, a \$200 billion company. Domestic baby formula represents less than 5% of their revenue — clearly not a priority.

Abbott Nutrition’s factory in Michigan was described as “a mess,” with old and dirty equipment. Workers complained about conditions to the Food and Drug Administration multiple times in October

2021. The FDA inspected the facility in January 2022. Recalls began in mid-February, and the plant was then closed, but only after several babies became sick and two died from consuming the tainted formula.

Without Abbott’s production, supplies dwindled; and for weeks now, caregivers have found shelves emptied of formula.

Finally on May 18, Biden invoked the Defense Production Act that would allow for additional imports of formula from abroad. But this is just a drop in the bucket and does not address the essential problem.

Baby formula, like COVID-19 vaccines, is life-sustaining. To limit access to these vital necessities, whether through charging exorbitant prices to consumers or denying access to less expensive foreign imports, exposes the crisis of capitalist production that always puts profits ahead of human needs.

Only a planned economy — socialism, which prioritizes human needs — can prevent this kind of crisis from occurring

Biden’s saber-rattling in Asia

By Otis Grotewohl

President Joe Biden used his first trip to Asia as an opportunity to renew saber-rattling against the People’s Republic of China and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. In Japan May 23, when asked if the U.S. would “defend” Taiwan militarily if China were to intervene, he replied, “Yes, that’s the commitment we made.” (Reuters, May 23)

During a three-day visit to South Korea starting May 20, Biden met with business leaders and held a summit with recently elected President Yoon Seok-youl. The former prosecutor ran on an anti-communist platform. The two leaders discussed an expansion of joint military exercises against socialist Korea. Such exercises had slowed down following the meeting between Donald Trump and DPRK leader Kim Jong Un in 2019.

As a result of Yoon’s threats and calls for strengthening sanctions against the DPRK, the socialist government was forced to launch its first inter-continental ballistic missile since 2017. This action was carried out shortly before Yoon’s inauguration, in order to send a message to the new South Korean regime.

Biden and Yoon used “denuclearization” as an excuse to threaten the sovereignty of North Korea. The DPRK not only has a right to exist but has also a right to self-defense, up to and including the production and use of nuclear weapons. Biden and Yoon deliberately ignore the fact that their governments have terrorized the people of North Korea ever since U.S. imperialism forcibly tore the country apart in an attempt to overthrow the socialist revolution that started in 1945.

Biden’s hypocrisy unmasked

When asked if he would be willing to meet with Kim Jong Un, Biden hypocritically commented, “It would depend on whether he was sincere and whether it was serious.” (The Hill, May 21) As the current commander-in-chief of the imperialist military that tried to slaughter the population of Pyongyang from 1950 until 1953, Biden has no right to demand

sincerity or seriousness from the leadership of North Korea.

Biden took advantage of the current COVID-19 crisis which the DPRK is facing by claiming, “We’ve offered vaccines, not only to North Korea but to China as well, and we’re prepared to do that immediately.” But, he said, “We’ve got no response.” (BBC, May 21)

Yet it is the sanctions and trade embargo imposed by the U.S. that is to blame for any COVID-19 related problems the DPRK is now facing. The people of socialist Korea have had no other choice but to practice self-reliance, recognized as Juche thought, following the Soviet Union’s collapse in the 1990s.

Washington, along with its puppets in South Korea and its imperialist allies in Japan, have done everything they could to cut off North Korea’s access to food and medicine. The U.S. has no interest in supplying vaccines to the DPRK or China, and the workers of those countries know that.

Washington’s aim: Build an anti-China alliance

Following his visit to South Korea, Biden is scheduled to go to Japan. There he is expected to meet with leaders of Japan, Australia and India. These countries and the U.S. are members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, an Indo-Pacific strategic alliance known as the “Quad.”

The Quad’s goal is to weaken China, which has compelled the Chinese Communist Party to conduct special military drills in the South China Sea. Washington seeks to build a wedge between China and Russia, but Western imperialist threats and aggression have pushed the two countries closer together in recent years. NATO’s proxy war against Russia in Ukraine is the most recent example of how the U.S. is unintentionally strengthening the ties between these two countries.

Revolutionaries and anti-imperialists in the U.S. must demand: “U.S. Hands Off People’s Korea and China!” □



Gwangju, South Korea, May 1980.

In remembrance of the Gwangju Uprising, fight for a united Korea

By Jesse Edwards

On May 18, 1980, the citizens of Gwangju, South Korea, started a protest in response to General Chun Du-hwan’s expansion of martial law. Soon, the protest became a major uprising as over 300,000 seized their entire city, demanding not only an end to martial law but for an expansion of democracy and human rights and a minimum wage. South Korea had been in major turmoil after the assassination of President Park Chung-hee the previous spring, which ended his 18-year dictatorship that had allowed the ruling elite to squeeze immense wealth out of the working class.

Gwangju’s people struggled to end this exploitation and the brutal dictatorships that had ruled the South since the U.S. Army divided the peninsula in 1945. Chun ordered the military to blockade the city as the media smeared and red-baited the people. After notifying the U.S. of his regime’s intentions, Chun sent paratroopers into the city and massacred over 2,000 people.

In the name of anti-communism, Chun thus consolidated his power as president. Until 1988, he ruled a fascist state that would continue to seek out, capture and torture activists and dissenters.

The Gwangju massacre recalled the

massacre of tens of thousands during the Jeju Uprising that began in 1948, when the Workers’ Party of South Korea led an insurgency against the U.S.-puppet government and the United States Army Military Government in Korea, which ruled Jeju island. Some sources believe that up to 100,000 Koreans were murdered at the behest of the U.S. This massacre ignited a civil war that over time led to the slaughter of over 2.5 million Koreans to satisfy the strategic needs of U.S. imperialism.

In a call for unity, newly elected ROK President Yoon Seok-youl has visited Gwangju. He was the first of his far-right party (whose ties reach back to Park Chung-hee) to appear on the May 18 Memorial Day. Yoon’s narrow election victory came on a platform of anti-feminism, 120-hour work weeks and a hard-line stance against the DPRK.

Working-class organizations worldwide must reject Yoon’s anti-labor, misogynist and pro-war style of unity. Rather, we must support our comrades in the South in their struggle for Korean reunification and the end to U.S. occupation. In the U.S., we must educate the people by counteracting anti-North propaganda and support the fight for a free, unified Korea and the end of U.S. imperialism worldwide! □

Sanctions — wrecking ball in a global economy

By Sara Flounders

U.S. government strategists are using sanctions as a wrecking ball to demolish the globalized economy. It is a desperate struggle to preserve their global hegemony and a unipolar world. The policy of consciously demolishing supply chains of essential products amounts to a reckless war on defenseless civilian populations. Sanctions disrupt trade worldwide and send shockwaves far beyond the countries directly targeted. This is well understood by financial planners.

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

For the first time this intentional disruption is rebounding against the countries imposing the sanctions. Wider sanctions are creating unprecedented inflation — the highest in 40 years — supply chain chaos and sharply higher costs of energy for industries, transport and homes.

Washington is demanding that countries act against their own economic interests and enforce sanctions passed as U.S. legislation, in which they had no voice or prior notice.

In response to the extensive sanctions on Russia, many countries have opened new forms of currency exchanges to carry out trade. This has in turn led to an erosion of dollar supremacy, a bedrock of U.S. economic hegemony.

The U.S. and European Union sanctions are creating famines throughout Africa. Sanctions under the Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) are threatened against India and are already imposed on Turkey, a NATO member, for their continuing trade with Russia.

After Pakistan continued its trade, Washington orchestrated a coup against the government of Imran Khan. The election of right-wing politicians to the presidency in South Korea and the Philippines, who support U.S. plans for military encirclement of China, confirms a new phase in a struggle dividing the world.

Yet this mounting pressure to enforce compliance has failed to reassert U.S. economic domination. Instead, countries inhabited by three-fourths of the global population are increasingly refusing to accept the latest sanctions. This refusal is a serious setback to U.S. hegemony.

Economic interests drive war

Economic interests drive nation states to war. For four decades, corporate interests in the G7 — the top economies of North America, Western Europe and Japan — have applauded and pushed globalization, because they were in control of the process. Their dominant position in the IMF and World Bank and their powerful position in the World Trade Organization assured this control.

During those same decades, and especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, industrial production of commodities, including garments and electronics, moved from the G7 to Mexico, Central America, China, India, Bangladesh and Eastern Europe. Production of a single garment or piece of electronic equipment was carried out in different countries, organized on a global scale. (See “Low Wage Capitalism,” by Fred Goldstein)

The threat of U.S. sanctions helped push back countries attempting to assert their sovereignty or even attempting a more favorable trade deal.

But now the Chinese economy is surpassing the U.S. in total production. Well over a trillion dollars spent in Chinese Belt and Road development programs has made China a more attractive trading partner, not only in Asia but throughout Africa and Latin America. European Union trade with China has overtaken its trade with the U.S.



The growing integration of the Eurasian bloc of countries, stretching from China and South Asia through Central Asia and Russia to much of Europe, promises a huge economic advantage to the countries involved.

U.S. provokes conflict to retain hegemony

The growing integration of EU trade and investment with Russia and China challenges both the domination of U.S. corporate power in Europe and U.S. global hegemony.

It is in the interest of corporate power that Washington provokes a conflict where others pay the greatest cost. Ukraine is a country where its capitalist rivals in the EU will carry the heaviest burden.

The immediate threat to U.S. hegemony is that the EU trade with Russia is \$260 billion a year — 10 times its trade with the U.S. The EU is the largest investor in Russia. Breaking this growing economic integration of the EU with Russia and at an even greater level with China serves the long-term strategic interests of U.S. corporate domination, in place since World War II.

A desperate attempt to break U.S. imperialism’s slipping economic position has driven NATO’s massive involvement in Ukraine.

When the economic repercussions of the present war in Ukraine are reported, the greatest amount of coverage is allocated to European countries and the sanctions’ impact on their industries, due to their reliance on Russian gas, oil, coal and fertilizers.

The business/industrial class, the oligarchs in Germany and throughout the EU, were hit hard by the U.S. demand to impose sanctions on Russian gas and oil. Their trade deals, corporate investments and energy supplies with Russia are unraveling.

U.S. Executive Order 14024, passed Feb. 21 before Russia’s intervention in Ukraine, prohibited new investment, trade in goods and services and financing. This was just the beginning of a constant drumbeat of the most expansive, unprecedented economic measures. The U.S. demanded that every country in Europe pass their own legally binding economic sanctions of similar prohibitions.

The inflationary impact and supply chain chaos affecting German industries has been reported widely. British news services report that millions of British families will have to choose between eating and heating. Each European country is dealing with the highest inflation in decades, including in formerly stable Nordic economies.

Why is Russia targeted?

The power of the Russian economy is much smaller than the power of the U.S., the world’s largest economy, and the combined economic power of the EU, Japan, South Korea and Australia. The Russian economy today is smaller than Canada’s or South Korea’s.

Russia’s defense budget is one-twelfth of U.S. military spending, and this ratio shrinks further when weighed against the budget of the entire NATO military alliance.

While Russia is neither a military nor an economic threat, it has enormous natural resources that are presently out of U.S. control. That makes Russia a target.

President Joe Biden confidently promised that U.S.

and EU sanctions would have a “catastrophic impact” on Russia’s economy. U.S. analysts intended and predicted Russian bank and stock market collapses, hyperinflation, soaring prices, supply chain disruptions, empty shelves and massive unemployment.

This was calculated to weaken President Putin and disintegrate the Russian state.

Graphic descriptions of the impact on the poorest Russians and middle class abounded in all the Western media.

U.S., Canadian and European media, along with Japan’s, South Korea’s and Australia’s, were unanimous in predicting complete collapse. Politicians, economists and bankers said that there was nothing the Russian government could do. Russia would be hostage to the seizure of all their assets held in Western banks and from the imposed cutoffs of all future trade credits.

Proud declarations were made that the major economies of the West would operate in lockstep.

Moscow’s response was that the measures will all lead to an increase in Russian independence, self-sufficiency and sovereignty. Russia is self-sufficient in grains, meats, other proteins and in energy. Its trade with China, India, Brazil and Iran ensures their industry will not collapse for lack of spare parts.

The enthusiasm with which U.S. politicians and the corporate media describe their ability to cause such massive pain to millions recalls the 1990s, when U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright assured the world that the deaths of a half million Iraqi children from sanctions was “worth it” to achieve U.S. strategic aims.

With shortsighted arrogance, the U.S. cut Russia from the SWIFT banking system of payments and trade. Visa and Mastercard shut down overnight.

This did not, however, create the predicted chaos. The Central Bank of Russia and other banking and credit institutions were able to switch to the Chinese CIPS network that includes 3,000 banking institutions in 167 countries. CIPS is also able to seamlessly process credit card transactions.

While Russia was able to transition its economy, the U.S. has no immediate solution to provide essential supplies of gas and oil to Europe or grains and fertilizers to numerous countries. They have no long-term low-price solution. Despite all the predictions of collapse, even The Economist, May 7, announced that “Russia’s economy is back on its feet.”

Sanctions fail

Forgotten in all the congratulatory declarations was that throughout the developing economies of the world, there was no agreement on these U.S.-imposed measures.

The resistance of China, the world’s largest economy, to U.S. demands to comply with sanctions on Russia has given other nations the confidence that they can survive U.S. demands and still have access to development funds, essential technology and trade.

There is the refusal of not only China, but also India, South Africa, Brazil — the BRICS countries — along with almost all the countries of Africa and Latin America and most Asian countries to stop trade with Russia against their own interests.

Mexico’s President Andrés Manuel López Obrador declared: “We are not going to take any sort of economic reprisal, because we want to have good relations with all the governments in the world.”

Brazil’s Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, now the leading candidate for Brazil’s October 2022 presidential elections, has proposed creating a pan-Latin American currency, in order to “be freed of the dollar. ... We are going to create a currency in Latin America, because we can’t keep depending on the dollar.” (popularresistance.org, May 6)

Similar statements were made by the other countries of Central and Latin America and the Caribbean. Several African countries, including Nigeria, a major economy, made note that sanctions were not passed by the United Nations Security Council and were therefore not binding.

The open defiance by so many countries and major trading blocs is a stunning confirmation of the weakening hold of U.S. economic power. □

WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

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

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

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Un grupo de manifestantes sostiene la imagen de Shireen Abu Akleh, periodista Palestina asesinada por el ejército Israelí.

Respuesta a la masacre de Buffalo

¡Destruyan la supremacía blanca!

Por Nigel Bouvart

En la noche del 14 de mayo, un fascista que llevaba un rifle entró en un supermercado en el barrio predominantemente negro de Masten Park, en el lado este de Búfalo, y abrió fuego. Mientras que la mayoría de las declaraciones oficiales han aludido más o menos vagamente a “motivaciones raciales”, las intenciones del tirador se esbozaron de forma bastante explícita en un manifiesto, en el que escribió su adhesión a la ideología de “gran sustitución” de los blancos.

Esta pancarta en Buffalo responde a “¡aquí está tu reparación!” escrita en el rifle de asalto utilizado por Payton Gendron en la masacre del 14 de mayo.

El “gran reemplazo” es una idea de la ideología fascista según la cual los blancos están siendo sistemáticamente superados por los grupos minoritarios. Es una idea que encuentra expresión en la política de extrema derecha en todas partes, desde el canto de “los judíos no nos reemplazarán” gritado por los neonazis en Charlottesville en 2017 hasta el programa nocturno de Tucker Carlson en Fox News. Es una idea de la ideología fascista, convertida en acción en el genocidio de los pueblos que supuestamente hacen el “reemplazo” — incluyendo a todas las



Una manifestación en Buffalo, durante la visita de Joe Biden después de la masacre.

FOTO: MO-WW

personas de color — y que fueron el objetivo de este ataque.

El tirador eligió el lugar deliberadamente: el único supermercado en un barrio que es abrumadoramente negro. La tecnología que utilizó para transmitir su ataque en directo revela su racismo. Cuando el tirador apunta con su arma a un transeúnte y se da cuenta de que es blanco, dice “lo siento” y sigue su camino. De los 13 muertos, 11 son afroamericano.

La gobernadora Kathy Hochul, aunque describió correctamente este terrible acto como un “terrorismo de supremacía blanca”, erró al intentar culpar a las “redes sociales”. El tirador se relacionó con sus compañeros supremacistas blancos en Discord y transmitió su ataque en Twitch. Pero estos medios no son la causa de la ideología; son simplemente un medio de comunicación de ideas.

La causa principal de este ataque es la ideología supremacista blanca y la tradición de violencia horrorosa que instiga y defiende. Está inseparablemente unida al propio tejido de los Estados Unidos capitalistas y supremacistas blancos. La violencia sólo desaparecerá si se destruye ese tejido.

Condiciones en Buffalo

Más allá de la pérdida de seres queridos por parte de las familias y los vecinos y del trauma infligido a quienes se vieron obligados a ser testigos de esta atrocidad, el ataque tiene ramificaciones más amplias para la comunidad en la que se perpetró. Una de ellas es: ¿De dónde saldrá ahora su comida?

La zona este de Búfalo, escenario del atentado y de generaciones de racismo, guetos y abandono deliberado, es un desierto alimentario. El supermercado Tops donde se produjo el ataque es el único del barrio. Aunque Tops ha prometido reabrir su tienda, nadie sabe cuánto tiempo tardará en hacerlo.

Una cuarta parte de los niños de Búfalo sufren desnutrición, sobre todo los pobres y los negros. Una organización benéfica local, Buffalo Community Fridges, empezó a recoger donaciones de alimentos para distribuirlos en el barrio a primera hora de la mañana del 15 de mayo, pero tuvieron que dejar de recogerlos a

media tarde por falta de almacenamiento para todas las donaciones. Este esfuerzo, aunque loable, no puede duplicar la eficacia de un supermercado en la distribución de alimentos a toda una comunidad ni debería hacerlo.

Además de la dramática interrupción de la vida cotidiana en Masten Park, el Departamento de Policía de Búfalo y la Policía del Estado de Nueva York han establecido bloqueos en las calles que rodean a Tops. Policías con garrotes se quedan de pie fingiendo que protegen, después de haber tardado casi media hora en aparecer cuando ocurrió la masacre.

Cuando los policías llegaron, detuvieron al tirador blanco sin disparar un solo tiro ni maltratarlo. Muy fuera de lo normal para un departamento de policía que hace un par de años abrió fuego contra un coche mientras participaba en una peligrosa persecución a alta velocidad —dejando al pasajero paralizado— porque les parecieron “sospechosas” sus cubiertas de matrícula tintadas.

Pero esa es la forma en que los policías detienen a los asesinos supremacistas blancos, como Dylann Roof después de que masacrara a nueve feligreses negros mientras estaban sentados rezando en la iglesia. Siempre existe el contraste de cómo los policías asesinan a hombres negros mientras los arrestan por “crímenes”, como George Floyd por simplemente intentar comprar cigarrillos o Eric Garner por venderlos.

En memoria de los que hemos perdido, muerte al fascismo. □

Derechos para las personas transgénero, ¡ahora!

NUESTRO PROGRAMA DE 10 PUNTOS



Los derechos de las personas transgénero de vivir con seguridad y dignidad nunca han sido respetados por el sistema capitalista, pero actualmente se enfrentan a un renovado y despiadado ataque por parte de las fuerzas reaccionarias que controlan el gobierno de EE.UU. Es responsabilidad de la clase trabajadora luchar por sus miembros más vulnerables, ya que ninguno de nosotros puede ser liberado hasta que TODOS seamos liberados. No se nos concederá nada; hay que conquistar y proteger nuestros derechos.

El género no se define por los genitales. Todas las personas tienen derecho a definir su propio género e identidad de género y a tomar sus propias decisiones sobre su cuerpo.

Entendiendo esto, el Caucus LGBTQ+ del Partido Mundo Obrero exige el reconocimiento y la preservación de los siguientes derechos para TODOS, pero especialmente para las personas transgénero, no binarias y de género variante negras y las personas indígenas de Dos Espíritus que están siendo atacadas:

- 1. EMPLEO:** Empleo garantizado con un salario próspero, no discriminación en el lugar de trabajo, total respeto a la identidad de género, derecho a un sindicato y la abolición del “empleo a voluntad”.
- 2. VIVIENDA:** Descomodificar y garantizar la vivienda. Acabar con las prácticas discriminatorias en cuanto a la vivienda y con la desigualdad en el acceso a los albergues y a los servicios sociales.
- 3. ATENCION SANITARIA:** Atención sanitaria gratuita y universal, que incluya cuidados y cirugías de afirmación de género, medicación y salud mental. Prohibir todas las terapias de conversión. Poner a disposición de las personas trans atención reproductiva y asesoramiento para la preservación de la fertilidad.
- 4. DERECHOS PARENTALES:** Prohibir la discriminación antitransgénero en los tribunales de familia, las agencias de adopción y el sistema de acogida. Cada uno

de estos sistemas debe ser libre y accesible. Reconocer los derechos legales de las familias transgénero.

- 5. NIÑOS:** Detener todas las leyes antitrans, especialmente los ataques a los jóvenes. Apoyar el derecho de los jóvenes a vivir su identidad de género. Proteger el acceso a la terapia hormonal y al asesoramiento de género para los menores. Permitir que los jóvenes trans compiten en deportes adecuados a su realidad de género. Cualquier ataque a la atención de afirmación de género constituye un abuso infantil.
- 6. EDUCACIÓN:** Enseñar la historia LGBTQ2S+, especialmente los momentos históricos protagonizados por la comunidad trans, y una educación sexual y de género integral. Proteger la expresión de la identidad de género en la escuela de los trabajadores de la educación y de los estudiantes, y prohibir las pólizas que obligan a los profesores a delatar a los estudiantes LGBTQ2S+ a sus padres.
- 7. ENCARCELAMIENTO:** Poner fin a la violencia, la opresión y la persecución de los presos transgénero. Dejar de asignar erróneamente a los presos a cárceles que no se ajustan a su género. Acceso total a la atención médica, incluyendo el tratamiento hormonal y todas las cirugías correctivas solicitadas.
- 8. INMIGRACIÓN:** Conceder asilo inmediato a las personas transgénero basándose únicamente en la opresión de género. Abolir el ICE y detener todas las deportaciones.
- 9. IDENTIFICACIÓN:** Abolir la cirugía forzada como requisitos para el reconocimiento de género. Permitir que los marcadores de género transgénero, no binario, Dos Espíritus y otros, incluyendo la no revelación, sean utilizados en toda la documentación gubernamental.
- 10. CRÍMINES DE ODIOS:** Ampliar las leyes sobre delitos de odio en todas partes para incluir los delitos de violencia basados en la orientación sexual, la identidad de género y la expresión de género.

Exigimos que el Congreso apruebe ya la Ley de Igualdad. ¡Pero debemos seguir luchando en las calles por todos nuestros derechos! □