Inclusive, expansive, revolutionary

New Family Code approved by Cubans 2-to-1

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

After years of intense discussion, debate and an on-the-ground, neighborhood-by-neighborhood democratic process, the people of Cuba have passed a new Family Code. The provisions of this “Code of Affections,” as it is familiarly known, are progressive, revolutionary and honor the reality of the wide range of families that people are creating in defiance of patriarchal capitalism.

People have formed all manner of different family configurations throughout history. But under modern-day capitalism, until very recently only one type—the male-dominated, female-compliant heterosexual marriage—has been given legal, state sanction.

Recently some headway has been made internationally, including in the U.S., to legally sanction paired same-sex unions and grant adoption rights to those couples. Though this accommodation has been made based on the fact this “new” kind of family parallels the paired heterosexual norm, marriage equality in the U.S. may now again be under threat, given the rise of protofascist efforts in many states and the current makeup of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The new Code of Families generically embraces the many varied and actual familial structures that human beings create in order to love, shelter, protect and nurture themselves and their children.

The new Code legalizes same-sex marriage, allows same-sex couples to adopt children, promotes equal sharing of domestic responsibilities and extends labor rights (including pay) to those who care full time for children, the elderly or people with disabilities. The Code confirms the right to free abortion, paid family leave and assisted and surrogate pregnancies (but not for profit). It fights gender-based violence and expands the rights of children and grandparents.

The new Code replaces the concept of “parental authority” with that of “parental responsibility.” Luis Palenzuela Paez, a Civil and Family Law expert and member of the working group drafting the new Code, stressed that the concept of parental authority originated in the “pater familia” of the Roman family, who held the power and legal right of life and death over the members of his family, which included his wife, children and enslaved people.

With deliberation, the new Family Code embeds in its articles such principles as “gender equality, the obligation of parents to provide their children with emotional stability and to contribute to the free development of their personality, based on their capacities, aptitudes and vocations.” (Granma, Sept. 20)

A resounding win for the people of Cuba

On Sept. 18 and Sept. 25, Cubans who went to the polls to vote in a referendum on the code numbered 6,251,786. The “yes” votes were 3,936,790 or 66.87% and the “no” votes were 1,950,090 or 33.13%.

U.S. proxy war

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The right to fight back

Coco McDonald, imprisoned for an act of self-defense, is greeted by Leslie Feinberg, Minneapolis, May 1, 2012.
Hail Indigenous Peoples Day!
Support Workers World

Boston’s proclamation last year that the second Monday of October every year would be Indigenous Peoples Day, “in lieu of” Columbus Day, was a first. Native peoples, since the creation of U.S. settler colonialism, the theft and devastation of their lands and cultures, denial of all rights, the torture and genocide, began and continue in what is now the state of Massachusetts.

Then on Oct. 8, 2021, President Joe Biden proclaimed a federal Indigenous Peoples Day and acknowledged the atrocities “Europeans inflicted on Tribal nations and Indigenous communities.” These pronouncements came about due to the strong, unified struggles by Indigenous peoples and their allies, notably at Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline and the courageous, militant fight that shut down the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The movement for recognition of Oct. 12 as Indigenous Peoples Day began in Berkeley, California, following a huge march called by the American Indian Movement in San Francisco on Oct. 10, 1992, protesting the celebration of conquistador Massacre Monday. Christopher Columbus’s arrival 500 years earlier. Since then, 14 states, Washington, D.C., and over 130 cities have dumped the holiday honoring the genocidal conqueror and recognize Indigenous peoples, their knowledge and cultures on that day.

Workers World has continually supported the righteous struggles of Native peoples on the streets and in our newspaper. WW joins Indigenous communities to demand: Drop “Columbus Day” as a federal holiday! Commemorate Indigenous Peoples Day in every city, town and state! Down with white supremacy!”

Your donations matter!

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Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogynist, 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, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward.

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Tear down the walls

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Residents in 69 low-income housing units at the University City Townhomes in West Philadelphia received news Sept. 23. Their pending Oct. 8 eviction date was moved to Dec. 27, after the property owner IBID Associates applied for an extension of their federal contract with Housing and Urban Development.

Residents first learned of plans by the owners to discontinue a decades-long contract with HUD July 8, 2021, and to evict all residents by July 8, 2022. If residents are evicted, IBID wants to demolish the buildings, and sell the land for $100 million to developers.

The residents, with growing community support, have put up an impressive struggle, now forcing the owners to postpone the evictions for a fourth time. They are making it clear; they don’t plan to go anywhere.

Each win by the residents of what they call the “Peoples Townhomes” has come with broadening support and growing national attention to this fight-back by a predominantly Black and Brown low-income community.

After the first eviction date extension, Save the UC Townhomes coalition set up a creative tent encampment on July 9 to drive home what their future would look like if evicted. Hundreds of individuals and community groups responded. City labor unions called on their members not to carry out any evictions. It took the cops – in this case sheriffs – to comply with the landlords’ orders to tear down the tents on Aug. 8.

Residents and supporters disrupted an incoming University of Pennsylvania student convocation Aug. 29 as President Liz Magill was speaking. With banners denouncing “Pennification,” the protest shed light on UPenn’s historic, racist expansion at the expense of Black residents in surrounding communities. IBID Associates subsequently moved the Sept. 7 eviction date to Oct. 8.

When two UPenn students who supported the protest were subsequently brought up on disciplinary charges by Magill, 73 UPenn faculty members issued a letter in their support.

Following a celebratory press conference and rally at City Hall Sept. 7, Save the UC Townhomes led a march to the Pennsylvania Academy for the Fine Arts, where demonstrators cracked a fundraising event for the Building Industry Association of Philadelphia Political Action Committee. Several local politicians were caught there hobnobbing with the major developers, gentrifiers and bankers.

Two city council members subsequently issued a previously prepared statement calling for a one-year extension of the federal contract between IBID and HUD. Recently, AFSCME District Council 47, representing thousands of city workers, issued a strong resolution supporting the Townhomes residents’ demands and calling on the city to use its resources to “ensure that properties which are subject to expiring HUD contracts in the coming years are maintained as affordable, subsidized housing for those who are low income or very low income.”

UC Townhomes residents are calling on the city to arrange to purchase the block where their homes are located and for their homes to be made permanently affordable. If they are forced to leave, they want a two-year eviction extension.

Struggle puts spotlight on national lack of affordable housing

The struggle by UC Townhomes residents to remain in their homes is forcing a discussion about what constitutes “affordable housing” and how little is available in major cities like Philadelphia. The city’s effort to maintain an aging housing stock was even the topic of an op-ed in the Inquirer on Sept. 22 by Philadelphia Housing Authority President Kelvin A. Jeremiah, who admitted that 14,500 affordable Section 8 housing contracts are at risk of expiring over the next decade.

The problem is that fewer homes and apartments are being built. It is that older housing construction, like the UC Townhomes, is being torn down and replaced with new boutique condo towers, which offer fewer and considerably more expensive units than what they replace.

Backed by investments from Wall Street and other financiers, the building industry is turned to luxury high-rise condominium construction, rather than expanding housing opportunities for low-income families. Even when developers agree to set aside a certain percentage of units as “affordable,” their concept of affordability totally excludes low-income families.

Driven by greed

Builders claim that the price of land, the higher cost of construction and the shortage of building materials forces them to turn to the luxury condo industry, but in reality it’s pure greed.

Often the luxury boutique structures contain far fewer individual units, but they are built considerably taller than the low-rise buildings they replace, meaning more building materials are needed, and the developer can charge more.

The New York Times gives several examples of this in an article: “For the rich, Fewer Homes” by Stefanos Chen, Sept. 23. In one example sited at 1165 Madison Avenue in Manhattan, a developer contracted with a dozen or so block tenants. The developer could have constructed 88 moderate-income units with fewer stories at the same site.

Under capitalism, there is little incentive for developers to build more units, when they can get higher prices and pay less for labor and materials for fewer but larger luxury spaces. Land and resources that could be used to house more people are being used instead for the superwealthy, as developers chase the best return on their investments.

UC Townhomes residents are waging a fierce battle against IBID’s plans to sell the property for millions of dollars to a developer who will most likely follow the example of the Manhattan builders.

The UC Townhomes struggle, like the developer who will most likely follow the example of the Manhattan builders.

UPenn students rally for environmental and housing justice

By Betsey Piette

Philadelphia

Students at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia held a press conference and rally Sept. 26 at the Fossil Free Penn encampment in front of College Hall. Speakers called on UPenn to end its practice of investing millions of dollars in fossil fuels and to cut all ties with the fossil fuel industry, its financiers and its upholders.

They demanded that UPenn commit funds to preserve the nearby University City Townhomes, whose Black and Brown residents face eviction. While UPenn does not own the property, the students and other activists believe the university should intervene in the sale because of its historic role in gentrifying the Black communities in West Philadelphia known as the Black Bottom.

In 1969, 400 students and activists occupied College Hall to force university trustees to pledge $10 million for low-income housing to counter its encroachment into the Black Bottom. UPenn never delivered on its promise. Instead, the property where UC Townhomes are located was sold to the Altman Group, which is evicting the residents. Speakers noted that UPenn continues to work with Altman Group to build student housing in the area, often at the expense of longtime residents.

An additional demand was for the university, considered a “nonprofit,” to make voluntary payments, called PILOTs, that many tax-exempt organizations make to local governments. While UPenn did pay PILOTs to the City of Philadelphia from 19995-2000, it has since failed to make payments. With a $20.7 million endowment, UPenn could easily have paid $82 million in PILOTs this year.

Speakers called on UPenn President Liz Magill to drop all disciplinary actions against the two students involved in a disruption of the Convocation for incoming students, Aug. 29, to protest “Pennification.” Townhomes resident Rasheda Alexander called out the hypocrisy of UPenn officials for failing to adhere to their own mission statement that urges students to develop “critical thinking” and “awareness of moral and social issues.”

The press conference and rally brought together many diverse groups in Philadelphia that are fighting gentrification and voice opposition to the city’s plans to build a new arena for the 76ers pro-basketball team in Chinatown and the developer who will replace the one in South Philadelphia’s FDR Park in order to build facilities for the pending World Soccer Cup scheduled for 2026. Also of interest was a call for a “Taller Towers” community concerns over remediation and redevelopment of a former industrial site in Point Breeze, where a Sunoco pipeline was approved by an explosion and fire in 2019.
Amazon hires a former prison prisoner

By Monica Moorehead

Amazon, with its notorious multi-billionaire owner Jeff Bezos, is universally known as one of the world’s largest unaccountable corporate entities. It is well documented that workers there have passed out due to heat and suffered physical injuries, mental anguish and other horrific working conditions that accompany the frenzied pace of packing, loading and delivering packages. If this wasn’t enough, along comes another shocking strike against Amazon to add to its already long list of criminal behavior.

On Sept. 12, Amazon hired a former manager from one of the largest private prison corporations as its new director of worker training programs. Dayna Howard was once a “quality assurance and labor relations” manager at Corrections Corp. of America between 2000 and 2005. CCA, which became CoreCivic in October 2017, is a Wall Street company that runs 65 state and federal prisons and detention centers in the U.S., all for profit.

In 2021, CoreCivic made close to $2 billion in revenue from mass incarceration, a heinous form of wage slavery. Howard stated on her LinkedIn page that she coordinated facility audits both internally and externally and developed a “Receiving and Discharge Training program” that “reversed inmate processing and reduced processing time.” Resulted in a 20% reduction in inmate processing time and a reduced error rate.” In other words, she was very efficient in ensuring that prisoners and detainees were checked into a facility in a timely manner.

This is not Howard’s first job with Amazon since coming to work for them in 2012. She headed up their global security and loss-prevention programs. The latter job criteria was to make sure that no Amazon worker or contractor confiscates products from warehouses. In other words, Howard was Amazon’s top spy and cop.

Amazon has a close relationship with police departments in setting up sting operations and doorbell surveillance cameras to deter people from taking deliveries ordered by others. One can only imagine how many billions of dollars Amazon invested in these programs to police their products and their workers.

Now Howard’s latest job description is to head up the learning and development team, Amazon’s internal training program for all warehouse workers. Amazon states that this program is about “improving the everyday experience of our associates. We design and deliver learning programs and support employees’ career paths inside Amazon and implement improvements that make a real difference for both our workers and our customers.” (vice.com)

If no one had a clue what Amazon’s sordid history is, this description comes off sounding like a positive development. It is not. How can any progressive person think that a former prison official — which Howard is — has the mindset of treating workers with dignity.

Aren’t prisoners and detainees workers just like Amazon workers? The only difference is that prisoners are in mass incarceration, security, and Amazon workers are in minimum security when it comes to treatment. Both sets of workers are exploited for their labor in varying degrees and environments.

Amazon was hoping to keep its workers invisible like prisoners, but not even the hiring of a former prison official can stop the march forward by this workforce. They, along with others like Starbucks’ workers, are calling out Amazon regarding their right to organize and be treated with dignity and respect.

Amazon hires a former prison prisoner

By Leslie Feinberg

On June 5, 2011, CeCe McDonald and friends were assaulted in Minneapolis by a group of white-supremacist, acquisitive-like thugs. One of these slashed McDonald with a broken glass; and in the fight that followed, he died. McDonald was arrested, tried and sent to jail for defending her life and the lives of her friends — and surviving. Feinberg wrote the following article, published by Workers World, Dec. 7, 2012, and excerpted here, to rally international support to “Free CeCe!”

At certain moments in history, the struggle of individuals to survive and organize against fascist attacks, police and prison guard brutality, largely rest on the societal relationship of forces — between oppressor and oppressed, oppressor and exploited and exploited. These battles inspire unity and action that help shape and define political eras — like the demands to free Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Denmark Vesey, Harriet Tubman, Mumia Abu-Jamal. The right to fight back against white supremacy and anti-trans terror — chanting in unison: “We’re gonna stop the Klan!”

Ever since the violent dismantling of revolutionary Black liberation movements after the Civil War, the police, in large numbers, have been called out to protect the right of white supremacists and fascists to assert power and declare their call for racist genocide.

When police attack, their force is always directed at those protesting the Klan. Over the decades, millions have taken to the streets in movements for national liberation and immigrant worker rights, against white supremacy, patriarchal class rule and anti-LGBTQ+ oppression.

These have answered which social force has the ability and willingness to fight white-supremacist, lynchlaw terror — chanting in unison: “We’re gonna stop the Klan!”

WWP founder Sam Marry wrote. “[T]he brutality of the Klan rests on solid long-term bonds to the [capitalist] state, and the two share a common political ideology, for the most part.” (“The Klan & the Government: Foes or Allies,” workers.org)

Marry emphasized that after the Civil War, “The Northern industrialists and bankers were more interested in reaching a compromise with the ex-slaveowners than with the newly freed slaves. The U.S. government capitulated to the Southern planters and ex-slaveowners after the period of Reconstruction, when it withdrew federal troops from the South without establishing an independent citizens’ militia composed of the Black people and poor whites.”

Marcy continued, “[T]hat left political defense of the black population of economic power by failing to grant the newly emancipated people the land which they had tilled for centuries.”

“It was in this period that lynchings, the most barbarous form of counterrevolutionary terror, became the hallmark of the reactionary attempt to keep the Black people in semi-bondage,” Marcy concluded.

The right to fight back

By Leslie Feinberg

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Saladin Muhammad: a life dedicated to organizing Southern Black workers

By Dante Strobinó

Saladin Muhammad, a revolutionary Black union organizer, died on Sept. 19 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, at age 76 after a long illness. Strobinó was a national Representative of United Electrical Workers (UE) 150 and a founding member of the Durham branch of Workers World, where he worked with Muhammad for many years.

Saladin Muhammad’s contributions to the global struggle against capitalism and imperialism are too numerous and profound to ever fully capture. His revolutionary commitment and practice have greatly influenced the direction of the U.S. labor movement, in particular in challenging all of us to understand the critical role of the U.S. South in the global working-class struggle.

His countless writings and speeches about the central role of the Black working class in the struggle against the boss. Fairness and waging shop floor struggles for Justice. This helped bring a basic level of organization and solidarity to workers from these plants who were fighting for fairness and wagin shop floor struggles against the boss.

Learning from the experience of various international unions having lost several National Labor Relations Board union recognition elections in the local area, Saladin, being the true dialectician that he was, helped develop the practice of pre-majority unionism.

The bulk of the labor movement at that time did not support such efforts, thinking it would not ever be consolidated into a powerful enough force to ever win concessions from the bosses and build organization. Through Saladin’s efforts over 35 or more years, he proved them wrong.

Saladin later also founded the Black Workers League, a revolutionary nationalist Marxist Leninist tendency that fought for Black self-determination, a cornerstone of the struggle against U.S. imperialism for national liberation; women’s emancipation; workers power; and revolutionary social transformation. He led a major struggle inside the Black Liberation movement at the time about the critical importance of organizing at the point of production and service in the U.S. South.

Promoting pre-majority unionism

Within a couple years, Black workers at multiple factories throughout that area of Eastern North Carolina were organized through the Rocky Mount Workers Unity Council, sponsored by the Black Workers for Justice. This helped bring a basic level of organization and solidarity to workers from these plants who were fighting for fairness and wagin shop floor struggles against the boss.

Saladin would continue to educate the leadership of Black workers, within a social movement and social union context, won over many other Black revolutionary socialists of the time, from many different political tendencies, to join his efforts and also move to North Carolina. A few years later, Black Workers for Justice was founded under his leadership.

Saladin Muhammad and Dante Strobinó at the Fruit of Labor World Cultural Center on April 6, 2013, following annual Black Workers for Justice Dr. Martin Luther King Strike for Labor banquet in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Workers at Philadelphia Home Depot file for union

By Betsy Piete

Retail workers at a Home Depot store in north-east Philadelphia filed a petition on Sept. 10 to have the National Labor Relations Board to form a union. Their request covers 274 employees organized as Home Depot Workers United. If successful, this will be the first storewide union in the company. In 2019, 60 Home Depot drivers won a petition to unionize as Local 287 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters at 60 Home Depot workers earn more than $15 an hour. Most — 68% — make between $12 to $14. The retail wage in Philadelphia for a single worker with no children is $17.87.

During the pandemic, the company made tens of billions in profits. CEO Craig Menear has been paid over $13 million so far in 2022.

Because Home Depot has a history of union busting, Quiles and other workers did not appeal to an established union to organize them. They wanted to file as quickly as possible, lest management try to disrupt the filing. Now they are open to any advice others can give.

“We look a lot at what Amazon [Staten Island workers] did up in New York. We’re hoping to maybe do the same thing; but as of now, it’s us and a handful of people who are offering advice.” (Inquirer.com, Sept. 20)
imposed in 2001. Since then, the repeal of the Oakland Institute has outlined, to limit partly provoked the conflict: the semi-total.)

Ukraine’s agricultural strengths

Post-Soviet Ukraine, with its 32 million arable hectares (nearly 13 million acres, or so about 70 million acres) of rich and fertile black soil (known as “cerneiiz”), has the equivalent of one-third of all existing agricultural land in the European Union. The “breadbasket of Europe,” as it is called, had an annual production of 64 million tons of grain and seeds, among the top 10 in the world, of sugar beet, wheat and sunflower oil. (For the latter, Ukraine produces about 30% of the world total.

As explained in my previous post, the plan of Ukraine’s resources partly provoked the conflict: the semi-civil war in the Ukrainian Donbas revolt and the annexation of Crimea by Russia. As the Oakland Institute has outlined, to limit unrestricted privatization, a moratorium on sales to all foreign firms was imposed in 2001. Since then, the repeal of

such reform. . . . [This] will only further marginalize smallholder farmers and risks severing them from their most valuable resource.

Zelensky regime approves capital turnover

And now July’s URC has reemphasized its plans to take over Ukraine’s economy for capital, with the full endorsement of the Zelensky government. At the con-

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Movements in NATO countries mobilize against war

By John Catalinotto

With an avalanche of anti-Russian propaganda in NATO-member and other European Union countries—and in the U.S.—the corporate media has created an obstacle to mobilizing antiwar actions. Nevertheless, the high-economic cost of the war, including higher prices for basic goods and shortages of energy sources, have created an opening that anti-imperialist and anti-war activists are starting to widen.

In Germany, the antiwar movement has called for coordinated actions in cities around the country Oct. 1. In Spain, at least one coalition has called, in its Madrid Platform, for mobilizing all the parts of the Spanish state against NATO aggression and to get military bases out. In Austria, where a demonstration was held Sept. 24, the Coalition for Austrian Self-determination calls for returning Austria to its historic position of neutrality.

In the United States, the National Antiwar Coalition has called for demonstrations the week of Oct. 1-22 in over 30 cities.

Massive demonstrations took place weeks ago in Prague, Czechia, and in many French cities opposing the war — and the costs of the war, which are borne by the European working class and poor, even more acutely than in the United States. Shortages of fuel for heating homes in winter and enormously higher prices for energy will inflict direct pain on the poorest sectors of Europe’s capitalistic society.

While some of the mobilizations criticize the Russian decision to intervene militarily, their statements all emphasize the provocations of the U.S.-NATO side: moves much closer and closer to Russian borders since 1990; the NATO-backed civil war against the eastern regions of Ukraine since 2014; and the criminal decision to intervene militarily, their statements all homes in winter and enormously higher prices for energy than in the United States. Shortages of fuel for heating homes in winter and enormously higher prices for energy will inflict direct pain on the poorest sectors of Europe’s capitalistic society.

The centers of power of Euro-U.S. imperialism have decided to resolve this deep capitalist crisis by applying the updated version of the same procedures they used in other times: massive destruction of capital and war. NATO and the military bases, the armed wing of imperialism, has set itself up as the governing body of the great reconfiguration of everything that is not war propaganda and provocation.

The enormous crisis, together with the gigantic concentration of capital in the big Investment Funds (majority shareholders of all the big media, pharmaceutical, agricultural, armament and banking companies) has been used by the U.S. to get closer to its great historical objective: to break all kinds of economic, commercial, cultural, etc., ties between the European Union and Russia. The imposition of sanctions on Russia has the perfect instrument to wreak the European economy as a result of skyrocketing energy prices, the lack of other raw materials and interest rates that are unaffordable for many companies and for the general population. All this while the U.S. takes over the European markets that are directly responsible for the death of millions of people and for ravaging countries. All this undermining of the living conditions of millions of people, a direct consequence of the high cost of living and mass unemployment, is a social powder keg more and more difficult to contain with the demonization of Russia, constantly repeated in the media.

The militarization of society, the increase of repression and of the mechanisms of social control (see the new National Security Law) and the establishment of an increasingly iron censorship of everything that is not war propaganda (last May the “ministry of truth” headed by General Ballesteros was created) has its keystone in NATO and the military bases.

Journalist Pablo Gonzalez

One of the most brutal examples of this repression is that of the journalist Pablo Gonzalez, imprisoned and held incommunicado in Poland, an EU country, for more than six months without trial or accusation, surrounded by a great media silence and without any known action on the part of the Madrid government. The denunciation of the case and the fight for his freedom will be one of our most important tasks.

If we look at history, with some very recent examples, we will see clearly what the allies and the so-called “forces of order” are used for in times of deep social crisis. On an international scale, there is also little doubt that no humanitarian consideration can stop an organization that is directly responsible for the death of millions of people and for ravaging countries to steal their resources, an organization dominated by the USA, the only country in the world that has used atomic bombs, dropping them on two defenseless cities. [Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, August 1945].

In view of the seriousness of the situation and in order to try to assemble all the forces necessary to confront it, the Madrid Platform Against NATO and the Bases has been formed. The same is being done in other areas of the Spanish State with the intention of converging in a State Coordinating Committee and with the objective of rekindling the anti-imperialist flame that some decades ago permeated the majority of the working-class population and that can ignite struggle within a youth that has more reasons than ever to fight for its future.

And we encourage all persons and organizations that, based on this common need, are aware of the seriousness of the situation to participate in our efforts and to contribute to the extent of the possibilities of each one, by contacting us through the e-mail madrid_cob@riseup.net.
Marching farmworkers say ‘Sí, se puede! Yes, we can!’

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Despite a farmworkers’ 24-hour vigil going on in Sacramento, California, Gov. Gavin Newsom is still stalling on signing Assembly Bill 2183, passed in May — a pro-farmworker bill that is also pro-union. Instead of an eye on justice, he seems to have his eye on a run for the U.S. presidency.

The Agricultural Labor Relations Voting Choice Act would make it easier for farmworkers to vote in union elections, by mail or card check as well as in-person. It would prohibit growers from encouraging or discouraging union membership. Newsom must sign the bill by Sept. 30, or it will expire.

It’s no surprise that farmers who hire farmworkers and local business “chambers of commerce” vehemently oppose the bill. Growers could face fines of between $10,000 to $25,000 for certain labor rights violations under Bill 2183.

But the bill was strongly backed in the California General Assembly — and was even endorsed in a Sept. 4 White House statement by President Joe Biden.

More importantly, there has been overwhelming popular and union backing of this bill, led militantly by the United Farm Workers (UFW) themselves.

On Aug. 3 workers and supporters started from Delano in the Central Valley on a marching journey that paralleled the one led by UFW co-founder Cesar Chavez in 1966, during the very first unionization drive by California farmworkers.

This time, on foot, in triple-digit heat, they journeyed for 335 miles in 24 days to the state capital on Aug. 26. They were greeted along the way by cheering schoolchildren, and they had their blisters and swollen knees treated by University of California Davis medical students. Food vendors provided sopas, tacos and other food.

On Aug. 20 they were cheered on by union icon Dolores UFW Farm Workers, who spoke to them in Stockton, California. Huerta coined the stirring motto chanted now at all progressive marches: “Sí, se puede! Yes, we can!”

Farmworkers have been historically excluded from federal labor protections, such as the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, which was passed in a racist deal with Southern legislators intent on denying labor rights to Black farmworkers and domestic workers.

Some states are trying to correct this injustice through legislative initiatives. Through leadership by the Workers Center of Central New York, based in Syracuse, the New York State Assembly passed the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act in 2019. Going into effect in January 2020, the law extended many new protections to farmworkers, including the right to a day of rest, overtime pay and collective bargaining rights.

Farmworkers in California are committed to fighting for basic worker rights, including the right to an easily accessed, fair and free union election, without intimidation from their bosses — which they determined because they know: “Sí, se puede!” (UFW.org/aaagotingchoiceact2022)

Teamster Women’s Conference holds rally outside Amazon HQ

By Martha Grevatt

The fight to unionize corporate behemoth Amazon is being carried out on many fronts and by many unions.

Over 1,000 attendees at the Teamster Women’s Conference, held in Seattle, rallied outside Amazon’s world headquarters Sept. 20. They carried signs reading “Amazon hurts workers” and “Organize Amazon!” Conference participants were joined by Teamsters General President Sean O’Brien and General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman, along with eight international vice presidents and other Teamster leaders.

In June 2021 the Teamsters Union’s national convention passed a resolution committing resources to unionizing Amazon. President O’Brien, who defeated the entrenched incumbent President James Hoffa Jr. in November 2021, has reaffirmed the commitment to help Amazon workers win union representation. Weeks before this mass rally, the Teamsters announced the creation of its new Amazon Division.

“Amazon should be afraid,” O’Brien warned. “The Teamsters are here standing shoulder-to-shoulder with so many communities demanding change. The Teamsters aren’t going away. Wherever Amazon abuses workers, we’ll be there. Amazon will not bust unions and get away with it. Amazon will not churn and burn [U.S.] workers and get away with it. This corrupt corporate giant must answer to the Teamsters now, and we’re ready for the fight.” (teamster.org)

Amazon is the world’s largest online retailer and the second-richest corporation. It will take a multipronged strategy to make it a union workplace — especially given that its bosses are hell-bent on keeping Amazon union-free.

Whether it’s the Teamsters; the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union; the Amazon Labor Union; Amazonians United; or Carolina Amazonians United for Solidarity and Empowerment — or any group of Amazon workers uniting for justice — their historic struggle needs and deserves a massive and coordinated wave of working-class solidarity.

High Tech, Low Pay

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcyn with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of Low-Wage Capitalism. Available at major online booksellers.

Or read it at workers.org/marcy/cd/samtech/index.htm

Low-Wage Capitalism

by Fred Goldstein

Describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class in the United States of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx’s law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval.

For more information, go to LowWageCapitalism.com

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper

Edited by Monica Moorehead

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination

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Llanso Dowell • The Struggle for Socialism

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The unfinished revolution Minnie Bruce Pratt • Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice

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Sara Pounder • Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions

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Consuelia Lee • Africa needs reparations, not occupation and sanctions

Minnie Bruce Pratt • The May Day uprising of 2006

Larry Holmes

Available at workers.org/books and major online booksellers.
Cuba will continue to raise its voice to reject domination and hegemonism

Speech by Cuba’s Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez at the United Nations General Assembly, Sept. 21, 2022

Delegates:
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed, as never before, the true essence of the unmitigated and unsustainable prevailing international order.

Humanity never had this formidable and terrible opportunity to assert the extraordinary capacity to generate wealth and well-being, and yet, never before has the gap so unequal and inequality so profound.

Eight hundred and twenty-eight million people, 10% of the world’s population, suffer from hunger, and about 50 million children suffer from wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition.

Unemployment will affect 207 million people in 2022, 21 million more than in 2019. In the middle of the fourth industrial revolution, the working class does not know how to read or write.

About 6.5 billion people have died due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccines to deal with its spread continues to be a problem for low-income countries. In 2021, pharmaceutical transnationals earned $82 billion for their share of the market.

The foreign debt has been paid several times, but it multiplies. Paradoxically, global income continues to grow rapidly and exceeds $2 trillion annually for the first time.

There is no justification for humanity to continue subsidizing the patterns of production and consumption of capitalism, denounced by President Fidel Castro, will lessen the consequences of which are unpredictable.

Mr. President:
Greenhouse gases recorded concerted concentration patterns of peacetime, in 2022. The average sea level has reached 120 meters above 2021, and it will be the same in 2022. The average sea level has reached a new high. The last seven years are the warmest on record.

We can’t continue ignoring the alarms that warn about the imminent climate catastrophe. We have only one Earth, the only home of all, rich and poor. We have to act without further delay.

The “philosophy of war and dispossession” and its socio-economic models have become the worst moment of the pandemic, to 42 countries and territories.

We have clearly warned the Government of the United States that the factors that have paid a high price for defending its doctrine, “and the irrational patterns of pro-activity, political manipulation damage the security and interest of the Cuban people.

Mr. President:
We condemn the imposition of unjust unilateral economic measures against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and external interference in its affairs.

We renew our rejection of the imposition of unjust unilateral economic measures against Venezuela, its constitutional president Nicolás Maduro Moros and the civic-military unity of its people, in the face of the attempts to destabilize and subvert the internal order of that sister country. We reject the application of unilateral coercive measures against Venezuela.

We condemn the uncoordinated campaigns of the United States of China and the attempts to damage its territorial integrity and sovereignty. We reiterate our unwavering support for the One-China principle.

We condemn the unconditional offers of the United States to the occupied Palestinian territories.

We condemn the uncoordinated requests of Cuba, which has been a victim of external interference or intervention.

We renew our historic commitment to defend the principle of the right to self-determination and independence of the people of Puerto Rico.

We condemn the unjust and unfounded judicial and media harassment, recently suffered a vile assassination attempt.

We reiterate our firm commitment to preserve the unity of the Caribbean region and the international community.

We reiterate our support for the People’s Republic of China and the attempts to damage its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

We condemn the unconditional offers of the European Union to the occupied Palestinian territories, to destabilize the Government of the United States and to destabilize and subvert the internal order of that sister country. We reiterate the application of unilateral coercive measures against Venezuela.

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Morbidity and the U.S.

Maybe people talked to you with excitement this week — seeing everywhere those photos of women in the streets of Iran, standing on top of cars, burning cars, protesting the death of a woman in custody after her arrest by the “morality police.”

Maybe you were furious after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling struck down the national right to abortion access and thought: What if there was that kind of mass protest in the U.S. — so why is the corporate media whipping up so much high-toned indignation and scorn toward the “theocratic government” of Iran?

We say: We are Marxist-Leninist communists, and our enemy is our own ruling class. The U.S. government aims to destroy Iran, which considers an enemy, by exploiting any legitimate grievances of the women living there. Washington tries to sow chaos and weaken Iran’s government, preferring the relations it has with the Saudi monarchy, despite that regime’s intransigent repression of women’s rights.

They are using laws instead of guns to condemn people to death — physical, intellectual and emotional death. To punish any women, gender-nonconforming people, and children pregnant through rape, to attack trans people who need medical treatment to stay strong against bigotry and physical attack, to deny school children factual information about history and health.

The “morality police” are stalking everywhere in the U.S. — so why is the corporate media whipping up so much high-toned indignation and scorn toward the “theocratic government” of Iran?

We refuse to march in lockstep with U.S. capital and its machinations. We know that no intervention by U.S. imperialism can liberate women or other oppressed sectors of another nation. Guarding its profits, capitalist imperialism will always sacrifice women while claiming it will “save” them.

The U.S. capitalist class seeks to dominate working and oppressed peoples — including all women — with white-supremacist, patriarchal, anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-disability laws and prejudice. We are dedicated to overturning this deadly U.S. ruling class.

New Family Code approved by Cubans 2-to-1

Continued from page 1

With the large majority of votes counted, the president of the National Electoral Council, Alina Balseiro Gutiérrez, announced in a Sept. 26 live broadcast that the Code is law.

The vote culminated a years-long democratic process among the Cuban people to update the 1975 Family Code, which codified gender equality in law. Mandated by a new Constitution passed in 2019, multiple versions were drafted and sent to the National Assembly for People’s Power in 2021, which approved a draft to be submitted to the Cuban people for discussion and debate.

Between February and April of this year, nearly 6.5 million Cubans took part in more than 79,000 meetings facilitated by the Federation of Cuban Women, the Committees to Defend the Revolution and other community organizations. These meetings offered proposals and amendments to the working draft of the proposed Code. Over 400,000 proposals were offered by the people; these were submitted to the National Assembly of People’s Power for discussion, and a revised draft returned to the people again for further discussion and proposals.

After reviewing all proposals and revisions, the National Assembly voted on the 25th version of the Code submitted, unanimously approving that and sending it to the referendum vote.

Unlike in the U.S., where reactionaries in state after state are making it more difficult for people of color and poor and working people to vote, all Cuban citizens and residents are automatically registered to vote at age 16 and were able to cast a ballot in the referendum, if they chose to do so.

LGBT+, women, pregnant people, people with disabilities and more

The new Code establishes the right of all Cubans to form a family, regardless of sex or gender identity. A variety of family forms are recognized, including multiparental families and allowing married persons to be shared among an extended and nontraditional family that could include grandparents, stepparents and surrogate mothers.

The new Code strengthens the right to free and safe abortion in a hospital or clinic for all Cubans. In the U.S. the right to reproductive choice, reproductive health and maternal health is being eliminated, severely restricted or undermined.

Newly updated in the new Family Code is defense of people with disabilities in matters of relationships and family. Caridad del Carmen Valdés Diaz, professor of law at the University of Havana, said, “The changes included in the Family Code seek to provide the people with motor, sensory or psychic disabilities with the possibility of exercising their rights as any other person, in absolute equality.” (Granma, Sept. 5)

Cuban Minister of Justice Oscar Silvera Martinez emphasized that the law “is more solid because it is impregnated with popular sovereignty, revolutionary essence, protection of rights and a high human value … and does not regulate rigid or preestablished family models but, instead, favors everyone having access to the protection of institutions of a family nature.” (TeleSUR, Aug. 8)

Ultraright opposition fomented in the U.S.

On the island there was some right-wing opposition to the Code based on conservative religious beliefs. Contrary to anti-communist stereotypes, religious bodies, including the Catholic church, are not forbidden in Cuba; they simply are not allowed to set political principles for the country.

After casting his vote in the referendum, President Miguel Mario Diaz-Canel said: “There are people who, by faith or creed, have not understood that the Code doesn’t deny the type of family they defend, but rather gives guarantees for other types of families.” (Resumen Latinoamericano-US, Sept. 26)

More insidious was the neoconservative campaign against the Family Code organized from the U.S. on social networks and right-wing media. The aim was to incite Cubans to vote “no” using the argument that supporting the bill means supporting the Cuban government.

Diaz-Canel clarified: “It is not a problem of convictions, reasoning or feelings; there are people who adopt that position because they consider that, if it is a Code within the Revolution, then it should not be approved.” Cubans — in defiance of anti-communist propagandists and the very real hardships of the U.S. blockade — once more have proven that they never stop searching for justice, and they never stop “making the Revolution.”

Bill Sacks, an organizer and participant with the Venceremos Brigade, breaking the travel blockade for over 50 years, contributed extensively to this article. In 1975 Pratt lost custody of her two young children under the anti-LGBTQ+ “crime against nature” law in North Carolina.

Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba by Leslie Feinberg

This groundbreaking book is a compilation of 25 articles about same-sex love and sex/gender variance in Cuba’s pre- and post-revolutionary history.

Available, along with complete Lavender & Red series, as free download at workers.org/books.
Youth join global strike for climate justice

By Kathy Durkin

Climate strikers in Bengaluru, India, one of 450 global locations, were among hundreds of thousands demanding “climate reparations and justice” Sept. 23. Young people in Asia, Africa and Europe joined a coordinated Global Climate Strike that called for wealthy countries to pay reparations to poorer countries that have been the hardest hit by the disasters caused by global warming.

Demonstrators emphasized the more frequent, ferocious and deadly heat waves; floods; wildfires; and droughts wreaking havoc worldwide, causing devastation to villages, homes, livelihoods and human life. These protests occurred six weeks before the upcoming COP27 climate summit, where impoverished nations plan to demand rich capitalist countries pay reparations for their actions, which have resulted in climate change.

Youth walked out of schools, colleges and workplaces in 100 countries from New Zealand to South Korea to Italy, Germany and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Kinshasa, the DRC’s capital, the main demand was “Act for Africa, protect our planet!” Some 20,000 German youth in Berlin, demanded their government establish a 100 billion Euro fund to meet the climate catastrophe. (Guardian, Sept. 23)

Coordinator of the protests, Fridays for Future, said at its website: “Colonizers and capitalists are at the core of every system of oppression that has caused the climate crisis” and called for “decolonization, using the tool of climate reparations.” It says demands must be met from “Indigenous, Black, anti-patriarchal and diverse marginalized communities to get their lands back, giving resources to communities most affected by the climate crisis.”

The statement recognizes that “climate struggle is class struggle” and said that for years, “the ruling class, primarily through corporations and governments from the Global North... have exercised their power, gained through colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy and exploitation, to destroy the Earth and its occupants with no remorse...” They deliberately sacrifice the Global South’s ecosystems and peoples for their “economic growth.”

It concludes, “The richest capitalist 1% must be held responsible for their actions... Their profit is our death and suffering.” The coalition calls for people’s power, led by the most marginalized.

The struggle against the climate disaster must be aimed at the capitalists who ravage the earth in search of superprofits with no concern for its inhabitants or for the planet’s well-being. Fighting for reparations is an excellent goal, but ultimately there must be a concerted global effort to oust capitalism and build a socialist world, which is the only way to ensure the preservation of the Earth and every living being on it.

On 50th anniversary of Philippine martial law

‘Never Forget, Never Again’

Sept. 24 — Dozens of people from ANAK Bayan and other local left organizations including Workers World Party met in Clark Park in Philadelphia on the 50th anniversary of Ferdinand Marcos’ 1972 declaration of martial law in the Philippines. A special presentation was made to honor Baltazar “Bal” Pintguel, Bayan Deputy Secretary General and a former political prisoner who bravely imprisoned and death threats to challenge authoritarian regimes in the Philippines. He moved to the U.S. as a political asylum and lived as an antiwar political activist in Philadelphia before he was passed away in 2017.

Sister Gertrude, a Catholic Assumption nun, shared her experiences organizing resistance during the first Marcos era.

Bringing the struggle of the people for a just society to the current year, Anakbayan Philadelphia member Tariq shared his experiences as a member of the international observer mission to the Philippines during the voting that ended May 9.

The election of Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., son of the dictator who ruled the Philippines 1965-1986, was marred by blatant vote buying, a disturbing level of red-tagging and a number of incidents of deadly violence.

Many voters were unable to cast their vote, and the International Observer Mission reported that the vote failed to meet the international standard of a free, fair and equal election.

The IOM report concludes: “Ousting to the Philippines’ history of colonialism under Spain and the United States of America and its enduring ties with the U.S. ruling elite, contemporary political leaders still bear the marks of colonial collaboration.” (The complete report can be read at tinyurl.com/7jx3ej9.)

Besides the speeches, music, a dance performance and refreshments provided cultural highlights to the event. Part of the program included a lesson in how to chant “The people united will never be defeated!” in the Philippine Tagalog language: “Ang Tao, Ang Bayan Ngayon Ay Lumalabas!”

By Deborah Rodriguez

On Sept. 23, 1868, el Grito de Lares erupted in the town of Lares, Puerto Rico, the island’s first armed uprising for independence from the Spanish colonial rule. Farmers, enslaved Africans and workers led a revolt for Puerto Rico’s independence, to abolish slavery and to end worker abuse and exploitation via the “libreta de jornalero” or day-laborer’s passbook. They fought for social and economic improvements and control of the archipelago’s finances.

It is 154 years later, and Puerto Rico is still under colonial rule. The U.S. replaced Spain and created a neo-colonial relationship with the archipelago. The U.S. has awarded some concessions under the guise of “recovery,” but in reality there is little control left to the Puerto Rican government or its people. This has been most noticeable since the creation of the Puerto Rico Fiscal Control Board, which is authorized to manage the country’s finances.

Under the guise of restructuring Puerto Rico’s debt, the Junta has sold off essential services to private companies, including the electrical grid, which is currently under the control of LUMA Energy. The utility company has been relentless in its treatment of the Puerto Rican people by outsourcing jobs, imposing seven price increases for services within one year and leaving people without energy for hours, sometimes even days, with its constant blackouts.

Still under colonial rule

It is 154 years later, and workers in Puerto Rico are still exploited. In recent years, workers have protested the cuts in their wages and pensions. After Hurricane Maria, the island suffered an exodus of health care professionals, due to the crumbling health care system that left people in a precarious state during a very distressing time. Doctors who were already underpaid were not being fully compensated, necessitating their departure from Puerto Rico because their wages were compromised.

In 2022, public workers, namely teachers, protested the first wage increase in over 14 years, which was a mere $450. This amount was added to an already dismal wage, and there were threats to cut pensions even more. In addition, the workers faced rising prices of goods and essential services, such as with LUMA, and an increase in housing costs.

It has been five years since Hurricane Maria ravaged Puerto Rico, and now the people are witnessing the effects that Hurricane Fiona has had on the already crumbling system on the island. If Puerto Ricans were ever under the impression that being under Yankee rule benefits our people, the last 154 years are revealing. In the last few years, the deteriorating conditions have been laid bare, and the people’s anger has been brewing and can no longer be suppressed.

On Sept. 25, at the Puerto Rican parade in Philadelphia, I saw my people waving the Puerto Rican flag high with pride, listening to our music, dancing and enjoying themselves. In the midst of it, a small but mighty group, my comrades, the Philly Boricuas, were banding out propaganda denouncing the selling of the island to exploitative hedge fund managers and “crypto bros.” Drowned out by the booming songs, wailing salsa and reggaeton beats with each flyer handed out, we thought to ourselves: “Despierta Boricua! Puerto Rico no se vende, se defiende!” (“Wake up Boricua! Puerto Rico is not for sale! It defends itself.”)
Una acusación al capitalismo moderno

Imagínese que el gobierno de Joe Biden y el Congreso hubieran acordado gastar 54,000 millones de dólares para impulsar la atención sanitaria en Estados Unidos mientras las variantes del COVID-19 seguían desfigurando sus caras. En el mismo lugar de que la esperanza de vida disminuyera por segundo consecutivo.

Esos 54,000 millones de dólares no cubrirían el coste de un sistema sanitario nacional, pero sería un comienzo. En cambio, la administración Biden destinó ese dinero a la compra de sistemas de armamento para ampliar la guerra en Ucrania. Otros 813,000 millones de dólares se gastaron en el Pentágono. Financiar y ampliar la economía de guerra, de la misma manera que se habrían salvado más vidas.

¿Cuántas vidas se perderán por estas políticas de guerra permanente, con más amenazas contra Rusia y China, si ha sido el prioridad de Biden desde que asumió el cargo?

La esperanza de vida media en Estados Unidos, basada en los censos de 2020 y 2021, es de solo 76,2 años, la más baja que se ha registrado desde 1968. Es el mayor descenso —2,7 años en total— en casi 100 años, desde el comienzo de la llamada “grípe española” en 1918—que en realidad comenzó con los soldados estadounidenses reunidos en Kansas para la Primera Guerra Mundial.

Para la gente de color, las cifras son más graves. Para los machos hispanos, en la última medición realizada se redujo a 75,5 años. Desde 2019 los indígenas y los nativos de Alaska experimentaron una caída en la esperanza de vida de 71,8 a 63,2 años.

El país sigue viendo picos de muertes por COVID-19 y el aumento del número de personas que mueren por sobredosis de drogas.

Por qué ‘aprender a vivir’ con las muertes por COVID?

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Para la gente de color, las cifras son más graves. Para los machos hispanos, en la última medición realizada se redujo a 75,5 años. Desde 2019 los indígenas y los nativos de Alaska experimentaron una caída en la esperanza de vida de 71,8 a 63,2 años.

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