U.S. immigration policy causes migrant deaths

By Ted Kelly

Mexican police arrested three officials from the National Immigration Institute and two private security guards as of March 30, after a deadly blaze at a migrant detention facility in Ciudad Juárez claimed the lives of 38 refugees on March 27. (Reuters, March 30) One of the incarcerated migrants, who had been accused of starting the fire, has also been arrested. (NPR, March 31)

According to the Ciudad Juárez fire department, no one at the detention center called emergency services. Rather, an on-duty captain saw the smoke and ran back to the station to alert others. Firefighters had to break down the cell doors to make a rescue. “It was a coincidence that we were fortunately able to get anybody out alive.” (La Verdad, March 31)

Long before the fire, this mass murder was premeditated. No one should have been in that facility in the first place.

Who created the conditions that forced these people to flee their homes and seek asylum elsewhere?

Immigrants rights activists are correctly pointing to Title 42, a policy implemented by former President Donald Trump in 2020, that forced asylum seekers in the U.S. back across the border by tightening restrictions on who qualifies for asylum.

The rule has enabled U.S. border agents to order 2.7 million expulsions since March 2020, according to the Institute and two private security guards arrested. (NPR, March 31)

Mexico side of the U.S. border wall at Friendship Park in Tijuana, Baja California, December 2018.

Continued on page 4

March for Queer & Trans Youth Autonomy

By Martha Grevatt

More than 430 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been pushed in legislatures across the U.S. within the past three months, a terrifyingly swift escalation in cruelty, even for this country. To say that we are witnessing an emerging genocide would not be hyperbole. This is why an impressive number showed up in actions called “March for Queer & Trans Youth Autonomy.” The coordinated protests were held March 31 to commemorate Trans Day of Visibility.

Trans youth and their loved ones know what is at stake here. National demands included “Codify Title IX to include sexuality, gender identity and gender expression,” a “Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ+ Students” and “an end to violence and hatred directed toward all people. We ask for empathy and clear actions against fascism, the police, racism, sexism and Islamophobia.”

The Georgia Assembly, in the waning hours of its March 29 session, voted to outlaw medical services to youth under 18 for issues relating to gender identity. Despite passionate testimony by parents, scientific arguments by medical experts and crowds of sign-carrying youth occupying the balconies and hallways, the legislature criminalizing necessary health care was passed into law.

On the day of action, defiant trans, lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex, gender-nonconforming and queer youth, their parents, and supporters gathered on the steps of the state Capitol to declare their humanity and pledge resistance. Following powerful stories by teenagers and young adults about their struggles

Continued on page 3

Student workers fight for union

Transphobia – a Marxist analysis

Editorial: Is Israel a ‘democracy’?

Anti-war light show at U.N.
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, multigendered and multilingual 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 never-ending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ+ 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 have the most seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth have the most

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

Workers World Party 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor New York, N.Y. 10011 Phone: 212.627.2994 E-mail: ww@workers.org Web: www.workers.org

Vol. 65, No. 14 • April 6, 2023 Closing date: April 2

Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt

Web Editors: Altair, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

U Penn RAs March for Union Recognition

By Joe Piette

Philadelphia

University of Pennsylvania residential advisers and graduate resident associates held a march and rally March 31 to draw attention to their fight for union recognition. Their energetic rally notified university officials that this struggle for union rights by over 200 university student workers will not be a quiet campaign.

The list of speakers organized by United RAs at Penn, Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 153 featured Philadelphia mayoral candidate Helen Gym and Pennsylvania State Representative Rick Krawczewski. The rally also included Evan Kassof of the Temple University Graduate Students’ Association, whose members had just concluded a victorious 42-day strike.

RAs are required to stay on campus through weekends and holidays, attend weekly staff meetings, meet one-on-one with students, respond to emergencies, organize hall events and work over night shifts. In exchange, they get housing and access to three buffet meals per week. During the pandemic, RAs were asked to put in long hours and risk their own health.

Residential assistant Madelaine Riley explained in an OPEIU press release announcing the union recognition campaign: “I love being an RA. I love forming a community with my residents, getting to know them and helping them to bond with one another and grow as individuals. That said, the RA role is still a job and a difficult one at that.”

“It is hours of planning, organizing and emotional output that goes largely uncompensated. I believe that it is important for us to unionize, so that RAs as a collective can have the ability to advocate for ourselves and our needs. If we are going to improve our working environment and get the compensation that we need, we need to have a stronger voice, and we can get there collectively with a union.”

RA Mica Lin-Alves stated, “The work that RAs do is vital — building community, supporting residents in times of both crisis and growth. It’s also more challenging and even more important for us, because we are the generation of students who have been impacted by the social isolation of the pandemic.

“That’s why we need compensation that reflects the importance of our work, and we need an influential, democratic voice, and only a union can give us that. I hope that Penn administration, faculty and students all recognize the importance of our role in residential life and support our effort to build a stronger, more fair and democratic workplace.”

The student workers’ immediate demand is a union election and voluntary recognition. Organizers are asking supporters to sign a letter asking U Penn leadership to not engage in anti-union campaigns against the RAs and GAs. (tinyurl.com/bdd15q48) Similar student RAs have voted for union recognition at Barnard, Mount Holyoke, Wesleyan, Columbia and Tufts.

Workers World

March 31 to draw attention to their fight for union recognition March 31, 2023.

U Penn RA students lead march through campus for union recognition March 31, 2023.
Transphobia—a product of capitalism

By Maddi Johnson
Portland, Oregon

Note: The following talk was given during the Trans Day of Resistance, March 31 in Portland, Oregon. Johnson is a member of the Portland branch of Workers World Party.

Where does transphobia come from?
Are we born hating each other?

Civilizations throughout history have had different gender norms than we do — different conceptions of what it means to be a woman or a man or something else entirely.

There were societies that not only accepted but revered gender-diverse people, even ones where such people were necessary to their cultures. This is not to say that bigotry did not exist in those societies or that we need to go back to a time before things got corrupted. But merely to explain that societies have prevailing ideologies, normalized ways of thinking that are built around the conditions those societies existed in.

Transphobes talk about the degradation of society, a return to tradition, to the values of “Western Civilization.” What tradition are they referring to? Why does their tradition exclude trans people, while the traditions of some other cultures champion us?

Transphobia in our society has a root. It is the same place sexism (the oppression of women) comes from: patriarchy. And patriarchy has a root: class society.

There was a time before class society, when children were raised in a more communal fashion. Where monogamy was not the standard — a society where you may not know for sure who a child’s father is, but you always know who the mother is: mothers have a certain right of stewardship over their children.

As agriculture led to centralized static living, and the land was enclosed and divided up, so too did relationships change from fluid, to polygamy (but only for men; a woman could never have multiple husbands), to strict monogamy. Marriages became more permanent, and instead of children falling under the final purview of their mother, both became the property of the father. Thus we have the nuclear family, the smallest building block of class society.

Why was this necessary? When a man died, his land and his wealth fell to his son. The legitimacy of a child’s parenting could not be questioned. Infidelity was a high crime, and women became shackled to their husbands for the purpose of preserving the class status of a family.

This is the tradition that feudalism and, later, capitalism were born into. This was part of the prevailing ideology that kept those at the top rich and powerful. And thus it was necessary to make those at the bottom believe in it, lest they start questioning everything else.

Innate threats to class society

Some people pose innate threats to this system: people like independent women, like gay people, like transgender people. While in a communal society, those people would have been able to play a role in the shared responsibility of raising children; they did not have a place in class society. Their existence threatened the house of cards everything was perched upon.

Have you ever noticed how bigots are more willing to tolerate queer folks who seem “normal?” The white gay couple in the suburbs? The passing strictly binary trans woman? It’s because those people at least approximate the existing class structure. The further away you get from it, the less comfortable they are. But that’s why people were taught to hate us. They say we’re unnatural. We don’t fit into their family values. We corrupt the moral fabric of society.

Whether bigots realize it or not, and usually they don’t, the tradition of heteronormative families serving property is what people are talking about when they discuss a return to traditionalism at the expense of trans folks.

March for ‘Queer & Trans Youth Autonomy’

Cleveland

Other speakers had been part of the battle to hold a “Rock and Roll Humanist Drag Queen Story Hour” at a park in the small town of Wadsworth, Ohio, March 11. They fought the Nazis, who showed up with swastika flags and shouted racist and transphobic slurs but who were unsuccessful in shutting down the event.

The march was one of three actions in the Cleveland area that day.

In Seattle a vigil was held for Eucy, a trans warrior murdered when three county sheriffs invaded her apartment to enforce an eviction for overdue rent and opened fire. Eucy defended herself, and one cop went to the hospital critically injured. After the shooting in the Lower Ballard neighborhood, the police swarmed the whole area.

Speakers at the memorial spoke about how Eucy was a social justice and tenants rights activist. She participated in many Black Lives Matter protests and was arrested for doing so. Eucy was a compassionate person, who would go out of her way to help others, speakers testified.

“Eucy was an anti-evasion activist,” another shared. “That’s why she was targeted. Her neighbor was threatened, and she helped him. That’s why the landlord wanted her out.”

The unremarkable system of capitalism killed Eucy and evicts millions of others, exposing them to the elements and deprivation.

Some 10 million households were hit with eviction during the mortgage foreclosure crisis following the 2008 recession. This crisis continues.

A rally in Portland, Oregon, drew an impressive number of people. Maddi Johnson, who spoke for Workers World Party, was not expecting the deafening cheers she received, when she shouted those words to several hundred people shouting in Oregon rain: “Enough! Enough relying on the system to fix the system! The capitalist system is the reason a bunch of fascists are in the government getting ready to kill us!”

This is what we mean when we say that trans rights are a class issue. We have to unite as workers, stop looking at things individually, see how they’re all connected and fight the problem at the root.

Get organized! Get out of the closet and into the streets! [2]
Hunger strikes at ICE detention centers protest slave labor

By Gloria Rubac

“ICE is a $100 billion-dollar company, and they’re paying us $1 a day,” 21-year-old detainee Cruz Martinez said. “They’re getting rich off of us.” (tinyurl.com/bdfm4y9h)

On Feb. 26, Martinez and over 40 incarcerated immigrants began a hunger strike at two ICE detention centers in California, because they are paid only $1.00 a day for working eight-hour shifts in the prisons run by GEO Group. They do janitorial work, which includes jobs where they’ve been exposed to black mold. The jobs involve scrubbing bathrooms, working as barbers, doing laundry and other jobs that maintain the facilities.

This hunger strike follows an earlier work stoppage that has been going on for 10 months. The strike and work stoppage both demanded that detainees who clean dorms and doing hands be paid the minimum wage and not $1 a day.

The hunger strike was at two for-profit immigration detention centers: the Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center in Bakersfield, California, and the Santa Rita Alameda County Jail in Dublin, California.

By Judy Greenspan

In what was an incredibly moving ceremony and protest, former prisoners, family members, clergy, prison abolitionists and community organizations gathered at the Santa Rita Alameda County Jail in Dublin, April 1, to send this powerful message: “We need healing, housing and care, not deaths!”

The Care First Community Coalition held space outside the large jail for people to express their anger and grief over the deaths of over 70 incarcerated people at the jail since 2014. Four of those deaths happened in the first two months of 2023. CFCC is a coalition of community and religious organizations.

The healing circle or rally consisted of family members, former prisoners and others speaking out about the abuse suffered by people incarcerated inside Santa Rita Jail.

A prisoner inside delivered a taped statement about his experience in May 2022 in the Intensive Care Unit at Stanford Health Center after attempting suicide. He called out to the Santa Rita administration for neglecting and ignoring Black men who “suffer from mental illness.”

The prisoner, who identified himself as a Black man, spoke anonymously for fear of retaliation, stating, “This is a jail, not a place of healing or a place of care. We are subjected to trauma daily here. I want us to see on this point.” The incarcerated speaker ended by thanking everyone who attended the protest. “I cannot express in words the gratitude I am for your assembling out here in order to demand that this county provide care not death.”

After the rally and vigil, a loud protest and march were held in front of the jail, with protesters banging on drums and pots and carrying paper tombstones, commemorating everyone who has died inside Santa Rita Jail.

CFCC, whose backbone organization is Restore Oakland, was the driving force behind gathering community members and to demand the two facilities shut down.

A Care First Community Coalition member said, “It is to make passage between the U.S. and Mexico safe and legal.

Prisoners and family members demand not jails
to divert from the systems that cage and criminalize our community members and to invest in holistic health care, housing and life-affirming resources that create true safety and healing for Alameda County residents.”

U.S. immigration policy causes migrant deaths

Continued from page 1

White House is poised to make the policy permanent through other means.

Hard-line policies continue under Biden

Since his 2020 presidential campaign, Biden painted himself as a compassionate, reasonable alternative to the hard-line and openly racist incumbent, especially when it came to immigration.

Just last month, the White House released a statement claiming “Biden has taken historic steps to secure our border and rebuild a safe, orderly and humane immigration system in the Americas,” which was gutted by the previous administration.” (whitehouse.gov, March 26)

In his first budget statement, the White House boasted it has increased the budget of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) by more than $800 million, for a total of nearly $32 billion.

As a senator, Biden supported the “Secure Fence Act of 2006,” signed into law by then-President George W. Bush, which authorized the construction of 700 miles of partition walls along the Mexican border. In a primary debate in 2007, Biden defended his border fence vote, on the basis of preventing drug trafficking. Referring to “14 million illegals,” he pledged to “take out the criminals” and “get them back.” (New York Times, June 3, 2007)

Under Barack Obama’s presidency, whom Biden served as second-in-command, Obama was known by his second term to immigrant rights activists as the “deporter-in-chief.” Why? Because he had expelled more people than any U.S. president before him, with over 3 million deportations combined.

According to a 2021 American Immigration Council fact sheet: “Since the creation of DHS [Department of Homeland Security] in 2005, ICE spending has nearly tripled, from $3.3 billion to $8.3 billion today. Much of this funding has gone to increasing the agency’s ability to hold immigrants in detention in locations around the country.”

Free them all Full legalization now!

How dangerous is it to attempt to cross the U.S. border illegally today? The CBP’s own reporting suggests they discovered 7,500 corpses of refugees between 1998 and 2018. (cbp.gov, 2019) And that was before Title 42 was implemented.

The United Nations reported migrant deaths in 2019 as 497, one of the highest on record. (un.org, Jan. 26, 2020) In 2020, the year Title 42 took effect, the remains of 227 migrants were found in Arizona. (Guardian, Jan. 30, 2021)

In 2021, Humane Borders reported finding 43 bodies in the Sonoran desert during the month of June. Brad Jones, a volunteer, said: “What is happening is climate change is real, and the temperatures itself is more volatile.” (VOA, Aug. 2, 2021)

June 2021 was the hottest year on record for Arizona, where heat-related deaths have increased more than 60%. (Guardian, Jan. 27, 2022)

The number of deaths increased by 28% subsequently, as 800 people died during attempted crossings between September 2021 and 2022, the highest toll reported by CBP to date. In June of last year, 53 people died in a single incident when locked in the back of a tractor trailer outside San Antonio. (Texas Tribune, June 27, 2022)

The deadly fire in Ciudad Juarez proves that refugees and migrants are put in an impossible position by U.S. border policy: Risk dying in prison or risk dying in the desert. The callousness and cruelty of border agents and capitalists, who give them their marching orders, must not be permitted to continue. The only way to stop the mass deaths on the U.S. border is to make passage between Mexico and the U.S. safe and legal.
For the past 13 weeks, Israel has been rocked with massive demonstrations in the hundreds of thousands, especially in Tel Aviv, targeting the far-right, neocolonial government headed by the butcher Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

What prompted the protests was a proposed “reform package” that would curtail the judiciary branch of the government and would give Israeli politicians, viewed as being the “moderate” wing, more authority to pick judges. The protests grew to the point that a change was necessary to balance the power between judges and parliamen-
tarians. At the same time, Netanyahu continues to face charges of corruption.

The demonstrations have been so relentless that the “reform” changes have been suspended, at least for now. As of now only a small number of people who oppose Netanyahu’s reforms have questioned Israeli apartheid policies.

Netanyahu’s critics say that the proposed changes would be a threat to Israel’s “democracy,” which beg the questions: Is democracy something that has ever been a democracy since its founding? The answers are an emphatic Hell NO!!

The state of Israel is an illegal formation founded on the blood, sweat and tears of the Palestinian people, who were the original inhabitants of the land for thousands of years. British imperialists passed the Balfour Declaration in 1917, declaring that Palestine would become a “national home for the Jewish people.” A small minority of Jewish people were then living in peaceful coexistence with Palestinians, before the declaration was codified.

As was written in a December 2022 WW editorial: “The official founding of the Israeli state in 1948 was accompanied by massacres and the forced removal through genocidal terror and intimidation of three-quarters of the population of Palestine at that time. Some 750 towns and villages were literally wiped from the face of the Earth, their remains bulldozed away, come to be known as Nabi, aka “the Disaster.”

“In violation of international law, not to mention the human rights of the Palestinians, the Israeli military occupied Arab homes and land, vectoring never to allow the people they had cruelly uprooted and driven out to return to their homeland. In 1967, in another war of aggression, Israel seized the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights, where they still remain to control, block-ade and terrorize.” (workers.org/2022/12/68147)

Israel became a military garrison state for imperial interests in this oil-rich region. For the Palestinian people, Israel is a colonial settler state ruled by the iron fist of white supremacy. Palestinians, including young work-
erd and children, are ruthlessly beaten, murdered and uprooted from their homes, as Zionist settlements are expanded on a daily basis in the Occupied Territories.

Despite the brutal occupation of Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), armed to the teeth by the Pentagon, the Palestinian people continue to heroically resist and fight back against this repression with mass protests and strikes, armed with only rocks and bottles. This kind of resistance continues to inspire not only the oppressed masses throughout the Middle East but throughout the world, including the imperialist centers like the U.S.

A growing number of Jewish activists, many of them young, are defining Zionism and siding with the Palestinian people by joining the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) campaign and other mil-
itant campaigns to help politically weaken and isolate Israel. The resistance has also resulted in the IDF fac-
ing a mounting crisis from those forced into military conscription and facing prosecution for refusing to kill Palestinians.

Underneath the current Israeli instability is that despite committing terrorist acts, Israel has been unable to contain the Palestinian people’s quest for national lib-
eration, especially winning back their rightful, ancient and stolen lands from their oppressors. Instead of flying the despicable Israeli flag, thousands of Palestinian flags, outlawed by the Netanyahu govern-
ment, should be proudly flown. Palestine will be free!!

Howard Clark
Comunicado: La clase obrera en Francia entierra a sus sepulcros

Por CNC en el Estado Español

Comunicado de la Coordinadora de Núcleos Comunistas (CNC) en el Estado Español (España), publicado en Workers World el 6 de abril de 2023.

La clase obrera francesa nos da, de nuevo, una gran lección de lucha de clases; y empezando por el principio, nos muestra qué es una huelga general.

Nada que ver con los patéticos simulacros de huelga con los que la burguesía intenta intimidar a la clase obrera. Es un ataque general contra la clase trabajadora, que no han servido más que para profundizar el sen- timiento de impotencia ante el único resultado cierto: el descuento en el salario de la jornada no trabajada.

La clase obrera francesa ha tomado la batuta. Sabía lo que había que hacer y dirigió la acción: bloqueo de zonas industriales, de puertos, centrales nucleares, de transporte público y de mercancías, de aeropuertos –con la incorporación de todos los sectores estratégicos y de él surgió el poder obrero y la capacidad de inci- ración de los barrios obreros donde se concentran los sectores más precarizados, como los estudiantes, incluso los maestros, etc. Los agricultores, los metalúrgicos, los del sector eléctrico, los de los trabajadores de mayor edad, barrios obreros donde se concentran las fuerzas más podestables, donde se ha ido habiendo más lealtad al fuego. La clase obrera

La crisis bancaria

¿Empujará a la clase obrera al fascismo o al alzarse?

Por Larry Holmes

A la clase dominante capitalista le preocupa lo que la cri- sis bancaria, que comenzó hace menos de un mes con el desplome de la firma de Wall Street, el Minyin Bank y se extendió realmente, más que extensamente, en todo el sistema financiero mundial, porque el hecho de que el crédito se haga difícil para el gobierno y para las empresas puede convertirse en una crisis financiera mun- dial mayor que el de 2008. Se acabó hablar de un "austeridad suave". La industria tecnológica, pilar del capitalismo estadounidense durante mucho tiempo, se ha quedado en el borde del precipicio, al igual que el mercado inmobiliario comercial.

A pesar de los esfuerzos de emergencia realizados las 24 horas del día por la Casa Blanca, la Reserva Federal, el Departamento del Tesoro y Wall Street para rescatar a los bancos y evitar el contagio, las retiradas de fondos de los bancos medianos se han extendido por todo Estados Unidos y por todo el mundo. En la creciente lista de temores del sistema capitalista figura en primer lugar la posibilidad de que los bancos medianos, que no pocas veces dejan más heridos entre ellos que entre los trabajadores, como en Saint Nazaire, y el pique en las maquiladoras, la lucha trasladada a otro frente; por ejemplo, a derribar el pórtico del panteón financiero y a demandar el cierre del gigante el 28 de marzo de 2023. Workers World publica el Comunicado de la Coordinadora de Núcleos Comunistas (CNC) en el Estado Español (España), correspondiente a la página 5 de nuestra edición de este mes.

La clase obrera ha tomado la batuta. Sabía lo que había que hacer y dirigió la acción. No es muy exagerado decir que en esta crisis bancaria, la clase obrera ha tomado el poder. La misma que fue capaz de tumbar la decisión de la cípula de su princi- pal sindicato, que pretendía que la votación de la Constitución Europea no concernía a la clase obrera, obligando a la CGT a pedir activamente el NO que salió victorioso. La clase trabajadora francesa ha tomado la batuta. La represión es durísima, las banderas de Ucrania.

Contínua a página 5