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Google, Amazon workers say ‘No tech for Israeli apartheid’

By Mackenzie Dolan and Dave Welsh
Seattle and San Francisco

Tech workers held actions in multiple cities Sept. 8, demanding Big Tech drop its Project Nimbus contract with the apartheid police state of Israel. Project Nimbus is a \$1.2 billion-dollar contract Amazon and Google have with the Israeli government and military for “cloud computing” that aids in surveillance and persecution of the Palestinian people through artificial intelligence.

Actions were held in Seattle, New York City, San Francisco and Durham, North Carolina.

In Seattle, activists spoke about reasons why workers will not support the Zionist project and oppose the cooperation of Israeli forces with the Seattle Police Department. The Palestinian people face untold horrors of oppression by the Israeli government. People are forcibly removed from their homes, harassed and beaten in the streets and spied on constantly by one of the most advanced cybersecurity divisions in the world.

While chants echoed through the city of Seattle, speeches on why tech workers will not support this were heard. The main theme was clear: Tech workers want to build tech to bring people together not to terrorize people. One speaker made the connection that as Seattle police train with Israeli forces, this technology will not only terrorize those abroad but will eventually be used against activists and agitators locally as well.

San Francisco workers ‘don’t want their labor being used to surveil’

About 150 people crowded the sidewalk outside Google and Amazon offices on Market Street in San Francisco. Many were young tech employees of these two corporate giants.



Seattle, Sept. 8.

WW PHOTO: MACKENZIE DOLAN

“Tech workers don’t want their labor being used to surveil Palestinians, expand illegal Israeli settlements and inflict violence on Palestinians living under military occupation,” said a statement passed out by members of the Palestine Action Network.

“I feel like I am making a living off the oppression of my family in Palestine,” said one Google employee. A former Google worker, Ariel Koren, who had been forced to resign from the company after speaking out, said, “Don’t forget that millions of Jews oppose Israel’s oppression of Palestinians.”

Aisha from the Palestinian Youth Movement said the Project Nimbus surveillance “can be used to decide which children can be allowed to cross the street to go to school ... which young person will be sent to administrative detention ... or who will be sent to facilities where torture is practiced. Remember that children as young as 13 years old have been sent to prisons where they can languish for years.” The technology uses facial recognition, which has a notoriously high margin of error, and even claims to be able to perform “emotional analysis” of the people it surveils.

Breaking the Silence, a group of Israeli military veterans, who are against the

occupation, issued a statement that “data collection over the Palestinian population is an integral part of the occupation.” The Arab Center for Social Media Advancement said mass surveillance is “used to create a feeling among Palestinians that we are being watched all the time, which could make Palestinian population control easier.”

Speakers pointed out that the Nimbus software can be used in other countries against oppressed people, including Black and Brown people right here in the United States. Sharif Zakout, from the Arab Resource and Organizing Center, high-

lighted “the role Israel plays in the world-wide repression of people’s movements.” In the past this has included extensive arms sales to right-wing dictatorships in Latin America (for example, Pinochet in Chile and Somoza in Nicaragua).

The book, “The Unspoken Alliance: Israel’s Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa,” by Sasha Polakow-Suransky, documents Israel’s provision of arms, including nuclear capability, to the racist South African government in the 1970s and 1980s, to combat the rising South African freedom movement at that time. Modern software like Nimbus can be reexported by Israel to repressive regimes today.

As workers it is our responsibility to hold our employers accountable for the contracts they sign. We should not be aiding in the harassment and displacement of Palestinian people, and we should not be building tech that is used to oppress. Tech workers should be horrified to see tech used to subjugate oppressed people around the world.

A statement from the workers of Amazon and Google can be found here: tinyurl.com/4sdz8amv. Additional Information: notechforapartheid.com.

Mackenzie Dolan is a tech worker in Seattle.



San Francisco, Sept. 8.

PHOTO: SAVANNAH KUANG

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Activists get reproductive justice, voter access on Michigan ballot

By Martha Grevatt

Michigan’s progressive movement scored a victory, when the Michigan Supreme Court ruled Sept. 8 to allow two progressive initiatives to appear on the ballot in November.

The Reproductive Freedom for All proposal enshrines in the state constitution the right to reproductive choices — including abortion and contraception — and ensures reproductive health care services such as miscarriage management, birth control, prenatal care and in-vitro fertilization. If the measure passes, it will nullify the 1931 law that bans all abortions with exceptions only made to protect the life or health of the pregnant person.

Reproductive justice activists believe the constitutional language is needed, because right-wing forces are involved in two legal challenges to the current court stay on enforcing the 1931 law. Unless reproductive rights are codified in Michigan’s constitution, this draconian law could be put in force, essentially criminalizing abortion. That would have ramifications beyond Michigan, where many pregnant people have had to travel from other states, such as neighboring Ohio, where abortion became illegal following the June overturn of Roe v. Wade by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Until the 5-2 ruling by the Michigan high court, the fate of the Reproductive Freedom for All proposal was in limbo after the State Board of Canvassers tried to keep it off the ballot over a bogus technical issue, potentially disenfranchising the record 750,000+ voters who signed the petition.

Now voters in Michigan will join those in four other states in deciding the issue at the polls. California and Vermont have issues on the ballot similar to Michigan’s. Montana and Kentucky have right-wing ballot language banning all or most abortions — but a comparable proposal suffered a decisive defeat in Kansas Aug. 2.

The New York state legislature passed the Equality Amendment Sept. 9, which adds language to that state’s constitution ensuring the right to abortion.

These elections are one of many fronts, where the



Detroit protest after the Supreme Court overturn of Roe v. Wade, June 24.

reproductive justice movement is pushing back against the horrendous June decision by the misogynist U.S. Supreme Court.

Expanding voter access

The Promote the Vote 2022 proposal will be on Michigan’s November ballot, despite Republican efforts to keep it off — based on another technicality. It will improve voter access by making early and absentee voting easier, along with constitutional enshrinement of current practice allowing in-person voting with photo identification or a signed affidavit.

It has been shown that limits on voter access disproportionately impact participation by people of color.

As with Reproductive Freedom for All, a grassroots, volunteer-driven campaign collected more than the 425,000 signatures required by state law to place the Promote the Vote proposal on the ballot. That the same forces opposed both initiatives demonstrates that the struggles against white supremacy and sexism — and all oppression and exploitation — are interconnected. If the two proposals pass in November, it will be a double victory against both racist disenfranchisement and patriarchal denial of bodily autonomy. □

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Housing activists crash developers' party

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

Residents of the University City Townhomes and their supporters, determined to save their homes from destruction by property developers, have taken their fight directly to the movers and shakers behind most gentrification in Philadelphia.

Over 100 residents and supporters converged on the University of Pennsylvania convocation for the incoming class of 2026, Aug. 29, shouting down President Liz Magill with chants of “Housing is a human right” and “Stop Penntrification.” Protesters then used the occasion to educate students about UPenn’s racist history in the destruction of a major Black Philadelphia neighborhood.

On Sept. 7, hundreds of protesters crashed the 2022 annual reception and fundraiser for the Building Industry Association of Philadelphia (BIAP) Political Action Committee, described as an “evening of networking with members of the Philadelphia City Council and the Pennsylvania General Assembly.” The private event, held at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), was attended by dozens of bankers, real estate developers and gentrifiers. With ticket prices starting at \$250 for non-BIAP members, no workers or low-income residents were expected on the guest list.

When building guards tried to stop demonstrators from getting on elevators to reach the party on the 11th floor, many climbed flights of stairs in defiance.

BIAP is the most powerful development PAC in Philadelphia. The for-profit developers of “low-income housing” lobby and monopolize state and city money in the name of protecting Black and Brown communities, without seeking input from residents. The Land Bank purchases delinquent properties in low-income communities, then hands them off for pennies to the developers who convert them to middle-income housing. Since this PAC

has been active in Philadelphia, the number of available affordable low-income units has drastically declined.

City Controller Rebecca Rhynhart was seen fleeing the event as demonstrators entered the room. Councilmember Kendra Brooks, who ran for office on the Working Families Party ticket, hightailed it to an outside patio, glass in hand, to avoid the protesters who shouted, “Hey Kendra, we have some working families out here.”

Brooks was one of the City Council members the UC Townhomes residents’ council met with earlier in the week seeking support for the city to buy the property. On Sept. 8, Brooks, along with Councilmembers Helen Gym and Jamie Gauthier, whose district includes the townhomes, released a previously prepared statement calling for a one-year extension of the federal contract between Altman Group and Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The council members call for the city to commit funds to preserve affordable housing and for state and federal matching funds. UC Townhomes residents are demanding that public officials stand up to greedy developers and purchase the property from Altman. There is precedent for this. Recently University Square Plaza, a residence for elderly and disabled people across the street from UC Townhomes, was preserved with local government



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Demonstrators crash developers’ party, Sept. 7.

funds when the owners’ contract with HUD expired.

Press conference and rally at City Hall

UC Townhomes, called “the People’s Townhomes” by residents, is owned by developer Brett Altman, who was a prior president of the BIAP. Altman has refused to meet directly with residents, who initially expected to be evicted Sept. 7. They only learned from media sources that the date had been extended to Oct. 8.

To mark this partial victory residents and supporters held a press conference and rally of over 300 people outside City Hall earlier in the evening, before marching to PAFA.

Several residents voiced their determination to remain in their homes. They are demanding that the City of Philadelphia buy the block where the 70 homes, hous-

ing over 400 residents, are located. Resident Sheldon Davids stated: “We stopped the sale of the property to a commercial buyer. This was a victory. Now we have a plan for the city to purchase and preserve the property.”

Resident Rasheeda Alexander read the residents’ demands which include “stopping outside investors and developers who are buying up our neighborhoods and pushing up prices for Philadelphia families.” They are calling on Altman Group to extend their contract with HUD for two years.

Other speakers included resident Mel Hairston and Workers World Party member Mike Wilson, who both laid the blame for the housing crisis directly on the profit-driven system of capitalism. Hairston stated: “Serial killers in suits are largely responsible for the destruction in our neighborhoods. There’s a war going on right now. They want to bring the war to the people? We bringing it right back to them.

“We are taking back what is ours by storm. Right now, we are taking the streets over and shutting them down. It is us versus capitalism. Build a worker’s world!”

Behind colorful banners and chanting: “Our city is not for sale, so we ain’t going nowhere!” demonstrators circled City Hall before marching to the surprise confrontation with developers.

A video of the protests on Sept. 7 is available at tinyurl.com/3bmed3md. □



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Resident activist Darlene Foreman leads chants, as demonstrators circle City Hall, Philadelphia, Sept. 7.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Demonstrators crash developers’ party, Sept. 7.

Queen City Workers’ Center fights for tenant’s rights

By **Lydian Standeford**
Buffalo, New York

For two months, fair housing activists with the Queen City Workers’ Center (QCWC) have stood up for the rights of Debbie Brenner, a tenant who has suffered through a string of abuses at the hands of her now former landlords, Patricia and Bryan Leslie, while living in the Town of Tonawanda, New York, a suburb of Buffalo.

Brenner’s conflict with her landlords began when she requested reasonable accommodation after a leg injury in July 2020, which the landlords dragged their feet in providing. Later Brenner legally withheld rent, when the apartment was uninhabitable due to a broken thermostat. She was eventually evicted in May 2022.

New York State law requires that land-

lords either return a tenant’s security deposit or provide written notice explaining why they are keeping it, within two weeks of the tenant vacating the unit — the Leslies did neither. Brenner is currently homeless, and the \$700 the Leslies owe her would go a long way toward getting her out of that hardship.

QCWC takes on the landlords

QCWC is using a variety of methods to achieve this goal: making the Leslies the least popular landlords on the block by frequent pickets with chanting and holding signs; and by leafleting and canvassing in the neighborhood to raise awareness of the situation.

Volunteers have also been providing court support. The Leslies have attempted to use the legal system to manipulate

more money out of their tenant on several occasions; they have even expressed frustration at Brenner and QCWC’s reliance on “following the law.” By observing as much of Brenner’s legal proceedings as possible, the Leslies are given less opportunity to exercise bad faith arguments within the courthouse.

The picket organizers have a clear message that can be communicated to local news outlets who are willing to cover the story. And they have disseminated it efficiently to passersby, who are curious about the protest. By having a clear message, a stated goal and a flexible plan to achieve that goal, QCWC’s campaign is sustainable for as long as the Leslies resist.

The activists are working within the legal right to protest and are staying on public property. The Leslies’ complaint that the protesters use too many swear words is not legally punishable. Despite the activists not breaking any laws, local police have predictably found excuses to disrupt the protests on various occasions and inconvenience the organizers.

Brenner has now faced additional legal persecution for protesting. Tonawanda PD issued her a citation for the use of a bullhorn at a picket, and a Tonawanda judge is trying to fine her more than the legal maximum for the offense.

Are the Leslies winning this battle? Even if they think they have the upper hand, they are only extending their own discomfort by not meeting the organizers’

demands. The next time Brenner goes to court, she knows that she won’t go alone; and any attempt at further abuse by the Leslies will continue to be witnessed by QCWC members. QCWC are making it clear that there is simply no way out of this for the Leslies — either live with the protests on their front lawn indefinitely or give Brenner her deposit back.

This benefits not only Brenner but all tenants. It sends a message to all landlords that they will be held accountable for their actions, if not by the law, then by the tenants whom they have wronged and by every tenant that that tenant is organizing with as well. QCWC can’t legally make the Leslies do the right thing, but they can continue to be a thorn in their side.

Many people who face Brenner’s situation are isolated from support systems, due to disability, age or other social factors, and landlords get away with more by assuming that such tenants will be unable to advocate for themselves if they are wronged.

The members of QCWC see Brenner as a friend and a fellow worker not just a client seeking help. This is reflected in the protest chants raised by volunteers, like “Leslies, fork over the cash! You can’t treat our friend like trash!”

Getting involved in a workers’ center is a way to multiply your efforts. Even if your job isn’t unionized or you don’t have a tenant organization, a worker’s center can help offer representation to individual workers and help them organize. □



Picket outside Brenner’s landlords’ house.

ATTICA REBELLION

Paris Commune of the Black Liberation Movement



By Larry Holmes

The following excerpted article first appeared online Sept. 14, 2016, to mark the 45th anniversary of this historic uprising of incarcerated workers and revolutionaries.

The story of Attica, Sept. 9, 1971, is the story of how prisons can be incubators of revolutionaries — like George Jackson, assassinated 2 ½ weeks earlier at San Quentin State Prison.

Attica has been described as the biggest deployment of state violence since the crushing of the Native uprising at Wounded Knee — 81 years before.

The significance of the Attica uprising as a prison rebellion transcends prison. Attica was a high-water mark in the Black Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It was almost the Black Liberation Movement’s Paris Commune of 100 years before in France in 1871.

Attica was spontaneous, but to the extent that it was led, it was organized by revolutionaries — highly political individuals who considered themselves Marxists, Maoists, Black liberationists. They organized committees for food and for negotiations. They put together 28 demands in a few hours!

Their demands addressed every aspect of survival in prison: health, food, an end to solitary confinement, legal rights, the right to family visitation, the right to get political material in the mail. Particularly noteworthy, in relation to yesterday’s national prison strike, is that almost one-third of their demands addressed prisoner labor rights.

This is from their statement: “We demand an end to prison labor exploitation. ... Prisoners who refuse to work are punished and segregated. This is a class issue.”

Their demands included: Prisoners should be considered workers. The work day should be eight hours. Prisoners should have the right to form a union. Prisons should be made to conform to New York state labor laws, including wages and workers’ compensation for accidents. Prisoners should have access to vocational training, union pay scales, union membership.

Workers World Party played an important role at Attica. The Party had a tremendous reputation with prisoners, through



Attica prison rebellion, 1971

both Youth Against War and Fascism and the Prisoners’ Solidarity Committee, and was known in all state prisons. We did work, ranging from solidarity with political prisoners and legal help, to providing buses to take prisoners’ families for visits to upstate prisons. We were also known for our political program: “Prisons are concentration camps for the poor! Tear them down!” Our reputation was such that the Attica negotiating committee asked that a leading comrade, Tom Soto, be an observer during negotiations with the state.

Ultimately the repression came. Nelson Rockefeller, the oil billionaire, then the governor, gave the orders to crush the uprising. He had a reputation as an Eastern liberal, but he was actually a ruling-class monster with presidential aspirations, so he ordered in more than 1,000 troops, guards and state troopers from four to five states around, to shoot indiscriminately. The state killed more than 30 prisoners and 10 hostages. The bourgeois propaganda was that the prisoners had killed the hostages, with the media giving all sorts of lying details. But it later came out that all who died, died of bullet wounds — and the prisoners had no guns. Surviving prisoners were tortured, without their wounds being treated.

The ruling class made their point: “There is a price to pay” if there is rebellion.

Organize prisoners, NOT cops and guards!

But the uprising opened up the question of prisoners’ rights and liberation. From then on, the cutoff, isolated pris-

oners became a much bigger issue in our movement, as well as the issue of prisoners as workers.

This brings us to yesterday’s strike, on Sept. 9. The prison population was perhaps under 500,000 in 1971. Now it is six to seven times that, and there is the prison-industrial complex. More than 1 million of those prisoners work within the prisons. They do construction and clearing land; they do clothing manufacture; or they work for McDonalds, ATT or Walmart. Many, many corporations are using prison labor.

The prisoners are a detachment of the working class, working under prison slave-like conditions for pennies a day. For yesterday’s strike, unionization and minimum wages were among the many demands, as well as abolition of prisons.

It is noteworthy that foremost among the forces helping the prisoners are anarchists, members of the International Workers of the World, who are also working with low-wage workers. As revolutionary Marxists we have many differences with anarchists, but we should give credit where credit is due.

The I.W.W. writings on why they are motivated should be read by unionists. These make clear that while they are supporting prisoners to have workers’ rights, their ultimate objective is to abolish prison slave labor. This is a good reminder to labor unionists that our ultimate objective should be to end slave labor.

This is a reminder to the labor movement of the necessity to adopt revolutionary methods in the labor struggle. Revolutionaries aid in the organization of the working class, so that workers can better their conditions.

However, revolutionaries never forget that our ultimate goal is not merely improving the conditions under which workers’ labor is exploited but rather the abolition of exploitation, the abolition of all wage slavery and capitalism.

The strike raises larger issues. For instance, in 1977 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a case brought by a North Carolina prisoners’ union that the prisoners do not have rights as workers.

But when has the claim of “no rights” ever stopped us from organizing workers?

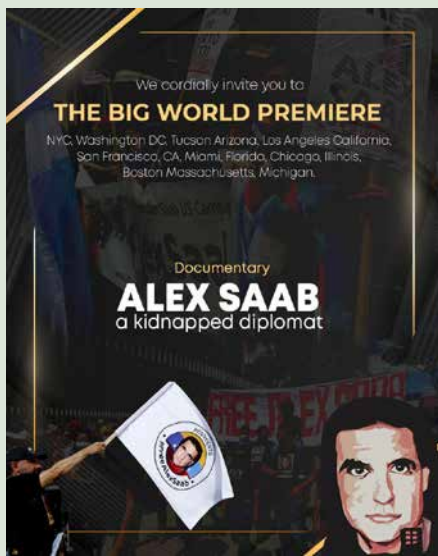
Fighting for legal rights is part of organizing! We fight for workers organizing in the “right-to-work” states in the South, for undocumented workers who don’t

have bourgeois rights as workers.

One problem for some unions is that they have cops and prison guards in these unions. That makes it harder for the union to take anti-racist and solidarity positions. They should get rid of the prison guards and organize the prisoners!

The working class is changing. Now a big section is temporary and unorganized. The Black Lives Matter movement is part of the working class in motion and is demanding a stop to killing Black and Brown workers and also demanding jobs and employment.

Our Party has to take the lead in acknowledging who is at the forefront of working-class organizing. If you have a Marxist view of the working class, our class is far from disappearing — it is expanding! End prison slave labor! □



On Sept. 16, President Maduro will be hosting the showing of the movie “Alex Saab, a diplomat kidnapped” at the Bolivar Theater in Caracas, Venezuela. Since Saab was arrested illegally in 2020 for working to evade the illegal, unilateral and coercive sanctions of the United States against the Venezuelan people, his case has drawn international condemnation and attention.

Venezuelan activists are asking that individuals and groups from around the globe show solidarity by hosting a viewing of the film and sending pictures, so they can be shown prior to the viewing in Caracas. Viewings are scheduled in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Tucson, Miami, Chicago, Boston, in Michigan and other places. Trailer for movie: youtube.com/watch?v=YHoyxWDT2V0.

A turning point in ‘American’ corrections

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

The following lightly edited commentary by Mumia Abu-Jamal aired as part of the “50 Years of Resistance: Black August and Attica” live broadcast, hosted by the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party, Sept. 2, 2021.

In my mind, Attica was a turning point in American — and I use the term loosely — corrections. It was like, what road will be taken? And the state, through Rockefeller, the governor of New York, chose the road of mass repression.

The media largely supported his efforts. They maligned and lied against these men, using really classic racism and fear. They charged that these men killed the men that the state killed. I think it was 39 people including 10 prison employees.

It took generations to have courts say,

in a civil action, that it was not so. But it wasn’t true that day, that night, that month, that week. Attica became a hall-mark of American corrections and really the American way of repression, instead of a tribune hour of liberation. What those men asked for was no retaliation, no charges and then specific changes to the prison. And they knew that the state, through prison officials, would kill them.

They said, send us to another country. We would rather go to another country than endure this kind of repression. They had press conferences; they wrote letters; they told this to the esteemed public officials and journalists who they met with. I don’t think people took them seriously, until it was too late. So what could have been a liberation moment became one of the most repressive moments in American history. This was the naked face of the repressive state, punishing

people who wanted to be free.

Think about it from this context. A decade after Attica, a U.S. president demanded that the president of a neighboring socialist state [Cuba] kick out his prisoners and free them and let them come to the United States. What’s the difference in principle here? Thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of people fled Cuba. They called it the Mariel boatlift.

Many of those people ended up in the U.S. prison system. And some remain there today. They are mostly in Terre Haute, Indiana. Because even though they’ve served their sentences, America was like, you can stay in America. But you ain’t going out. That’s the reality.

My point is that why was what an American president did applicable, but what African American and Puerto Rican prisoners said absurd? It’s the same thing. Now they might not have found a

great life in the countries they wanted to go to. But you know, hopefully they would have found freedom, something they did not have in the United States. They may have lived to an old, old age, instead of being slaughtered by state troopers. And they wouldn’t have found the kind of class and race denial that meant their executions in Attica.

Those are the things I think about, when I think about Attica. It really was a turning point. There was a live option that could have gone another way, but for the political forces in New York State and in the United States. This just didn’t come from the governor, so much as through the governor. [Nelson] Rockefeller had political ambitions as a Republican official. And the United States didn’t want the embarrassment of people demanding to be freed from the United States prisons. So they kind of killed two birds with one stone. □

Alabama miners defiant in longest U.S. strike underway

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

The longest strike in the U.S. is going on right now in Brookwood, Alabama, where United Mine Workers are still on the picket line after 17-plus months.

In April 2021, 1,100 workers walked out of the Warrior Met mines. They had given serious wage and benefit concessions to save the company from bankruptcy — and then the company broke its “promise” to restore those cuts.

As Haeden Wright, president of UMWA Auxiliary Locals 2368 and 2245, said in a Oct. 31, 2021, Twitter broadcast, the struggle is over “higher compensation, better benefits, better holidays — on every front of the contract. We’ve been making them millions of dollars!” (@HaedenWright)

Now — in a union-busting move similar to those being mounted by Amazon and Starbucks — Warrior Met sent out a list of 40 workers it says will never be rehired, even if the company signs a new contract with the UMW. This is truly a “blacklisting” of workers, as most of those listed are African American, leaders of the strike — or both.

UMW International President Cecil

E. Roberts issued a Sept. 2 statement denouncing Warrior Met’s racism: “I would note that the list includes the majority of leaders in every UMW local union that is on strike. It also includes a disproportionate number of African-American members. ... Warrior Met now wants to wipe out the union’s local leadership and attack our union’s diversity.”

“Perhaps the Wall Street, ‘greed is good’ mentality of Warrior Met upper management has deluded them into believing this action will intimidate the

membership into submission. That would be a serious miscalculation.” (umwa.org)

Almost 900 of the original walkouts are still on strike, despite an unrelenting assault by the company supported by state authorities. Scabs were escorted into Warrior Met by the state highway patrol, while those same cops harassed the picketing workers. A state judge issued an injunction that essentially barred strikers and supporters from bringing the picket lines close to mine entrances.

Then on Aug. 3, the National Labor Relations Board, through its southern unit Region 10, ordered the UMW to pay Warrior Met \$13.3 million — allegedly for the costs of security guards, security cameras, repairs and “production lost” because of the strike. This to a company that made \$146 million in profits from January to March and paid its CEO \$5.6 million in 2021. (investors.warriormetcoal.com, Aug. 3)

Roberts analyzed the ruling in an Aug. 3 statement: “What is the purpose of a strike if not to impact the operations of the

employer, including production? Is it now the policy of the federal government that unions be required to pay a company’s losses as a consequence of their members exercising their rights as working people?”

Roberts further affirmed: “I want to be clear: Warrior Met Coal instigated this strike and has brutally extended it through its sustained unwillingness to reach a fair and reasonable agreement at the bargaining table.

“We have no intention of paying its costs for doing so. The right to strike in America must be preserved. We will fight this at every level, in every court. We will spend every penny of our resources, rather than give in to something like this from the NLRB, Warrior Met or any other entity.”

The Alabama miners remain defiant. They are receiving constant and ongoing mutual aid and solidarity from other unions and workers. Most recently the National Association of Letter Carriers voted at its Aug. 10 convention to send \$25,000 to the UMW strike fund, saying, “This ruling from the NLRB is unjust and troubling for all unions and the labor movement. NALC stands with the members of UMWA and their efforts to fight this ruling.” (nalc.org, Aug. 10) □



PHOTO CREDIT: QUEZ SHIPMAN/100 DAYS IN APPALACHIA

Striking Brookwood, Alabama, miners have received strong solidarity from across the U.S., here from the International Longshoremen’s Association local of Mobile, Aug. 4, 2021, Tannehill Ironworks Park.

UMWA commemorates the Mine Wars on Labor Day weekend

By Otis Grotewohl
Marmet, West Virginia

During Labor Day weekend, the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum hosted two ceremonies entitled “Courage in the Hollers” to present permanent monuments in honor of the coal miners who fought in the Battle of Blair Mountain. That conflict is considered the largest labor uprising in U.S. history and the largest armed uprising since the U.S. Civil War.

The Battle of Blair Mountain was an armed struggle in 1921 between roughly 10,000 multinational coal miners, on one side, and a private army of scabs and the Logan County sheriff’s deputies known as the “Logan Defenders,” on the other.

The first monument was uncovered on Sept. 3, in Clothier, West Virginia, the town closest to Blair Mountain. The second monument was unveiled on Sept. 5 — Labor Day — in the town of Marmet, West Virginia, where the miners initiated their march that led to the battle.

On Aug. 25, 1921, coal miners planned on marching from the Kanawha County town of Marmet all the way down to Mingo County, with the intention of physically freeing incarcerated coal miners. The miners ended up in a violent clash on Blair Mountain, located in Logan County, against the viciously anti-union Sheriff Don Chafin and his private army of deputies and scab vigilantes.

Working-class history seldom taught

The coal miners who fought on Blair Mountain donned red bandannas to signify class unity. For this, they became known as “red-neck” miners, and that battle is one of several known as the “mine wars.” The red bandannas are featured in the monuments displayed in Clothier and Marmet. As an act of labor solidarity, the monuments were assembled by union Steelworkers in Pittsburgh.

This writer attended the event in

Marmet on Labor Day and heard the speakers, including Executive Director of the Mine Wars Museum Mackenzie New Walker and United Mine Workers (UMWA) International District 17 Vice President Brian Lacy, among others.

The keynote speaker was UMWA International President Cecil Roberts, the great-nephew of the most recognized leader in the Battle of Blair Mountain, Bill Blizzard. Roberts mentioned that his great-uncle Blizzard was first elected as Vice President of District 17 as a teenager. Like many miners who fought on Blair Mountain, Blizzard was charged with the crimes of treason and murder by the state of West Virginia, for which he was later acquitted. He went on to serve as President of UMWA District 17, until he was forced out of the union by John Lewis in the 1950s; he died three years later at age 65.



UMWA International District 17 Vice President Brian Lacy and Mine Wars Museum Executive Director Mackenzie New Walker, wearing a “Black Lung Kills” T-shirt, look on as UMWA President Cecil Roberts addresses crowd.

Roberts spoke about the 1912-1913 strike on Paint Creek-Cabin Creek, located in Kanawha County, which was in many ways a prelude to the Battle of Blair Mountain. According to Roberts, the miners in Paint Creek were unionized, and

the miners in Cabin were not. The initial demands came from Paint Creek miners, who wanted a pay raise competitive with the rest of the unionized miners in the county, while unorganized Cabin Creek miners simply wanted a union.

The coal operators sent in Baldwin-Felts agents to evict all 6,000 miners from their homes, which ultimately led to the strike at Paint Creek-Cabin Creek. Miners were forced to live in tents, and they fought back against violent agents.

Roberts’ great-great-grandmother Sarah “Ma” Blizzard — Bill’s mother — assisted miners in the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike. The famous labor ballad “Solidarity Forever” — sung in various languages throughout the world — was written in Huntington, West Virginia, by Industrial Workers of the World activist Ralph Chaplin in response to the bloody Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike.

Roberts spoke about another brawl between coal miners and Baldwin-Felts detectives in 1920 that occurred in the coal mining town of Matewan, situated in the southwestern county of Mingo. Following that fight, Matewan Police Chief Sid Hatfield and his deputy Ed Chambers faced trial on conspiracy charges. Hatfield and Chambers fought alongside the coal miners in the gunfight in Matewan against the Baldwin-Felts agents and are the only recorded police officers in U.S. history to side with workers in a labor dispute.

For that, both men were shot dead Aug. 1, 1921, on the courthouse steps of Welch, West Virginia, just before they stood trial. It was the murder of Hatfield and Chambers that sparked the mass march on Blair Mountain.

Importance of solidarity

Both the monuments and the Mine Wars Museum are worth visiting for anyone interested in working-class history. The miners who fought in the mine wars were Black and white, immigrant



Silhouette monuments, constructed by union Steelworkers, presented in honor of miners who fought in the Battle of Blair Mountain, with the word “Solidarity” engraved below.

and U.S.-born. As a result of the multinational character of coal miners — when compared to other industries, which were often viciously segregated by both bosses and unions at the time — the UMWA was among one of the first racially integrated trade unions in the U.S.

Despite the gains made by the UMWA, African American miners were still subjected to the worst treatment by the coal operators. In discussing his own experiences, as well as his father’s during the period of the mine wars, Robert Armstead writes in his autobiography “Black Days, Black Dust: Memories of an African American Coal Miner”: “Black miners often worked in the worst areas of the mines. These included heading with low ceilings or waters and areas with bad air that needed to be cleared and ventilated often, causing dead time, or time without pay.”

As the far right is currently mobilizing shock troops to disrupt school board meetings in an attempt to criminalize the teaching of this type of history, it is important we learn and educate others about historical struggles of working and oppressed peoples.

Mine Wars Museum Communications and Outreach Coordinator and young worker, Kirstyn Ooten, told Workers World why she felt the “Courage of the Hollers” mission is relevant today: “Painstakingly, our history has been ripped from our classrooms, textbooks and even daily conversation. We can’t turn back time, but we can start now with these new projects in engaging our youth with the sacrifices our ancestors made for labor justice.” □

Blinken’s blinders

By Julia Wright

Last month, another chapter of U.S. domination in Africa was written, a chapter of such hubris and arrogance toward independent and sovereign African countries that we begin to wonder if there is not a growing agenda that the memory of George Floyd’s death is to be banned like critical race theory.

But how can we, African Americans, forget that African U.N.-member States blocked together to request an investigation into law enforcement on U.S. territory after his murder?

The head of the State Department, Antony Blinken, and the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Linda Thomas Greenfield, toured the African continent with language such as: “We hold you to be our equal partners to fight our common challenges; and as such, you must stop buying Russia’s oil and gas, or else we will take ‘action’ against you.”

The action thus spoken of was not (that I know of) spelled out, but, as Vijay

Prashad brilliantly says, if it means that the U.S. will boycott any African State that refuses to obey the U.S. ultimatum, then Africans will trade elsewhere, and the American economy will suffer.

Not surprisingly for a country that bans as much Black history as it can domestically, the U.S. shows a good deal of historical disregard of African history here. The fact that the USSR aided African liberation movements against colonial powers supported by NATO, the fact that the African States Mr. Blinken or Linda Thomas Greenfield are giving orders to today — are born from the struggle of those very liberation movements — these facts are to be pushed under the carpet — Ukraine oblige.

Such language also disregards the historic bonds born of the solidarity between the African American communities and the South African struggle against Apartheid — from the U.S. divestment campaigns to decades of mass protests.

Such language makes short shrift of the gratitude independent South Africa still

has toward our contribution to her struggle: For instance, in 2012, the late Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu called for the immediate release of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Such language forgets the contributions of African American intellectuals such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Richard Wright, Julian Mayfield, Maya Angelou, Stokely Carmichael [Kwame Toure] and others to the First Independent Republic of Ghana.

This is an indelible web of mutual solidarity that haughty words from the State Department cannot break.

Again, as Prashad reports, Madame Greenfield in Accra claims that “U.S. policy in Africa is an open book.” If I may be allowed, I would agree to the extent that both she and the State Department have, with their threats, opened their playbook for us to read clearly.

Our warm solidarity is extended to all the African States who are also members of the U.N. and who have thus been spoken down to. For if Antony Blinken really means he holds his African independent



Demonstrators gather in front of the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria in solidarity with the global Black Lives Matter movement, June 8, 2020.

interlocutors to be “equal partners,” well then “equal partners” have equal say and equal right to fair debate.

I spoke to African brothers and sisters in the former slave trade port of Nantes in France the other day. They all have heard of Uvalde. They all know who Emmett Till, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier are. They know all about our “invisible” political prisoners.

As “equal partners,” they will sit down at the table with a list of their own demands.

— (c) Julia Wright September 7, 2022

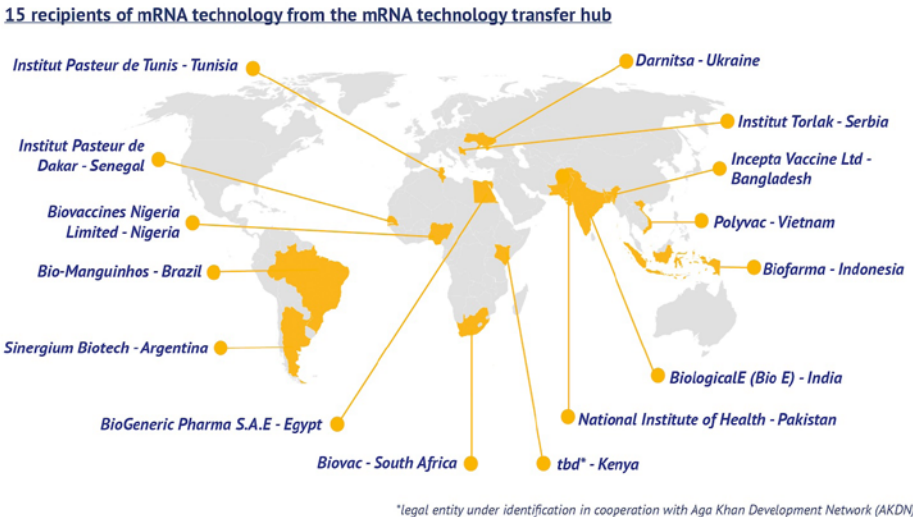
Global South countries strive for vaccine independence

By Lyn Neeley

A radical cooperative of 15 countries in the Global South is trying to create the next generation of messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines and drugs.

They are integrating medical technology, skills and knowledge, manufacturing practices, intellectual property and training from their respective universities and pharmaceutical companies.

The cooperative is an mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub, centralized at Afrigen, a South African biotech company. The first goal is to expand global access to new medicines by creating self-reliant, vaccine- and drug-making capabilities in the Global South. The second step is to transfer or share skills and technology throughout established centers in Africa, South America, Asia and Eastern Europe. (tinyurl.com/wn4jbdcv)



Once the transfer hub develops a new next-generation mRNA technology, it can quickly make vaccines to fight impending COVID-19 variants and other diseases claiming the lives of millions — such as tuberculosis, malaria, influenza, Zika and measles, and potentially even HIV.

Clinical trials for some of these vaccines are predicted to start at the end of 2022. Countries receiving the technology could be approved soon after.

This approach has the potential of preventing the next pandemic. “Until you can vaccinate the whole world in six months instead of six years, we’re going to continue with challenges like we are having right now with the variants,” says Barney Graham, a researcher who conducted foundational work on mRNA vaccines at the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, and is one of the hub’s advisers. (tinyurl.com/bdz44sa7)

Surmounting patent laws

At this research stage, the hub’s work is “legal.” But the biggest hurdle in its success will be international patent laws.

The hub receives help from the World Health Organization and the U.S. NIH, two organizations fraught with contradictions within capitalism. Both organizations have provided some progressive assistance and have developed some progressive programs in relation to health. However, their track record shows that, in the end, they ensure profits for huge

pharmaceutical companies by protecting and enforcing patent laws.

Researchers at the hub see two possible strategies to avoid patent laws. They are trying to develop distinct mRNA sequences and lipids that won’t infringe on Big Pharma Moderna’s mRNA patents. But this strategy is “like reinventing the wheel,” says Abdullah Ely, a molecular biologist at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. Moderna holds patents that are so broad, it will be hard for anyone else to develop distinct vaccines. The company has refused WHO’s request to help hub researchers.

Another avenue is to call on governments, the WHO and NIH to enforce policy changes and override patent barriers. But researchers at the hub are doubtful that these organizations will push back against Big Pharma.

Patent apartheid

In 1995, due to intense lobbying by the U.S. and other developed countries, the World Trade Organization (WTO) signed the TRIPS agreement (Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights). TRIPS stipulates that countries comply with patents for international intellectual property rights (IP) for a minimum of 20 years. This ensures profits for big capitalist businesses.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, India and South Africa called on the WTO to suspend enforcement of patent laws on COVID-19 vaccines and technology. The intent was that each country should be allowed to manufacture the vaccine without penalty. Nearly every Global

South country supported this proposal.

But the developed countries refused to temporarily waive the COVID-19 vaccine patents. On Nov. 29, 2021, nursing unions in 28 countries, representing more than 2.5 million health care workers, filed a formal appeal with the U.N. over the terrible crisis created by profiteering by the developed countries. The unions’ appeal stressed that the health care workers witnessed “staggering numbers of deaths and the immense suffering caused by political inaction.” (tinyurl.com/bdhfjkyh)

The patent waiver was rejected at the WTO through pressure by centibillionaire Bill Gates and the wealthy capitalist countries, including the U.S., the EU, Switzerland and Norway.

The Gates Foundation is the second largest donor after the U.S. to the World Health Organization, and it “prioritizes capitalist ownership first and health care in the formerly colonized world a distant second.” (“China shares vaccines, technology with world,” workers.org/2021/08/58302)

In June the WTO finally suspended COVID-19 patents — partially. “Piyush Goyal, Indian commerce minister, responded, ‘Vaccines have already lost relevance. Two years [the WTO] spent without giving a solution, and it is too late — not even a situation where you can say better late than never. It is just too late.’ Alan Beattie, world trade editor of the Financial Times, wrote: ‘TRIPS provisions have been watered down to almost homeopathic levels from the original proposal.’” (tinyurl.com/548wd6fm)

While vaccination rates are now 70%

to 90% in developed countries, more than 30 underdeveloped countries have vaccinated less than 10% of their population, according to the Multilateral Leaders Taskforce on COVID-19.

In the U.S., Big Pharma companies have pocketed profits from mRNA vaccine development, even though their costs were offset by public funding, foundational work at universities and a government grant of \$1 billion for clinical trials.

COVID-19 vaccines created nine new billionaires with a combined net wealth of \$19.3 billion, enough to fully vaccinate all people in low-income countries 1.3 times. (oxfam.org, May 20, 2021)

China and Cuba, collaboration and global assistance

Cuba and China filed for joint patent for a Pan-Corona vaccine in June 2022. The new vaccine, a collaboration between the biotechnological sectors of the two countries, is the first patent for a single vaccine effective against the many variants of COVID-19. (workers.org/2022/06/64691)

Cuba asked the World Health Organization to approve its vaccines — an important step towards making them available throughout the developing world. They are already exporting two homegrown vaccines to Venezuela, Vietnam, Iran and Nicaragua. As of November, 89% of Cuba’s population have been vaccinated — including children as young as 2. Unlike the messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines, Cuba’s protein vaccines do not need to be kept at extremely low temperatures, making them easier to deliver to remote areas. (tinyurl.com/2u9cemcw)

China has provided over 2.1 billion doses to more than 120 countries and international organizations, a third of the total number of vaccines administered outside China. It is already providing technology to low- to medium-income countries, so they can manufacture their own vaccines. China has 17 manufacturing agreements with 15 countries — with an anticipated production per year amounting to an additional 2 billion doses.

These countries with a socialist foundation show that sharing technology and raw materials, while helping to develop manufacturing, breaks the monopoly of the U.S. and EU pharmaceutical industries. □

How royalty reinforces imperialism

By Sara Flounders

As Britain’s Queen Elizabeth was near death, a professor of Nigerian heritage at Carnegie Mellon University, Uju Anya, tweeted her view: “I heard the chief monarch of a thieving, raping genocidal empire is finally dying. May her pain be excruciating.” This tweet brought down a torrent of condemnation.

A personal attack by Jeff Bezos, the world’s wealthiest person, confirmed the stake this multibillionaire has in defending his class and its enshrined property rights.

Uju Anya tweeted her response: “If anyone expects me to express anything but disdain for the monarch who supervised a government that sponsored the genocide that massacred and displaced half my family and the consequences of which those alive today are still trying to overcome, you can keep wishing upon a star.”

This exchange reflects a global divide in how the British Queen is remembered. It raises the larger question: Why is the death of Queen Elizabeth treated with such overwhelming reverential attention, not only in England but in the U.S. corporate media?

Even though the United States was founded on a struggle for independence from the British monarchy, upholding “the royals” is of fundamental economic importance to U.S. imperialism. Royalty reinforces privilege, the right of class rule and the right of inheritance.

Queen Elizabeth was the official figurehead of one of the world’s wealthiest families. The British monarchy’s real estate holdings were valued at roughly \$28 billion in 2021, according to Forbes and other sources; its total wealth was estimated at roughly \$88 billion in 2017 by the brand valuation consultancy firm Brand Finance. The queen reportedly successfully lobbied the British government in the 1970s to change a draft law in order to conceal her private wealth from the public, claiming the disclosure would be embarrassing.

From British Empire to British Commonwealth

Of greater importance to world imperialism is that Queen Elizabeth was, and now King Charles III is, the titular Head of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Formerly called the British Commonwealth, this neo-colonial political institution ropes in 2.2 billion people, one-third of the world’s population in 56 countries. Overwhelmingly the Commonwealth members are former British colonies; most are now politically independent.

More than 95% of the members of the Commonwealth are formerly colonized countries and people of color. Yet by right of inheritance, the head of this institution belongs to a fabulously wealthy white family. Today England is a country where one-third of the population are people of color, but the traditional monarch is by inheritance a white billionaire.

Members of the Commonwealth include eight Asian, 21 African, 13 Caribbean and American, and 11 Pacific Island countries. It includes the major economies of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Nigeria and South Africa, along with the economic powers Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In 15 countries the monarch is still nominally the head of state. But in order to combine all 56 vastly different countries in one institution, the British monarch is named “Head of the Commonwealth of Nations.”

Legalizing piracy

The Commonwealth is supposedly a network based on a “shared history” — a history of abuse and piracy. It maintains, even after independence, the brutal roots of the British Empire and its distorted trade routes, whereby all economic ownership relations were centered through British banks and corporations.

Being a member of the Commonwealth of Nations means accepting and making a commitment to so-called “democratic values.” What this really means is accepting continuance of the existing capitalist property relations and corporate ownership, including private corporate ownership of patents, and capitalist laws of inheritance. Many of the codes and courts that were set up under British colonial rule were left in place at the time of nominal independence.

Guaranteeing existing “ownership” — rather than demanding Britain pay reparations to the former colonies or return the lands, resources and industries the colonizers had confiscated — was in the pact each country was forced to sign. Most countries of the British Empire were left

impoverished and underdeveloped by British colonialism.

Commonwealth status in fact, although promising a protective network and continued trade for their products, forced countries to be part of an economic network based on past colonial theft and expropriation.

Zimbabwe chooses land reform

Zimbabwe, 20 years after independence through a land reform act, finally distributed land to subsistence farmers from the estates of wealthy white corporate farmers who had expropriated the land. The whole weight of the Commonwealth came down on the people. Zimbabwe was expelled, and all Zimbabwe’s ties with all African members of the Commonwealth countries and Britain were ordered cut. The U.S. of course backed up Britain in these harsh sanctions that created hyperinflation and economic chaos.

These brutal measures were intended to be an example to other African countries, where the masses were demanding land reform and distribution of expropriated land. This kind of policy is the basis of Wall Street’s support today for an institution that enforces unequal capitalist property relations.

A waning empire

Never once in 70 years did Queen Elizabeth or her family or her predecessors speak out against or even apologize for any of the crimes of British imperialism. Yet Britain demanded that every country support NATO’s war and agree to condemnation and sanctions against Russia.

None of the Commonwealth member countries in Asia, Africa or the Caribbean agreed to the U.S.-dictated sanctions on Russia — securing grain, protein, energy and development funds for their own populations was their priority. The only Commonwealth members to agree to the sanctions were Britain, Canada and Australia.

This is the clearest sign that the power of British and U.S. banks to dictate to countries of the Global South is weakening. Each country knew, from bitter experience in times of crisis, that their concerns and needs would be overlooked by the British banks and the royal family, whose generational wealth had been provided by their stolen labor and resources. □

Columbus community protests another police killing

By Martha Grevatt

The Columbus, Ohio, area has one of the highest rates of police shootings in the country. Since 2018 there have been 62 shootings, 19 of them fatal, in Franklin County. A large majority of those killed have been Black.

The most recent racist police murder took place Aug. 30, when Columbus police fatally shot 20-year-old Donovan Lewis in his bed — recalling the similar killing of Breonna Taylor by Louisville, Kentucky, police in 2020, as she slept in her bedroom.

Police arrived at Lewis’ home after midnight to serve a warrant on him for several charges. When Lewis did not heed orders to exit the home, officer Ricky Anderson entered his bedroom and immediately shot Lewis in the abdomen — as he was getting out of bed with his hands up. While Lewis was groaning in pain, officers handcuffed him.

Lewis’ parents and other family members were among those who took to the streets in protest the evening of Sept. 2. Speaking through

tears, Lewis’ mother, Rebecca Duran, said, “He loved to sing. He loved sports. He wanted to be loved, and he loved people unconditionally.”

“He was so sweet and so kind, even when someone disrespected him and there was a situation,” added Donovan’s father, Daryl Lewis. “He was so forgiving; he would forget about it and still come to you and show you love.”

After rallying on the steps of Columbus Division of Police, protesters marched through downtown Columbus, stopping briefly to listen to music Lewis had composed.

Protest organizers J.U.S.T.—Justice, Unity and Social Transformation—announced plans for more actions to demand justice for Lewis.

Since the September rally and march, Ohio State University students held a protest Sept. 6, and on Sept. 8 Lewis’ family and the family attorney held a press conference on the steps of Columbus City Hall.

A large crowd attended Lewis’ open casket funeral Sept. 10, where the Rev. Jeremiah Posey Sr. said Lewis “was just a young man, and he deserves justice.” □

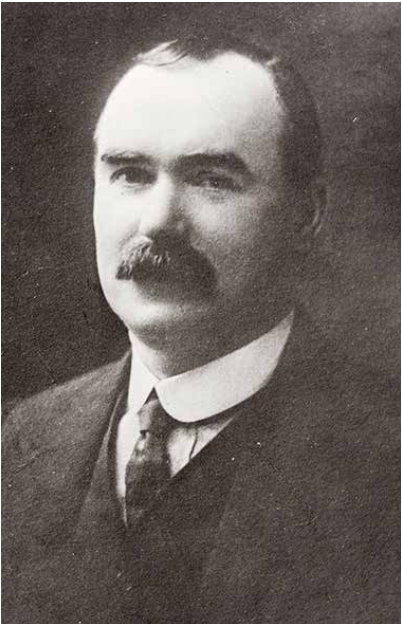


Protest against the Aug. 30 police killing of Donovan Lewis on Sept. 2, Columbus, Ohio.

Monarchy is a survival of the tyranny

By James Connolly

Irish Freedom Fighter, Marxist and labor leader James Connolly wrote these words in 1910. Connolly, along with James Larkin, was a leader of the Irish Transport and General Union during the 1913 Dublin Lockout. The British government executed Connolly by firing squad in 1916 for his leadership role in that year’s heroic Easter Rising.



James Connolly

What is monarchy? From whence does it derive its sanction? What has been its gift to humanity? Monarchy is a survival of the tyranny imposed by the hand of greed and treachery upon the human race in the darkest and most ignorant days of our history. It derives its only sanction from the sword of the marauder and the helplessness of the producer, and its gifts to humanity are unknown, save as they can be measured in the pernicious examples of triumphant and shameless iniquities.

Every class in society save royalty, and especially British royalty, has through some of its members contributed something to the elevation of the race. But neither in science, nor in art, nor in literature, nor in exploration, nor in mechanical invention, nor in humanizing of laws, nor in any sphere of human activity has a representative of British royalty helped forward the moral, intellectual or material

improvement of mankind.

But that royal family has opposed every forward move, fought every reform, persecuted every patriot and intrigued against every good cause. Slandering every friend of the people, it has befriended every oppressor. Eulogized today by misguided clerics, it has been notorious in history for the revolting nature of its crimes. Murder, treachery, adultery, incest, theft, perjury — every crime known to man has been committed by some one or other of the race of monarchs from whom King George is proud to trace his descent. □

Pakistan: Climate catastrophe caused by Global North

By Tania Siddiqi

Following months of intense humidity and a catastrophic heat wave—temperatures reaching upwards of 124F—Pakistan is once again bearing the brunt of the Global North-induced climate crisis.

According to the United Nations Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the government of Pakistan, due to monsoon rains and melting glaciers, one-third of the country is under water; 33 million people are displaced; 1.1 million homes have been completely destroyed or damaged; 3.6 million acres of crops and orchards have been washed away; and 1 million livestock have been killed. (Women’s Democratic Front, Sept. 9, 2022)

Organizations that are delivering direct relief are reporting more detailed accounts of this disaster. According to the Women’s Democratic Front, there is a much higher scale of devastation and losses. The scale of this disaster is unfathomable.

The WDF has noted: “[W]omen and children from the working class, mainly peasant, tenant and landless families in peripheries, are the most and worst affected ones. Most male workers have left for Gulf countries and urban centers within Pakistan, due to poverty and joblessness caused by prolonged imperialist war, financial imperialism and debt servicing for decades.

“High male labor migration has resulted in the feminization of agriculture and natural resource management. Their crops, farms and tools, fisheries, livestock, poultry, homes and belongings



Members of Women’s Democratic Front and Progressive Students Federation set up a solidarity donation relief camp.

have been washed away. They even can’t find dry land for funerals and the burial of their loved ones, who continue to die due to disaster and diseases.”

Climate catastrophe, colonialism and capitalism

Since 1959, Pakistan has been responsible for only 0.4% of the world’s historic CO₂ emissions. The U.S. is responsible for 21.5%.

The events happening in Pakistan are not unprecedented. Rather, they are a continuation of colonialism’s legacy in the region. During its 200 years of domination in the subcontinent, the British Empire was responsible for the deaths of 35 million people; and the cost of colonial theft in India by the British equals up to \$45 trillion. The Bengal Famine of 1943, which killed 3 million, was the

result of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s colonial policy.

Shortly after gaining independence from Britain, Pakistan became a tool to further U.S. imperialism. The WDF explains: “We are suffering for the last 40 years from an imperialist war [waged by the U.S.] in our region. Pakistan is a frontline state and a battlefield for this war.

“Our youth continued to be used as gun fodder/cheap labor in this war. Despite repeated floods in 2010, 2011 and 2014, there has been a heavy increase in military expenditure at the cost of water infrastructure, better water and natural resource management and public welfare. The war has also caused environmental degradation. The enforced migration of Afghans to Pakistan caused increased pressure on natural resources and food security.”

Now, another Cold War has started —

this time between the U.S. and China.

The WDF states: “The growth and profiteering-based capitalist development model of the international financial institutions (IFIs) has disrupted the natural flow of river water. Big dams, barrages and canals in irrigated feudal heartlands are also a reason for continued floods in the provinces of Sindh, Balochistan, Pakhtunkhwa and Seriaki Waseb. All the big flood infrastructure projects were financed by IFIs, and they never considered the potential environmental impacts.”

Flooding in Pakistan has caused an estimated \$10 billion in damages. The U.S. has pledged a pathetic \$30 million in “humanitarian assistance.”

Smash U.S. imperialism

The ongoing catastrophe in the Pakistan crisis is a political issue; as Marxist-Leninists, we must contextualize it as such. WDF explains: “Transforming structures of exploitation and oppression at home is our own battle, and we will fight that battle. However, we think that the left in the Global North needs to struggle against imperialism within the imperialist Global North to not only decarbonize but also decolonize and demilitarize the Global South and the world. We believe that this is the battle the Western left must fight to express solidarity with us.”

There’s nothing natural about the disaster in Pakistan, and there’s no such thing as a coincidental revolution. The only way to defeat U.S. imperialism is through international solidarity. Decarbonize, Decolonize and Demilitarize! Solidarity with the masses of Pakistan! Build a workers world! □

War propaganda threatens nuclear meltdown

By G. Dunkel

The United States and its imperialist allies in the European Union have a big political problem. The embargo/boycott that they so swiftly and gleefully placed on Russia’s energy exports, mainly oil and gas, had the unintended consequence of guaranteeing much higher profits to Russia in selling to markets outside U.S./EU control, as well as sharply increasing energy costs in western Europe.

Goldman Sachs predicts that the energy costs for EU households this coming winter will increase by \$2 trillion, or about 15% of EU’s GDP. (Bloomberg, Sept. 6)

Since the U.S. has its own domestic supplies of both gas and oil, this surge in energy costs is less of a threat to its economy.

Propaganda is usually the tool most used to build political support on a domestic front for troops on the front

line. While the EU and the United States don’t officially have “boots on the ground” in the current proxy war, they are both funneling huge amounts of military assistance to Ukraine.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken promised a fresh \$2 billion to Ukraine Sept. 5 to support a new offensive. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, on a Sept. 10 visit to Kiev, “promised Ukraine further military assistance.” (Deutsche Welle)

Nuclear ‘threat’ propaganda for Ukraine’s army

In the first flush of war propaganda, excluding Russian and Belorussian participation in athletic or cultural venues was widely accepted. Blue-and-yellow ribbons — Ukraine’s flag colors — were everywhere.

But the fervor has faded. The impact of articles and videos — praising the heroism of the Ukrainian people, their victories, the “incompetence” of Russia, the “atrocities” — has diminished as the war grinds on month after month.

The U.S. has made much of the United Nations’ condemnation of Russia’s “special military operation,” presenting this as worldwide condemnation and ignoring the fact that both India and China (each with over 1.4 bil-

lion people) were among the 35 nations which abstained on that vote.

Now it appears that the EU and the U.S. have picked the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station (ZNPS) as the new propaganda issue to use against Russia, playing on global fears of another Chernobyl, which was also located in Ukraine.

On April 26, 1986, while Ukraine was still part of the Soviet Union, there was a catastrophic nuclear accident at the No. 4 reactor in the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant near the city of Pripyat, as workers attempted to carry out a poorly designed experiment. Two people died in an explosion that spread a huge amount of radioactivity throughout Europe; many more died over the years that followed due to radiation poisoning.

ZNPS is now the largest nuclear power plant in Europe and among the 10 largest in the world. Built by the Soviet Union near the city of Enerhodar, it sits on the southern shore of the Kakhovka Reservoir on the Dnieper River

This is in an area of Ukraine that has been under Russian control since early March. Much of the ZNPS Ukrainian staff remained after the Russians took over. The plant was producing power for both the Ukrainian and the Russian grid until recently.

Enerhodar, where the families of the staff live, has recently been cut from the grid. There is no power for water, sewerage, cooking or heating, which puts a lot of pressure on the staff families. The degradation of living conditions in Enerhodar is going to force the families of the ZNPS staff members to leave, which will lead

the staff members to leave with them.

ZNPS has been the target of some heavy shelling, leading the International Atomic Energy Agency, an agency of the U.N., to demand the plant and surrounding area become “a nuclear safety and security protection zone.” (IEAA, Sept. 9)

Ukraine accused Russia of carrying out the shelling. Russia responded by asking why it would shell an area it had controlled for months?

Fanning fears, President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine recently said: “The IAEA and other international organizations must act much faster than they’re acting now. Because every minute the Russian troops stay at ZNPS is a risk of a global radiation disaster.” (bigthink.com/hard-science, Sept. 9)

Tom Hartsfield, experimental physicist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, said Zelensky is exaggerating. He points out that the design of ZNPS, and the physics this design relies on, make a catastrophe highly unlikely. The plant’s safety systems would have to be suddenly destroyed, while the reactor vessels were damaged but not destroyed.

The verdict? Nuclear catastrophe is scientifically unlikely. Elimination of fighting in the area would be safer but is not absolutely urgent.

The threat of nuclear catastrophe is being exaggerated to frighten people in the U.S. and EU countries to back a war being waged to reap profits for U.S. weapons companies and to strengthen U.S. power globally. (Lolita Baldour, “Allies push for U.S. weapons,” AP, Sept. 9) □



Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station

U.S. firms get rich, Ukrainian youth die

By Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein

Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein is a Venezuelan international relations expert, who was previously Director of the International Relations of the Presidency of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, his country's ambassador to Nicaragua and an advisor for international politics for TeleSUR. This article, published Sept. 7, was translated from Spanish by United World International and edited by WW.

Although it is not widely known, few social scientists have theorized as much and as well about war as Vladimir I. Lenin. When studying World War I, he said that “the proletariat fights and will always fight unfailingly against war, but without forgetting for a moment that wars can only be ended when the division of society into classes is totally ended. ...” The Soviet leader also taught that, “In war, whoever has more reserves, more sources of strength and more support among the people, wins.”

In the same way, one of the most brilliant contemporary military strategists, the Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap, stated that victories in combat were closely linked to “production, communication, transportation, cultural, health and other activities.” Thus, General Giap considered that “the victory overall [...] is the result of the heroic struggle of all compatriots, in all branches, services and regions, who dedicated their prodigious efforts, braved bombs and bullets and overcame innumerable difficulties.”

It is necessary to understand then, that the phenomenon of war is very complex, especially because the subjective factor intervenes decisively to forge victories, even when there are shortcomings or insufficiencies of the material elements that comprise its objective side.

In modern warfare, although technological weapons play an increasingly relevant role, the main and conclusive tool continues to be that of the humans who participate in the conflict. No matter how much the technique has been developed, the objective of war is still to occupy territory. And occupation is only possible when the soldiers of an army and the officers who command them take an effective position in geographical space.

Only those who have participated in a war know the barbarity that it entails. In the warlike conflict, the best and the worst of the human being is unleashed; the best because the decision to give one's life, for something in which one believes, exceeds any analysis about the subjectivity that could motivate such action. Incidentally, this does not apply to mercenaries and hired killers, who only fight for the money and emoluments they might get. But war also unleashes the worst of the human condition, which is the need to kill in order to survive.

It is known that what separates a common politician from a leader is basically the latter's ability to successfully manage the elements related to defense and security, first of all, being able to direct the armed forces; likewise, it is essential to have the genius and ability to conduct foreign policy and international relations. The rest can be done by anyone, especially if they are well advised. I had the chance to meet Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro, the greatest military genius of the 20th century in Latin America, and I know what I'm talking about.

Direction of the war in Ukraine

This long discourse is aimed at analyzing the direction of the war in Ukraine and its decisive element, which means leadership and strategic command in the conflict, and which takes place not only in the military arena.

On the one hand, the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, has given clear signs of his ability to manage the war “as a continuation of politics by other means.”

The same cannot be said of those who manage the war from the other side of the trench. When the head of European “diplomacy,” Joseph Borrell, affirms that the end of the conflict will take place in the military arena and, later, assures that “Russia has already lost the



Fidel Castro, V.I. Lenin and Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap

war and is on the defensive against Kiev” and does this despite the fact that Russia has already conquered 27.2% of Ukrainian territory — in much of this territory, by the way, life is moving towards normality under Russian control — we realize that we are facing very dangerous levels of ignorance and stupidity.

This is especially dangerous because Borrell's view of the facts leads to deeply mistaken decisions that result in the unnecessary sacrifice of thousands of soldiers for political interests not even linked to the traditional rhetoric and trappings of the West.

When looking at the map of military operations, the recent and much vaunted Ukrainian “counteroffensive” in the south, it is hard to believe that such an action was planned by professional soldiers.

This action involves a penetration into a sector of the Russian defense, leaving Ukrainian flanks open while advancing in depth, to the point of making it impossible for logistics to fulfill its mission of guaranteeing the combat supplies necessary for success.

This tactic presaged disaster ... and so it was: 152 tanks, 151 infantry fighting vehicles, 110 armored combat vehicles, 56 armored trucks, 17 special vehicles, 11 fighter planes of different designations and 3 helicopters destroyed. And what is worse, 3,100 soldiers annihilated between Aug. 29 and Sept. 6 is the balance of this madness, motivated only by the need to show results to justify the arrival and increase of Western aid, although it is evident that this is a lost cause.

Needless to say, the Western media massively rushed to headline this disaster: “Epic Victory of the Armed Forces of Ukraine,” misleading their readers with impunity. While this is happening, the Russian army continues to focus its efforts on regaining control of the entire Donetsk territory, maintaining the liberated regions of the Kherson, Kharkov, Zaporozhye and Nikolaev provinces.

At the same time, President Putin, Defense Minister General [Sergei] Shoigu and the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, General [Valery Vasilievich] Gerasimov traveled to the far east of the country to inspect in place the conduct of the Vostok 2022 military exercises that were developed in seven polygons and in the seas of Japan and Okhotsk — and in which some 50,000 soldiers, more than 5,000 heavy weapons units, 140 aircraft and 60 ships from Russia, as well as Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burma, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Syria and Tajikistan participated.

U.S. arms dealers profit, Ukrainian youth die

In the case of the Ukrainian “offensive” in the south of the country, the political leaders (Volodymyr Zelensky, Joe Biden, [Boris] Johnson, Olaf Scholz, Emmanuel Macron, Borrell, Jens Stoltenberg and company), who know nothing about the war, forced the Ukrainian

armed forces to carry out a military operation that from the beginning had no chance of success and that cost the lives of 3,100 youths. These young Ukrainians believed that they were sacrificing themselves for the Homeland, when in reality they were dying for the commercial interests of the large transnational energy and weapons manufacturers from the United States that are making huge profits from this war.

The truth is given in the opinions of experts, none of them friends of Putin or Russia. Let's read what some say. When the war was just beginning, in a long interview, Jacques Baud, colonel of the Swiss army, expert in military intelligence and deputy in NATO and the U.N., was asked how to evaluate the Russian offensive.

Baud answered: “Attacking another State goes against the principles of international law. But the background to such a decision must also be considered. First of all, it must be made clear that Putin is neither crazy nor out of touch with reality. He is a methodical and systematic person; that is, very Russian. I think he was aware of the consequences of his operation in the Ukraine.

“He [Putin] assessed, obviously rightly so, that whether he carried out a ‘small’ operation to protect the population of Donbass or a ‘massive’ operation in favor of the population of Donbass and the national interests of Russia, the consequences would be the same. So, he went for the ultimate solution.”

For his part, in a Sept. 1 opinion article for The Wall Street Journal, retired U.S. Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt stated that: “Beginning the diplomatic resolution would be distasteful and perhaps seen as defeatist, but as there is little chance of climbing out of the current morass, it may be better to negotiate now than later.”

Kimmitt recalled that NATO can no longer cope with the need to keep up the pace of arms supplies to Ukraine, because Ukraine's forces too often lose them

on the battlefield. The U.S. general said he believed that cutting Western supplies to Kiev would have a “disastrous” effect on the Ukrainian military.

Finally, the retired general and former deputy secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, Serhiy Krivonos, expressed his dismay at the “monstrous” losses of the Ukrainian army, which, according to him, number “tens of thousands and could even reach hundreds of thousands.”

Questioning the causes of this situation and the refusal to talk about it by the Western authorities and media, Krivonos said: “The stories that now is not the time to talk about it are nothing more than an attempt to cloud memory, erase history. But how can you erase the blood of the dead, who already number in the

hundreds of thousands? Who will answer for it?”

While this is happening, the Washington Post in a report on Sept. 6 was forced to say that the Ukrainian soldiers who participated in the counteroffensive attempt in the Kherson region in the south of the country, “complain of great losses, lack of ammunition and technological backwardness with respect to the Russian army.”

The daily newspaper from the empire's capital quoted a soldier, saying almost all of his comrades out of a total of 120 “were wounded, many seriously.” He attributed it to the need to save ammunition, but also stated that when they fired “it was difficult to hit, because of problems with the guidance systems of old weapons.”

The Post concludes by stating that “many fighters in the Armed Forces of Ukraine doubt whether the attempt was worth it [in the face of] such losses.” □

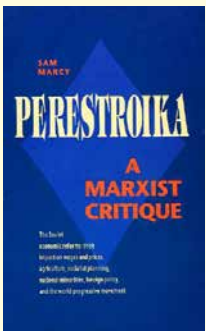
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Perestroika: A Marxist Critique

By Sam Marcy

Articles from 1985 to 1990 which examined critically both the words of Gorbachev and the negative developments within the Soviet Union during that period, as they occurred. Anyone who wants to understand the role of the USSR in the history of the 20th century would benefit from reading Marcy.

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NY Times – ‘Learn to live with COVID’ deaths

If you write for the New York Times, expect to be assigned articles condemning China for causing its people enormous inconvenience and discomfort to avoid massive deaths from the coronavirus. The Times clearly shares the capitalist-class viewpoint that the world’s priority should be to get back to business as usual, to keep making profits regardless of the virus’s toll on the global working class. Their message: Live with the virus, ignore its presence and don’t bother us gathering statistics on COVID-19 infection rates and deaths.

Pity the poor Times commentators assigned to write these successive articles attacking China for COVID-19 policies that avoided the mass deaths experienced in the U.S. and much of the West. Month after month, they churn out diatribes that apparently are not fact-checked by their editors. Most of their statistics are easily disputed by the Times’ own website, “Tracking Coronavirus Vaccinations Around the World.”

Writing for the Times on Sept. 7, Vivian Wang states that China’s “zero-COVID” policy “goes too far.” Wang suggests that China join the rest of the world and learn to live with the coronavirus. But just what would that look like for China?

Facts don’t lie

As Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) has repeatedly noted in response to the Times articles, had China taken the same approach to the pandemic as the U.S. did, **4.5 million more Chinese people would be dead.**

In the U.S., population 331.45 million, over 1 million people have died since the initial outbreak in early 2020. The country continues to see spikes in COVID-19 deaths in 2022 from omicron variants. Currently there are 450 COVID-19 deaths per day in the U.S., roughly 160,000 deaths per year if the trend continues — a fact not mentioned by Wang or Times columnist Austin Ramzy writing from Hong Kong.

To date, China, population 1.4 billion, has had just 5,226

COVID-19 deaths until this spring, when an outbreak in Hong Kong raised the number to 15,000. Ramzy wrote the latest Times attack on China Sept. 8. China’s “zero-COVID” policy, he states, “has been a drag on China’s economy, travel and everyday life,” as lockdowns led to “shortages of food and other daily necessities in some cases.”

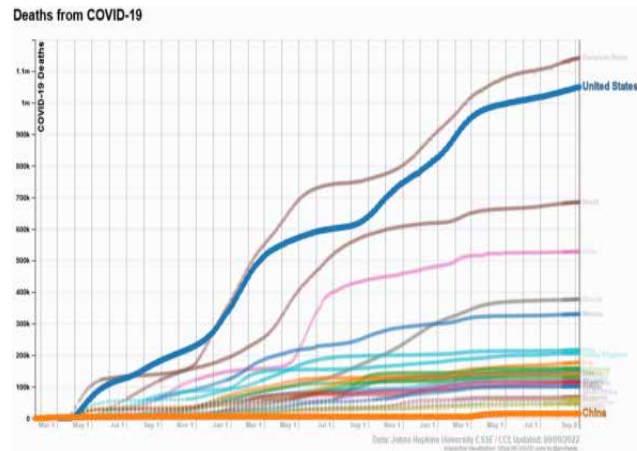
Perhaps since he’s writing from Hong Kong, Mr. Ramzy was unaware of the drag COVID-19 had on most Western economies including the U.S., where shortages of food and basic necessities like toilet paper were indeed a daily crisis. At least in China, most people survived the inconveniences — unlike millions in Europe and the U.S. who died.

Ramzy also apparently didn’t bother to research China’s GDP, which grew 2.2% in 2020 and 8.1% in 2021. According to FAIR, Goldman Sachs projects that China’s GDP growth for 2022 will be 3.0%, compared to the U.S. at 1.3%.

Vaccine controversy

Ramzy blamed China for “failing to vaccinate older people,” citing thousands of deaths this year in Hong Kong from the omicron surge. He fails to mention that Hong Kong’s health care system is modeled on the Western approach and totally separate from China’s vaccination policies.

He, and other Times writers busy attacking China for refusing to approve Western mRNA vaccines, neglect to



FAIR shares NY Times graphic showing U.S. (blue line) near top of countries with highest COVID-19 deaths, while China (orange line) remains at the bottom.

acknowledge that the vaccine programs developed by major U.S. pharmaceutical companies are proving to be far from adequate in stopping the resurgence of new variants. What started out as “breakthrough” cases among vaccinated individuals in the U.S., who contracted COVID-19 in the summer of 2021, is becoming the norm. Not so with China’s vaccines.

Times articles attacking China started early in the pandemic. Some

of the first suggesting that Chinese labs may have been responsible for manufacturing the virus were later proven false by the World Health Organization and other international scientists.

A major difference between socialist China and capitalist U.S. was laid bare by the failure of the U.S. profit-driven health care system to meet the demands of the COVID-19 crisis. This is still being experienced in 2022, as thousands of health care workers take to the picket lines in massive strikes across the country.

There is no denying that China, as a workers’ state, has policies designed to benefit and protect the working class. And China has provided vaccine assistance to other workers around the globe. Times writers frequently attack China’s COVID-19 policy for being “political” yet ignore the agenda of the Times as a major political voice for the U.S. and global capitalist ruling class.

Just how many lives will be lost from these “business as usual” policies? □

Of queens and capitalism

What an anachronism it is that, in this modern age of exploring the moon and the depths of the largest oceans, the mass media in the United States should be mourning the death of Queen Elizabeth of Britain. Adulation of the British monarchy oozes from the so-called free press in the United States.

Forgotten, it seems, is the revolutionary war of 1776, in which thousands died to secure the independence of the 13 American colonies from Britain. But the ruling class in the United States, now arguably the richest in the world, has more in common with the monarchy in Britain than it does with the millions of people, all over the world, who still suffer under British colonial rule in one form or another.

At its height in 1921, the British Empire ruled over one-quarter of all the lands on Earth. Plundering its colonies made the British ruling class one of the richest in the world. It also inspired rebellions against the colonizers, which were

crushed without mercy.

Two world wars between competing blocs of imperialist rivals cost dearly. Millions died in these struggles for world domination. The Anglo-U.S. bloc won both times, and by 1952, when Elizabeth took over the throne, the British Empire ruled over some 70 countries.

The U.S. ruling class prides itself over its revolutionary origins in the overthrow of British rule and makes the Fourth of July an occasion for self-congratulation. This has had no impact on the alliance between the ruling classes of the U.S. and Britain. They are class allies with the shared objective to reap superprofits from the labor of the workers in both countries and around the world.

Capitalism is an economic system based on the exploitation of the working class. The result is untold wealth for a few, even as millions struggle to survive. This is inherently unstable, regardless of whether it is managed by a president or a monarch. □

On Labor Day, hail workers in motion! Support Workers World!

Workers World/Mundo Obrero newspaper cheers on the Amazon and Starbucks workers who are leading struggles to unionize their workplaces. These mainly young people of many nationalities and genders are in the forefront of the class struggle in the U.S. Their bold actions have sparked an upsurge of worker-led union drives in other companies and industries. Their bravery in defying vicious corporate union busting is inspiring workers around the country.

This newspaper has closely followed and featured reports on the organizing drives of Amazon and Starbucks workers and recent unionization campaigns at Trader Joe’s, Chipotle, REI, Apple and other companies.

On this year’s Labor Day, WW expresses solidarity with these workers, all those celebrating union pride on this day, and the unorganized and low-wage earners who are fighting for workplace rights and a union. We laud the workers, especially young people, women, other gender-oppressed and LGBTQ2S+ people, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, Arab and immigrants, who are fighting for all workers.

Since Workers World’s first issue in 1959, the newspaper has featured coverage of workers’ struggles. Our newspaper is partisan, siding with workers and oppressed people fighting for their rights against capitalist bosses. The struggles of our class are covered in our pages and in our biweekly column “On the Picket Line.” Not only does WW write about worker organizing, but our writers and staff members join picket lines and rallies!

Your donations matter!

Workers World relies on our readers’ backing. The WW Supporter Program

was founded 45 years ago to help build this socialist newspaper. Since the early 1990s, the fund has supported the website workers.org, where WW articles are posted daily and the PDF file of every weekly paper is displayed.

Unforeseen circumstances during the pandemic caused us to reduce the number of printed issues to once a month. But the weekly online newspaper has never been skipped during this 2 ½-year health crisis. And while WW’s staff is voluntary, both the printed newspaper and the website entail monthly expenses. Although many online publications require fees to read their articles, WW does not. Our articles are free to all readers.

Workers.org contains news and analysis of global and U.S. events and struggles and is a resource for political activists. The website posts firsthand accounts by writer-activists in many countries, translated by our staff. Timely articles by worker-organizers keep the newspaper current on key U.S. union drives.

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Capitalism on a Ventilator

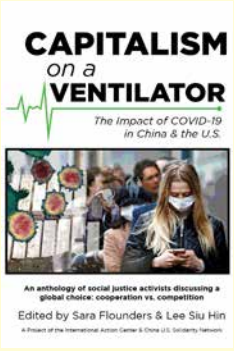
The impact of COVID-19 in China & the U.S.

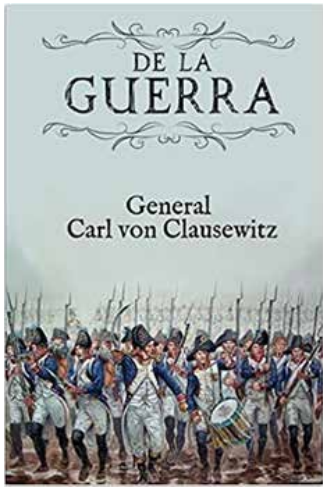
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El libro de Carl von Clausewitz, sobre la estrategia de la guerra.

Ucrania: ¿una guerra en minifaldas?

Por Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein

El autor es Consultor y analista internacional venezolano, ha publicado artículos en Revistas especializadas de Puerto Rico, Chile, Bolivia, Perú, Brasil, Venezuela, México, Argentina y España así como en diversos periódicos e innumerables páginas de Internet. Fue Director de Relaciones Internacionales de la Presidencia de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela.

7 de septiembre. Aunque sea insuficientemente conocido, tal vez haya pocos científicos sociales que hayan teorizado tanto y tan bien sobre la guerra como Vladimir I. Lenin. Al estudiar la primera guerra mundial dijo que: “el proletariado lucha y luchará siempre indefectiblemente contra la guerra, pero sin olvidar ni por un momento que solo podrá acabarse con las guerras cuando se acabe totalmente con la división de la sociedad en clases...”. El líder soviético también enseñaba que: “En la guerra vence quien dispone de más reservas, de más fuentes de fuerza, de mayor apoyo en el seno del pueblo”.

De la misma manera, uno de los más brillantes estrategas militares contemporáneos, el general vietnamita Vo Nguyen Giap exteriorizaba que las victorias en los combates estaban estrechamente vinculadas con “la producción, la comunicación, el transporte, las actividades culturales, sanitarias y otras”. Así, el general Giap consideraba que la victoria multilateral [...] es el resultado de la lucha heroica de todos los compatriotas en todas las ramas, servicios y regiones que dedicaron sus prodigiosos esfuerzos, desafiaron bombas y balas y superaron innumerables dificultades”.

Es necesario comprender entonces, que el fenómeno de la guerra es muy complejo, sobre todo porque el factor subjetivo interviene de manera decisiva para forjar victorias cuando hay carencias o insuficiencias de los elementos materiales que configuran su aspecto objetivo.

En la modernidad, aunque los instrumentos tecnológicos juegan un papel cada vez más relevante, la herramienta principal y concluyente sigue siendo la del componente humano que participa en el conflicto. Por mucho que se haya desarrollado la técnica, el objetivo de la guerra sigue siendo el de ocupar territorios y eso solo es posible cuando los soldados de un ejército y los oficiales que los comandan, toman posición efectiva del espacio geográfico.

Sólo el que haya participado en una guerra conoce la barbaridad que ella entraña, en el conflicto bélico se desata lo mejor y lo peor del ser humano, lo mejor porque la decisión de entregar la vida por algo en lo que se cree, rebasa cualquier análisis acerca de la subjetividad que pudiera motivar tal actuación. Por cierto, esto no es válido para mercenarios y asesinos a sueldo que solo combaten por el dinero y los emolumentos que pudieran obtener. Pero la guerra desata también lo peor de la condición humana que es la necesidad de matar para sobrevivir.

Un político común o un estadista

Es sabido que lo que distancia a un político común de un estadista es básicamente su capacidad para manejar exitosamente los elementos atinentes a la defensa y la seguridad, en primer lugar, ser capaz de dirigir a las fuerzas armadas; así mismo es básico poseer el genio y habilidad para conducir la política exterior y las relaciones internacionales. Lo otro, lo puede hacer cualquiera, sobre todo si está bien asesorado. Tuve la posibilidad de conocer al comandante en jefe Fidel Castro, el mayor genio militar del siglo XX en América Latina y sé de lo que hablo.

Toda esta larga disquisición viene a cuenta de la dirección de la guerra en Ucrania y el elemento decisivo que significa la conducción y el mando estratégico en el conflicto que no sólo se desarrolla en el terreno bélico. De un

lado, el presidente de Rusia, Vladimir Putin que ha dado muestras claras de su capacidad para manejar la guerra “como continuación de la política por otros medios”.

No se puede decir lo mismo, de los que gestionan la guerra desde la otra trinchera. Cuando el jefe de la “diplomacia” europea Joseph Borrell afirma que el fin del conflicto se producirá en el terreno militar y posteriormente, en fecha más reciente asegurara que “Rusia ya ha perdido la guerra y está a la defensiva ante Kiev” a pesar que Rusia ya ha conquistado el 27,2% del territorio ucraniano - en los que por cierto, en buena parte de ellos, la vida transita hacia la normalidad bajo control de Rusia- nos damos cuenta que estamos ante niveles de ignorancia y estupidez muy peligrosos. Sobre todo, porque esta visión de los hechos conduce a decisiones profundamente erradas que traen como consecuencia el sacrificio innecesario de miles de soldados en función de intereses políticos ni siquiera vinculados a la retórica y la parafernalia tradicional de Occidente.

Cuando se observa sobre el mapa de operaciones militares, la reciente y muy cacareada “contraofensiva” ucraniana en el sur, cuesta pensar que tal acción fuera planeada por militares profesionales: una penetración en un sector de la defensa rusa dejando los flancos abiertos y avanzando en profundidad hasta hacer imposible para la logística poder cumplir su misión de garantizar los abastecimientos combativos necesarios para el éxito.

Estas acciones presagiaban el desastre... y así fue: 152 tanques, 151 vehículos de combate de infantería, 110 vehículos blindados de combate, 56 camionetas blindadas, 17 vehículos especiales, 11 aviones caza de diferente designación y 3 helicópteros destruidos, y lo que es peor, 3100 soldados aniquilados entre el 29 de agosto y el 6 de septiembre es el saldo de esta locura, solo motivada en la necesidad de mostrar resultados para justificar la llegada y el incremento de ayuda occidental, aunque sea evidente que es una causa perdida.

Vale decir que los medios de prensa occidentales se apresuraron masivamente a titular este desastre como “Victoria épica de las Fuerzas Armadas de Ucrania” engañando impunemente a sus lectores.

Mientras ello ocurre, el ejército ruso sigue centrando sus esfuerzos en recuperar el control de todo el territorio de Donetsk, manteniendo las regiones liberadas de las provincias de Kherson, Kharkov, Zaporozhye y Nikolaev.

Al mismo tiempo, el presidente Putin, el ministro de defensa general Shoigú y el jefe del Estado Mayor General de las Fuerzas Armadas de Rusia general Guerasimov, se trasladaron al extremo oriente del país para inspeccionar in situ la realización de las maniobras militares Vostok 2022 que se desarrollaron en siete polígonos y en los mares de Japón y de Ojotsk y en las que participan unos 50.000 soldados, más de 5.000 unidades de armamento pesado, 140 aviones y 60 buques de Rusia además de Argelia, Armenia, Azerbaiyán, Bielorrusia, Birmania, China, India, Kazajistán, Kirguistán, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Siria y Tayikistán.

Las transnacionales de EE.UU. hacen pingües ganancias

En el caso de la “ofensiva” ucraniana en el sur del país, los líderes políticos (Zelensky, Biden, Johnson, Scholz, Macron, Borrell, Stoltenberg y compañía), que no saben nada de la guerra, le impusieron a las fuerzas armadas la obligatoriedad de una operación militar que desde su inicio no tenía las menores posibilidades de éxito y que costó la vida a 3100 jóvenes ucranianos que creían que se estaban inmolando por la Patria, cuando en realidad lo hicieron por los intereses comerciales de las grandes transnacionales energéticas y de armamento de Estados Unidos que están haciendo pingües ganancias con esta guerra.

La verdad viene dada en opiniones de expertos, ninguno de ellos amigo de Putin o de Rusia. Leamos lo que dicen algunos. Cuando la guerra recién comenzaba, en una larga entrevista realizada a Jacques Baud, coronel del ejército suizo, experto en inteligencia militar

y adjunto en la OTAN y la ONU, ante la pregunta de ¿Cómo evalúa la ofensiva rusa?

Baud contestó: “Atacar a otro Estado va en contra de los principios del derecho internacional. Pero también se debe considerar el trasfondo de tal decisión. En primer lugar, hay que dejar claro que Putin ni está loco ni ha perdido el contacto con la realidad. Es una persona metódica y sistemática, es decir, muy rusa. Creo que era consciente de las consecuencias de su operación en Ucrania. Evaluó, obviamente con razón, que, si realizaba una operación “pequeña” para proteger a la población de Donbass o una operación “masiva” a favor de la población de Donbass y de los intereses nacionales de Rusia, las consecuencias serían las mismas. Entonces, fue a por la solución máxima”.

‘Podría ser mejor comenzar las negociaciones ahora’

Por su parte, el martes pasado en un artículo para The Wall Street Journal el general de brigada de las Fuerzas Armadas de Estados Unidos, Mark Kimmitt afirmó que: “Comenzar un acuerdo diplomático sería desagradable y tal vez aparentemente derrotista, pero hay pocas posibilidades de salir del atolladero actual, por lo que podría ser mejor comenzar las negociaciones ahora que más tarde”.

Kimmitt recordó que la OTAN ya no puede hacer frente a la necesidad de mantener el ritmo de abastecimiento de armas a Ucrania, porque las fuerzas de ese país las pierden con demasiada frecuencia en el campo de batalla. El general estadounidense expuso que creía que la reducción de los suministros occidentales a Kiev tendría un efecto “desastroso” para el ejército ucraniano.

Finalmente, el general retirado y exsubsecretario del Consejo de Seguridad y Defensa Nacional de Ucrania, Serhiy Krivonos mostró su consternación por las pérdidas “monstruosas”, del ejército de Ucrania que según él se cuentan por “decenas de miles, e incluso podría llegar a cientos de miles”.

Al cuestionarse sobre las causas de esta situación y la negativa de hablar del asunto por las autoridades y los medios de comunicación occidentales, Krivonos manifestó: “Los cuentos de que ahora no es el momento de hablar de ello no es más que un intento de nublar la memoria, borrar la historia. ¿Pero cómo se puede borrar la sangre de los muertos, que ya van por cientos de miles? ¿Quién responderá por ello?”.

Mientras ello ocurre, el Washington Post en un reporte del martes 6 de septiembre se vio obligado a decir que los militares ucranianos que participaron del intento de contraofensiva en la región Kherson en el sur del país, “se quejan de grandes pérdidas, falta de municiones y retraso tecnológico con respecto al ejército ruso”.

El diario de la capital imperial citó a un soldado que dijo que casi todos sus compañeros en un total de 120 “resultaron heridos, muchos de gravedad”. Lo achacó a la necesidad de ahorrar munición, pero también afirmó que cuando disparaban “era difícil acertar por problemas con los sistemas de guiado de las armas antiguas”.

El Post concluye afirmando que “muchos combatientes de las Fuerzas Armadas de Ucrania dudan si el intento valió la pena [ante] tales pérdidas”.

Unos días antes que esto aconteciera en el campo de batalla, Zelensky junto a su esposa posaron para la revista Vogue, cuyo último titular fue: “Todas las tendencias en minifalda para este otoño e invierno 2022”.

Tratar la guerra como si fuera un hecho banal y de la farándula y suponer que la muerte de tantos jóvenes quedará impune por la irresponsabilidad política de los líderes europeos, formará parte de las próximas crónicas que habrán de escribirse cuando concluya esta historia. Pero no creo que sean minifaldas las que van a usar los soldados ucranianos que combaten cuando se aproxima el temido invierno boreal.

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