Atlantans vow to ‘Stop Cop City’

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

June 4 – In the days leading up to the June 5 Atlanta City Council meeting — where a final vote on the tax-payer share of the cost of building the militarized police training facility, known as “Cop City,” is expected – one shocking revelation after another has come to light.

Each new travesty of justice aids the mobilization of individuals, organizations and communities for Monday’s the meeting, which will start with press conferences and a rally outside City Hall, to be followed by hundreds and hundreds of Atlantans determined to speak their outrage and pack the City Council meeting. This will be an historic day of reckoning for Mayor Andre Dickens, each City Council member and the city’s elite.

The Atlanta Progress Collective produced evidence on May 24 – the same day that the Finance Committee of the Council was set to approve the 2024 budget allotment needed to finance the construction – that the real cost to the city will double from the estimated $31 million to about $67 million. Despite still more opposition to the whole plan from the public at their meeting, the Committee members passed the financing language by a vote of four yeses, one no and one abstention.

For the past two years, two different mayors, the corporate leaders of the private Atlanta Police Foundation and various City Council members repeated false and misleading financial information. It has become clear that the funding picture the AFP has promoted was inaccurate to say the least, and Atlanta working-class families will bear the cost directly and indirectly, as city funds for other social services will be cut to pay for Cop City.

Arrests of activists fuel more anger

Adding to this outrageous situation, early in the morning on May 31, a SWAT team accompanied by Georgia Bureau of Investigation agents and other police, raided the home of Marlon Kautz and Adele MacLean (known as Earthworm) in the historically Black Kirkwood neighborhood of Atlanta and arrested them. Savannah Patterson was also arrested at that address by the cops, who carried long guns. Some might say it was a perfect example of what militarized policing looks like.

All three of them were charged with one count of money laundering and one count of charity fraud! Kautz and Earthworm, in particular, are well-known activists who have organized CopWatch teams in overpoliced neighborhoods, at demonstrations protesting local and national police killings, and at anti-Klan and anti-Nazi rallies held at Stone Mountain and other Georgia cities.

In response to the high number of arrests during the countrywide outrage over numerous police killings, they established the Atlanta Solidarity Fund in 2016. This fund assisted many young people with bail and legal support, especially at that time during the mass protests following George Floyd’s murder in May 2020.

Continued on page 3

Cleveland Pride promotes social justice

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

Thousands marched through downtown Cleveland June 3 to celebrate “Pride in the CLE,” organized by the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland.

The call to action read: “Pride in the CLE® March adheres to the grassroots ideals of early Pride celebrations that sprung forth following the Stonewall Inn uprisings in 1969. With this in mind we aim to lift up the voices of our community and advocate for social justice by way of a march through our beloved city streets. We also commemorate the thousands who have marched over the last half century demanding the fair and equal treatment of the LGBTQ+ community.”

This is a progressive appeal, considering the increased corporatization of LGBTQ+ Pride events over the decades since Stonewall. Among the social justice issues addressed were the attacks on trans youth by state legislatures around the country, including in Ohio.

Many marchers carried pro-abortion rights demonstrations held in the 1960s. Philly Pride March 2023 was organized by Galaei, a radical social-justice organization serving “all Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous and people of color communities.”

While celebrating Pride, rally speakers addressed the continued attacks on LGBTQ2S+ people and their rights by right-wing groups across the country. Rally organizers urged solidarity and attendance at protests denouncing a scheduled gathering of the national bigoted, anti-LGBTQ2S+ group “Moms for Liberty” in Philadelphia at the end of June. □

Celebrate Pride Philly style

Pride Month kicked off in Philadelphia with a massive march of thousands of people from Washington Park at 6th and Walnut Streets to a festival in the Gayborhood at 13th and Locust Streets on June 4. Turnout was the largest ever for a Philadelphia Pride event. Crowds lined the route to chant and cheer on participants.

A highlight of the event was a 20-by-200-foot-long Pride flag carried by hundreds of participants.

The starting location was just blocks from the Liberty Bell – the site of gay rights demonstrations held in the 1960s. Philly Pride March 2023 was organized by Galaei, a radical social-justice organization serving “all Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous and people of color communities.”

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NO to rainbow capitalism in Seattle

Buffalo Pride

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Rally held in Youngstown on Saturday, 5/27/23.

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By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

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Debt ceiling bill worsens hunger

NO to rainbow capitalism in Seattle

Buffalo Pride
President Joe Biden avowed a default on the federal debt June 3 when he signed the Fiscal Responsibility Act. Biden hailed the bipartisan “compromise and consensus” that resulted in the bill being approved by the House and Senate earlier in the week. He even said the Republican negotiators, who wanted cuts in spending—but of course not military spending—“acted responsibly and put the good of the country ahead of politics.” (pbs.org)

One of the bill’s high points is the suspension of the freeze on student loan payments—meaning young people struggling to make ends meet, working one or more low-wage jobs, will be another bill to pay.

An estimated 750,000 individuals could lose Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits under the bill, which raises from 50 to 54 the age at which a recipient is required to seek work for 80 hours a month to receive food stamps. This would hit very poor, elderly, and disabled people the hardest. In addition, the “bill effectively takes up requirements on states to show that very low-income parents receiving [Temporary Assistance to Need Families] income assistance are meeting rigid work requirements that are often ill-suited to the needs of families” (Centers for Budget and Policy Priorities, May 31).

Democratic supporters of the bill point to new exemptions to the work requirement for veterans and houseless people, saying the actual total number of SNAP benefit recipients could increase. But why abandon poor families, disproportionately families of color, about to lose a needed benefit?

The bill curtails a number of clean-energy-related tax credits for individuals and businesses, while fast-tracking the Mountain Valley Pipeline, which when completed will carry natural gas from West Virginia to Virginia, with a proposed extension into North Carolina. Courts previously upheld construction after residents drew attention to environmental problems caused by deforestation and mountaintop removal to grant pipeline developers the right of way.

No gains for working class

Despite President Biden’s exuberance over the lifting of the debt ceiling, there is nothing in this bill for work­ers and oppressed people to celebrate. Not one penny of the Pentagon budget—which increased under the Biden administration along with billions in military aid to Ukraine—has been touched. Not one loophole the billionaires use to get out of paying taxes has been closed. The bill is yet another transfer of wealth—all created by the working class—from the masses of people who pay student loans, taxes and many other bills to the tiny wealthy minority at the top.

While the most rabid right-wingers in Congress opposed the bill because it didn’t cut enough from safety net programs, some of more progressive Democrats voted against it for the damage it contained. But that’s all they did—they voted. They didn’t even lobby against it, let alone mobilize their constituents—the millions who will actually be hurt by the bill—to try to stop it.

After Biden signed the so-called Fiscal Responsibility Act, the stock market gained 700 points. It’s no surprise this law sounds a bit like former House Speaker Newt Gingrich’s Personal Responsibility Act, which then-President Bill Clinton signed in 1996, forcing people on public assistance to seek an income or lose their benefits. That should clear up any doubts as to which class the industry “compromise and consensus” on Capitol Hill was orchestrated to benefit.

It will be up to the multi-national working class to build a movement around demands like “Bail out the people, not the banks!” and “Feed the poor, not the Pentagon!”
Debt ceiling bill worsens food crisis

By Will Hodgkinson

Boston

Amid ongoing austerity, workers and other marginalized communities continue to suffer from rising food insecurity. When the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) expired May 11, tens of millions of people lost access to basic necessities provided by the expanded federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These cuts, in addition to inflation stoked by corporate price- and rent-gouging, have forced millions of families to go hungry.

In Massachusetts alone, a recent survey found that 1.8 million, one-third of the state’s adult residents, struggle with food insecurity, a 13% increase from 2020. The statewide hunger crisis disproportionately affects communities of color, as well as adults who identify as LGBTQIA+. Some 36% of Massachusetts households have reported that their children experience chronic hunger. (tinyurl.com/ezcz20by)

Many residents report having to choose between a meal and other basic necessities. “When you get to be my age, you worry over questions like: ‘are you going to have enough food to eat for the month?’”

They have to buy groceries instead of paying for your medicine? ‘I have to make that decision.’ (people.tinyurl.com/672v4xld) Stop Cop City

People’s Pride Bloc marched in the Buffalo, New York, Pride Parade June 4, holding a banner that read: “Starbucks has no place at Pride!”

Ad designed by Arthur Pratt, a trans man fired from Starbucks because of his union activism. Small text reads: ‘A union contract is one of the strongest ways for LGBTQ2A+ workers to protect their rights and ensure equity & inclusivity at work — especially as some states actively pass legislation to deny and restrict our humanity.’

‘Stop Cop City’

Continued from page 1

During the COVID-19 crisis, Kautz and Earthworm expanded the free food giveaways that had been part of the community services operated out of their home, known as The TearDown. Volunteers continue to deliver boxes of food to seniors and other low-income families weekly, as inflation increases hardships for poor people.

The nonprofit Network for Strong Communities is the target of the charges jointly brought by Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr and the DeKalb County District Attorney’s office. They claim that funds from the NFSC supported the nonprofit to defend the Atlanta Forest, an umbrella group that has organized opposition to Cop City.

Here are some of the items described on the ad’s exclusion. Comments from Encore Media to the story on the ad’s exclusion were original to sgw.org.

Uprisings of workers, youth and students, in this case most notably Starbucks workers, are part of the worldwide struggle of workers and oppressed communities, who are mobilizing to fight for a socialist society, where housing, health care and food are not commodities but human rights.

By Arjae Red

An ad against union busting submitted by Starbucks Workers United (SBWU) to the Seattle Pride Guide has been rejected after Seattle Pride made the decision to side with corporations against LGBTQ+ workers, according to a labor advocacy group that monitors ad campaigns against corporations.

The ad, which was co-signed by 23 labor and community organizations, said: “Workers rights are anti-queer rights and ‘Starbucks you can’t be pro-union. It’s time to stop union busting’!”

The ad was designed by Arthur Pratt, a trans man who was fired from Starbucks because of his union activism. Submitted by the deadline, the ad was singled out for an atypical process of review by Seattle Pride and consequently rejected.

The story on the ad’s exclusion was originally published by the Seattle Gay News, which obtained comments from Seattle Pride and Encore Media — the ad agency that manages advertisements for Seattle Pride. Seattle Pride’s leaders denied that they deliberately blocked the ad, claiming that it was actually just an “unfortunate series of miscommunications” and that “there was simply no space left for a full page ad.”

Comments from Encore Media to the Service Employees Union (SEIU, which SBWU is affiliated with) however, reveal the real reason the ad was blocked. “My concern is that Starbucks is one of [Seattle Pride’s] sponsors,” said a representative from Encore. “I do not want to jeopardize our relationship in any way, so I flagged the ad for their approval.”

Starbucks has platinum sponsor status with Seattle Pride, which requires donating at least $10,000. It’s clear that Seattle Pride has been bought off by Starbucks and is throwing working-class LGBTQ+ people under the bus in favor of a multinational coffee behemoth with a reputation for brutal mistreatment of its workers.

Smashing the sham of rainbow capitalism

SBWU, the union representing nearly 8,000 Starbucks workers across the 300 stores, has made LGBTQ+ struggles a main focus of organizing since the start of the union campaign. Despite Starbucks co-opting rainbow pride imagery as a convenient way of marketing their products to a young audience, the actual conditions for LGBTQ2S+ workers in the company have pushed many to fight for change.

In addition to the dozens of individual horror stories from queer and trans workers about discrimination and mistreatment from managers, Starbucks has taken a systemic approach to targeting LGBTQ+ workers in the union drive. The company threatened that animating could jeopardize the gender-affirming health care coverage for transgender employees — in other words, “if you unionize, Starbucks will take your gender-affirming care away from you, so don’t even try.”

This sinister tactic of withholding lifesaving treatment from trans workers fighting for their labor rights is particularly egregious at a time when rights and care for LGBTQ+ people, especially youth, are being stripped away across the country.

This shows that when profits are threatened, even so-called “progressive allies” companies like Starbucks and its former CEO and former Democratic presidential candidate Howard Schultz will stoop to the same level as rabid bigots like presidential candidate and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis when it comes to the rights of LGBTQ2S+ people.

We need to smash through the sham of rainbow capitalism and understand that corporate support for the LGBTQ+ movement is really just an attempt to offer a genuine way forward in fighting for LGBTQ+ liberation.

Starbucks threatens and fires workers for organizing; Black and Brown LGBTQ+ workers face horrific union busting. Starbucks holds hostage lifesaving health care against trans workers. Starbucks bribes LGBTQ+ organizations to silence queer and trans workers. Starbucks is on the front line of gentrification, in its home base of Seattle and across the country, where workers of color and LGBTQ2S+ people are forced out of their homes due to the high cost of rent. Starbucks has no place at Pride! The author is a bisexual non-binary former Starbucks worker in Buffalo, New York and an organizer with Starbucks Workers United.
Kissinger a los 100 años: sigue siendo un criminal de guerra

Henry Kissinger ha cumplido 100 años hoy, 27 de mayo de 2023, ofreciendo la prueba de que los criminales de guerra de Estados Unidos pueden escapar al castigo si cometen sus crímenes al servicio del imperialismo estadounidense.


Al igual que el difunto Zbigniew Brzezinski, estratega global que sirvió a los presidentes del Partido Democrata, Kissinger fue un emigrante europeo a Estados Unidos que propugnó el margen intelectual para las políticas imperialistas durante la Guerra Fría. Kissinger proporcionó la estrategia para los asesinatos de la mafia en el Medio Oriente, que destrozó al pueblo vietnamita, la dirigencia, pero también a los “victoriosos”. Aunque no los cometió, aunque no fue el que estaba detrás del espionaje, el que el objetivo de estos crímenes era conti- nuar la dominación de gran parte del mundo por la “Dinastía de los generales” y la “cumbre” de capitalistas y ban- queros superpuestos.

Sus mayores crímenes, aunque no los cometió, los que cometieron contra los pueblos del suroeste asiático, concretamente contra los vietnamitas y los camboyanos. Si, fueron los demócratas del gobierno de Lyndon Johnson quienes intensificaron la guerra y enviaron más de medio millón de soldados estadounidenses a Vietnam en 1968. Pero la Ofensiva del Tet en enero-febrero de ese año demostró la debilidad de la intervención estadounidense. A finales de 1969, más apoyada por la otorgada a los administradores de Nixon ya había empezado a retirar las tropas; las negociaciones se hicieron inevitables. En 1970, Kissinger y Nixon iniciaron las negociaciones, pero su política incluía intensificar los bombardeos contra el pueblo vietnamita. En un intento de impedir que los vietnamíes liberaran su país, Kissinger amenazó incluso con utilizar armas nucleares contra ellos. Al final, Estados Unidos arrojó más toneladas de bombas sobre Vietnam que todos los bomberdazos aliados sobre Alemania en la Segunda Guerra Mundial, lo que costó millones de vidas vietnamitas.

Kissinger impulsó el bombardeo de Vietnam y de los países vecinos, y mantuvo a cientos de miles de bay- boyanos en el campo. Esta política dejó una situación caótica: acabo provocando la muerte de muchos más camboyanos. En un insulto al pueblo vietnamita que luchaba por su liberación, en 1973 el Comité Nobel intentó ofrecer el Premio de la Paz a Kissinger y al patriota vietnamita Le Duc Tho, ya que ambos habían firmado el tratado de paz. Le Duc Tho, entonces portavoz de la delegación vietnamita, las conversaciones de paz de París, se negó a aceptarlo conjuntamente con el crimen y el pueblo, aunque no sólo eran heroicos; tenían principios.

Como Secretario de Estado, Kissinger supervisó el derrocamiento de Che Guevara por el gobierno de la cártel de la CIA, el derrocamiento de la dictadura de Salvador Allende en septiembre de 1973 en Chile. En su lugar se instaló la dictadura militar del general Augusto Pinochet, que asesinó a decenas de miles de chilenos y abrió el país a los bancos y empresas imperialistas. La política de Kissinger dio luz verde a los generales argentinos para torturar, asesinar y detener a decenas de miles de argentinos. A pesar de su amor por los generales argentinos, Washington apoyó a su socio menor, el imperialismo británico, en la gue- rra contra el pueblo de las islas Malvinas de Argentina en 1982. Es una lista omite muchos de los crímenes de Kissinger. Pero es suficiente para una conclusión.

La cuestión importante no es si Kissinger fue un estratega eficaz para los intereses imperialistas de Estados Unidos. Esa es una cuestión que sólo interesa a la clase dominante. La cuestión importante es qué ocurrió durante este período de su conducta. Nuestra conclusión: Para ampliar los intereses de una minúscula clase de multimillonarios, Kissinger proporcionó la estrategia para llevar a cabo crímenes de guerra y críme- nes contra la humanidad. Quienes lucharon contra esos crímenes hicieron lo correcto. Quienes defienden esos crímenes y celebran los cumplidos de sus centenarios perpetradores son los enemigos de la inmensa mayoría de los pueblos del mundo.

Por Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein

El autor es un diplomático venezolano y analista antiimperialista. Twitter: @sergiorgz

Kissinger a los 100 años: sigue siendo un criminal de guerra

Erdogan: Un barco navegando en un mar de contradicciones

En política exterior, Erdogan continuará manteniendo una aparente neutralidad. En este sentido, Estados Unidos, por un pequeño grupo de enemigos de la inmensa mayoría de los pueblos del mundo. ☐

Por Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein

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