

# Which way forward for the antiwar movement?

By John Catalinotto and Sara Flounders

On March 13, Workers World Managing Editor John Catalinotto interviewed Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center (IAC), a member of the Administrative Committee of the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) and contributing editor to Workers World, to discuss the developments of the past year of the war in Ukraine between the U.S.-led NATO alliance and Russia.

**Workers World:** We're about to participate in antiwar demonstrations, set to take place in Washington and San Francisco. What is the nature of the war we'll be protesting?

**Sara Flounders:** First I'd like to list



Protest in Times Square, New York City, Jan.14, 2023.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

some recent events that reinforce the points I'll be making.

On March 10 President Joe Biden's

administration submitted a military budget to Congress of a record \$886 billion. With add-ons from Congress, funds

hidden in veterans' benefits and research, and supplements for arms to Ukraine, the costs will easily top \$1 trillion.

That same day a major regional bank, the Silicon Valley Bank in California, failed and was taken over by federal regulators. It was the largest U.S. bank to collapse since the 2008 financial crisis.

And that same day, China hosted negotiations in Beijing between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which ended with an agreement between the two major West Asian countries. For the past 75 years the U.S. had been the dominant power in that region. In a symbolic way, U.S. imperialism has been pushed aside.

These events mark the serious character of the economic and diplomatic crisis U.S. imperialism faces. It means that in an

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## WORKERS WORLD editorial

It is often the case that, when the capitalist system is on the verge of a crisis, the period leading up to it is marked by buoyant explosions of optimism. On Oct. 25, 1929, President Herbert Hoover proclaimed that the U.S. economy was "on a sound and prosperous basis." Four days later the stock market crashed. (billof-rightsinstitute.org)

It's not much different almost a century later. Typically before a recession, the working class (along with uneasy wealth-holders) is reassured that the economy is "robust" or at least "safe."

Hence the collapse of the Silicon Valley Bank — the largest bank collapse since the 2008 implosion of Washington Mutual and the second-largest bank collapse in U.S. history — is being presented as an isolated event.

On the morning leading up to SVB's collapse March 10, the news media was focused on the latest employment statistics. "Employers added 311,000 jobs in February, another stronger-than-expected showing," The New York Times crowed. President Joe Biden stated, "Today's jobs numbers are clear; our economy is moving in the right direction."

Later that Friday a California financial

regulator, referring to SVB, declared: "The bank is now insolvent." On Sunday's "Face the Nation," U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen tried to soothe the public's nerves: "What I do want to do is emphasize that the American banking system is really safe and well-capitalized; it's resilient." (cbsnews.com)

Yellen stated that SVB's depositors would be made whole by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, beyond the \$250,000 limit that the FDIC guarantees. So the money of larger depositors is safe.

What is not safe are the jobs of workers in the technology sector, where there have been massive layoffs in the past few

months. SVB, the 14th largest U.S. bank, was the lender of choice for tech companies — not only in California's Silicon Valley but around the world. Now startups are scrambling to make payroll, and more layoffs are predicted.

### No normal downturn

The "experts" continue to allay worries about a "contagion," blaming SVB's demise on a "panic" caused by a few overly worried venture capitalists, who urged investors to pull out. But in addition to SVB, Silvergate Bank closed two days before and Signature Bank

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Injustice system for LGBTQ2S+ people

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

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## International Working Women's Day 6-7

- Cuban women:  
End the blockade
- Honoring  
Harriet Tubman
- Celebrating IWWD  
around the world
- Women bear brunt  
of food cuts



# Youth lead protest supporting Palestinian resistance

By Judy Greenspan  
San Francisco

It felt like the very bricks of the building housing the Israeli Consulate in San Francisco shook with the anger and ferocity of Palestinian youth who blocked traffic, chanting in support of the Palestinian resistance movement against Israeli terror, March 10. The demonstration, organized by the Palestine Action Network (PAN), protested Israeli terror and murder of Palestinians in the West Bank, including in Jenin, Huwara and Nablus.

A sound truck blocked the street in front of the Israeli Consulate, where young leaders from the Palestinian Youth Movement and the Arab Resource and Organizing Center emceed the rally, leading chants of “Free, Free Palestine” and “Long live the Intifada.”

Voulette of PYM called recent massacres in the West Bank, carried out by a fascist settler group with the support of the government, a Zionist campaign of “ethnic cleansing.” “This is what Zionism is. In Jericho, when they killed six people, they demolished six Palestinian homes,” she explained.

A Palestinian University of California-Berkeley law student, Malak proudly proclaimed she was the great granddaughter of a Palestinian freedom fighter. She told the crowd: “We are standing at a time when our freedom fighters’ last words are begging their brothers and sisters

to continue taking up arms against the fascist, apartheid state of Israel.”

The event’s main message was that despite the fascist terror of the settlers and the Israeli government, Palestinians are more determined than ever to win their freedom. Monadel Herzallah, co-founder of the U.S. Palestinian Community Network (USPCN), said: “Palestinians will continue to fight; Palestinians will continue to resist, because the enemies of the Palestinians are the enemies of peace.”

“The Zionist regime of Israel, the U.S. imperialists, may have a military victory here and there; they may have a political victory here and there, but they will never ever break our spirit,” Herzallah concluded.

PAN, a local coalition of progressive organizations supporting the Palestinian struggle includes PYM, AROC, Al-Awda: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition, Queers Undermining Israeli Terrorism, Jewish Voice for Peace, ANSWER and Workers World Party. PAN is organizing a protest for this spring commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Nakba.

The Nakba (May 15, 1948) was the date marking the official expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland by the Israeli government. However Palestinians and their supporters know that Nakba, Arab for ‘catastrophe,’ was part of the process of ethnic cleansing that began before 1948 and still continues. □



Monadel Herzallah of USPCN speaks about the meaning of Palestinian resistance, March 10, 2023. WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

## Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Activists vow: ‘Cop City will never be built!’

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

Recently, the news cycle has been filled with the struggle against Cop City, the proposed urban warfare training facility to be located on acres of forest lands which had been previously set aside as a nature preserve and for public recreation. This entire area has now been renamed Weelaunee Forest, as it was called by its original Muskogee Creek inhabitants.

Beginning March 4, Atlanta and other Georgia residents, along with hundreds coming from across the U.S. and other countries, have engaged in a multiplicity of educational, cultural and protest activities to fight back against the corporate-backed Atlanta Police Foundation’s (APF) plan to establish the training center there.

On May 5, a two-day, family friendly, all-day concert on public land took place, a considerable distance from the site of the Atlanta Prison Farm, where destruction of trees and bulldozing of a small section has illegally proceeded.

In the late afternoon, a fairly large group managed to enter the area where the “destruction” equipment was stored and set some of it on fire. Any immediate police response was held back by a volley of fireworks and rocks. The group then disappeared into the woods.

The police retaliated an hour later by encircling the unaware concert goers with a smoky barrier of pepper spray, threatening people with drawn guns and verbal commands, demanding identification to be able to leave the area and tackling



Feb. 6, 2023, press conference organized by the family of martyred forest defender Manuel “Tortuguita” Terán. On the left is Dianne Mathiowetz.

a number of people to the ground and arresting them. Twenty-two people were taken to the DeKalb County jail charged with “domestic terrorism.”

A March 6 press conference held in front of City Hall with local clergy denounced the actions of the police and the outrageous charges that the city has implemented in an attempt to repress the movement. The determined group then went to the City Council meeting and lambasted its members for their role in these anti-democratic actions.

On March 8, several Muskogee women entered a meeting of the Atlanta Regional Council where Mayor Andre Dickens was present. He and his security team immediately bolted out of the room and did not hear the statement of the descendants of the land’s original people.

Later, at night, outside the DeKalb jail, a noisy demonstration in support of those arrested and held without bail was held, complete with messages of “Tortuguita

Lives” and “Stop Cop City” flashed on the seven-story building. From the small jail windows, cheers and expressions of solidarity from those incarcerated could be seen.

March 9 was a rainy, cold day, but that did not stop hundreds from turning out at the King Center for a nighttime rally and march to the headquarters of the APF on Atlanta’s famed downtown Peachtree Street.

Dozens and dozens of riot-equipped cops were on the corners, in cars and vans on side streets and amassed in front of the office tower, still with boarded up windows from the protest following the murder of forest defender Manuel “Tortuguita” Terán shot 14 times by Georgia State Police on Jan. 18.

### No backing down

The chant “Cop City will never be built” echoed off the canyon of buildings. Community Movement Builders founder, Kamau Franklin declared the event a successful show of solidarity by the broad range of Cop City opponents. These opponents included Black neighborhood residents, clergy, Indigenous members, environmental and climate change activists, housing and voting rights organizations, political groups, college students from Morehouse, Spelman and other universities and families whose loved ones had been killed by police.

On the early morning of March 11, the police raided the grounds of a nonprofit in the Lakewood neighborhood of Southeast Atlanta, the Lakewood Environmental Arts Foundation (LEAF). The food distribution center had offered camping space on their property for those concerned about setting up their tents in the

Weelaunee Forest. Again dozens of police threatened people with arrest, demanded ID, refused to show a warrant and trashed people’s things. In the end, one person was arrested for an unpaid parking ticket!!

Later on Saturday, a Youth Festival with music, food and games was held at Brownwood Park, with many families and



Tortuguita

young people in attendance. A press conference was held to inform people of what really happened that morning and to repeat that this movement, which represents so many connected struggles of oppressed and working-class peoples, not just in Atlanta but globally, will not be defeated.

The closing event of the Week of Action took place March 12, when Tortuguito’s ashes were scattered in the Weelaunee Forest by their mother, Belkis Terán. Accompanied by a crowd of other forest defenders and supporters, she said Tortuguita’s spirit would always live in these woods. She has spoken or been present literally every day of the Week of Action.

*Go to [stopcopcity.org](http://stopcopcity.org) for more information.*

## France on strike

# Millions of workers walk out, block streets

By G. Dunkel

Some 3.5 million workers in 270 locations in France demonstrated March 7, called out by the coalition of trade unions leading the struggle. This was the largest of seven actions since Jan. 19, as millions of French workers have hit the streets to protest President Emmanuel Macron’s attempt to reduce France’s retirement benefits, the so-called “reform.”

The General Confederation of Labor (CGT) says many workers went on strike on March 7 without demonstrating, and on March 11 a million protesters came out for the same issue. The CGT is the largest union group in the coalition that has called for major demonstrations throughout the country for the day the French parliament votes on increasing the age of retirement from 62 to 64 years old. The vote must take place on or before March 26.

French workers have a constitutional right to strike. Public sector workers usually must give advance notice. Private sector workers may walk out for any length of time, with rare exceptions for essential public services that the private companies may provide. The CGT reported about a metal working plant in Loire where workers went on strike for 15 minutes every hour in the week leading up to March 11.

Most active workers at the seven



PHOTO: L'HUMANITE

A contingent from a student union during a February protest in Paris.

demonstrations were also striking. Retirees joined them, as did students and youth yet to join the workforce. Five of the seven major marches were held on weekdays. In smaller cities and towns, workers protested for a few hours and then returned to work.

On March 8, International Working Women’s Day, mass demonstrations continued to target the government’s attempt to decrease pension benefits.

Macron’s government faces no imminent financial crisis regarding pensions. The system is pay as you go, and no deficit is projected until 2032 at the earliest.

Macron’s plan would increase the full retirement age from 62 to 64, increase the total number of months retirees must have worked for wages and make it harder for workers whose jobs involve harsh conditions to qualify for special treatment. Such conditions include working outside

in bad weather, using strong chemicals, working on roofs, doing sanitation work, night or on-call work. This is an attack on workers’ living standards.

The CGT reports that this change to the retirement system still leaves women, on average, getting a pension 40% lower than men get. The CGT points out that by raising the minimum wage and setting a wealth tax, the government could increase revenue to the retirement system enough to lower the full retirement age to 60.

The issues are clear. Polls show over 80% of the public supports these protests.

### More than marches

In Paris, over 700,000 active workers, retirees, youth and self-employed people marched March 7 from one huge square to another, with music, dancing, street theater, puppet shows, all making the point that the reform was unacceptable.

French television (TV2) that night showed some dramatic vignettes: When the march along a limited-access highway approached a drawbridge, demonstrators got it raised and locked before continuing. Other contingents occupied traffic circles — setting up burning barricades — held sit-ins across tracks in train stations or used cars to conduct slow-moving traffic jams.

A detachment of union electric workers cut the power to the construction

site for the Olympic Village for the 2024 Olympics and some major computer networks. The unions involved used a smoke screen to hide the identities of the workers who acted. The national leader of the electric workers section of the CGT said that if the government withdrew the pension reform, the workers would take no similar actions. (France.tv, March 9)

In Paris and other big cities, sanitation workers who pick up tons of garbage every day have continued their strike, which began March 7. The garbage has been accumulating, and only cold weather has kept the smells down.

Workers at the French oil refineries and distribution networks have been on strike since March 7. There have been scattered but significant walkouts in mass transit, on the railroads and on the docks.

### French parliament

The Senate approved President Macron’s pension reform bill March 11.

A joint committee consisting of lawmakers from both houses of the French Parliament (the Senate and National Assembly) is currently scheduled to meet on March 15 to review the text of the bill, with the final votes occurring in the Senate and National Assembly after that date.

If the government doesn’t have the votes to pass the bill, it can invoke a procedure in the French constitution called 49.3 that lets the government declare the bill a law, without a parliamentary vote. □



## Resistance behind bars

# Walpole prison strike 50 years on

By Phebe Eckfeldt

March 15 will mark the 50th anniversary of the 1973 Walpole Prison takeover in Massachusetts by incarcerated workers. It ended May 18, some 65 days later. What led to this stupendous, courageous event by captured workers?

Bobby Dellelo, a leader of the takeover, spent 40 years in prison, much of that time in Walpole, including 10 years in solitary confinement. He categorized it as one of the most dangerous prisons in the U.S. In one 18-month period, 20 prisoners were murdered. At that time, the particularly brutal Raymond Porelle was the warden. Rampant guard-on-prisoner violence, endemic human rights violations, poor nutrition and filthy conditions escalated. It was common for guards to give prisoners cold meals, urinate in their tea and put soap powder in their food.

In December 1972, during Kwanzaa, the administration locked the prison down, denying the prisoners clean clothes, showers, outside time and visits. The lockdown lasted 2 ½ months in Blocks 9 and 10. Blocks 9 and 10 were classified as Departmental Segregation Units (DSU).

This is where men were sent for punishment and torture. Protest leaders were sent there in retaliation for their actions. Guards would flood the cells, put bugs in the food, set fire to clothes and bedding, put the heat on at full blast or turn it off all together, do rectal searches and use mace and tear gas.

### General strike shows prisoner unity

A general work strike began on Feb. 21. John Boone, a Black man, was the Corrections Commissioner, who considered himself a prison abolitionist. Demands were for the resignation of Warden Porelle and for “citizen observers” to be allowed into the prison. Both demands were met, and the strike ended March 2. The hatred for Porelle ran so deep and wide that the incarcerated people stated that he had united them and made them strong. Citizen observers began to enter the prison on March 7.

The leadership of Walpole prisoners at this time was embedded in the National Prisoners Reform Association, which believed in prison abolition. The NPRA strove to organize prisoners into collective bargaining units and have more power when going up against the guards’ unions. They saw themselves as a labor union, recognizing that they were captured and exploited workers.

The leaders of NPRA-Walpole were a Black man, Ralph Hamm III, who had been sentenced to life for “intent” to rape a white woman, and Dellelo, a white man. They were supported by Black African Nations Toward Unity (BANTU), of which Hamm was a leader.

Hamm and Dellelo worked with “Big Bob” Heard of the Black Panther Party, head of the Walpole Inmate Advisory Council. The fight against racism was recognized as a priority by the leadership of the NPRA. They knew they would not survive if they were not united.

The prisoners in the DSU agreed to treat each other as equals. “In hindsight,” Dellelo mused, “it is amazing that this kind of unity could have emerged in these circumstances; you just had to be there to fully appreciate it.” (“When the Prisoners Ran Walpole,” 2008, by Jamie Bissonette, South End Press, page 28)

The NPRA recognized themselves as workers who deserved the minimum wage, a union and health and safety regulations. They filed and fought for official union certification from the National Labor Relations Board.

The struggle was covered in the press and media and provoked discussions among people on the outside as to whether incarcerated people were workers and whether they should receive a fair wage for their work. Those incarcerated at Walpole, in fact, performed jobs that were essential to the state, including printing forms for state documents and making building materials, license plates, street signs, sewer covers, furniture and eyeglasses. They cooked 1,800 meals a day.

### Guards walk off job

The guards were livid about the prisoners’ demands and that Boone had agreed to them. They hated the arrival of outside civilian observers. Observers, some of whom had formerly been incarcerated, examined the guards’ job performance and reported violations.

When the first observers took their posts on March 9, some 50 guards refused to punch in and the entire 3:00 p.m. shift walked off the job. Calling for Boone’s immediate firing, the guards issued a strike ultimatum on March 14.

The NPRA then demanded the release of those locked

up in Blocks 9 and 10.

On March 15, 11 prisoners were released from Block 10 and entered the general population. In response, some 200 guards walked out of Walpole, beginning an official guard strike. The corridors were free of guards for the first time. The guards’ “union” continued to demand that Boone leave. He responded by suspending 150 of them for five days without pay. Cadet trainees, who were young men of color, were given keys to the cell blocks and ordered to work alongside the incarcerated workers.

### Prisoners take over

On March 15, 1973, those incarcerated at Walpole took over and began running the prison.

The NPRA set up a structure of 20 committees, which were accountable to the whole prisoner population. The



Walpole, Massachusetts, prisoners on strike, 1973.

committees managed the hospital, the kitchen, mail distribution, educational programs, industrial production and internal problem solving. A printing apprenticeship program was set up to build skills and ensure a higher wage when getting out. The NPRA arranged for visits with families to take place outside in the yard, with playground equipment they had fought for. Prisoners also set up an Adult Prisoners Education Program.

A board of elected prisoners became a dispute-resolution committee to address any larger problems. The beating, maiming and murder by guards ceased. From March 15 to May 18, the NPRA functioned as the elected representative of the prisoners at Walpole and was responsible for running nearly the entire institution.

### Civilian observers side with prisoners

In its never-ending quest to divide the workers in order to exist, the capitalist class constantly demonized and demeaned the incarcerated workers to workers on the outside, through their kept press and media. Therefore, civilian observers were very important to the life of the prison takeover, particularly in countering the disgusting lies of the guards about what was going on inside.

The observers’ role was to observe activity, report abusive incidents and witness how the NPRA ran the prison. The observers released daily reports to the press. Most observers quickly realized that it was the guards who were the problem, and they became advocates for the incarcerated population.

They came in at 7 a.m., 3 p.m. and 11 p.m. shifts every day. They were free to go to any area of the prison and talk and eat with those incarcerated. Female observers were not allowed inside the prison but acted as shift coordinators. There were many reports of guards slicing the tires of cadets and observers.

One observer stated: “When we visited Walpole, the prisoners had ended their work strike. The guards were still out. And we found a complex society at work ... it has its workers, its employers, its organizations, its cooks, craftsmen, educators, even its artists.” (“Prisoners take control of Walpole Prison,” libcom.org)

Right outside the prison doors in Boston, Black school children riding buses to school were being assaulted daily with rocks and bottles by large, angry racist mobs. The racist forces who were opposed to desegregation had taken over City Hall. This historical context was very important in guiding the Walpole prisoners’ beliefs and actions.

### State retaliates

On May 18, the NPRA became aware that the state forces would be coming to retake the prison. They had prisoners prop open cell doors, so they could not

be closed by guards using remote control.

Observers still in the prison recorded that it was “quiet as a morgue.”

The acting warden had called in the state police upon receiving false reports of mass destruction. Black outside allies — Rev. Edward Rodman and State Representative Bill Owens — joined observers. Guards and state police entered with guns and brought a violent end to the prisoners’ takeover of Walpole.

The prison was locked down. Dellelo was “stripped, beaten, run naked across broken glass and thrown in the hole.” (“Instead of Prisons,” Chapter 9, Prison Policy Initiative)

Hamm was beaten and spent a long stretch in solitary — but not until after he had backed state police wearing riot gear out of his cell, with a machete, and organized a rally in the main corridor. Owens and Rodman had stayed on Hamm’s cellblock during the state police assault.

On May 19, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ordered the guards to return to prison. Boone was subsequently fired. Hamm stated that the NPRA was “terrorized and brutalized out of existence” for its efforts to unionize.

### Prisoner strikes in 1970s historic

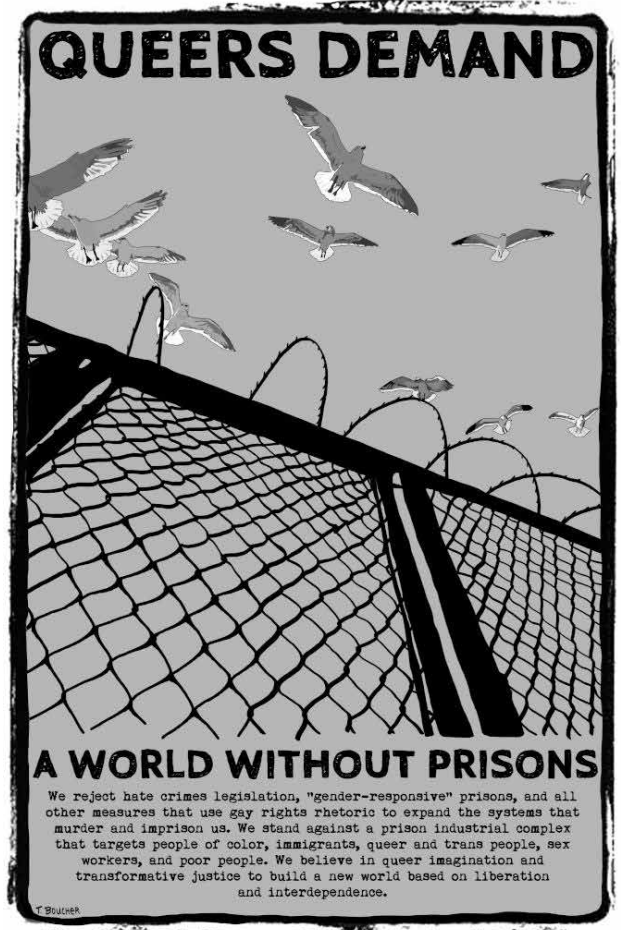
People incarcerated at Walpole were influenced by the 1970 strike at Folsom Prison, which had lasted for 19 days and gave birth to the prisoner union movement; the heroic Attica rebellion of 1971; and the assassination of beloved leader George Jackson in 1971 by San Quentin prison guards.

The nationwide prisoner strikes of the 1970s remain a testament to what is possible, when people “behind the wall” unite across the divisions imposed on them by the prison-industrial complex. The grainy documentary “3,000 Years to Life,” filmed inside Walpole during the takeover, is proof of such an accomplishment.

Many of the organizers remained incarcerated for decades and continued to resist. Many have since died, including Peter Ladetto and the late, great John McGrath. Dellelo is still around, and Hamm (falsely accused) was finally released just two years ago.

“I was one who dared. ... Life would be far more difficult for Massachusetts prisoners now, had we not taken on the ‘powers that be’ directly, and struggled for prison reform. The sacrifices we may have made were worth the lives that we ultimately saved — including our own.” (Ralph Hamm, in “When the Prisoners Ran Walpole,” by Jamie Bissonette, 2008)

*Susan Mortimer, longtime anti-prison activist, contributed to this article.*



# Communities protest murderous West Virginia jails

By Otis Grotewohl  
Charleston, West Virginia

Two rallies were held in southern West Virginia to raise awareness of the high number of deaths at regional jails throughout the state in the last year. The over 100 prisoners, who have “mysteriously” died while incarcerated, are both Black and white, but people of color face harsher sentences than white people for the same “offenses.”

A major focus has been on the Southern Regional Jail (SRJ), located in Beckley, a small city in Raleigh County which has a significantly larger African American population than most towns in southern West Virginia. The state chapter of the Poor People’s Campaign (PPC) organized a militant, majority-Black protest march on March 4 in downtown Beckley.

Over 100 marchers chanted “No Justice, No Peace” and “Say his name: Quantez Burks,” followed by “Say his name: Alvis Shrewsbury” — referring to two of the incarcerated people who were killed while in custody at SRJ in 2022.

Family members of Quantez “Quan” Burks, 37, and Shrewsbury, 45, attended the March 4 rally. Burks was an African American resident of Beckley, while Shrewsbury was white and lived in a rural town in neighboring Wyoming County. Both counties were once thriving with unionized coal mining jobs but are now plagued with severe poverty, due to



CREDIT: OTIS GROTEWOHL

Rev. William Barber joins jail protest in Charleston, West Virginia, March 10.

decades of union busting, corporate greed and capitalist automation that destroyed their communities. Burks died at the jail, while Shrewsbury was taken to a local hospital before he was officially declared dead.

The marchers made a symbolic stop outside the police precinct building, where many of the SRJ murder victims were booked before being incarcerated. They waved signs and held two banners that featured Burks’ image.

PPC organizer Matt Kerner told Workers World, “Burks and Shrewsbury were two of 13 inmates who were killed at the hands of corrections officers at the SJR in 2022 alone. In addition to that, there were roughly 114 inmates who died last year at the regional jails across the state; and according to our (PPC) studies, that is more than any other state in the country.”

Kerner further clarified: “A small number of the deaths have been from heroin and fentanyl overdoses, and that is still the fault of the COs who allow inmates to die. Inmates who seek medical attention are often denied.”

### Disturbing discoveries

Quantez Burks was taken to the SRJ on Feb. 28, 2022, on a petty “obstruction” charge, and he was found dead the very next day. Burks’ fiancé, Latasha Williams, said there was blunt trauma “all the way from his head to his toes.” (WVVA, Oct. 31, 2022)

Workers World spoke with Kimberly Burks, Quantez Burk’s mother, at the March 4 rally. Her message was clear: “Our obtainable goal is to hold the Southern Regional Jail COs accountable for their cowardly acts of violence and their continuous efforts to destroy lives in their barbaric facility. I want justice for my son, for Alvis Shrewsbury, and for all victims of CO brutality at the Southern Regional Jail.”

Alvis Shrewsbury’s family also spoke with Workers World. One family member stated, “Alvis was hopeful he would be released in 30 days, but unfortunately, he didn’t make it.” Another relative added, “From what we understand, corrections officers beat on him, and then they had inmates beat on him.”

### March on the Capitol

The Poor People’s Campaign held another rally on March 10, which started off as a press conference at the Capitol building in Charleston. Rev. William Barber was the guest speaker, along

with Kimberly Burks, West Virginia Poor People’s Campaign spokesperson Pam Garrison, longtime labor activist Stewart Acuff and Miranda Smith, Shrewsbury’s daughter. Family members of Burks and Shrewsbury stood behind the speakers, holding signs. Framed images of Burks and Shrewsbury were placed in front of the speakers’ podium.

Burks and Smith both gave passionate speeches that brought tears to this reporter’s eyes. Burks pointed out the inexcusable fact that the COs involved in her son’s murder are still employed at the SRJ. “We had to raise money and also save money to hold a funeral for my son,” she stated. “I don’t want any other family to experience what my family has had to go through.”

Rev. Barber informed the crowd that the PPC filed a federal civil rights investigation on behalf of the families of Burks, Shrewsbury and others. “We cannot rest until every family is given truth and every departed body has been given peace,” he declared.

Family members of Burks, Shrewsbury and others marched from the Capitol steps to the nearby governor’s mansion, where they attempted to deliver the petition. West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice, as well as other state officials, have deliberately ignored the victims’ families’ demands. Gov. Justice has refused to hold a genuine investigation, and his office’s only “solution” is to increase the number of COs, despite the fact they are responsible for the mass deaths being committed inside the dreary walls of his state’s regional jails. □

# Overrepresented in prisons: LGBTQ2S+ people

By Mirinda Crissman

*This lightly edited article first appeared in Workers World on May 28, 2021.*

At every stage in the criminal injustice system, LGBTQ2S+ people are overrepresented, including within the juvenile justice system.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, this is true from arrest to sentencing to incarceration to probation to parole: “In 2019, gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals were 2.25 times as likely to be arrested than straight individuals. This disparity is driven by lesbian and bisexual women, who are 4 times as likely to be arrested than straight women. Meanwhile, gay and bisexual men are 1.35 times as likely to be arrested than straight men.” (tinyurl.com/LGBTQbehindbars)

Incarceration rates also reflect the discriminatory trends of the arrest rates, with queer women facing the brunt of disproportionality. They, along with trans women — whose sexual orientation may or may not overlap with queer identity — also tend to have the least amount of data to show what is happening to them.

“Once behind bars, trans people face extremely high rates of harassment and physical and sexual assault, are frequently denied routine health care and are at high risk of being sent to solitary confinement. Black and Pink found that 44% of transgender, nonbinary gender and [Indigenous] Two Spirit [people] in their sample were denied access to hormones they requested.” (Prison Policy Initiative)

This high percentage of LGBTQ2S+ people persists in prisons, jails and

migrant detention centers and interlocks with other oppressions based on race, disability and income. Data demonstrate that Black, Latinx and Indigenous people are locked up in numbers incredibly disproportionate to their share of the population. Many LGBTQ2S+ people are people of color, and many have disabilities.

There is no data on Two-Spirit Natives incarcerated. However, according to the Appeal, South Dakota leads the country on jail admissions based on arrests for nonviolent crimes, and Native people account for the majority of all arrests in that state.

“In South Dakota, the people who are arrested and admitted to jail are disproportionately Native. Although Natives make up 8.7% of South Dakota’s population, they are roughly half of those booked into jails in the state. Racial disparities in incarceration rates exist nationwide — Black people are jailed at more than 4 times the rate of white people — but disparities in South Dakota are far greater: According to data from the Vera Institute of Justice, Natives between the ages of 15 and 64 are incarcerated at 10 times the rate of white people in South Dakota.” (The Appeal, Sept. 18, 2019)

### Roots of oppression

Gender-based oppression and oppression based on sexual orientation have their roots in the rise of private property and capitalism. These oppressions have similar roots as other class-based oppressions like race and disability.

Oppression based on gender and sexual orientation is maintained through various social enforcements such as, but not limited to, criminalization and the structure of the nuclear family. These tactics rely

on the punishing power of imposed isolation, confinement and imprisonment.

Overrepresentation of LGBTQ2S+ people in the criminal legal system is largely due to obstacles LGBTQ2S+ youth frequently face after fleeing abuse and lack of acceptance at home. In order to survive, many are pushed toward drug sales, theft and sex work — dramatically increasing the risk of arrest and confinement.

Up until 1973, the American Psychiatric Association listed homosexuality in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). That medical definition — and the assumptions that continued even after it was delisted — has been used to confine, isolate and punish many LGBTQ2S+ folks. Because of the material conditions faced by LGBTQ2S+ individuals, many find themselves with high rates of depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation. In this context, someone needing mental health care can end up confined for an indefinite stint in a hospital under strict surveillance — experiencing something more like punishment than help.

### Shared struggles, abolition, liberation

Liberation for those oppressed based on their gender or sexual orientation means envisioning and building a world without prisons, jails and migrant detention centers. These structures do not keep people safe from violence but perpetuate violence rooted in the origins of these institutions on this continent.

Prisons, jails and detention centers in the U.S. evolved from enslavement of African people. Enslavement legally codified Black people as property. During the shift from slavery to the system of convict leasing to today’s mass incarceration, there have been continuously shared

struggles to abolish these institutions that are based on extracting profit from warehousing human beings.

Now the fight has turned to ending the profit-making, prison-industrial complex and abolishing the legal status of capitalist private property. Abolition also means the end to borders and criminalization of migrants, who are simply workers and oppressed people seeking to find a place they can survive.

Societal organization based around meeting human needs can and must be built in the wake of the afterlife of enslavement.

Many of the reasons LGBTQ2S+ people end up being held in prisons, jails and detention centers could be alleviated first and foremost by abolishing capitalism. This project of abolition — whether it be prison abolition or the abolition of capitalism — is not simply a negation. It is a generative project that requires collective building.

This means building up social support for LGBTQ2S+ youth within families, schools, communities and other institutions; eliminating discrimination against LGBTQ2S+ people in housing, employment and other realms; eliminating homelessness, for housing is a human right; ending criminalization of sex work; and providing free, gender-affirming health care for all.

LGBTQ2S+ people’s liberation is bound to the struggle for Black liberation, just as it is bound up with the struggle for disability justice. Our liberation is bound to the struggle against settler colonialism and capitalism at home and around the world.

No cages! No borders! We will accept nothing less. □



New York

# Cuban women headline conference to end U.S. blockade

By Monica Moorehead  
New York City

An International U.S.-Cuba Normalization Conference took place March 11-12 at the Fordham University School of Law in Manhattan — 200 activists attended the conference in person, while hundreds more, including those from around the world, live streamed the event. The conference was hosted by the New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition, made up of dozens of organizations.

The main demands of the conference are to unblock socialist Cuba from the 61-year inhumane U.S. blockade and to demand that President Joe Biden remove Cuba from the U.S. State Department’s “State Sponsors of Terrorism” list. Throughout the conference, activists explained how these anti-communist U.S.-led attacks on Cuba may have stifled the revolutionary socialist process in Cuba but have not stopped that process, including in social, scientific, technology and cultural areas of advancements.

Among the many inspiring highlights of the conference was the participation



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD  
Osmayda Hernandez, FMC Director of International Relations, March 11, 2023.

of the Cubans, who educated the conference on the ongoing revolutionary progress made especially by Cuban women for gender equality.

A keynote address was made by Noemi Rabaza Fernandez, First Vice-President,

Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), who commented on the negative impact of sanctions on the Cuban economy. ICAP has helped to organize brigades for many decades from around the world to travel to Cuba to show concrete solidarity with socialist construction.

There was also a delegation from the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), founded on Aug. 23, 1960, by the late Vilma Espin, a leader of the Cuban Revolution. The FMC has participated for 10 years in activities organized by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. There are over 4 million members of the FMC, roughly 95% of the female population over the age of 14.

Osmayda Hernandez, Director of FMC International Relations, spoke on the radical transformation of women’s rights in Cuba, along with rights of sexual identity and sexual orientation. The major goal of the FMC is the defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Hernandez presented statistics that show the impact of women in many sectors of Cuban society. Women make up 53.2% of the National Assembly; 43.2% of

the Council of States; 60% of university graduates; 67% of technical and professional workers; 81% of professors, scientists and teachers; and 81% of prosecutors in the provisional courts. Cuban women make up the second highest number of women parliamentarians in the world, and there is parity amongst women and men workers in the state labor force.

A representative of the National Union of Cuban Jurists made remarks about the Family Code, recently passed in September, which broadens the definition of what constitutes a Cuban family and their rights. Known as the “Law of Love,” the Code broadens the rights of not only blood mothers and fathers but also grandparents; aunts, uncles, and lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans and queer people; disabled people; and more.

In the case of adoption, a person has the right to adopt if they have taken on the responsibility to raise the child, even if an abandoning parent attempts to reclaim the child. To read a summary of the code, go to [walterlippmann.com/cuban-families-code-2022-summary/](http://walterlippmann.com/cuban-families-code-2022-summary/). □



Newark, N.J.

# Statue unveiled honoring Harriet Tubman

The unveiling of a monument honoring the legacy of the great Black abolitionist, Harriet Tubman, took place in the Black-majority city of Newark, New Jersey, on March 9. Named “Shadow of a Face,” taken from a 1962 Robert Hayden poem “Runaway Runagate,” the statue sits in the newly named Harriet Tubman Square, previously known as Washington Park.

The statue replaces one paying homage to Christopher Columbus, the butcher of Indigenous peoples. That statue, along with hundreds more that glorified white supremacy, especially the Confederacy, were taken

down when rebellions took place in response to the police lynching of George Floyd in May 2020 in Minneapolis.

Shown in the picture, Nina Cooke John, the designer of the statue, stated in a press release, “Her heroism is recognized, and space is claimed for her story in this historic park, while her humanity is made accessible so that we can all be empowered by her deeds both great and small.”

Tubman freed hundreds of enslaved people using the Underground Railroad.

— Story by Monica Moorehead

# March 25 in Bronx, New York: Commemorate Women’s History Month in the streets

By Monica Moorehead

Paying homage to Women’s History Month, the International Working Women’s Day Coalition is organizing a day of outdoor speak-outs and a march, followed by an indoor discussion on Saturday, March 25, starting at 2 p.m. in the Bronx, New York. The first speak-out will be held in front of the historic Lincoln Hospital at 234 E. 149th Street, where over 50 years ago, a protracted struggle led by the revolutionary Young Lords Party took place to demand accessible health care for one of the poorest communities in New York City.

The second speak-out will take place at nearby Hostos Community College, located at 500 Concourse, where recently students won a successful campaign to reopen their cafeteria, which had been shut down due to the pandemic since March 2020.

A march will then follow to a community center at 810 Gerard Avenue, for an interactive discussion between activists

representing various struggles and local residents on why billions of dollars are spent for war, instead of funding health care, housing, food and human needs. The discussion will also include scheduling solidarity actions throughout 2023.

Brenda Stokely, a co-coordinator of the coalition, told WW, “It is so important for women and other gender-oppressed people, who are denied equality and subjected to oppression, bond together by listening to each other, planning together, learning from each other and those before us who committed their lives to freedom and justice, showing up to support our sisters who are on the front lines.”

Organizations and individual activists are encouraged to bring signs and banners and to help spread the word at other events and on social media. For more information including flyer pickups, email [iwwd.coalition@gmail.com](mailto:iwwd.coalition@gmail.com). There will be Spanish translation if needed. □

EN HONOR DEL MES DE LA HISTORIA DE LA MUJER. ÚNETE A LA COALICIÓN DEL DIA INTERNACIONAL DE LA MUJER TRABAJADORA

**SÁBADO, 25 DE MARZO A LAS**  
2:00 PM SPEAKOUT @ LINCOLN HOSPITAL, 234 E 149TH ST. ←  
2:30 PM SPEAKOUT @ HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, 500 GRAND CONCOURSE  
3-5 PM MARCHA AL SÓTANO DE 810 GERARD AVE. BASEMENT - PARA UNA ANIMADA CONVERSACIÓN SOBRE:

- POR QUE MILES DE MILLONES DE DÓLARES VAN PARA LA GUERRA, PERO NO PARA LA VIVIENDA, LA SALUD, EL EMPLEO Y TODAS LAS NECESIDADES HUMANAS

- POR QUÉ NECESITAMOS UNIR A LAS MUJERES Y A LA COMUNIDAD PARA CONSEGUIR UN MUNDO JUSTO

PARA MÁS INFORMACIÓN Y PARA PARTICIPAR. PÓNGASE EN CONTACTO CON LA COALICIÓN EN [iwwd.coalition@gmail.com](mailto:iwwd.coalition@gmail.com). SE OFRECERÁ UN REFRIGERIO A LAS 3 DE LA TARDE

TODOS LOS TEMAS SON TEMAS DE MUJERES!



# International Working Women's Day around the world



Indigenous women in Peru protest the right-wing coup.



Bangladesh: Green Bangla Garment Workers Federation.



Manila, the Philippines.



Nigeria Women demand equity.



Part of the resistance in Palestine, in Gaza.

WW COMMENTARY

Food cuts show  
Women bear brunt of deepening economic crisis

By Monica Moorehead

No matter how large or small, no class struggle can be put into its social context without understanding the current global capitalist economic crisis. Neoliberal policies flow from long-term and short-term fluctuations within the capitalist system, which no ruling class can ultimately control.

There used to be periods of ebbs and flows, where the system could find a way out of a cyclical crisis with some kind of stimulus — such as a bank bailout or a war — to revamp the system, but now the system is in permanent crisis and has been that way at least since the 2008

global meltdown.

This crisis brought us the “Great Recession” due to permanent capitalist overproduction — when workers on a global scale cannot afford to buy the products and services they produce. This recession made the poor even poorer, labor unions weaker and created more precarious jobs, especially for women.

In 2008, the ruling class allowed Barack Obama to become the first Black president, in part as insurance against rebellions.

**Food cuts heavy impact on women**

Workers stand to lose their homes through eviction or foreclosure, lose their

pensions, have cars repossessed and become unable to provide food for their families.

Speaking of the food crisis, the Biden administration announced on March 1 devastating cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that helped sustain low-income families and individuals with extra allotments during the pandemic that began March 2020. These allotments expired in 32 states and impacted 30 million people enrolled in the program. This will deepen hunger and malnutrition in the richest country in the world.

In May 2018, when there were over 44.2 million SNAP recipients, the National Women’s Law Center and Food Research

and Action Center put out a fact sheet on the significance of SNAP in the lives of women and their communities across social lines. ([tinyurl.com/3k64b3sb](https://tinyurl.com/3k64b3sb)) These following statistics show the need for militant, organized campaigns led by women and gender-oppressed people, like occupying grocery stores to demand the release of healthy foods:

- Women are 63% of adult recipients;
- Women of color are 34% of nonelderly adult recipients and 31% of elderly adult recipients;
- White women are 24% of nonelderly adult recipients and 32% of elderly adult recipients;

*continued on page 10*

## Honor International Women’s Day — Support Workers World

In the spirit of International Working Women’s Day, March 8, Workers World hails women workers and oppressed people in the U.S. and worldwide. But this newspaper doesn’t show solidarity only on that date or solely in March, which Congress proclaimed Women’s History Month in 1987.

This newspaper’s pages and its website, [workers.org](https://workers.org), show WW sides with the multinational, multigender working class and all those oppressed by capitalism and denounces all forms of bigotry.

WW views “every struggle as a woman’s struggle,” whether it is for affordable housing, jobs at a livable wage, unionization, free medical care with guaranteed reproductive rights, voting rights, a clean environment or an end to imperialist wars.

WW is in solidarity with the mothers whose children have been killed by racist police and vigilantes.

Today an urgent situation exists: Reactionaries are fiercely attacking reproductive rights and health care — their goal: a countrywide abortion ban. The unelected Supreme Court majority overturned the right to access abortions, won by a mass movement in 1973. Their ruling dealt a racist, misogynist and classist blow to millions of people. WW hails the struggles for reproductive justice, while calling for a militant, independent mass movement to win back this right.

WW shows solidarity with superexploited Black, Latinx, Asian, Arab, Indigenous and immigrant women workers, Our coverage supports the Starbucks workers, mostly young women, LGBTQ+ workers and people of color fighting to unionize coffeehouses; and Amazon and other workers’ organizing drives against corporate union-busters. The “On the Picket Line” column shows solidarity with nurses, teachers and other women workers in action.

Socialists have long recognized the only way to improve women’s lives is inherent in the anti-capitalist struggle, as propounded by International Working Women’s Day’s European socialist founders in 1910. WW espouses this view and boldly states that socialism is the only system that can ensure real liberation for women, workers and oppressed people here and worldwide.

**WW needs your support!**

If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program or renew your membership. WW depends on its readers’ backing. The program was established 46 years ago to help us publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns against capitalist exploitation and for revolutionary change and, ultimately, for socialism.

Since the early 1990s, the fund has sponsored workers.

org, where articles containing news and analysis of global and domestic issues and struggles are posted continually. The website is a resource for political activists. It contains firsthand accounts by writer-activists in many countries, translated by our staff. Timely articles by worker-organizers keep the newspaper current on union drives, anti-racist and other progressive movements.

While WW’s staff is voluntary, the 12 printed issues each year and the website and essential equipment necessary for production incur costs. Although many online publications require online payments to read their articles, WW does not. **Our articles are free to all readers.**

**Join the WW Supporter Program:** Can you donate \$50, \$100 or \$200 or more a year? Annual donations of \$50 or more entitle you to receive 12 print issues a year, email links to every article posted online and, upon request, a copy of the book “What road to socialism?”

By donating to this fund, you can help get class truth to more readers. Write monthly or annual checks to Workers World and mail them with your name, address and email to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., New York, NY 10011.

We are grateful for your help in building Workers World! □



# From Philadelphia to Pretoria, supporters demand ‘Free Mumia!’

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

An event titled “Bearing Witness in the Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal” brought together over 150 people to the First United Methodist Church of Germantown in Philadelphia, March 11. With a live-stream option, over 2,000 more supporters were able to view the event from other cities and countries. In several places, activists organized watch parties with groups of participants.

The program included Rev. Judge Wendell Griffen, a retired state court trial judge from Arkansas; professor and author Dr. Marc Lamont Hill; Philadelphia-based organizer Gabriel Bryant; Dr. Johanna Fernández, historian and movement liaison to the Abu-Jamal legal team; and Associate Professor of Journalism Linn Washington Jr., who served as moderator.

German journalist Michael Schiffmann and philosopher Dr. Cornel West joined the program via video conferencing. A highlight of the event was a phone call from Abu-Jamal, who was convicted in 1982 of shooting Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner but maintains his innocence.

Washington reminded the audience that Abu-Jamal, while best-known as a political prisoner in Pennsylvania, is a radio journalist and author of over 3,000 commentaries and eight books. They were all handwritten, as he has no access to a typewriter. Washington addressed key issues in Abu-Jamal’s case, including evidence in hidden file boxes withheld from defense attorneys.

Washington explained: “One of the most common forms of misconduct by district attorneys is the withholding of evidence of innocence that they are obligated to make available to the defense, under the 1963 decision Brady v. Maryland. Since 2013, of the 33 exonerees in Philadelphia, 30 involved Brady violations.

“Larry Krasner, who became Philadelphia District Attorney in 2017, had made his career about hearing



WW PHOTO: WW JOE PIETTE

**Speakers, left to right — Gabriel Bryant, Linn Washington Jr., Dr. Johanna Fernández, Rev. Judge Wendell Griffen, and Dr. Marc Lamont Hill at a gathering for Mumia Abu-Jamal, March 11, Philadelphia.**

evidence. Now a judge [Lucretia Clemons] is saying some of the evidence is time-barred, but if evidence takes 100 years to be uncovered, so be it.”

Judge Griffen expanded on this: “If the government is charging us, they cannot hide stuff that clears us. They have an obligation to produce and deliver all evidence they have of our innocence. You don’t need a law degree to know that things got jacked up in Mumia’s case.”

### State hid boxes of evidence

Six concealed file boxes pertaining to Abu-Jamal’s case were uncovered by DA Krasner in late 2018. The boxes contained documents indicating that key state witnesses were compensated for their testimony.

Fernández went into some detail: “The cab driver [Robert Chobert] was fed, housed in a hotel and driven around by prosecutors all during the trial. But evidence found in the hidden boxes — a letter to Prosecutor Joe McGill asking ‘Where’s my money?’ — showed he expected more. In the case of the state’s other chief

witness, sex worker Cynthia White, all 33 of her pending convictions went away. Then after the trial White also disappeared.”

Schiffmann, who appeared via video conferencing, explored the holes in the state’s case, which were exposed in photos taken by Pedro Polakoff, the first photographer on the crime scene in 1981. The photos show that Chobert’s cab was not where he claimed. This called into question his testimony about directly witnessing the shooting.

Another photo shows that the police officer responsible for handling the weapons involved was carrying both guns in his bare hand. Other key evidence withheld by the prosecutor included the fact that the driver’s license of a fourth man at the scene — Kenneth Freeman — was found in Faulkner’s pocket.

The program was organized by The Mumia United Nations Liaison Group and was co-sponsored by Uncle Bobbie’s Coffee & Books, Mobilization4Mumia, Love Not Phear, Campaign to Bring Mumia Home and the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Abu-Jamal’s supporters held meetings and demonstrations around the U.S. and in several other countries, calling on Judge Clemons to do the right thing and release him. South Africa’s largest union, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, demanded “Free Mumia!” in a spirited protest outside the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria. See NUMSA Facebook to view photos and videos of the protest in Pretoria. ([tinyurl.com/ynpfsrkw](https://tinyurl.com/ynpfsrkw))

In French Guiana, activists hung a banner calling for Abu-Jamal’s release on the gates of the courthouse in the city of Cayenne. Activities were also held in Argentina, Australia, Benin, France, Germany, Mexico, Portugal, Senegal and Togo, many organized by dockworkers.

In a Dec. 16, 2022, hearing, trial Judge Clemons ruled that Abu-Jamal’s attorneys should have access to examine all of the prosecution’s evidence in this case. Her decision is expected later in March. □

# Which way forward for the antiwar movement?

*Continued from page 1*

attempt to reverse these developments, the Biden administration will deploy the U.S. military. We’ve seen this increased use of the U.S. and NATO’s military in Ukraine and in the South China Sea throughout 2022.

**WW:** Let’s start with the war in Ukraine.

**SF:** The war in Ukraine is a proxy war. The U.S.-NATO-European Union armed the Ukrainian side and turned it into a prolonged war against Russia. Washington is willing to fight to the last Ukrainian.

U.S.-led NATO has been developed as a worldwide police power enforcing imperialist expansion not only in the North Atlantic but in Africa, Latin America, West and Central Asia, and even in the Pacific. The U.S., often with NATO backing, has waged wars of aggression against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and indirectly against Syria, Yemen and Palestine.

Biden declared that the goal of the Ukraine war was to collapse Russia. U.S. strategists have designated the weakening of Russia as a necessary step in targeting China. The war in Ukraine is a disastrous, dangerous new imperialist offensive. It is part of a continuing effort to reconquer the world economy.

In his arguments evaluating World War I over 100 years ago, the Russian revolutionary V. Lenin demanded a “revolutionary defeatist” position of the workers’ party in each country against their own imperialist ruling class. In Workers World newspaper, we have been explaining the dangers of NATO expansion for the last 30 years. We are for the defeat of this NATO offensive today.

The demonstrations this coming weekend demand that the U.S. and NATO stop their war against Russia, stop arming the Kiev regime and end all sanctions against Russia. Why do we focus our criticism on NATO? Because any gain of NATO is a threat to workers here and

globally. Any setback for U.S. imperialism and its NATO war machine strengthens the workers globally.

**WW:** The war in Ukraine has gone on for over a year now. How do you evaluate its result?

**SF:** Soldiers have died on both sides, and the civilian population has suffered greatly. Remember that by expanding NATO eastward and threatening to make Ukraine part of NATO, the U.S. and its allies provoked the Russian intervention. Washington then imposed the heaviest sanctions it could, in the hope of bringing about regime change in Russia. This it failed to do.

Washington did succeed, however, in lining up the European Union countries behind these sanctions. Many NATO countries increased their war budgets, Germany doubling its budget. The U.S. succeeded in disrupting EU-Russia trade. When pressure mounted in Germany to reopen transmission of gas from Russia, the Pentagon blew up the Nord Stream pipelines.

The U.S. failed to bring about regime change in Russia. But it succeeded, through sanctions, in breaking EU trade with Russia. These sanctions have imposed great hardship on the work-

ing class in Europe — which is a multinational working class. There is an upsurge of working-class struggle in Europe — seen at its peak in France — and growing disillusionment with the war.

The failure of the U.S. to disintegrate Russia is leading to many other global changes. U.S. dollar hegemony has slipped. And, as was just shown, an important deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran could be made in China without U.S. participation.

**WW:** A month ago there was a demonstration in Washington on Feb. 19, which was labeled antiwar, which had the leadership of the Libertarian Party. What was your attitude toward it?

**SF:** We did not believe it would help the antiwar struggle to try to build what some people call a “right-left

block.” The working class, including the most oppressed sectors of the population, those most impacted, will be the core of the antiwar movement.

A right-left block, in this case with Libertarian leadership, diminishes the role especially of oppressed workers. Libertarians are pro-capitalist in the rawest form. Capitalism is the basis of imperialist war. So aggressively promoting capitalism disorients the movement and divides it.

The Libertarians are strongly anti-union, anti-Social Security and against civil rights laws that attempt to mitigate racist discrimination. In Washington, their speakers made their pro-capitalist positions clear.

But we also understood why individual antiwar activists would participate. We did not discourage participation. But we opposed endorsing the Feb. 19 demonstration. UNAC, Answer, Code Pink, Veterans For Peace, Black Alliance for Peace and others also refused to endorse.

**WW:** How is the demonstration on March 18 projected to be different from Feb. 19?

**SF:** The United National Antiwar Coalition — UNAC, which I have been part of since its founding 12 years ago — chose to build an alliance determined to strengthen left and anti-racist forces that target, not glorify, the capitalist system. This was a defining moment in direction.

UNAC held demonstrations from the beginning of the war in March 2022. In October of 2022, we organized coordinated actions in more than 70 cities and with an even broader coalition in more than 90 events in January 2023.

In the upcoming March 18 Peace in Ukraine rallies, on the 20th anniversary of the criminal U.S.-invasion of Iraq, we are part of an even broader antiwar coalition where anti-imperialist positions are well represented

Our demands include opposing the threatened U.S. war against China and Israel’s war against the Palestinian people, keeping the U.S. out of Haiti, ending sanctions on Syria, an end to NATO and to AFRICOM. Fund people’s needs not the war machine, and fight racism and bigotry at home not other peoples, is what ties this effort all together.

*See [UNACpeace.org](https://UNACpeace.org) for more information.*



# Socialist Cuba and mosquitos: humanity calls, Cuba answers

By Stephanie Hedgecock

Mosquito-carried disease vectors have plagued humanity for millennia. Mosquitos carry dengue, yellow fever, malaria, West Nile fever, Zika fever, several varieties of encephalitis, Rift Valley fever, Chikungunya and Lymphatic filariasis, as well as Dog heartworm.

Aedes mosquitos transmit dengue fever to cause 96 million symptomatic cases a year, resulting in around 40,000 deaths. Malaria, carried by Anopheline mosquitos, killed 619,000 people in 2021, according to the World Health Organization. (Dec. 8, 2022) Worldwide, malaria-bearing mosquitos caused 247 million cases in 2021, and Africa bore the heaviest tolls with 95% of those cases and 96% of malaria deaths. WHO reports some 80% of all malaria deaths in that region were of children under age five.

Mosquitos have even long impacted human history. In the 2019 book, “The Mosquito: A Human History of Our Deadliest Predator,” Timothy Winegard states that malaria goes back at least as far as 2700 BCE in China and 1700 BCE in Sumeria. Hippocrates wrote about summer malaria epidemics; 94 BCE Chinese historian Sima Qian reported malarial deaths of young males south of the Yangtze. Hannibal’s forces and Genghis Khan’s armies were decimated by mosquito-carried disease. (Winegard, 2019)

According to Winegard, “In the 3rd century, malaria epidemics helped drive people to a small, much persecuted faith that [then] emphasized healing and care of the sick, propelling Christianity” to world prominence. And Winegard relates that with the arrival of the conquistadors and Cristobal Colon, the previously uninfected mosquitos in the Caribbean Islands became carriers of diseases, and 5 million to 8 million Tainos died from vectors carried by the then-infected mosquitos and the mammals brought there by Spain.

Around 95 million Indigenous peoples of the American continents are estimated to have died from introduced diseases following 1492.

By colonization and war, humanity has historically created fresh environments for mosquito populations to invade and explode within. However, campaigns to eradicate vector-ridden mosquito populations, throughout the 20th century and since, have been based on pesticides.

### Sixth Extinction

Meanwhile, our biosphere is experiencing the Sixth Extinction, driven by human activity, due to climate change, pesticides, unsustainable use and degradation of Earth’s lands and waters, plastic pollution, use of fossil fuels and petrochemicals. Some 40% of all land has been converted to agriculture use, causing massive deforestation; plus Big Agriculture uses up to 70% of freshwaters.

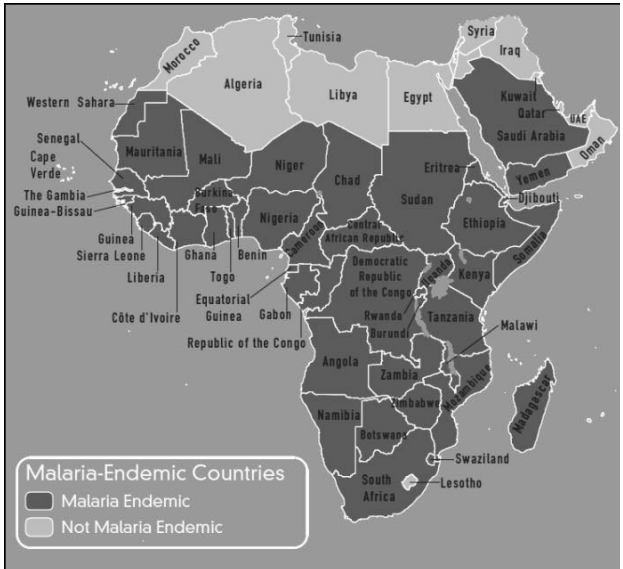
According to the World Wildlife Fund, “A mass extinction is a short period of geological time in which a high percentage of biodiversity, or distinct species — bacteria, fungi, plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates — dies out. ... note that, in geological time, a ‘short’ period can span thousands or even millions of years. The planet has experienced five previous mass extinction events, the last one occurring 65.5 million years ago which wiped out the dinosaurs from existence. Experts now believe we’re in the midst of a sixth mass extinction.”

In 2020, the United Nations issued a report estimating over 1 million species were in danger of extinction during the next few decades. Currently, the observed species extinction rate is between 1,000 and 10,000 times higher than long-term natural species extinction rates.

As a key part of the biosphere and food chain, whether as pollinators or as food for birds and other life-forms, insects are dangerously impacted. The extinction rate of insects is now eight times higher than the observed extinction rates of mammals, birds or reptiles. (tinyurl.com/yc3u79xh) From dragonflies to beetles to butterflies, over 31% of insect species were considered threatened by 2019, with 10% going extinct locally in Europe and North America.

According to the U.N. 2019 Sustainable Development blog: “The average abundance of native species in most major land-based habitats has fallen by at least 20%, mostly since 1900. The numbers of invasive alien species per country have risen by about 70% since 1970 across the 21 countries with detailed records. The distributions of almost half (47%) of land-based flightless mammals, for example, and almost a quarter of threatened birds, may already have been negatively affected by climate change.”

But while even greater numbers of insect species are in decline, mosquito populations are spreading, due to global warming.



### Global warming and disease

The Stanford University Earth Matters magazine 2019 report, “How does climate change affect disease?” stated: “As the globe warms, mosquitos will roam beyond their current habitats, shifting the burden of diseases like malaria, dengue fever, chikungunya and West Nile virus.” (tinyurl.com/yadzvbvx)

In a Feb. 14 article, “Climate change may make it easier for mosquitos to spread malaria,” the Washington Post reported that top U.N. climate scientists estimate the most deadly impacts of global warming won’t come from weather disasters but from disease. (tinyurl.com/546hth9p) Researchers at Georgetown University found that mosquito populations have shifted away from the equator, north and south, about 2.9 miles (4.7 km) a year on average over the last 100 years. Mosquitos have spread into new parts of Africa; in Hawai’i mosquitos have now infected a native songbird with an avian malaria, threatening another species extinction.

And climate change has increased the risk of nearly 60% of all known infectious diseases, from mosquito- and tick-borne vectors to fungal infections, according to a report in the journal “Nature Climate Change.” (yaleclimateconnections.org, Feb. 22)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states its approach to global “malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases” is “developing tools and approaches to better prevent, detect and control mosquito-borne diseases, to mitigating drug and insecticide resistance,” in other words, relying on pesticides, spreading poisons through the habitats.

### Capitalism’s solution: poisons

From its inception, in order to attempt control of mosquito and insect populations, capitalism has produced poisons. The view of the corporate world is that they have eradicated malaria from most, though not all, temperate climates, with DDT and other organochlorine and organophosphate mosquito-control insecticides. However, the use of pesticides left mosquitos endemic in the tropical and subtropical zones of Africa, Asia and the Americas and has damaged the biosphere in uncounted ways.

Imperialist wars for neocolonies and fossil fuel resources have poisoned the Earth — from the U.S. military’s dropping 13 million gallons of Agent Orange, along with several other defoliants, to decimate the triple-canopy rainforest in Vietnam to polluting areas of Iraq and the

former Yugoslavia with depleted uranium ammunition.

Conditions on Earth for the biosphere and for the health of humanity itself continue to worsen in a society based on profits. Clearly, there is no solution to the problems of mosquito-borne disease, global warming and the Sixth Extinction under capitalism. But another way is possible.

### Cuba shows another way

Since Cuba’s 1959 revolution, the U.S. has constantly threatened this small island and has exercised economic blockade of the Cuban people. The U.S. was defeated when it invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón), and the imperialist colossus tried multiple times without success to assassinate Fidel Castro. The U.S. even went so far as to introduce swine flu in a 1990s bioterrorism attack. And more recently in 2019, then-President Donald Trump increased the brutality of the economic sanctions with Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.

But Cuba has consistently created their own industries and facilities in response to the blockade, from organic agriculture to medicines and health care. All Cuban agriculture is organic; the U.S. blockade long ago prevented any corporate export there of pesticides. Cuba makes its own medicines and veterinary medicines and even its beauty products, all from natural sources.

In a March 2020 talk to the National Network on Cuba, University of Glasgow lecturer Dr. Helen Yaffe stated that Cuba initiated biotechnology five years before the first capitalist biotech company was established. Dr. Yaffe explained that Cuban biotech was nonprofit — based on collaboration, not competition — and is tied to their education system.

“Cuba bet on biotechnology very early, opening the first research manufacturing facility in the country in 1981,” said Agustín Lage, founder and former director of BioCubaFarma’s Center of Molecular Immunology. “Those early steps set the stage for the sector’s current performance in Cuba — supplying over 60% of the country’s essential medicines list, exporting to more than 40 countries, registering innovative products, showing tangible impact in public health and owning more than 2,000 patent filings worldwide.” (tinyurl.com/546hth9p)

### Cuba’s answer to mosquito-borne disease

While in Cuba with the 50th Venceremos Brigade in August 2019, in a visit to Labiofam, one of Cuba’s socialist state-owned biotech enterprises, this writer learned how Cuban scientists have developed a wide range of needed products for human and animal and agricultural use, from veterinary vaccines to beauty creams. Labiofam, created in 1977, produces an anti-cancer homeopathic medicine, Vidatox, made from the venom of the blue scorpion (scientists take the scorpions’ venom and release them without injury), as well as 98% of Cuba’s needed veterinary medications and some human food products.

### Natural product to prevent mosquito reproduction

And Labiofam scientists invented a product to stop mosquito populations reproducing — BactiVec®, a bio-larvicide made with spores and crystals of a specific bacteria. This natural biolarvicide is made to be spread across mosquito-breeding areas; when ingested, it paralyzes the mosquitos’ intestinal walls within 24 to 48 hours. BactiVec kills the larvae.

Labiofam works with facilities in China, Vietnam, Tanzania and Bolivia to create this and other products for the Global South. As a socialist state-owned enterprise, it engages in collaborative trade, where Cuba exports its products in return for needed raw materials — the Cuban products to control mosquito and rat populations are especially desired. The Dominican Republic bought 30 tons of Labiofam’s rat-control product.

While WHO reports that Africa has 96% of malarial deaths, Cuba’s BactiVec has been found to be very effective and is in high demand in tropical areas of Africa.

Due to the blockade against Cuba, people in the U.S. cannot legally get Cuban beneficial products. The ruling class severely restricts travel to Cuba to prevent people here from learning what is possible under socialism.

Another world is possible — medicine and science for human health and the health of Earth’s biosphere are needed. End the blockade on Cuba! □



‘The struggle against malaria’ in Africa.



# What the Justice Department won't say ABOLISH THE POLICE!

After a two-year investigation of Louisville, Kentucky, police — prompted by the murder of Breonna Taylor on March 13, 2020 — the U.S. Department of Justice published its findings March 8.

According to the New York Times, “In a damning 90-page report, investigators painted a grim portrait of the Louisville Metro Police Department, detailing a variety of serious — at times shocking — misconduct.”

The DOJ document gives detailed descriptions of a “pattern or practice of conduct” of the LMPD, formed in 2003 as part of a consolidated city/county government incorporating the city of Louisville with Jefferson County:

“LMPD uses excessive force, including unjustified neck restraints and the unreasonable use of police dogs and tasers. LMPD conducts searches based on invalid warrants. LMPD unlawfully executes search warrants without knocking and announcing. LMPD unlawfully stops, searches, detains and arrests people during street enforcement activities, including traffic and pedestrian stops.

“LMPD unlawfully discriminates against Black people in its enforcement activities. LMPD violates the rights of people engaged in protected speech critical of policing. Louisville Metro and LMPD discriminate against people with behavioral health disabilities when responding to them in crisis.”

While this may be “shocking” to an establishment capitalist mouthpiece like the Times, these scenarios are all too familiar to Black Lives Matter activists throughout the U.S. — and in most of the world.

The Louisville report asserts: “Most Metro employees and LMPD officers are dedicated public servants who work hard to promote public safety.” Yet these “dedicated public servants” all belong to organizations — mislabeled unions — that operate to protect violent cops from disciplinary actions. They rally together when one of their own is charged with misconduct, even when fatalities occur.

**Reform or abolition?**

Also familiar to the anti-police brutality movement are reports and recommendations by the DOJ, often leading to a consent

decree, which the Times indicates will likely follow the investigation of the LMPD. These consent decrees mandate certain reforms, such as improved training of officers, stronger policies on excessive use of force, and more effective investigations of complaints and civilian oversight.

Other cities’ experience indicates that Louisville Metro residents are unlikely to see much change from DOJ-mandated reforms.

As far back as 1979, the DOJ filed a first-of-its-kind lawsuit, charging Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo and 18 other city officials with allowing numerous abuses by police including 162 killings in the previous eight years.

The DOJ said then that the pattern of excessive force in Philadelphia “shocks the conscience.” But two years later, in December of 1981, Mumia Abu-Jamal was brutalized by police following his arrest. His commentaries before his arrest had frequently condemned Rizzo and the Philadelphia Police Department.

In March 2015 another DOJ review of the PPD revealed a force that routinely shoots civilians, is inadequately trained and lacks a transparent review process of police-involved shootings. Then-Mayor Michael Nutter appointed a panel of “experts” to oversee implementation of the DOJ recommendations. Nothing came of it. In 2020 Philadelphia police were among the most violent in repressing protests over the death of George Floyd.

A consent decree was in place by the DOJ in Cleveland in 2014, which among other things created a Community Police Commission. Yet there has been little change; a federal judge, who has the

power to end the consent decree, extended it for two years in September, stating the Cleveland Police Department “has not yet achieved substantial and effective compliance at this time.”

The investigation that led to this consent decree followed the 2012 slaying of Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams, when Cleveland and East Cleveland police fired 137 bullets into the unarmed couple’s car. Two years later CPD officers shot and killed 12-year-old Tamir Rice; prosecutors declined to charge the officers involved. Since then, those murdered by CPD include Desmond Franklin, a 23-year-old father of four fatally shot in 2020.

In November 2022 city voters passed Issue 24, which creates a Community Police Commission that will not go away if the consent decree is ended. But now the CPC is at risk of being defunded by Cleveland City Council.

Philadelphia and Cleveland provide two of numerous examples of ineffective federal mandates for police reform.

The question not asked — and therefore unanswered — why are police departments across the country, who we are taught are responsible for enforcing the law and protecting peoples’ rights, so routinely violating those same rights with impunity?

The truth is that the police do not exist to uphold anybody’s legal, civil or Constitutional rights. They are part of the repressive capitalist state apparatus, which is an instrument of class rule created by and for the wealthy.

The DOJ’s “damning” report is but another argument for the only true means to halt police terror: ABOLISH THE POLICE! □



Aug. 25, 2020, protest, Louisville, Kentucky.

## SVB: ‘The bank is now insolvent’

Continued from page 1

two days after. All three were heavily involved in the crypto-currency market. Last year the multibillion-dollar crypto company FTX went belly-up.

Wild speculation, such as that which fueled the crypto boom, may lead to fantastic growth of monetary wealth. But because it does not involve the exploitation of workers’ labor power, there is no creation of surplus value, which is the foundation of the capitalist mode of production. That is why the crypto bubble — an example of what Marx called fictitious capital — is like the real estate bubble leading up to the 2008 financial crash. It likewise will expand at a galloping pace until it bursts. By the evening of March 14 the breaking news was "Global markets

tumble."

The writing is on the wall.

As Workers World Party’s First Secretary Larry Holmes wrote in October 2022, “This is no normal economic downturn. However long and drawn out this economic crisis is and whatever events push it forward, it’s the development that many Marxists (as well as bankers and billionaires who are willing to utter words of truth) consider to be the biggest global capitalist economic crisis in history. The capitalist crisis that is under way is unique in that it is symptomatic of a dying system entering its end-stage.”

The historic role of the working class is to bring capitalism, with all the destructive crises it engenders, to an end — and replace it with socialism, a system based on human needs, not profit. □

## Women bear brunt of deepening economic crisis

Continued from page 7

- 18% of nonelderly women recipients are women with disabilities;
- 58% of all SNAP households with children are headed by a single adult, 92% of them by women;
- 44% of SNAP recipients are children (3.5% of whom have a disability);
- 34% of bisexual women, 32% of lesbians and 24% of straight women between 18 and 44 report participating in SNAP; and about 15% of transgender national survey respondents participate in SNAP.

### War on workers, oppressed

The 2008 crisis accelerated a global social process, which is manifesting itself with massive layoffs in the thousands, especially in the tech companies like Google, Microsoft and Yahoo. And just recently the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank, which reflects the billions of dollars in investments of tech industries, is just the tip of the iceberg regarding the reverberations that have just begun. It is the second largest such bank collapse since 2008.

Today the Federal Reserve Bank, the bank that all the other central banks either follow or get whipped back in line by, is slowly shutting down the economy with interest rate hikes, not because the bankers have a real plan. The Fed is in panic mode. They have run out of all other alternatives, and so in a desperate attempt to save U.S. capital-

ism, they are opening the doors of hell on workers, post COVID-19. In 2022, the Fed raised interest rates seven times and raised them again in February 2023.

The Federal Reserve has declared war on the workers and oppressed peoples of the world by raising interest rates, faster than at any other time, to essentially force the layoffs of as many workers as possible, drive up the unemployment rate, as well as lower workers’ wages, and help companies like Amazon and Starbucks bust unions.

The young workers who are in the vanguard of the organizing drives underway at Amazon, and Starbucks and Target and many, many other places must be in the leadership of this struggle, because they are brave, radical and hate capitalism. And a great majority of these dynamic young organizers are women and gender oppressed. Some 70.5% of Starbucks workers are women, and this number reflects the union organizers, who are voting to unionize and at the same time, fighting union busting. Out of the over 1.6 million Amazon workers, 48% are women.

More than 60% of the nearly 400,000 U.S. workers Amazon hired into its lowest-paying hourly jobs between 2018 and 2020 were Black or Latinx, and for the years 2019 and 2020 more than half were women.

The historic struggles led by women and gender-oppressed people that will be recognized during Women’s History Month — against white supremacy, for equal pay for equal work, reproductive justice and for the right to organize — are still relevant today on a global scale.



Migrant mother and her children receive food from Emmaus House food pantry in Phoenix, Arizona.

What is needed now more than ever is a worldwide, classwide struggle for socialism, where capitalist greed for profit will be swept away, replaced by provision of human needs such as housing, health care, education, healthy food, child care and much more will be guaranteed for women and all humanity.

*The writer is a co-coordinator of the International Working Women’s Coalition in New York City and an executive board member of the International Women’s Alliance.*



# Weapons against workers and oppressed

## Drugs and the ‘War on Drugs’

By Princess Harmony

The history of the use of drugs — legal and illicit — against the working class and its movement is a long one. The “War on Drugs” — officially declared on June 17, 1971, but a staple of U.S. policy since the 1950s and amplified in 1973 — really acts as a war on drug users. There have been multiple drug abuse and overdose epidemics from the 1950s onward. Neither the drug users, nor the working class as a whole, were prepared for the problem of drugs being socially used as weapons — or as a means to get free (slave) labor by expanding mass incarceration.

Employment of drugs as a weapon to stifle the discomfort and discontent and thus destroy proletarian movements in the United States is a large subject. With the rise of the Black Panther Party and the antiwar movement in the 1960s and ’70s, President Richard Nixon (who despised Black and Brown people, left wing organizations and movements, drugs and drug users) aimed to use his War on Drugs to eliminate his political enemies on the left.

Nixon’s White House Counsel John Erlichman said that the president “had two enemies: the antiwar left and Black people”; because he couldn’t directly criminalize being antiwar or being Black that he would “[get] the public to associate the

hippies with marijuana and Blacks with heroin” in order to “arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings and vilify them, night after night, on the evening news.”

In 1973, the Nixon Administration founded the Drug Enforcement Administration, supposedly to find and destroy sources of drugs inside and outside U.S. borders. This was merely a prelude to the full horrors of “anti-drug” actions in the U.S. The DEA at the time of its founding was 1,500 agents strong, with a budget of \$75 million. By 2016, the DEA had more than double the number of agents and a budget in the billions.

In 1982, the Reagan administration was appealed to by wealthy business owners from Miami-Dade County, Florida. They were demanding aid in fighting the drug problem, which had resulted in hundreds of violent deaths. Government agencies — the DEA, IRS and FBI among others — were showing up to arrest anyone involved or suspected to be involved with drugs. Under Ronald Reagan, the Office of National Drug Control Policy was founded.

**Laws target the most oppressed**

In 1986, the basketball star Len Bias went to a party where he was given cocaine, which killed him just as he was celebrating his successes. After this case

and other drug-related deaths and murders, New York Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) worked with Reagan’s administration to pass the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which turned out to be one of the strictest laws passed during the War on Drugs era.

This law was supposedly color-blind, putting drug dealers away and keeping the communities drugs were ravaging safe. In reality, the state was charging Black and Brown men at a rate higher than white people. While drugs were a scourge, it was not Black or Brown men selling cocaine. Cocaine was being sold by white people primarily to white people, with some exceptions like Len Bias.

Future President Joe Biden was partly responsible for one of the most obviously racist aspects of the War on Drugs: the sentencing disparity between selling powder cocaine and crack cocaine, with the harsher penalty for crack. White people were more commonly users of powder cocaine, particularly petty bourgeois white people. But the crack cocaine because of its low price was pushed into communities to be used by Black and Brown people.

The U.S. government has contributed to the spread of cocaine use in this country. As early as 1984, the United States knew that there were Contras — right-wing



anti-Communist, anti-Sandinista fighters in Nicaragua — who were either trafficking cocaine themselves or aiding other trafficking rings in Latin America. And the U.S. Department of State funded the Contras.

The War on Drugs included federal laws that increased mass incarceration; similar laws existed on the state level. In New York State, then-Governor Nelson Rockefeller established the Rockefeller Drug Laws, which established varying sentences for possession of drugs over a certain level. While these laws were eventually altered to remove the mandatory minimums of sentencing, it was after the damage had been done. Thousands of young, nationally oppressed people were locked behind bars because of Rockefeller’s “tough on crime” stance.

This is only a short summary of the impact that the War on Drugs and drug use itself has had on the working class. The entire history would fill many volumes. But knowing the basics can help to resist the continued War on Drugs. □

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MUNDO OBRERO

## La campaña de guerra de Biden aviva la resistencia

Por John Catalinotto

27 de febrero de 2023 — En la semana del primer aniversario de la guerra de Estados Unidos y la OTAN contra Rusia en Ucrania, la administración Biden ha tomado o anunciado medidas para prolongar la guerra y arriesgarse a una escalada. Los medios de comunicación corporativos han repetido como loros y amplificado cada anuncio del gobierno. Y el movimiento antiguerra comenzó a responder.

El presidente Joe Biden hizo un rápido viaje en tren el 20 de febrero a Kiev, donde se reunió con el presidente ucraniano Volodymyr Zelensky para apuntalar su tambaleante régimen. Biden ofreció al títere estadounidense 500 millones de dólares en armas y municiones.

Rápidamente de vuelta en tren a Varsovia, Polonia, Biden dijo a los periodistas en el Castillo Real que habría “días duros y amargos por delante”, y antes de regresar a Washington, prometió que Washington y sus aliados de la OTAN “cubrirían las espaldas de Ucrania”, lo que implica que más ucranianos morirán en el frente. (PBS, 21 de febrero)

El 24 de febrero, el Pentágono anunció un nuevo paquete de ayuda para Ucrania, comprometiendo 2.000 millones de dólares para enviar más municiones y una variedad de pequeños aviones no tripulados de alta tecnología a la matanza. La ayuda incluye el avión no tripulado kamikaze Switchblade 600 mejorado, así como equipos de detección de guerra electrónica. Estados Unidos ha comprometido ya más de 32.000 millones de dólares en armamento en el último año, según un informe de AP.

### Ofensiva propagandística

Washington también abrió una ofensiva diplomática y propagandística. Una votación contra Rusia en la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas tuvo más o menos los mismos resultados que las convocatorias similares del año pasado. Mientras que 141 países votaron a favor de la condena, entre ellos los históricos países colonialistas de Europa, Norteamérica, Japón y Australia, entre los 39 países que votaron en contra o se abstuvieron se encontraban los de mayor población.

Cuando el gobierno chino propuso un marco perfectamente razonable para las negociaciones, Washington respondió como si la propuesta de Pekín fuera una declaración de guerra. (tinyurl.com/5bazzbdj) Biden la rechazó inmediatamente. Su reacción transmitió el



‘Paz’, reza una pancarta en Berlín en protesta por la guerra de Ucrania, 25 de febrero de 2023.

mensaje de que Estados Unidos y la OTAN querían que continuara la guerra de poder en Ucrania.

A continuación, las cataratas del Niágara de mentiras de los gobiernos y los medios de comunicación corporativos bombardearon a las poblaciones de los países imperialistas. Hasta ahora, los gobiernos -incluidos todos los miembros de la OTAN- se han alineado con la línea pro-guerra de Estados Unidos. Aunque este diluvio de propaganda embotó la respuesta de organizaciones y partidos que suelen ser antibelicistas -el Partido de Izquierda en Alemania, por ejemplo-, hubo indicios dentro de la clase obrera de una creciente desconfianza en los argumentos oficiales de EE.UU./OTAN. Cuanto más cerca de la línea del frente, mayor era la preocupación por la guerra.

### Acciones contra la guerra

Las fuerzas a favor de la guerra aprovecharon el primer aniversario para organizar el apoyo a la guerra. Las acciones contra la guerra en la mayoría de los países fueron más fuertes de lo que habían sido.

En Alemania, un partidario clave de la guerra entre Estados Unidos y la OTAN, salieron a la calle las primeras manifestaciones masivas contra la guerra bajo el liderazgo de la izquierda. Decenas de miles de alemanes asistieron a la manifestación masiva del Levantamiento por la Paz en Berlín el 25 de febrero. Los principales portavoces de la manifestación fueron Sahra Wagenknecht, política del Die Linke (Partido de Izquierda), y la escritora Alice Schwarzer.

El Partido de Izquierda tiene serias divisiones respecto a la guerra de Ucrania, lo que ha frenado al movimiento antibelicista hasta ahora.

Los manifestantes pidieron al gobierno de coalición socialdemócrata de Berlín que dejara de suministrar

armas al régimen de Kiev y exigieron conversaciones de paz. Como señaló Wagenknecht, la manifestación demostró “cuántos somos” y que necesitábamos un movimiento pacifista nuevo y fuerte, y “nos estamos organizando”. (junge Welt, 27 de febrero)

El artículo del veterano periodista Seymour Hersh, que revela el papel de Estados Unidos en la colocación de bombas para destruir partes de los gasoductos Nord Stream que transportan gas ruso a Alemania, expuso las tácticas terroristas que emplea Washington para mantener a raya a sus aliados de la Unión Europea, en relación con la ofensiva económica contra Rusia. (tinyurl.com/bdhn647j)

En Italia, miles de personas se manifestaron en todo el país, en Roma, Florencia, Milán y Génova, contra las sanciones occidentales impuestas a Rusia. Los manifestantes exigieron que el gobierno de la primera ministra italiana, Giorgia Meloni, deje de suministrar armas a Kiev.

Estados Unidos ha utilizado su base de Camp Darby, cerca de Livorno, como importante depósito de armas y su base aérea de Aviano, en el noreste de Italia, para bombardear Yugoslavia en 1999 y Libia en 2011. Desde suelo italiano, muchas bases aéreas estadounidenses amenazan a Rusia con un posible primer ataque nuclear. Estas amenazas también convierten a Italia en un objetivo.

También hubo manifestaciones en varias ciudades de Portugal y acciones más pequeñas en Gran Bretaña.

Por importantes que fueran estas protestas contra la guerra, una señal aún mayor de la resistencia de la clase obrera ha sido el creciente número de grandes huelgas en Alemania, Italia, España, Portugal y especialmente en Gran Bretaña y Francia. Son una respuesta a las décadas de usurpaciones de los niveles de vida de los trabajadores y a los sacrificios especiales exigidos por una guerra que no redunde en interés de los trabajadores.

**Protestas previstas en Estados Unidos**

También en Estados Unidos los trabajadores llevan dos años en movimiento, mucho más que antes, con jóvenes trabajadores que cuestionan las políticas gubernamentales en todos los frentes. Y el movimiento antiguerra ha convocado acciones nacionales para el 18 de marzo, con la acción central a las 1 p.m. en la Casa Blanca en Washington.

Esta acción une a todas las fuerzas de la izquierda que han estado agitando por el fin de la agresión de la OTAN en Europa y en todo el mundo y luchando contra el uso estadounidense de sanciones económicas, otra forma de guerra. (unacpeace.org) □





Lorraine Liriano habla, 1 de marzo, 2023, CUNY, Manhattan. FOTO: D. SANTA

# Luis Miranda Jr., no se arrepiente de PROMESA

Por Puerto Rico No se Vende

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2 de marzo — Luis Miranda Jr., no se arrepiente de PROMESA, trivializa el desplazamiento y la ruptura de sindicatos por parte de sus clientes.

En un foro anoche en el Centro de Posgrado de la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York (CUNY Post Graduate Center), Luis Miranda Jr., operativo político y de organizaciones sin fines de lucro, defendió cruel y cobardemente su decisión de cabildar por el proyecto de ley PROMESA, actualmente impuesto a través de una Junta de Supervisión y Control Fiscal (“la Junta”) opresiva e impulsada por la austeridad en Puerto Rico. Al mismo tiempo trivializa el desplazamiento de residentes de comunidades obreras y las tácticas anti-sindicales de sus clientes.

En la charla, irónicamente, si no cínicamente, titulada “Latinos, elecciones y el futuro de la democracia estadounidense”, el impenitente partidario de PROMESA habló ampliamente sobre las elecciones y la democracia en todo EE.UU., omitiendo flagrante y convenientemente el rol que ha jugado presionando para que la Junta extremadamente antidemocrática e irresponsable gobierne sobre la colonia estadounidense de Puerto Rico.

Dos mujeres activistas de la campaña “Puerto Rico No se Vende”, lo desafiaron y le recordaron el papel que desempeñó al impulsar PROMESA y aceptar clientes en su Grupo MirRam que incluyen a Industry City, un cliente con planes para rezonificar y desplazar a puertorriqueños y otros residentes de Sunset Park, Brooklyn, y Amazon que le pagó \$100,000 en su lucha por destruir la histórica campaña de organización sindical de los trabajadores explotados.

“Esta noche, Luis Miranda Jr. se despojó de su piel traicionera y reveló cuán realmente vil es al no responder por qué tomó clientes como Amazon e Industry City”, dijo Lorraine Liriano. “Dice mucho sobre su incapacidad para justificar cómo las décadas que ha servido como agente político de la maquinaria del Partido Demócrata han deshumanizado e insensibilizado su conexión con la comunidad y la clase trabajadora”.

Cuando se le hizo una pregunta directa sobre su cabildeo para PROMESA/Junta que cerró cientos de escuelas públicas, redujo drásticamente las pensiones de los trabajadores, impulsó la privatización de los recursos públicos y creó las condiciones para el desplazamiento masivo de puertorriqueños, Miranda respondió: “Sentí que necesitaba hablar sobre lo que era responsable hacer por Puerto Rico, no lo ideológico que hubieras querido”.

Sobre su cabildeo por el plan de Industry City para desplazar a los boricuas y otros, y el cabildeo contra los trabajadores que organizan un sindicato en Amazon, Miranda en tono burlón dijo “aquí a nadie le importa una mierda los dos temas que planteaste”.

“Nos parece extremadamente irónico, si no escandaloso, que el mismo día que conmemoramos las acciones desinteresadas y valientes de luchadores puertorriqueños como Lolita Lebron, a alguien como Luis Miranda Jr., que cabildó por la imposición de una Junta antidemocrática e irresponsable sobre Puerto Rico, se le da una plataforma para hablar sobre los latinos y la democracia estadounidense”, dijo Verónica Sánchez. “Si este es el tipo de democracia que él busca para Puerto Rico, las familias que están siendo oprimidas diariamente por esta Junta no quieren ser parte de ella.

Debe saberse que Miranda, un agente político del Partido Demócrata desde hace mucho tiempo, tiene sus tentáculos en numerosas instituciones y organizaciones que deberían tomar nota de su desprecio por los puertorriqueños trabajadores, residentes de la comunidad y los trabajadores que buscan la verdadera democracia en su lugar de empleo. Estos incluyen la plataforma de noticias “La Ciudad”, El Teatro Público, el Fondo de la Victoria Latina, el Desfile Nacional

Puertorriqueño y la Federación Hispana.

De manera reveladora, y dado que no pudo proporcionar respuestas sustantivas y creíbles que justificaran su traición, Miranda recurrió a insultar y menospreciar a las mujeres cuando salían, llamándoles “cobardes” y haciendo otras referencias misóginas.

“Su risa y sus insultos para que no abandonemos la presentación estaban dirigidos a hacernos sentir como objetos de esos piropos callejeros y misóginos que reducen a las mujeres a ‘mami mami’”, dijo Liriano. “Cuando dijo que éramos cobardes, el verdadero cobarde era él y su incapacidad para justificar lo que no es justificable. Esta noche me enseñó que necesitamos ocupar más espacios y enfatizar nuestra narrativa, que nuestra gente está harta del politiquero manipulador que se vende al mejor postor y que necesitamos un movimiento de liberación y organización en nuestras comunidades para que nuestra gente no caiga presa de un Luis Miranda Jr. ¡Qué viva Puerto Rico Libre! Independencia es la única solución!”

La Campaña Puerto Rico No Se Vende es una campaña integrada por organizaciones e individuos de Puerto Rico y Estados Unidos que luchan por la abolición de la Junta de Supervisión y Control Fiscal, la deuda ilegal, el imperialismo y la intervención estadounidense en Puerto Rico. □

## ‘Cop City’ Atlanta

# La policía ataca un festival de música

Por Defend the Atlanta Forest Atlanta

El 7 de marzo, la escritora de Mundo Obrero Dianne Mathiowetz declaró: "Acabo de estar en una conferencia de prensa convocada por varios clérigos locales y nacionales que denunciaron la acción policial de nuevo como prueba de que no hay nada en Cop City que sugiera desescalamiento y protección de los derechos de las personas. Aquí hay un número significativo de personas de la etnia muscogee, y al menos una de ellas fue maniatada, brutalmente agredida y detenida por la policía en el lugar del concierto.

"Se reconocen diversas tácticas. En la rueda de prensa de hoy de los clérigos no se hizo ninguna declaración sobre los supuestos daños a la propiedad. Toda la atención se centró en las reacciones militarizadas de la policía. El enfado es por el hecho de que se haya empezado a construir y se hayan talado árboles, antes de que se haya concedido ningún permiso de construcción. Está cercado y vigilado por policías las 24 horas del día".

El siguiente comunicado de prensa fue emitido por Defend the Atlanta Forest tras una brutal agresión policial durante la Semana de Acción para detener "Cop City".

6 de marzo — Anoche, varias agencias policiales ataviadas con equipo militarizado y armadas con armas letales asaltaron un festival de música local para toda la familia en un parque público dentro del Bosque Weelaunee. Hicieron un uso excesivo de la fuerza para detener a decenas de asistentes al concierto y amenazaron con disparar a las personas que se encontraban en el parque. El evento se celebraba el segundo día de la quinta Semana de Acción para proteger el Bosque Weelaunee (Atlanta) y detener Cop City.

Alrededor de mil personas se reunieron en un campo entre los árboles del bosque de Weelaunee en la segunda jornada del festival de música para escuchar la actuación de músicos, ponerse al día con los amigos, disfrutar de

un castillo hinchable y compartir comida.

Otro grupo de protesta, con cientos de personas, marchó hacia el bosque, cerca de la Granja de la Vieja Prisión, el lugar arrendado a la Fundación de la Policía de Atlanta para Cop City. La marcha era una respuesta al asesinato del activista “Tortugueta” y una iniciativa para recuperar el bosque Weelaunee como espacio público. Se informa de que se prendió fuego a vehículos de construcción y equipos de vigilancia.

Poco después de esta acción, la policía tomó represalias con saña, asaltando todo el bosque y deteniendo al menos a 35 personas en el festival de música cercano, incluidas personas que no tenían ninguna relación ni conocimiento de la acción al otro lado del bosque de casi 600 acres.

Los asistentes al festival afirman que la policía electrocutó a los asistentes al concierto que se alejaban de la conmoción, tiró a la gente al suelo y amenazó con utilizar fuerza letal. Al parecer, un policía mantuvo asfixiado a un asistente indígena al concierto mientras se le echaba encima.

Otro testigo presencial informa de que un agente de policía de un agencia desconocida dijo: "Juro por Dios que te mataré, carajo" a los civiles que se encontraban en el Weelaunee People's Park (Parque Intrenchment Creek). El Atlanta Community Press Collective informa de que se utilizaron gases lacrimógenos y bolas de pimienta contra la gente durante las detenciones.

A pesar de este ataque indiscriminado y violento de la policía, el festival continuó durante más de una hora con la multitud coreando: “Stop Cop City!” y “¡El espectáculo debe continuar!” entre los actos musicales. Entonces, un ejército de fuerzas policiales, sin previo aviso, irrumpió en masa en el festival.

Según Unicorn Riot, los agentes rodearon el castillo inflable, apuntaron con sus armas y lo derribaron. A continuación, los agentes, fuertemente armados, rodearon al resto de la multitud, entre la que había niños, y desplegaron LRAD (equipos de guerra acústica). La policía amenazó con detener a todos los participantes en el festival



de música acusándolos de terrorismo doméstico.

En su defensa, los asistentes al festival, los del parque, los niños y los músicos se mantuvieron unidos y corearon: “¡Tenemos niños aquí!” y “¡Déjenlos ir a casa!”. Según el Atlanta Community Press Collective, después de que los asistentes al festival exigieran ser liberados, la policía comprobó los documentos de identidad de quienes abandonaban el bosque.

Detuvieron a varios observadores legales y arrestaron a uno de ellos. También detuvieron a varios músicos. Además, la policía amenazó con detener a varios periodistas. Según los registros de la cárcel del condado de DeKalb, al menos 22 personas han sido acusadas de terrorismo doméstico.

Ha habido muchos informes adicionales de agresiones policiales que aún se están confirmando. El Fondo de Solidaridad de Atlanta declaró: “Violencia policial indiscriminada esta noche contra los asistentes al festival Stop Cop City. La policía parece arremeter contra cualquier persona presente en el festival de música. La música no es un delito; protestar no es un delito. Las personas que ejercen legalmente los derechos de la Primera Enmienda no pueden ser consideradas penalmente responsables de las acciones de otros.

“Cop City nunca será un proyecto legítimo. Sigue contando con la oposición generalizada de los atlantistas. Las violaciones de los derechos civiles cometidas ayer por la policía reafirman que este centro de entrenamiento policial no debe construirse nunca. Nos mantenemos firmes en nuestra convicción de construir un nuevo mundo en el que todas las personas estén a salvo del terror policial”, afirma un organizador que desea permanecer en el anonimato.

Para apoyar a los detenidos, visite [atlsolidarity.org](https://atlsolidarity.org) y haga un donativo al fondo de fianzas.

Puedes visitar [defendtheatlantaforest.org/calendar](https://defendtheatlantaforest.org/calendar) para consultar el programa completo. La semana de acción continúa.