

No to white vigilantism! Why did Jordan Neely's murderer go free?

WW STATEMENT

Workers World Party condemns the heinous murder of 30-year-old Jordan Neely on May 1 in a New York City subway. What happened to Neely was nothing more than a public lynching, reminiscent of the police killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Neely's death was recorded even as he was being held in a chokehold for at least seven minutes and thereby asphyxiated, while two of his killer's accomplices held him down.



Jordan Neely

Neely, a well-known Black houseless subway entertainer, was killed by a 24-year-old white Marine veteran, Daniel Penny. The New York Police Department (NYPD) brought Penny in for "questioning" and then released him.

Protests spontaneously occurred in Manhattan and Brooklyn once it came to light that Penny, a white vigilante, had not been arrested or charged with anything. Activists vowed to keep the protests going until there is justice for Neely. Workers World Party applauds all forms of mass protest, including the blocking of a subway on May 6 to express righteous outrage over this inhumane act.

Not an isolated incident

Collusion between the police and white vigilantism is nothing new. There are instances too numerous to mention that substantiate this claim, but here are three perfect examples.

After a 25-year-old Black man, Ahmaud Arbery, was fatally shot by two Ku Klux Klan sympathizers while jogging in Brunswick, Georgia, on Feb. 23, 2020, it took months before the district attorney arrested the father and son responsible, as well as the person who recorded the assault. These arrests came about only after community mass pressure demanded them. The racists, Travis McMichael and Gregory McMichael, are now serving life sentences.

Seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin was hunted down and shot to death on Feb. 12, 2012, by a wanna-be-cop vigilante, George Zimmerman, in a gated community in Sanford, Florida. Zimmerman's subsequent acquittal helped to ignite the Black Lives Matter struggle, which continues today.

Kyle Rittenhouse, an 18-year-old white vigilante, was tried and acquitted on Nov. 20, 2021, for the murder of two anti-racists, 36-year-old Joseph Rosenbaum and 26-year-old Anthony Huber, and the attempted murder of a third, Gaige Grosskreutz, in Kenosha, Wisconsin.



Demonstrators block NYC subway line demanding justice for Jordan Neely, May 6.

The shootings by Rittenhouse took place during a protest against the Aug. 25, 2020, police shooting of Jacob Blake, a 27-year-old Black man, who had been shot seven times in the back, leaving him paralyzed. The police allowed an openly armed Rittenhouse to walk freely during the protest before and after the shootings.

The judge put the victims on trial by characterizing them as "looters" and "arsonists" to support the false view that Rittenhouse's actions were justified as self-defense. This was a classic case of the police and the courts working hand-in-hand with the racists.

Stigmatizing mental illness and homelessness

Jordan Neely suffered from being houseless and living with mental illness. Before his murder, he was yelling on the subway that he was hungry, thirsty and tired of living. Should these societal ills have triggered a death warrant for him? NO!!

It is no secret that those who suffer the trauma of being mentally disabled and without shelter are the most vulnerable to police and vigilante terror, especially if they are Black. Why? Because they have been labeled as dangerous, irrational, less than human and therefore expendable.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union of New York, the 2023 budget for the city's police department is \$11 billion, the largest by far compared to other police departments in the U.S. This is a travesty, considering that city hospitals like St. Vincent's, once known for providing vital mental health facilities,

have closed their doors to these life-and-death services.

Profit-hungry landlords who represent the interests of multibillion-dollar real estate developers are now demanding a 15 percent rise in rents that are already unaffordable. Unless there is a sustained mass movement, this increase will only lead to more mentally ill houseless people surviving on the streets and in subway stations, winding up in jail, or losing their lives, like Neely.

The police, along with the city administration, are more concerned about protecting the profits of Wall Street bankers and bosses than the well-being of the many people like Jordan Neely.

Fund human needs, not police repression

Jordan Neely would still be alive today if he had a union job, housing, health care and nutritious food – which all New Yorkers deserve. The only solution to this crisis is to abolish the NYPD and take that \$11 billion to fund all the needs that human beings have a right to.

And in order to abolish the police, there must be a socialist revolution to abolish capitalism, because, as the popular street chant says, "The whole damn system is guilty as hell!" □



Workers World Party joins May 5 protest organized by PSL, NYC.

Protesters decry death of Salvador Vargas, immigrant detainee

Georgia

More than 50 people, including family members and former detainees, rallied outside the gates of the Stewart Detention Center in rural Lumpkin, Georgia, in remembrance of Salvador Vargas on May 6.

The 61-year-old Mexican national died on April 6; Vargas was the 11th incarcerated immigrant to die while being held at the for-profit prison, owned and operated by CoreCivic.

A number of statements written by current detainees were read, which detailed the deplorable conditions and human

rights violations in the prison. Stewart, which has a capacity to hold over 2,000 people, ranks among the most deadly and abusive immigrant detention prisons in the U.S.

Georgia Detention Watch, El Refugio and the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights, along with other groups, organized this action and a press conference at the Atlanta ICE headquarters on May 3 to demand: "Shut down Stewart now!"

— Report by Dianne Mathiowetz



PHOTO: GLAHR

U.S. hands off Haiti! Reparations now!

By any account the situation in Haiti is desperate. What the U.S. has done to Haiti in the past, as well as its current maneuvers, has devastated the country.

Most people in Haiti have no access to clean water, which is essential to controlling cholera. While the disease had been under control for three years, cholera has resurfaced all over the country with 33,000 cases reported at the beginning of March.

The previous cholera epidemic, which raged from 2010 to 2018 with over 1 million cases and 10,000 deaths, was caused by fecal wastes from United Nations troops entering Haiti's major water supply. The U.S. backed the U.N. in denying responsibility.

Nearly 5 million Haitians regularly miss meals, because they don't have enough money to buy food. Some people go days without eating. The World Food Program has only enough resources to keep the food scarcity from getting even worse.

In the 1980s, the U.S. slaughtered Creole pigs, then a staple for farmers in Haiti, and destroyed Haiti's domestic rice and corn production. The U.S. Agency for International Development food programs since then have contributed to mass hunger in Haiti today by undercutting the market for locally produced food.

Fighting among armed groups, including the cops, has led to hundreds of thousands of Haitians being "internally displaced," as the U.N. puts it — meaning they have no choice but to live in mass emergency shelters.

Almost all the weapons these armed groups have, including advanced high powered firearms and ammunition, come from U.S. gun dealers, mainly in Florida, smuggled in through Haiti's porous borders with lax enforcement of the U.S. embargo on weapons to Haiti.

The last presidential election was seven years ago; and since Jan. 1, no government official in Haiti has been elected. Acting President/Prime Minister Ariel Henry owes his appointment to the Core Group, which consists of the ambassadors of the U.S., Canada, France and other foreign powers. Henry appoints the mayors and other

local officials in the country, as well as ambassadors and other representatives.

History of interference

Here are a few historical examples of how the U.S. has interfered in Haiti's internal affairs for over two centuries.

President George Washington, an enslaver himself, gave the enslaving class of Haiti \$750,000 — a significant sum at that time and the U.S.'s first foreign aid — to put down the rebellion of the people, whom they had enslaved. Haiti's liberation struggle was victorious in 1804. That same year, Thomas Jefferson, the U.S.'s second president and another enslaver, established an embargo against Haiti that lasted until 1862.

In 1915 some 330 U.S. Marines raided Port-au-Prince and seized Haiti's gold reserves for the National City Bank of New York, today known as Citibank. That U.S. occupation lasted until 1934.

The U.S. was behind the first coup in 1991 against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had won the election with 67% of the vote. Regarding the second coup in 2004, after Aristide had won 92% of the votes, the U.S. supplied the plane that allowed Aristide's kidnappers to forcibly remove him to the Central African Republic.

The French regime continued to loot Haiti after Haiti's 1804 Revolution. In 1825 the French rulers sent a heavily armed fleet to extort the Haitian government into paying the expropriated French slaveholders for "property lost in the uprising." Haiti only finished paying the extorted 90 million gold florins in 1947. The French rulers used Haiti's payments for their own capitalist economic development.

Haiti is owed reparations to replace the resources stolen by the French and U.S. ruling classes. But reparations are also due for the subsequent hardships created by imperialism that continue today.

Every progressive person should be in solidarity with the Haitian struggle for freedom and prosperity. We must demand in unison: U.S. hands off Haiti! Reparations now! □

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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♦ In the U.S.

No to white vigilantism! 1
Death of Salvador Vargas, immigrant detainee . . . 1

♦ Editorials

U.S. hands off Haiti! Reparations now! 2

Online articles

♦ In the U.S.

'Give us health care, not COVID' LINK
Stop harassment of anti-imperialists! LINK
Okefenokee Swamp threatened by mine LINK
May Day marches and rallies LINK
Oakland teachers launch strike LINK
Black immigrant's family torn apart by ICE . . LINK
Writers strike in entertainment industry . . . LINK

♦ Around the World

May Day in France: Workers resist state LINK
What we should know about Ukraine war . . . LINK
U.S role in fomenting violence in Haiti LINK
Ben Dupuy: Rest in power! LINK

♦ Mundo Obrero

Solidaridad con la lucha en Francia LINK

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Vol. 65, No. 19 • May 11, 2023
Closing date: May 10, 2023

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published monthly by WW Publishers, 121 W. 27th St., Suite 404, New York, NY 10001. Phone: 212.627.2994.

Subscriptions: One year: \$36; institutions: \$50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 121 W. 27th St., Suite 404, New York, NY 10001. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 121 W. 27th St., Suite 404 New York, N.Y. 10001.