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Trans, queer activists to Marriott

Keep ‘Moms for Liberty’ out

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Trans- and queer-led groups are protesting the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown for agreeing to host the Moms for Liberty (M4L) national conference scheduled for June 29 to July 2. Members of ACT UP Philadelphia, Galaei Philly, Stop Moms for Liberty and other activists rallied outside the hotel May 12, calling on the Marriott to refuse to host the racist and transphobic group. Organizers are urging people to call the Marriott and demand that it “stop hosting hate.”

Galaei, a nonprofit organization serving queer and trans Black, Indigenous and other people of color, suggests people tell the Marriott it will lose business if it does not cancel the M4L summit.

ACT UP member Aaron Bodiford, who planned to protest, said it “breaks my heart” that trans students face attacks on their identities by Moms for Liberty and other groups’ rhetoric. Bodiford, who is 20 and trans, added: “The way this ramped up so dramatically, more than



Protesters on May 12, 2023 demand the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown cancel the reservation for the ‘Moms for Liberty’ national summit. PHOTO: TYGER WILLIAMS

ever we should be focusing on what’s happening in schools,” referring to anti-trans actions. (Philadelphia Inquirer, May 13)

Moms for Liberty is a right-wing conservative “parental rights” group that has pushed schools’ libraries to remove books

they claim have “sexual content,” heavily targeting LGBTQ+-themed books, as well as books pertaining to racism. This includes fiction books with protagonists of color or LGBTQ+ characters or which explore themes of feminism.

The nonprofit organization PEN America cited 1,648 titles that have been banned by schools across the U.S. as a result of pressure from M4L and other reactionary forces between 2021 to 2022. (Truthout, May 18)

Fight bigoted book bans!

The State of America’s Libraries Report 2023, from the American Library Association, found a record 1,269 attempts in 2022 to remove some 2,571 books from U.S. schools and libraries. “Almost all were written by or about members of Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+ and other marginalized communities.” ALA found these censorship efforts to be well-organized, typically targeting lists of books at the same time.

Founded in Florida in 2021, M4L debuted on the Rush Limbaugh Show in January 2021 and was featured on several other right-wing programs. M4L’s 2022 national summit in Tampa, Florida, featured speeches by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, U.S. Sen. Rick Scott and

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Post-Stonewall liberation movement

Power to the people!

By Leslie Feinberg

This article is #72 in the Lavender & Red series, written by the late transgender author and Workers World newspaper managing editor Leslie Feinberg and published in Workers World from 2004 to 2008. See workers.org/books to view the entire series.



asexual, Two-Spirit, nonbinary, gender-nonconforming and other identities] fought back against police repression. Stonewall, however, was only defensive in its very earliest hours. It quickly turned into an insurrectionary offensive.

The street leadership of youth of all [genders] — particularly those who were homeless and trying to cobble together a living on the streets and those who faced oppression based on their nationality and/or gender expression — forced the police and riot troop reinforcements to retreat, again and again, in running battles.

Stonewall was not just a response to oppression. For at least the third time in

history, revolutionary leadership sparked a mass struggle for the liberation of same-sex love, oppressed genders and sexes.

But unlike the early 20th century German Homosexual Emancipation Movement and the early 1950s Mattachine movement, the left-wing of gay liberation unleashed by the Stonewall insurrection was more thoroughly multinational and included many more women and trans people. The revolutionary leadership of early gay liberation was both of the oppressed and with the oppressed.

Some 25 militant organizations coalesced across the country in 1969, including the Committee for Homosexual Freedom of San Francisco, which fought job discrimination, and chapters of the

Gay Liberation Front (GLF) in cities that included New York; Berkeley, California; Los Angeles; and Minneapolis.

Many of these youth of all nationalities and sexes and genders identified as radicals and revolutionaries. They drew inspiration from the Chinese Revolution, the indefatigable resistance of the Vietnamese people and the liberation struggles sweeping the African continent. Many of the youth of color were actively a part of struggles for their own national liberation, and many of the white youth saw the need to unite against racism and its white-supremacist ideology.

Within a week after the Stonewall Rebellion, the Gay Liberation Front formed. It named itself to honor the

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TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

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Struggle to stop Cop City continues

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Hundreds of opponents of “Cop City” — the militarized police-training facility scheduled to be built on forested lands in Atlanta, Georgia, the historic Weelaunee Forest — literally occupied City Hall on May 15. The line to speak before Atlanta Council members in the public comment section of their meeting snaked from the large ground-floor atrium up the stairs and along the balcony to the sign-in table at the Council chamber doors, long before the hearing started.

Despite having been in line for a considerable time, several people who didn’t reach the sign-in table by 1 p.m. were denied the right to speak or even enter the chamber.

When the meeting started, more than an hour was spent with various Council members presenting proclamations to civic groups and individuals and getting their picture taken with the recipients. When city public works employees were brought up to be honored, at the urging of this writer, a standing ovation was given by the Stop Cop City advocates.

Finally at 2:15 p.m. the Council president announced that people would be given two minutes to speak and that no clapping or cheering would be allowed, or he would clear the room. However, those inside the room could clearly hear chants of “Let us in,” “Stop Cop City” and “Cop City will never be built” coming from people outside the chamber.

The sign-in sheets showed over 280 people signed up to speak before the list was closed. Despite dozens of empty seats, many Atlanta area residents never gained entrance to the meeting. However, scores watched the proceedings on screens in overflow rooms and the atrium.

In the seven hours of in-person public comments, not one person spoke in



Segment of line snaking through City Hall to speak out against Cop City in largest public attendance ever at Atlanta City Council meeting, May 15.

PHOTO: GLORIA TATUM

favor of Cop City. Rather every issue, from racist and brutal over-policing, to corporate control to alternative public needs to environmental devastation, was passionately and clearly addressed. Many took pains to make it clear they lived in the Atlanta metro area, as a way to dispute the oft-repeated lie that only “outside agitators” opposed Cop City.

Despite this historic turnout, the majority of the Council members moved the proposed budget with its \$33.5 million allocation of taxpayers’ money to the Budget subcommittee for review on May 24. Another large crowd is expected for that committee meeting.

Multiple organizations and coalitions are gearing up for the June 5 scheduled final Council vote on whether to approve city tax money to save the Atlanta Police Foundation’s corporate plan, to insure their profits against any mass upsurge.

In the meantime, the demand for institutions, companies and banks to sever their relationship with the Atlanta Police Foundation and Cop City is escalating across the country with demonstrations, continued legal challenges, mass petitions and phone calls to corporate headquarters and presidents’ offices. □

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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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Solidarity with writers strike growing

By Martha Grevatt

As the 11,500 members of the Writers Guild (WGA) begin their third week on the picket line, the strike shows no signs of weakening. On the contrary, the effort to win a decent pay formula that keeps up with inflation is bolstered every day by new voices of solidarity.

Representing Hollywood drivers and prop warehouse workers, Teamsters Local 399 Secretary-Treasurer Lindsay Dougherty spoke at a strike rally May 3: “If we all want to get what’s ours, we are going to have to fight for it tooth and nail. If you throw up a picket line, those f— trucks will stop, I promise you.” Drivers have made good on Dougherty’s promise. (Los Angeles Times, May 12)

Members of other unions representing entertainment industry workers, including the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), have joined the picket lines. Numerous unions are listed as strike supporters on the WGA web site. (wga.org)

A long list of celebrities have voiced support for the strike, from late night talk show hosts to film actors to comedians, including those whose shows are affected

by the strike. Many have walked the line with striking writers.

The strike first impacted talk shows, which depend on writers for material and are not taped far in advance. Now streaming shows and cable and network programs have been affected. Soap operas could be next, and eventually theatrical film production will be halted if the powerful strike continues.

The Tony Awards were not going to be televised as scheduled June 11, but the WGA agreed not to picket the show only after its producers agreed not to use any scripted content.

With the technology of how programs are created shifting towards streaming, “minirooms” and other cost-cutting production methods, WGA members have watched their incomes fall. This has driven them to strike to force the entertainment industrial complex to improve pay formulas.

Workers understand the need to back the strike. To quote the old union slogan, “An injury to one is an injury to all.” □

Rally for striking Writers Guild members, May 23, New York City.



WW PHOTO

when we fight we win!

On the picket line

By Marie Kelly

UAW strike in Ohio

Workers at the Clarios auto battery manufacturing plant in Holland, Ohio, went on strike May 10. An overwhelming 98% of the 500 workers at the plant, members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 12, voted for the strike since negotiations with the company have been unproductive.

The company wants workers to agree to a contract that Local 12 President Bruce Baumhower says would cost workers money. Union leaders say the workers will not make concessions, while churning out around 150,000 car batteries per week. Clarios supplies Ford and General Motors and is responsible for one-third of the car batteries in vehicles on the road.

Clarios is owned by Brookfield Business Partners, an affiliate of Toronto-based Brookfield Asset Management, a company with more than \$600 billion in assets. The Clarios workers are supported on the picket line by workers from 41 other companies represented by Local 12.

On May 22 a tentative agreement between the union

and Clarios was announced. Meanwhile as of May 17, the UAW has another parts plant on strike: Constellium Automotive in Michigan.

Georgia workers join Steelworkers union

The 1,400 workers at Blue Bird electric bus manufacturing plant in Fort Valley, Georgia are now unionized. In May they voted to join United Steelworkers (USW) Local 697 after a hard-fought, three-year organizing campaign. The workers and the union battled company union-busting tactics, including worker intimidation and misinformation about the union.

Blue Bird received \$40 million in rebates, as part of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean School Bus program, and are expected to get additional funds through 2026. Yet workers are underpaid and have cited multiple safety issues at the plant.

“It’s been a long time since a manufacturing site with



Blue Bird workers celebrate win, May 2023.

1,400 people has been organized, let alone organized in the South, let alone organized with predominantly African American workers and let alone in the auto industry,” said Maria Somma, organizing director with the USW. “It’s not a single important win. It’s an example of what’s possible.” (Jacobin.com, May 2023)

Medical residents in Pennsylvania unionize

Early in May, medical residents and fellows at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center voted 892-110 to organize with the Committee of Interns and Residents. CIR, affiliated with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), is the largest union of its kind in the U.S., representing over 27,000 medical interns, residents and fellows. The Penn doctors are the first group of housestaff to unionize in Pennsylvania.

The organizing effort began during the COVID-19 pandemic, when residents were on the front lines risking their lives while Penn Med cut the residents’ cost-of-living wage increase and began union-busting tactics to thwart the organizing effort.

Dr. Chantal Tapé, a third-year resident in family medicine, spoke on why medical housestaff need the power of collective bargaining at institutions like Penn. “We chose to train at an academically rigorous and highly respected institution, but we expect more from Penn than just a fancy name,” she said. “We are human beings first and foremost. If we’re sacrificing our physical and mental health, our financial stability and our personal relationships in order to provide care, that means our health care system is failing.” (Phillyvoice, May 9) □

Protests demand justice for trans organizer Banko Brown

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

Despite the fact that recently released video footage clearly shows a Walgreens security guard tackling, beating up and then killing unarmed Black trans activist Banko Brown April 27, on busy Market Street in San Francisco, no charges will be filed. In fact, the San Francisco District Attorney’s office released a statement after viewing the video calling the shooting “reasonable.” (Guardian, May 15)

Since Brown’s murder by the security guard, demonstrations have been organized in San Francisco and around California. Brown, 24 years old, was well-known in the local trans movement as an organizer who worked hard to support Black trans youth, despite his own recent struggles with homelessness.

Angered by Brown’s murder and by San Francisco DA Brooke Jenkins’ early release of the Walgreens security guard from custody (three days after the shooting), along with her announcement that

no charges would be filed, community activists attended a San Francisco Board of Supervisors meeting. They spoke out and demanded accountability for Banko’s murder.

DA Jenkins, who recently replaced former DA Chesa Boudin, ran on a law-and-order platform promising swift and severe punishment of shoplifters and others engaging in property crimes. Boudin was targeted in a right-wing recall, due to his unprecedented championing of the poor and his refusal to join the gentrifiers in filling the jails with poor people.

The Young Women’s Freedom Center has been consistently outspoken in its demand for justice for Brown. On Twitter, in a recorded statement, Co-Executive Director Julia Arroyo said, “You can’t take a Black life here. You can’t take a Black trans life here. Now you have to answer to us!” She went on to say, “We won’t stop until we hold Walgreens and the City of San Francisco accountable.”

Brown was unarmed. The recently released video showed him being

brutalized by Walgreens security guard Michael Earl-Wayne Anthony, thrown into the air and then, as Brown was backing away, shot by Anthony in the chest.

The fact that an unarmed Black trans person can be killed for an alleged crime of survival like shoplifting, and the guard who murdered him can go free is testimony to the incredible racist gentrification that has swept San Francisco. The city has declared war not on homelessness but on the homeless, the unhoused and the poor.

This ongoing racist war has clearly targeted the trans community, not only with the unprecedented rise of anti-trans legislation across the country, but with the recent brutal attacks and murders of trans people, including at least 11 this year so far.

Here in San Francisco, the home of the 1966 Compton Cafeteria Riots, a rebellion led by Black and Brown transgender youth and drag queens that set the stage for the Stonewall Rebellion in New York City in 1969, the LGBTQIA2S+



PHOTO: YOUNG WOMEN'S FREEDOM CENTER

Banko Brown, right, with Julia Arroyo, Co-Executive Director of the Young Women’s Freedom Center.

community and its allies will continue to expose and fightback against this upsurge of violence against the Black and Brown trans community. □

Texas Rally Demands ‘Free Rodney Reed now!’

By Gloria Rubac
Austin, Texas

Rodrick Reed told a crowd demonstrating for his brother Rodney Reed’s freedom May 19: “Twenty-five years is a long time to have your family ripped apart and unjustly so. Twenty-five years is a long time for anybody to be down there on death row for a crime they did not commit. All we’ve ever asked for out of the gate is a fair trial.”

A large crowd of Reed’s family and his supporters from around Texas and around the U.S. was listening outside the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in Austin. They had come to remember the 25-year anniversary of Rodney Reed’s death sentence and to shine a light on the racist injustice that led to it.

Rodney Reed, who is African American, was tried and sentenced to death on May 18, 1998, for the murder of Stacy Stites, who was white. The rally held May 19 culminated two days of actions for the condemned prisoner. A social media blitz May 18 preceded the rally.

The rally was opened by Angie Agapetus, an activist with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement in Houston, who commemorated the execution of her dear friend Quinton Jones on this day two years earlier.

Delia Perez-Meyer spoke passionately about her brother, Louis Castro Perez, who is on Texas death row and whose case points to his innocence. In fact, the Innocence Project in New York is working on both her brother’s case as well as Reed’s.

Rodney Reed has been trying for years

to get evidence from the crime scene tested for DNA, including the belt used to strangle Stites. Texas courts and the Fifth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals in New Orleans have only ruled that Reed waited too long to ask for the testing.

Finally, in April, the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that Reed’s request was within the legal time frame and sent the request for testing back to the Fifth Court of Appeals.

Reed’s guilt ‘impossible’

In an unusual development, former police detective Kevin Gannon, a 20-year veteran with the New York City Police Department, became an independent investigator for Reed and is now an advocate for his freedom. Gannon, who now lives in Seattle, visited Bastrop, Texas, where the Reed family lives. He carried out his own independent investigation of Stites’ murder.

Gannon stated his conviction that Reed is innocent: “It is physically impossible that Reed could have committed this murder. Other experts, forensic pathologists, agree with me. It is just not possible with the facts we now know about the timeline of her killing.”

Student Minister Robert Muhammad with the Nation of Islam in Austin, and a longtime supporter of Reed, presented an emotional talk about the injustice the whole Reed family has suffered.

Herman Lindsey, the executive director of Witness To Innocence, was a keynote speaker at the rally. Lindsey, who spent several years on death row in Florida before being exonerated, said, “I just want

to say to those who have the control to fix this for Rodney, they need to do it. It’s okay to fix a wrong. The wrong done to Rodney must be fixed.”

State Rep. Jolanda Jones of Houston rushed out of the Texas capitol across a grassy area to join the rally to be with the Reed family.

Jones comes from a family of activists and has a long history of fighting oppression. As a radical lawyer, a Black woman and a lesbian, she knows firsthand how the injustice system works against people of color and poor people.

“I came out of the legislative session for a minute,” said Jones, “because I’m opposed to the death penalty and know that Rodney Reed was framed up because he was dating a white woman. Justice delayed is not justice, because you can never get back the time a person is wrongfully locked up. I stand with the Reed family and all of you here today. Just never give up. Keep the pressure on. Texas is hardheaded, and justice is hard to find.”

‘I will not be quiet’

Sandra Reed, Rodney’s mother, has supported her son’s struggle since the moment he was sentenced to die. She has spoken for him around the country, from her small town of Bastrop to



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Herman Lindsay, Executive Director of Witness To Innocence and a survivor of Florida death row, with family members Sandra, Rodrick and R.J. Reed.



Chicago, Houston, and Los Angeles. And she has spoken every year at Texas’ annual death penalty march and rally.

Sandra Reed has gained the support of activist and author Sister Helen Prejean, one of the best-known death penalty abolitionists.

“No matter how old my kids are, they are still my babies. And our family has not been whole since they did this

to Rodney, I will not be quiet. Never will I shut my mouth. I will fight until the day that Rodney walks out of the prison a free man,” Sandra Reed told Workers World.

A cousin to the Reed brothers, Jonathan Piper, ended the event by doing a rap song he wrote for Rodney in 2015 and has performed at numerous rallies.

This 25th anniversary was filled with love, anger, hope, passion, disgust, commitment and frustration. But as Sandra Reed told supporters afterward: “I love all of you so much and am so grateful that our family is not alone. We did it today. We had a great rally. We had lots and lots of media there. I can’t wait to tell Rodney how good it went. He will be thankful and happy. We are going to win. I know it in my heart.”

Gloria Rubac is a founding member of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.

Health care is a right – for those behind bars too!

By Bryant Arroyo and Joe Piette

“This is how they treat us!” exclaimed Bryant Arroyo, incarcerated at State Correctional Institute Coal Township in Pennsylvania. He was expressing frustration with his three-year attempt to get effective treatment for severe psoriasis in his ankles.

On April 7, Arroyo had a scheduled mandatory medical call at 1 p.m. He had a pre-scheduled Law Library session in the morning; but when back to his cell, he was told he had missed his medical appointment. The Medical Department had rescheduled to an earlier time, but no one informed him. Guards could have reached Arroyo at the Law Library but didn’t. As a result, his appointment was rescheduled, and treatment was delayed once again.

Earlier in May, Arroyo’s cellmate Alex Machado, suffering from chronic asthma and out of inhaler medicine, requested a sick-call appointment but got no response. He suffered severe coughing for several days, until his mother’s repeated calls to the prison resulted in his being given the lifesaving medicine.

Just how difficult it is for incarcerated people at SCI Coal Township to get adequate health care is similar to how almost 2 million people behind U.S. prison walls are treated, according to a report entitled: “Health Care Behind Bars: Missed Appointments, No Standards and High Costs,” by Vera, a New York-based, anti-mass incarceration organization. (tinyurl.com/4ccjzbv7)



Arroyo during a video call Feb. 2021

In 2022 the New York Supreme Court found the New York City Department of Correction in contempt for failing to comply with an earlier order to provide people in its custody with access to basic medical services. Corrections officers often report incarcerated people as declining treatment that they were in fact never offered.

The lawsuit filed by New York City public defenders and pro bono associates listed more than 1,000 instances in December 2021 alone, in which someone incarcerated at a Rikers Island jail did not make a scheduled medical appointment, because a corrections officer had failed to escort them. (tinyurl.com/3h5rrdvh)

Routine care denied

The New York court’s ruling highlights the denial of basic care, which plagues jails and prisons across the U.S. In state prison facilities, according to the American Journal of Public Health, more than 20% of incarcerated people with a persistent medical condition go without care. (tinyurl.com/8y3zm444)

People from impoverished backgrounds and people of color, who make up the majority of incarcerated populations, are more likely to suffer from chronic health conditions like heart disease, asthma and diabetes, making inadequate care in prison more likely to result in premature death. (tinyurl.com/5a69xddn)

Wheelchair cruelly removed

On April 19 Arroyo’s wheelchair was cruelly taken away by RN Linda Jones and RN Heather Britt, and he was uprooted under

threat of being placed in the Restricted Housing Unit (solitary confinement) if he didn’t voluntarily get out of the wheelchair. Arroyo was not given a crutch, a walker or even a cane to help counterbalance the pressure of his weight on his severely inflamed sore ankles. He had to limp back to his cell with the help of another incarcerated person, Joseph Cruz.

Six months earlier, Arroyo had many biopsies performed, resulting in several stitches on both ankles. Despite complaints about pain, he has not received any oral medication since then.

On April 25 Arroyo was seen by Physician Assistant Davis, who insisted on prescribing the same ineffective generic topical cream prescribed last year. Arroyo refused the ineffective, costly ointment.

In Pennsylvania prisons, each visit to the medical unit or for a virtual telehealth call costs \$5. Each prescription costs an additional \$5. Incarcerated workers in Pennsylvania prisons only earn 23-to-50 cents per hour, forcing them to consider costs before seeking treatment or a prescription. (tinyurl.com/3yaphrp8)

Arroyo was seen by Dr. John Hochberg on April 26, when he noticed his wheelchair was still folded and parked in the same medical unit. In response to Arroyo’s complaint about losing his wheelchair, Hochberg stated: “This is what you get when you publish articles on health care.” He refused Arroyo’s right to a walking aid; Arroyo limped away in pain. (Hochberg was referring to the Workers World article “Health care in prisons is a crime,” workers.org/2022/12/68201/.)

On May 15, Arroyo was given a virtual visit by dermatologist Stephen Schleicher, who exclaimed: “Whoa, this is way too

long!” when told how long Arroyo has been waiting for follow up since the biopsy. Schleicher prescribed a new topical cream and scheduled an appointment for an injection May 18.

Incarcerated workers have right to Medicaid

The National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) sets standards and offers accreditation to jails and prisons for health care services. (tinyurl.com/yxy7832e) Participation is optional, and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections isn’t listed as a participant. In fact, just 17% of prison facilities (500 of 3,000) in the U.S. are accredited. The NCCHC opposes co-pays for health care for incarcerated people. (tinyurl.com/yvanvbvw)

Medicaid provides health coverage for low-income people who qualify based on income, disability status and other factors. Most incarcerated people would be eligible for Medicaid, since people in prisons and jails are among the poorest populations and have high rates of disabilities. (tinyurl.com/2wdntmhy)

Yet, Medicaid rules deny those health care rights to the incarcerated. Eliminating those restrictions would give incarcerated people more access to health protection, as stipulated in the landmark Supreme Court case Estelle v. Gamble, 1976. The ruling established that failure to provide adequate medical care to incarcerated people as a result of deliberate indifference to serious medical needs violates the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment.

Health care is a right, including for those behind bars! □

Overrepresented in prisons: LGBTQ2S+ people

By Mirinda Crissman

This article was originally published 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 (with an arrest rate of 3,620 per 100,000) were 2.25 times as likely to be arrested than straight individuals (with an arrest rate of 1,610 per 100,000). This disparity is driven by lesbian and bisexual women, who are 4 times as likely to be arrested than straight women (with an arrest rate of 3,860 per 100,000 compared to 860 per 100,000).

Meanwhile, gay and bisexual men are 1.35 times as likely to be arrested than straight men (with a rate of 3,210 arrested per 100,000 compared to 2,380 per 100,000).” (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 overlap with queer identity or not — 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 demonstrates 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 face after fleeing abuse and lack of acceptance

at home. In order to survive, many are pushed toward drug sales, theft and sex work — which dramatically increase 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.

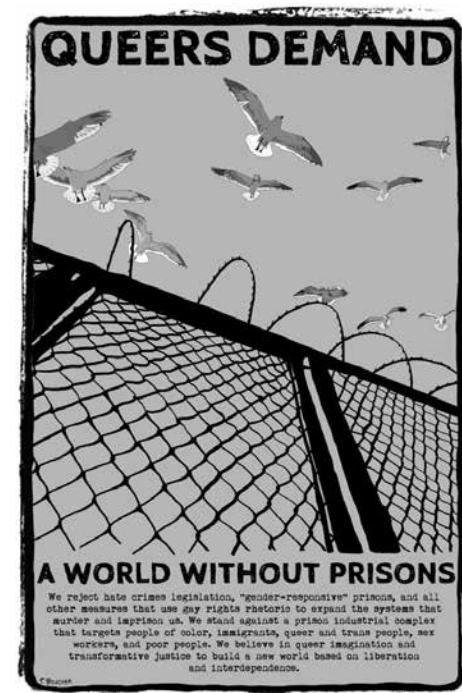
Shared struggles, abolition, liberation

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



ART BY TYRONE BOUCHER

meeting human needs can and must be built in the wake of the aftermath 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. □

Haiti, hunger and U.S. prison imperialism

By James Patrick Jordan

Note: This article, first published by Black Agenda Report, has been edited for this print issue of Workers World. Read in full at tinyurl.com/yck3k98y.

Three prisoners in the U.S.-built prison in Petit-Goâve, Haiti, starved to death between Aug. 23 and Sept. 27, 2022. The website Haiti Libre reports: “... one of the deceased prisoners was from Léogâne imprisoned for having stolen an electric wire, and ... [another] from the 5th communal section of Petit-Goâve was serving a prison sentence for having stolen a rooster.”

The vast majority of those imprisoned at Petit-Goâve and throughout the Haitian prison system have not yet been tried or convicted of a crime. In fact, of a prison population of 11,580 persons as of May 2021, only 2,071 had been sentenced. Across Haiti, there were an estimated 80 to 100 prisoners who died of malnutrition and lack of medical care nationwide last year.

The United States has funded the construction of four prisons in Haiti since 2013. However, given its dominant influence over and funding of the Haitian National Police and its prison system, the U.S. bears responsibility for the deplorable conditions that characterize all of

Haitian jails today.

Besides Petit-Goâve, the U.S.-built prisons include Port Liberté, for a cost of as much as \$8 million; Hinche, at \$1.34 million; and Cabaret, which, together with Petit Goâve, cost between \$5 million and \$10 million. With 83% of the incarcerated awaiting trials that rarely come and people lost in overcrowded cells for years, even the most minor offense can be a de facto death sentence.



PHOTO: JACOB KUSHNER

U.S. deportees in Haitian prisons

It comes as no surprise that Haiti’s jails are connected to U.S. prison imperialism, the spread of the U.S. mass incarceration model across the Global South. The funding for U.S. involvement in foreign prison systems is mainly funneled through the U.S. State Department Bureau of International Narcotics Law Enforcement (INL), [which] has programs that provide direct input and oversight in the police and national prison systems, including embedding INL personnel in some cases.

The INL is the main funding source, even when the U.S. is involved in prisons in places like Saudi Arabia, which the State Department claims has no major role in narco-trafficking.

Though the patterns of abuse we see are all too typical, the levels at which they occur in Haiti are shocking. In Haiti, as in other countries, jail construction is justified on humanitarian concerns and the alleviation of overcrowding. Yet time after time, we see that the construction of more prisons just leads to more overcrowding, worsened conditions and a spike in politically motivated arrests.

Modern prison imperialism began in 2000 with an agreement between the U.S. and Colombian governments to restructure their entire system on a U.S. model. In the aftermath, political imprisonment

reached the highest levels in the Americas, and overcrowding surged, rather than being alleviated. Throughout the system, the denial of access to potable water, sufficient and decent quality food and basic health care was endemic.

Nevertheless, misery in jails can be lucrative for some. Somebody has to build those jails — and those somebodies are rarely if ever actual Haitian companies or workers. Among those who profit off U.S. jail construction in Haiti is the firm Hollingsworth Pack, with its headquarters in Williamsburg, Virginia, and offices in Austin and San Antonio, Texas, and Copenhagen, Denmark. The corporation designed three of the four prisons built in Haiti since 2013, as well as three police stations and one police academy.

James Patrick Jordan lives in Tucson, Arizona, and works for the Alliance for Global Justice. Along with Colombia’s Fundación Lazos de Dignidad (Links of Dignity Foundation), he has co-coordinated efforts to inform about and resist Prison Imperialism, the international spread of the U.S. mass incarceration model. AFGJ and FLD are compiling an anthology on the subject, which will be available in early 2024.

Cuba is a beacon!

By Monica Moorehead

The edited remarks were given on a May 11 webinar, “U.S. Women need what Cuban Women have: Socialism,” organized by the Women and Gender Oppressed Caucus of Workers World Party.

Comrades and friends, when it comes to living in the capitalist U.S., every issue is a women’s and gender-oppressed issue because every issue impacts the working class here and around the world. And I will mention some of these issues which should be guaranteed rights but unfortunately remain ongoing struggles:

Everyone should have the right to healthy food; jobs, not jails and union busting; free quality education; housing, not gentrification; a clean environment; full legalization for migrants, not deportation; an end to white supremacy including police violence and extralegal terrorism; an end to all forms of misogyny; no imperialist war and occupation; and full rights for people with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people.

And then there is the right to health

care, especially free access to abortion for those who can become pregnant. The U.S. Supreme Court did the bidding of the reactionary ruling class, along with the capitalist state — that is the judicial, legislative and executive arms of the government — when it abolished Roe v. Wade last June. This ruling gave the states the right to severely curtail this health care treatment, vital for reproductive justice.

While this devastating defeat has harmed and endangered the lives of millions here, since 1966 Cuban women have had free legal abortion performed by doctors in hospitals with only the pregnant person’s consent. Cuba has been a beacon in Central and South America and the Caribbean for abortion seekers for decades. But a movement is growing here, shown by recent pro-abortion access referendums in several states and more.

Our excellent panelists will explain in their own words why Cuba inspires us here to struggle for socialism — a system that puts human needs before profits. The Cuban people do not face the same obstacles we face here, because of the Revolution they achieved in 1959. Cuban women have



been in the vanguard of this ongoing socialist process. And this process would be more advanced if it wasn’t for the violation of their sovereignty by U.S. imperialism through the criminal blockade.

Next January will mark the centennial of the death of the great leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, Vladimir Lenin, who was a champion of women’s rights. The Soviet Family Code of 1918 gave women equal status to men, granted children born outside of marriage the same legal rights as those born to married parents, secularized marriage and allowed a couple to take either spouse’s last name once married.

Divorce became easily obtainable,

abortion was legalized in 1920 and communal facilities for child care and domestic tasks were introduced with the aim of relieving women of household chores. Same-gender sexual relations were decriminalized under this code during the early years of this historic Revolution.

As revolutionaries in the belly of the beast, we have a lot to fight for here, along with workers and oppressed peoples globally from Haiti to Palestine to other imperial centers like France fighting for a world free from capitalist exploitation and oppression. And women and gender-oppressed people will be in the forefront of these battles, united until victory. □

U.S. plagued by lack of affordable housing

By Betsey Piette

This talk was presented at the May 11 webinar: “U.S. Women need what Cuban Women have: Socialism” sponsored by Workers World Party’s Women and Gender Oppressed Caucus.

I want to dedicate my remarks on housing tonight to Jordan Neely, the Black houseless subway entertainer murdered May 1 on a New York City subway by a white vigilante. Neely’s death drives home the trauma of being mentally disabled and without shelter that all too many people in the U.S. suffer, especially if they are Black.

My remarks tonight will not be discussing housing in Cuba. It’s almost impossible to find unbiased information on housing in Cuba in U.S. media.

Here is a link to an article by a Portland comrade, Danny O’Brien, who visited Cuba and who writes on housing and the question of houseless people there: workers.org/2023/01/68739/.

However, when we look at housing in the U.S., it is easier to understand why the media here doesn’t want us to know how Cuba handles housing.

The lack of affordable housing in the U.S. and most capitalist countries has only intensified with the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the U.S., rents increased by around

25% since early 2020. Median rents were already over \$2,000 per month by July 2020, when it was estimated that nearly 40 million people in the U.S. could not afford their current living situation. If they were housed at all, most spent nearly half of their income on housing. Many were households headed by single women.

Federal programs for rental assistance ended today [May 11], with nothing set up to prevent widespread evictions.

Housing activists estimate that 7.2 million new affordable housing units are needed. Yet the 2020 Census found that one in 10 existing homes are vacant. The federal government alone owns an estimated 45,000 underutilized buildings. The problem is a shortage of homes that are both livable and with rents that working and poor people can afford.

UC Townhomes just one example of enormous housing crisis

For decades, 400 low-income residents of the University City Townhomes in Philadelphia enjoyed the security of community in apartments where rent was subsidized through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), set at 30% of one’s income or less. All that changed in October 2021, when the billionaire property owner decided to sell the land to developers for \$100 million.

In January 2022, Mayor Jim Kenney signed a Philadelphia City Council bill requiring any new residential building of 20 units or more to set aside 20% of those units for affordable housing, meaning rent can be no more than 60% of income. Yet even if some affordable units are included in any construction at the Townhomes site, this definition of affordability excludes the current residents who are demanding their right to return.

UC Townhomes residents are not alone. There is a looming eviction crisis developing countrywide, which reflects the failure of this capitalist government to take steps necessary to provide adequate affordable housing for millions in need.

In 2018, before COVID-19, only 3.6 million eviction cases were filed in the entire year. The U.S. Census Bureau now estimates that 3.8 million tenants could be evicted every two months. Meanwhile, wait lists for affordable housing units, especially for families or seniors, stretch years into the future.

The battle waged by Townhomes residents since late 2021, led primarily by Black women,

has launched a citywide fight-back for affordable housing which includes tenant activist groups and communities struggling against gentrification, like the Save Chinatown coalition. Students at the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University have turned out in significant numbers to support the low-income tenants, who have been impacted by decades of the two universities’ gentrification of historic Black and Brown neighborhoods surrounding the campuses.

Their heroic fight-back brought these divergent communities together and has raised awareness that there is no solution under the profit-driven housing market under capitalism. In supporting these struggles, our task is to raise awareness that socialism does offer a solution and is worth fighting for. □



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

UC Townhomes residents and supporters march for affordable housing, April 2022.

ALU’s Chris Smalls:

‘Worker solidarity doesn’t stop at the border’



PHOTO: @PRESIDENCIACUBA

Amazon Labor Union President Chris Smalls greets Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel in Havana on May 1, 2023.

By Chris Smalls

On May Day, I joined a delegation of organizers on a trip to Cuba to show solidarity with the Cuban people and call out the injustice that is an economic blockade designed to harm workers and the people on the island.

Let’s make one thing very clear: The blockade isn’t designed to hurt the political leaders in Cuba or whatever nonsense people say to defend a Cold War-era policy. The blockade is designed to hurt the people — full stop.

Our group had to fill our suitcases with medical supplies like syringes and antibiotics, because hospitals literally cannot access even basic lifesaving instruments. Just imagine losing a friend or a family member, just because U.S. politicians are still so stuck in the past. They are willing to let folks die.

Enough. Show solidarity with the workers of Cuba and all of the people who have suffered for literally no reason and join us in demanding an end to the blockade.

Nearly every country in the United Nations has called out the United States for its brutal economic sanctions on Cuba, all because they want to propagate the lies spread by massive corporations about the island. Massive companies are actually threatened by even just a small society that dares to exist without their profiteering.

Throughout its history, Cuba has been a bastion of workers’ rights. And that’s exactly why the rich and powerful are so dedicated to keeping the people

there down.

But worker solidarity doesn’t stop at the border — or any border. After decades of completely avoidable economic struggle, it’s time for the United States to listen to the rest of the world and end this pointless blockade. Sign your name to show your solidarity.

Chris Smalls is the president of the Amazon Labor Union. Sign the ALU’s petition to end the U.S. blockade of Cuba at: wwp.pub/alucuba.

Cuba’s ‘Law of Love’

By Mairead Skehan Gillis

These remarks were given at a webinar entitled, “U.S. Women need what Cuban Women have: Socialism,” on May 11, organized by the Women and Gender Oppressed Caucus of Workers World Party.

Thank you all for coming out tonight to talk about revolution! I had the amazing experience of visiting Cuba in January with some of my comrades. In Santiago de Cuba, we met with organizers who played key roles in bringing the entire island together to take part in the process of implementing this most recent layer of inclusion for all into Cuban society, the second Family Code.

So what is the Family Code? Also referred to as the “Law of Love” (“el ley de amor”), it ensures that all Cubans have the right to start and be part of a family. It’s the most progressive and revolutionary law in the world, because of how impactful it really is.

This Family Code, which was passed by referendum Sept. 25, 2022, updates the Cuban Constitution, redefining family simply as people who have love for each other, and guarantees equality, support and legal protection against discrimination for all types of family structures.

These family structures include people from the LGBTQIA+ community, women

and single parents, people of all races, people with disabilities or mental illness, unpaid youth, elders, those interested in adopting or having a child through non-commercial surrogacy, victims of interpersonal violence and caregivers. The law protects people who in the United States are most oppressed by the ruling class.

The Family Code increases support for institutions that offer services to families, so that the best available resources are easily accessible to anyone who needs them. The Code ensures that service providers such as caregivers, home health workers, family mediators, social workers and educators have the dignity and respect that they deserve.

The Family Code not only protects the most vulnerable, it protects the course of Cuban socialism. The entire population was involved in writing the referendum, with 25 revisions made over the course of 3 1/2 years. After the referendum was introduced in 2019, Cuba carried out a nationwide process of education and outreach, centering the fact that this code was not creating anything new but rather defending the many identities that already shape the island.

Tens of thousands of discussions took place in every workplace, organization, neighborhood and community group, which ultimately led to the majority of the island voting in favor of this Law of Love.

This is public consultation. This is the



WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

LGBTQIA+ and CENESEX Speakers on Cuba’s Family Code, Dec. 29, 2022, Santiago de Cuba.

very essence of People’s Power. And this is what is possible when a system is truly for the people, by the people, designed to meet the direct needs voiced by the workers themselves and uplift the working class in an intersectional and all-inclusive way. This is what socialism looks like in action.

The Cubans urge workers from all countries, including the U.S., to demand and fight for and take the same, which will be a victory for the LGBTQIA+

movement, the women’s movement and the gender-expansive movement, as well as for the working class as a whole. What we really need, to achieve the same thing here, is a dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism, where the needs of working people are heard and prioritized instead of commodified.

And we will make this happen. Because when we fight, we win! ¡Venceremos! □

Haydée Santamaría, central figure in the Cuban Revolution

By Lyn Neeley

In the early hours of July 26, 1953, Fidel Castro and nearly 150 Cuban rebels traveled to the Moncada garrison to capture the barracks and seize the many weapons stored there. They planned for this to be the beginning of the Cuban Revolution to overthrow the Cuban dictator, President Fulgencio Batista.

Batista’s forces ambushed the rebels, however, killing half of them and imprisoning those who survived the attack, including Fidel and Haydée Santamaría.



Haydée Santamaría

IMAGE: TELESUR

Although the rebels failed to take hold of the Moncada, it was a turning point that changed the course of Cuban history. It laid the basis for the successful revolution six years later in 1959.

While in prison Fidel wrote his famous decisive thesis: “History will absolve me.” He wrote in lemon juice on napkins that were sneaked out of the prison. Haydée Santamaría wrote out and edited Fidel’s thesis and, with a group of revolutionaries, disseminated the thesis to the Cuban workers. This provided the inspiration that sparked the revolution.

Haydée Santamaría’s brother Abel Santamaría and fiancé Boris Luis Santa Coloma, also imprisoned after the Moncada, were both tortured and killed. Haydée heard her brother’s screams as the prison guards gouged out his eyes.

Batista wanted Haydée Santamaría to divulge Fidel’s whereabouts. To force her to speak, the torturers showed her her brother’s eyes and Boris’ dismembered genitalia. This grotesque act of intimidation, however, did not break her revolutionary strength. She defied her own

torturers and remained silent. “If you did that to them, and they didn’t talk, much less will I.”

Santamaría wrote to her mother from prison: “Abel will always be with us. Cuba exists, and Fidel is alive to build the Cuba that Abel wanted.” She said, “Abel is not dead, for to die for your country is to live.”

Launch of the guerrilla war

After being released from prison, Fidel went into exile in Mexico. In November 1956, Fidel and a group of rebels sailed to Cuba on the famous yacht Granma. Batista’s forces ambushed Fidel and his comrades, but those who survived, including Fidel, went to the Sierra Maestra hills to launch a guerrilla struggle.

Santamaría joined the guerrillas after her release from prison. She was in charge of obtaining weapons and resources and fought alongside other women heroes such as Celia Sánchez and Vilma Espín.

When later asked about the Moncada, Santamaría said: “I never considered the attack on the Moncada to be a failure. It was different from all the other battles leading to the revolution. It was the first. When Abel, my first son was born, the pain was enough to tear out one’s insides, yet there was also the strength to keep from crying or screaming or cursing. Why? Because a child was coming.

“That was the Moncada. We kept our serenity, because of what we knew was to come from it all. It is only because of the coming of something great that one can stand such grief.” (Moncada, Memories of the Attack that Launched the Cuban Revolution, L. Stuart, 1980)

When talking about the eve of the attack on the Moncada, Haydée recalled: “It was one of the most joyful nights. I could not know what would happen, but I knew that it would be something great. That alone is worth the pain of living. I wondered if I would ever again see the sunshine of my country. I knew that if I didn’t see it that too would be great. ...

“We tend to say: ‘That happened before,’ or ‘that happened after.’ And that before and that after are before Moncada and after Moncada. After Moncada we underwent a total transformation.”

Fidel’s high praise for her heroism

Santamaría was a central figure in the Cuban Revolution. Fidel, speaking about her said: “Never before has the name of Cuban womanhood been raised

to such a high place of honor and dignity.”

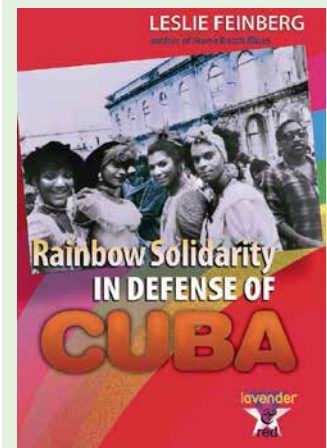
Santamaría’s political convictions were based on experience, not just theory or pure logic. She saw that it was not enough to change one politician for another, that it became necessary to change systems in order to change humans. “Changeover had to be total. Then it had to be ours, absolutely ours. ... For me, to be a Communist does not mean only joining a party; it means having an attitude towards life.”

Fidel said that “during the darkest moments of the revolution, Santamaría was a woman with overflowing inexhaustible energy and laughter and flashing anger and a sorrow that is like a wound, yet she preserved the clear eyes of girlhood.”

After the triumph of the revolution in 1959, Santamaría directed the Casa de las Americas, the cultural institution created by Cuba to make visible the work of Latin American intellectuals. She kept her revolutionary commitment intact until her death in 1980. □

Rainbow Solidarity in DEFENSE of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg, author of Stone Butch Blues



This book is an edited compilation of chapters 86 to 110 from the Lavender & Red series in Workers World newspaper that began June 3, 2004.

A free download is available online at workers.org/books

U.S. banks ‘extraordinarily’ sound – really?

By Steve Gillis

Jamie Dimon is Chief Executive Officer of JPMorgan Chase, the largest U.S. bank with over \$3.7 trillion in global assets and the world’s largest bank by market capitalization, i.e., stock value. Dimon made headlines May 1, with a pronouncement: “The American banking system is extraordinarily sound.”

Dimon had reportedly stayed up all night making JPMorgan Chase an even bigger bank, by buying the failing California-based First Republic Bank at a rock-bottom price. By April 24, First Republic became the second-largest bank failure in U.S. history, after uber wealthy depositors like Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg yanked over \$104 billion out of the bank in just a few weeks. (Technology conglomerate Meta owns Facebook and Instagram.)

These rapid withdrawals drove First Republic’s stock price down 97% to near worthless, resulting in its seizure by bank regulators.

This is Dimon’s world, where a run on a bank was driven by the richest of the rich panicking. This moved unimaginably more wealth into the monopoly vaults of JPMorgan Chase, which Dimon characterized as just another “extraordinarily sound” day at the office.

The first second-largest bank collapse ever

Just two months earlier on March 8, Silvergate Bank, whose depositors were invested heavily in cryptocurrency, went belly-up after a Bitcoin dive.

Then on March 10, the first “second-largest bank failure in U.S. history” occurred, when regulators and the

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) declared Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) insolvent following a classic bank run. This run featured the spectacle of wealthy depositors, business owners, foundation executives and real estate developers — for-profit and nonprofit alike — lining up on sidewalks on both U.S. coasts in abject fear of losing their deposits. (Workers World, March 13)

Immediately following SVB’s seizure, Signature Bank collapsed March 12, in the wake of last fall’s implosion of the world’s then-largest crypto-exchange, FTX. Last year FTX founder Sam Bankman-Fried was feted at the White House and on Capitol Hill. Today he’s a scapegoat, under federal arrest for financial crimes and facing a potential life sentence.

Yellen: ‘Banking system is safe and sound’

Following the First Republic takeover, the “extraordinarily sound” bank collapses continued like slow-motion dominoes, when Pacific Western Bancorp, another regional bank, announced May 11 that its stock price had dropped nearly 25% overnight, down 80% since January 2023. This occurred after tens of billions of dollars of deposits recently fled to bigger banks like JPMorgan Chase.

Other medium-sized regional banks, including Zions Bancorp and Western Alliance, are reportedly experiencing similar deposit outflows and stock-price tremors.

President Joe Biden’s Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, formerly chair of the Federal Reserve Bank, had issued her own soothing statement that the banking system is “safe,” “sound” and “resilient,” in a joint release by Treasury, Federal Reserve and the FDIC March 12. Yet she ordered the rules for deposit insurance changed to cover jumbo clients with accounts over \$250,000. Jumbo mortgages and deposits exceed Federal Housing Finance Agency limits and are currently not guaranteed.

Yellen strong-armed her banking allies into ponying up tens of billions of dollars to essentially bail out JPMorgan Chase, which had assumed much of the jumbo low-interest mortgage debt, and other liabilities and many jumbo deposits from this season’s failed banks in its frenzy of crises-driven monopoly acquisitions.

Despite their optimistic forecasts, Yellen and Dimon are aware that the U.S. finance system is quickly running out of bail-out money. Their recent utterances, mostly off newspaper front pages tucked in the business sections, have all included the words “panic,” “sadness,” warnings

of impending “catastrophe” and news of the creation of a “war room” at JPMorgan Chase’s Park Avenue headquarters. (Reuters, May 11)

Only workers produce value

A fundamental problem for the bankers, often hidden amid the reams of bourgeois journalism and arcane economic data about interest rates, rates of profit, debt default and Wall Street’s pseudo-theories, is that workers are the only class in the capitalist economy who produce value. Profits are based on workers’ unpaid labor — surplus value — and that includes the share of profits that goes to the bankers.

The fortunes of the capitalist class are for a time augmented by Wall Street gambling, speculation and criminal activity, ultimately resulting in multiple bubbles of unprecedented debt, in relentless but futile pursuit of ever higher wealth.

When capitalist bubbles burst, the working class pays the price. The Boston Globe noted May 11: “The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits last week rose to its highest level in a year-and-a-half, though jobs remain plentiful by historical standards, even as companies cut costs as the economy slows.”

Bankers are attempting to manipulate interest rates to lower inflation as a tactic to prevent workers from demanding and winning wage increases and improved benefits. By doing this, however, bankers create the conditions for their own internal balance sheet crises and for increased workers’ resistance.

In the U.S., young workers in rebellion at Starbucks and Amazon, Teamsters building for a potential strike at UPS, writers on strike in Hollywood and teachers at school districts and universities should know the leading role of JPMorgan Chase and other banking monopolies in fomenting austerity, war, mass layoffs and union busting.

What is “extraordinarily sound” is the growing working-class consciousness that these bank monopolies must be overthrown and totally replaced by a socialist system of production, owned and compassionately but forcefully controlled by the working class and oppressed peoples, organized, planned and run for the equal benefit of all.

For further background: “Top banker says, An economic ‘hurricane’ is coming — Workers of the world, time to get ready to fight!” by Larry Holmes, Workers World, June 20, 2022. □



A 1911 cartoon depicts a giant J.P. Morgan sucking in treasures from global peoples and cultures.

Nakba commemorations

‘Today South Africa, tomorrow Palestine’

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

Chief Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandela, grandson of the late South African President Nelson Mandela, was the keynote speaker at a Nakba (Great Catastrophe) commemoration in Cleveland on May 17. He is the tribal chief of the Mvezo Traditional Council and a member of South Africa’s Parliament, representing the African National Congress.

Mandela drew parallels between the successful movement to overturn apartheid in South Africa and the ongoing resistance to Zionist apartheid in occupied Palestine, along with struggles in the U.S. against the oppression of African-American and Indigenous peoples. He referenced significant dates in Cleveland’s resistance history: May Day 1919; the 1966 Hough rebellion; the 1968 Glenville rebellion; and the police repression of May 30, 2020, during a Black Lives Matter protest.

The crowd applauded Mandela throughout his talk, including when he declared: “Today South Africa, tomorrow Palestine!”

Other speakers represented organizations co-hosting the event: U.S. Palestinian Community Network, Palestine

Youth Movement, Council on American-Islamic Relations and the InterReligious Task Force on Central America and Colombia. The Cleveland program was part of Mandela’s national speaking tour, sponsored by USPCN, PYM and the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.

May 15 was the 75th anniversary of Nakba, the genocidal expulsion of hundreds of Palestinians from their homeland to establish the Zionist apartheid state of Israel. As speakers pointed out, Nakba was not a one-time event; it continues to this day. □



Cleveland Palestinian activists present an award to Chief Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandela, grandson of the late South African President Nelson Mandela, at a Nakba commemoration on May 17, 2023.

Portland Solidarity with Palestine

By Maddi Johnson
Portland, Oregon

U.S. imperialism was in the crosshairs of the Nakba event in Portland on May 21. Speeches and signs alike identified U.S. weapons and money as the critical factor that allows Israel to perpetrate genocide and apartheid on the Palestinian people.

Speakers, including those from organizers in Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights (SUPER), described the restrictive expectations that a white-supremacist culture puts on Arab women of color. They spoke on the unique experiences of the Palestinian diaspora, recited poetry about their occupied homes and sang songs of resistance.

BAYAN-USA spoke as well, identifying the unified struggle that Filipinos and Palestinians must fight for liberation. Their solidarity was matched by countless groups in attendance, from Jewish people who support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, to an organization dedicated to providing safe needles, to Marxist-Leninist parties. As a speaker from SUPER put it, we will only win if we know and help each other. Not just at these events, but every day. □



PHOTO: SARAH KOWALESKI
Portland, Oregon, May 21, 2023.

Wildfires threaten Indigenous First Nations lands

By Kisha James and Will Hodgkinson

This month, wildfires continue to devastate Indigenous First Nations lands in the western part of so-called Canada. At least 91 fires have broken out, 25 of which authorities have admitted are out of control as of May 20. Over 964,000 acres of land have burned thus far.

Smoke from the fires has spread as far as the U.S. mid-Atlantic. In total, over 29,000 people have been evacuated over the past two weeks. A record-breaking heat wave in Canada and the Pacific Northwest — the result of the ongoing climate disaster — is fueling this wildfire outbreak, which experts predict will only get worse as temperatures continue to climb.

Currently, the Little Red River Cree Nation and the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation are experiencing the greatest destruction, with dozens of homes reported destroyed. Fox Lake, the largest town in the Little Red River Nation, lost at least 44 buildings, and all 3,700 of its residents had to evacuate last week.

At the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation fires destroyed the power grid and forced a water-treatment plant to shut down. “This is going to take several weeks to sort out,” said Sheldon Sunshine, Chief of the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation. (CBC, May 9)

Wildfires have also spread to the K’at’odeeche First Nation, displacing hundreds more residents. Over the past two weeks, thousands of citizens of four First Nations have evacuated, and a dozen more First Nations and at least one Métis community remain at risk.

“It’s really been an emotional roller coaster,” said evacuee Gary Moostoos, a



Wildfire burning on the K’at’odeeche First Nation, 2023.

PHOTO: MATT ADAMS

citizen of the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, in an interview with Canada Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). “At the reserve we have our own areas that we live in; it’s like clusters of families. And within those clusters, we also have the environment around us ... especially the medicines and the berry bushes we grew up in — and those are all gone.” (tinyurl.com/hhr92j9c)

‘Devastating, life-altering situation’

First Nations and Métis leaders have described how the wildfires have disrupted the lives of their residents, many of whom have lost access to traditional and vital food sources, including moose and other game animals. “There’s one [resident], he’s lost everything, his trapping equipment and guns, his hunting supplies —really devastating, life-altering situation, absolutely,” said Dave Lamouche, President of the Alberta Métis Settlement Council.

In the East Prairie Métis Settlement, wildfires have destroyed at least 14 homes, and last week all 300 residents were forced to evacuate. Though many residents have returned, they remain under evacuation orders. The community has gone without power since May 5.

East Prairie Métis Settlement Council member Reva Jaycox fears the fires could come back. “We’re not out of the woods yet,” she said in a CBC interview. “We still have the potential of losing even more homes.” (CBC, May 11)

As of this writing, the wildfires have affected over 12 First Nations and at least three Métis communities, including the Little Red River Cree Nation, O’Chiese First Nation, Sunchild First Nation, Whitefish Lake First Nation #459, Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Heart Lake First Nation, Swan River First Nation, Driftpile Cree Nation, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation,

Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, Stoney Nakota First Nation, Beaver First Nation and the East Prairie Métis Settlement.

Global threat to planet’s biodiversity

Sparked by worsening climate-change conditions, such as drought and extreme heat, wildfires have proliferated around the globe, threatening Indigenous nations, which preserve over 80% of the planet’s biodiversity. A 2021 Canada Journal of Forest Research study found that on-reserve First Nation citizens are at disproportionate risk of wildfires compared to Canada’s settler population. (tinyurl.com/mua6x662)

Despite this, the settler-colonial regimes of Canada and the U.S. — as well as those of Australia, Israel and New Zealand — are worsening the climate crisis by imposing pipelines, fracking and strip-mining projects that devastate Indigenous lands and poison water supplies.

Alberta, the Canadian province most affected by the wildfires, is also one of the Canadian settler state’s largest fossil fuel-producing regions, releasing over 250 million tons of carbon dioxide every year. (tinyurl.com/2p82pfnm) Much of the attention and response to the wildfires, therefore, has focused on the “threat” they pose to oil extraction, revealing the priorities of capital, which depends on the exploitation of Indigenous resources at the expense of Indigenous lives.

Any lasting solution to the ongoing environmental disaster caused by capitalism requires complete solidarity with Indigenous nations in their struggle to dismantle settler colonialism and reclaim their stolen lands. □

Spanish state accuses web magazine of ‘glorification of terrorism’

The following is a May 20 statement by the Editorial Collective of La Haine, a web news magazine that publishes anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and anti-capitalist articles, calling for solidarity to stop a new attempt by the Spanish authorities to target the collective for its publication of news and opinion. See Lahaine.org. Translation: John Catalinotto

A colleague of our media has been called to appear May 23, 2023, before Judge Ismael Moreno of the Audiencia Nacional [National Court], under investigation for “glorification of terrorism.” The case involves a video that was published on the social network Twitter of our media about the reception that dozens of neighbors gave to the former Basque political prisoner Iñaki Etxeberria, in the Casco Viejo [old town] of Iruñea [aka Pamplona]

in December 2021.

The tweet in question is a video, in which you can see the moment of the arrival of the ex-prisoner to Casco Viejo and the applause of dozens of neighbors gathered there. The text that accompanies the tweet says, “Dozens of people give Ongi etorri [a welcome] in Alde Zaharra of Iruñea to Iñaki Etxeberria ‘Mortadelo,’ Basque political prisoner who was released after 25 years of imprisonment. #AmnistiaOsoa” [Amnestia Osoa means Amnesty for all in the Basque language].

It is clear that the tweet does not extol anything but is dedicated to reporting in an objective way about what happened that night in Alde Zaharra in Iruñea.

Once again, the state has set in motion its machinery to silence those voices that make it uncomfortable. Those are the same voices that reject the discourse that the capitalist state is trying to impose and

that are much less willing to submit to the state’s repressive tactics.

It is no surprise that the media dedicated to counterinformation is targeting us [at La Haine] because of the role we play in revealing the reality that they try to hide from us and for our refusal to systematically criminalize those forces that are unwilling to submit to the state’s dictates.

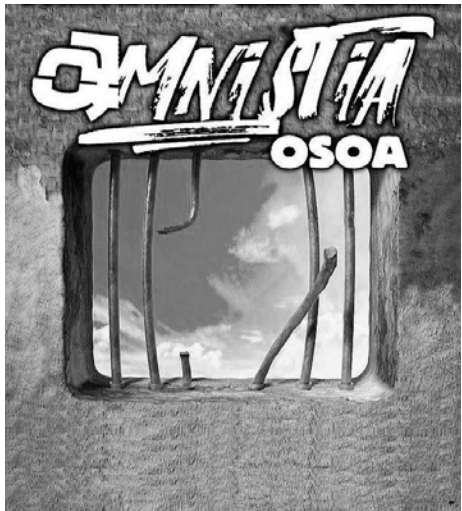
Thus the message of the Audiencia Nacional is clear: It will be considered information if it responds to its own interests; otherwise, if it does not and is still published by La Haine, it will be considered as a glorification of terrorism.

An attack on freedom of expression

We understand that this new judicial process against our media is a flagrant attack on freedom of expression and information. We also denounce the persecution by the judiciary and the Guardia Civil of an anti-fascist media like ours.

We demand the repeal of the crimes of opinion and specifically of articles 578 and 579 of the Penal Code, which regulate the so-called crimes of “glorification of terrorism,” a tool with which the state is equipped to persecute opinions and political dissidence. Of course, this attack on La Haine and freedom of information is just another piece in the attack on the movements in support of the political prisoners and any show of solidarity with them.

The only purpose of the proceedings undertaken by the Audiencia Nacional is to punish political ideas contrary to the



Amnesty for all (Basque political prisoners)

regime, to punish anti-fascist ideas, in short, to set in motion a trial that serves as an example and a warning to everyone to lower our ears and keep our heads down.

The Court of Public Order [that condemned political opponents of fascist Spain] decades ago became the Audiencia Nacional, but it continues to maintain the role conferred on it by [Gen. Francisco] Franco’s regime, being faithful to its legacy. That is why it is impossible to deny the political character and motivation hidden behind this new proceeding.

From La Haine we call for publicly denouncing this new attack on freedom of expression and information; we reaffirm this for our work in the streets, with social movements and by informing the people from an anti-fascist perspective.

— La Haine Editorial Collective

WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

THE PENTAGON'S ACHILLES HEEL

WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

SARA FLOUNDERS

by Sara Flounders

“By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”

– Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann,
President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;
Foreign Minister of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

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Then and now

Stonewall means FIGHT BACK!

June 28 will mark the 54th anniversary of the historic Stonewall Rebellion, sparked that day by a police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City’s Greenwich Village neighborhood. These raids were commonplace, as were arrests for violating anti-trans laws prohibiting “inappropriate clothing.” What made this raid different was that bar patrons and LGBTQ+ people in the neighborhood fought back, forcing police to retreat after the first night of the six days of protests and fights with the cops. Leading the resistance were drag queens, trans women and butch lesbians, mostly poor, working class, and Black and Brown. The movement for LGBTQ2S+ liberation did not begin with Stonewall. The gay and lesbian rights groups Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis were formed in the 1950s and picketed government buildings as early as 1964. The Compton Cafeteria Riot against anti-trans police harassment took place in 1966 in San Francisco, three years before Stonewall. Cooper Do-nuts, in Los Angeles, was the site of a protest in 1959 against police harassment; it became a rebellion after a protester was arrested.

But Stonewall was a major turning point in the LGBTQ2S+ liberation movement, spawning the formation of groups around the country, such as the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance. Sylvia Rivera and Stonewall participant Marsha P. Johnson formed STAR — Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries — in the Village. Beginning with the first anniversary of Stonewall and continuing to this day — now globally — Pride is celebrated in the month of June.

Solidarity: ‘Our first, most elementary and fundamental duty’

Workers World Party has supported this movement since its inception. To orient the entire party on the need for solidarity with the gay liberation movement — as it was known in the 1970s — WWP’s late Chairperson Sam Marcy wrote: “Our first, most elementary and fundamental duty on this question is to completely eliminate and abolish all forms of persecution and oppression of gay people. We must also fight against all ideological, political and social manifestations of gay oppression that may be reflected in our own ranks. “Ending oppression is really an

elementary democratic demand that a bourgeois democracy should be able to grant, along with all other democratic demands. But imperialist democracy tends to restrict the elementary rights of all people — not only gays, women, youth, Brown and Black. It is only the struggle that can wrest concessions.” (Sam Marcy, “From a tendency to a party”) One of the most famous photos from the movement’s early years depicts a banner signed by the Gay Caucus of Youth Against War and Fascism, with the slogan “Stonewall means fight back! Smash Gay Oppression!” The photo, which hangs today in the Stonewall Inn, is from the 1971 march on the second anniversary of the rebellion. YAWF was the youth group of WWP. That slogan — “Stonewall means fight back!” is as true today as it was over half a century ago. Trans youth are under fierce attack by forces that would like to see them annihilated. There are 19 state legislatures that have passed — and eight more are considering — bills blocking gender-affirming health care for youth under 18 years old. Some bills set the age for health care denial at 26, the age limit

for coverage by one’s parents’ insurance under the Affordable Care Act. These bills are like fuel to the fire of transphobic terror. Already this year at least 11 trans people have been murdered, most of them trans women of color. Untold numbers have experienced physical violence, verbal and emotional abuse, job discrimination, housing discrimination, forced “conversion therapy” and more. The vicious attacks on the trans community are occurring in tandem with racist police and vigilante terror, the undermining of abortion rights, union busting and the climate catastrophe — to name just a few ways that working-class and oppressed people are under siege. Single-issue politics — in which every group just focuses on its own issues — is a self-defeating strategy. The LGBTQ2S+ community has to unite with other impacted groups to push back the multipronged assault on nearly everyone’s basic rights. We can’t rely on Democratic Party politicians to stop the right wing. As Marcy wrote, “It is only the struggle that can wrest concessions.” Stonewall still means fight back! □

Trans, queer activists: Keep ‘Moms for Liberty’ out

Continued from page 1

Trump’s former Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, who advocated for abolishing the department she led. Donors to the summit included Publix heir Julie Fancelli, The Heritage Foundation and Heritage Action for America, and the Leadership Institute — which donated \$50,000, according to Politico. M4L’s “financial supporters include some of the most influential organizations, media operations and wealthy donors in the vast theater of the right-wing propaganda machine.” (LA Progressive, Oct. 8, 2022) M4L co-founder Bridget Ziegler is married to Christian Ziegler, vice chair of the Florida Republican Party, who told the Washington Post that he expected M4L to “become foot

soldiers” for DeSantis’s reelection campaign. “I have been trying for a dozen years to get 20- and 30-year-old females involved with the Republican Party,” he said, “and it was a heavy lift to get that demographic. ... But now Moms for Liberty has done it for me.” (Oct. 15, 2021) In 2022, Moms for Liberty was suspended from Twitter for calling gender dysphoria a “mental health disorder that is being normalized by predators across the U.S.A.” The hate group has expanded to other states with its second-largest membership in Pennsylvania. It expects to draw 650 people to the Philadelphia summit, with tickets priced between \$249 and \$499. At present, there are M4L chapters in nearly half of the state’s counties, although not in Philadelphia County. Book bans are part of the Republican, right-wing strategy

to play to or whip up their base and to target and increase hostility to various communities. The neofascist drive to ban, or ultimately burn, books did not arise in a vacuum. It is clearly an organized response to the spontaneous social movements and unrest following the police murder of George Floyd in 2020, in which many LGBTQ2S+ activists and people of color played leading roles. The answer to Moms for Liberty must include a unified, broad-based progressive social movement that picks up where the earlier protests left off. The society M4L wants to return to has already proven to be a failure and needs to be swept into the dustbin of history. Call 215-625-2900 and tell the Marriott to stop hosting hate.

Workers World hails LGBTQ2S+ Pride

For over half a century, Workers World newspaper has covered the global struggle to end all forms of discrimination, persecution and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and gender-nonconforming communities. WW has consistently backed up our activist coverage with analysis. WW published “The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal,” in 1976, reissued in 1993 as “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View,” with a new preface and afterword. WW managing editor and globally recognized transgender leader Leslie Feinberg’s “Lavender & Red” series ran from 2004-2008 in WW; 25 of those articles were published later in “Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba.” Read these books at workers.org/books. The newspaper has extensively covered resistance to the current storm of right-wing “Don’t Say Gay” and anti-trans, anti-youth laws sweeping the U.S. WW articles have upheld the struggle for reproductive justice and covered opposition to racist laws limiting the right to vote and the right to teach a people’s history of resistance to oppression. WW reporters on the ground — from Buffalo and Staten Island, New York, to Portland, Oregon — celebrated the tremendous groundswell of worker organizing that won historic union victories against Amazon and Starbucks and sparked further

organizing elsewhere. This historic upsurge was fueled by the leadership and solidarity of young, multinational, queer, gender-nonconforming workers. WW needs your support! If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program. 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 needed to fight against capitalist exploitation and for revolutionary change. 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 unionization drives, along with reports on anti-racist and other progressive movements. While WW’s staff is voluntary, the 12 printed issues each year and the website incur expenses. Although many online publications require 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, \$200 a year or more? Donating \$50 or more will entitle you to receive 12 print issues a year, an email link 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; include your name, address and email, and write “Supporter Program” on the memo line. **Send to Workers World at our new address: 121 W. 27th St., Suite 404, New York, NY 10001.** We are thankful for your support in building Workers World.

U.S. national security veterans counter Ukraine war drive

By John Catalinotto

On May 16 a full-page advertisement appeared in the New York Times. Under the headline “The U.S. should be a force for peace in the world,” 15 veterans of the U.S. security apparatus endorsed an analysis of the war in Ukraine that confronted head-on the tidal wave of lies from the Biden administration and the corporate media.

The Eisenhower Media Network placed the ad. The EMN is an organization of veterans of the U.S. military, police and/or foreign policy establishment, who once served the state apparatus. In the course of their engagement or following retirement, they found themselves disagreeing with many U.S. policies. They now especially oppose the U.S. role in the war in Ukraine — a war they describe as “an unmitigated disaster.” (eisenhowermedianetwork.org)

The statement warns that: “Future devastation could be exponentially greater, as nuclear power creeps ever closer toward open war.”

The document’s arguments counter the

corporate media’s relentless demonization of the Russian government (with the exception of some of the ultraright media like Fox, which focuses its warmongering against China). The ad’s arguments present an opportunity to strengthen antiwar and anti-imperialist positions within the population of NATO countries.

NATO expands to Russia’s borders

For example, the EMN describes how “the plans and actions to expand NATO to Russia’s borders served to provoke Russian fears.” It finds these fears legitimate and criticizes U.S. policymakers for pushing them aside.

The ad even shows two maps: one real, showing U.S. and NATO military bases surrounding Russia, and a hypothetical one of the U.S., showing what it would look like if there were as many Russian bases in Mexico and Canada. Dennis Fritz, Director of EMN, told Amy Goodman on Democracy Now! on May 17, that [the U.S. military command] “would go crazy!” if that map were real.

Fritz is a retired Command Chief

Master Sergeant in the United States Air Force, who while on active duty served as the principal senior adviser to four-star commanding officers at both the Pacific Air Forces and the Space Command.

Among the 15 initial signers of the statement are Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, U.S. Army (Ret.) and Chief of Staff to Gen. Colin Powell; Special Agent Coleen Rowley, FBI Intelligence (Ret.); Ann Wright, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.) and former U.S. diplomat.

The statement points out the pro-war role of the military-industrial complex: “So far, the U.S. has sent \$30 billion worth of military gear and weapons to Ukraine, with total aid to Ukraine exceeding \$100 billion. War, it’s been said, is a racket, one that is highly profitable for a select few.

“NATO expansion, in sum,” the statement continues, “is a key feature of a militarized U.S. foreign policy characterized by unilateralism, featuring regime change and preemptive wars. Failed wars, most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan, have produced slaughter and further confrontation, a harsh reality of America’s own making.



Protesters outside the White House, Washington, D.C., Jan. 27, 2022.

The Russia-Ukraine War has opened a new arena of confrontation and slaughter.”

The corporate media’s baiting of any antiwar statement as being pro-Vladimir Putin, who the same media reviles in multiple reports and opinions daily, has succeeded up to now in intimidating many who fear political isolation. The EMN statement has the virtue of reestablishing some truths, as told by people who have been inside the U.S. establishment and know how it works.

Anti-imperialists have the opportunity to use these truths to expose, weaken and destroy the framework of pro-war and anti-Russia propaganda and to strengthen the movement against war, so that it targets the real warmongers in the U.S. imperialist establishment and in NATO. □

Solidarity with Haiti on Haitian Flag Day

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

Haitian Flag Day, commemorated all over Haiti and internationally May 18, marks the day in 1803 when the then-enslaved Haitian people made a commitment to create the sovereign nation of Haiti, totally independent of France. The Haitian flag was created on that day in the buildup for the Haitian revolution of 1804, which abolished enslavement in Haiti and defeated French colonialism. This was 59 years before the U.S. Emancipation Proclamation.

More than two centuries later, the people of Haiti continue to fight against imperialist intervention by the U.S. and Canada.

The Haiti Action Committee called for local actions everywhere on Haitian Flag Day, to demand an end to U.S. and Core Group (Canada, most of Western Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand) support for the illegitimate government of Ariel Henry and an end to funding for the murderous Haitian police and army. The protests demanded an end to the ongoing nightmare Haitians are forced to endure, as they are shot dead in the streets, burned alive in their homes and their



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Pierre Labossiere of HAC and Monadel Herzallah of USPCN hold the flags of their countries on Haitian Flag Day, San Francisco, May 18, 2023.

resources are plundered by an unelected U.S.-supported cabal of murderers and thieves.

San Francisco: “Haiti must be free!”

A broad coalition of solidarity activists stood in the shadow of the Simón Bolívar statue in San Francisco’s Civic Center to demand “U.S. Hands Off Haiti — Haiti Must Be Free!”

Organized by the Haiti Action

Committee, the protest began with a spirited rally. Robert Roth, HAC activist, spoke about the history of the colonization of Haiti and the strong resistance movement of the Haitian people for freedom and self-determination. Roth called upon the anti-imperialist movement in the U.S. to place Haiti “at the center” of their consciousness and their support for world struggle against occupation.

Pierre Labossiere, a Haitian leader and co-founder of HAC, thanked everyone at the demonstration for continuing to support “the powerful people’s movement of Haiti. This movement doesn’t stop despite the massacres, despite the killings, the imposed starvation on our people and the destruction of the Haitian economy that’s ongoing.”

Labossiere stated that the violence in Haiti is being perpetrated by “death squads that the corporate media calls gangs” that are funded by the U.S. “These are not gangs; the term gang is being used to fool people abroad,” stated Labossiere. He went on to say that these death squads are “sponsored, equipped, activated and supported by the coup government, the occupational government of Haiti.”

Chanting “Black Lives Matter from Haiti to the Bay,” the anti-imperialist

demonstrators marched to United Nations Plaza, a very busy commercial area in downtown San Francisco. Speakers from other supporting organizations such as the San Francisco Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, the U.S. Palestinian Community Network, Black Alliance for Peace and Workers World Party delivered strong solidarity statements to the Haitian struggle.

Narissa Lee of the SFCHRP talked about the similarities of the struggles of the Filipino and the Haitian peoples against U.S. imperialism. “Those who are in power are stealing the resources of both of these countries,” Lee said.

Monadel Herzallah of the USPCN expressed the solidarity of the Palestinian people with the Haitian struggle against occupation and for the sovereignty of the Haitian nation.

Today’s protest was only one of many held in the U.S. and around the world, demanding an end to U.S. funding of the massacres and oppression of the Haitian people, as well as an end to the deportation of Haitians living in the U.S.

Joe Piette contributed to this article.

Post-Stonewall liberation movement: Power to the people!

Continued from page 1

National Liberation Fronts — the national resistance movements — in Algeria and Vietnam and demanded, in solidarity with the Black Liberation Movement, “Power to the People!”

The Los Angeles GLF statement of purpose, adopted in December 1969, read in part: “We are in total opposition to America’s white racism, to poverty, hunger, the systematic destruction of our patrimony; we oppose the rich getting richer, the poor getting poorer, and are in total opposition to wars of aggression and imperialism, whoever pursues them.

“We support the demands of Blacks, Chicanos, Youth, Senior Citizens, and oth-

ers demanding their full rights as human beings. We join in their struggle and shall actively seek coalition to pursue these goals.”

GLF women initiated their own caucus in the spring of 1970; some of these women later started the “Lavender Menace.” In November 1969 and May 1970, lesbians from the Lavender Menace demanded to be heard at the Congress to Unite Women, opening up the vocal and militant role of lesbian activism on the front lines of the women’s liberation movement.

East Coast GLF delegates and other militants at the November 1969 Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations—a more moderate coalition from the pre-Stonewall era—formed

a “radical caucus” that put forward resolutions that included calls to support the Black Panther Party, which was battling police raids, state frame-ups and assassinations; the Chicano grape pickers, who were trying to organize a United Farm Workers union in the field factories; and the Chicago Eight, political activists charged with conspiracy to start a riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago; and to take part in demonstrations against the Pentagon’s war in Vietnam.

From San Francisco to Ann Arbor [Michigan], antiwar lesbian and gay activists organized to stop the war against Vietnam. New York’s GLF organized its own contingent at the Oct. 15, 1969, antiwar march in Manhattan and

an even larger one at the November moratorium weekend in Washington, D.C., in which half a million people protested the Vietnam War.

Gay radicals from Berkeley marched with their banners at the November 1969 antiwar rally in San Francisco. And lesbians and gays organized a large and visible presence at the 1971 May Day antiwar protest in Washington.

People of color [LGBTQ2S+] forces provided leadership in many of these struggles and formed their own caucuses and organizations. The struggle against racism and national oppression was an integral, yet highly underreported, part of the multinational left-wing gay liberation movement. □



Protesta del 8 de mayo exigiendo justicia para Jordan Neely en Nueva York.

Fuerzas de clase detrás del asesinato de Jordan Neely

Debido a la lucha de masas, Daniel Penny, blanco y ex marine, cuyo estranamiento de 15 minutos de duración provocó la muerte de Jordan Neely, un afroamericano de 30 años sin hogar y enfermo mental, fue acusado de homicidio involuntario en segundo grado. Si es declarado culpable, y ese es un SI muy grande, podría enfrentar entre 5 y 15 años de prisión. Penny tenía al menos dos cómplices que sujetaban los brazos y las piernas de Neely mientras lo asfixiaban lentamente; los dos no han sido acusados.

Cuando Penny fue llevado para ser interrogado por el Departamento de Policía de Nueva York el 1 de mayo, el día en que ocurrió el asesinato en un tren subterráneo F, fue puesto en libertad sin cargos.

A partir del 2 de mayo, se produjeron manifestaciones espontáneas y planificadas durante días, incluida una que bloqueó una vía del metro, exigiendo que

se cobrara a Penny. Esa demanda no se cumplió hasta el 12 de mayo, cuando Penny se entregó después de que el fiscal de distrito anunciara los cargos de homicidio involuntario. La familia de Jordan Neely y sus abogados, aunque dijeron que estaban “satisfechos” con los cargos, habían pedido que se acusara a Penny de asesinato en segundo grado, lo que habría significado una sentencia más severa si fuera declarada culpable.

Penny fue liberado inmediatamente con una fianza de \$100,000. ¿Cómo se recaudó una suma tan grande tan rápido? Un sitio de recaudación de fondos basado en la supremacía blanca, bajo la apariencia de ser cristiano GiveSendGo, ha recaudado más de \$1 millón hasta la fecha para apoyar los gastos legales de Penny. La recaudación de fondos fue organizada por sus abogados; dentro de las 24 horas posteriores a la acusación de Penny, se recaudaron \$600,000 para su defensa.

Este mismo sitio recaudó cientos de miles de dólares para el supremacista blanco Kyle Rittenhouse, quien mató a dos manifestantes antirracistas de Black Lives Matter en Wisconsin en 2020; los acusados pro-Trump de los disturbios del Capitolio de EE.UU. del 6 de enero de 2021; y el llamado “Convoy de la libertad”, un grupo de camioneros en Ottawa, Ontario, Canadá, que en 2022 protestó por una regla que exige que los conductores transfronterizos se vacunen.

Republicanos de extrema derecha como el gobernador de Florida Ron De Santis, la representante de Georgia Marjorie Taylor Greene, el propietario de Twitter y multimillonario Elon Musk y los expertos de Fox News elogiaron a Penny por el asesinato. Sus comentarios que condonan la muerte de Neely son demasiado repugnantes para mencionarlos aquí.

Una vez más, el personaje de la víctima, en este caso Jordan Neely, un hombre sin hogar, hambriento, enfermo mental y desesperado, que resultó ser negro, está

siendo juzgado en público. Los abogados de Penny utilizarán la difamación como principal defensa para justificar este asesinato por parte de un justiciero blanco.

Y este tipo de reacción atroz no está aislada de un solo individuo. Es parte de una guerra racista justificar tales asesinatos por parte de la policía y vigilantes racistas como Penny demonizando a las víctimas, especialmente a los jóvenes negros como Neely, Ahmaud Arbery en Georgia, Trayvon Martin en Florida e incluso Tamir Rice, de 12 años en Ohio, quienes fueron etiquetados falsa y cruelmente como un peligro y una amenaza para la sociedad.

Y el hecho de que un sector de la clase dominante apoye las acciones de Penny ilustra que tiene mucho apoyo de las grandes empresas para intentar exonerarlo de este terrible crimen. Esta es otra razón por la cual una lucha unida de clases políticas debe abolir este horrendo sistema capitalista, para garantizar todas las necesidades humanas que los Jordan Neelys del mundo claman y merecen. □

América Latina en Resistencia: EE.UU. mantiene la ‘presión máxima’

Por Jessica Dos Santos y Ricardo Vaz

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El pasado 25 de abril, el presidente de Colombia Gustavo Petro logró reunir a delegaciones de 20 países para la llamada “Conferencia Internacional sobre el proceso político en Venezuela” realizada en Bogotá. Marcaron presencia varios países latinoamericanos y caribeños, así como la Unión Europea y Estados Unidos.

Desde su llegada a la presidencia, Petro ha mantenido a Venezuela entre sus prioridades, restableciendo relaciones diplomáticas y comerciales, así como condenando las sanciones estadounidenses contra su nación vecina.

Sin embargo, la conferencia en Bogotá fue algo “atípica”. Para empezar, se trató de un encuentro dedicado a Venezuela sin la presencia de actores venezolanos, tanto del gobierno como de la oposición. Un evento así refuerza la tesis de que la soberanía venezolana está a la merced de decisiones foráneas, aunque Petro haya ganado un cierto beneficio de la duda.

Pero más resaltante fue el hecho de que la cumbre no trajo conclusiones significativas. Efectivamente, en la rueda de prensa que cerró el evento, el canciller colombiano Álvaro Leyva esencialmente repitió los puntos establecidos previamente: la necesidad de establecer un calendario electoral, el llamado al levantamiento (gradual) de las sanciones y la importancia de restablecer el diálogo gobierno-oposición en México.

Naturalmente que la diplomacia se hace esencialmente tras las cámaras, pero no se



‘Conferencia Internacional sobre el proceso político en Venezuela’, realizada en Bogotá el 25 de abril.

entiende el llamado a una conferencia con bombos y platillos. ¿Sería una iniciativa de Petro para reforzar sus propias credenciales en el escenario internacional? Ciertos analistas venezolanos especularon que Washington “saboteó” los posibles avances.

Sobre los tres puntos, y empezando por el último, el gobierno venezolano (con razón) ha dicho que no tiene sentido seguir dialogando si no se cumplen los acuerdos. En noviembre del año pasado se firmó un acuerdo para liberar 3 mil millones de dólares en fondos venezolanos congelados en el extranjero. Los recursos se usarían a través de agencias de la ONU en salud, educación y reparación de infraestructuras.

No obstante, la oposición y sus aliados (que congelaron las cuentas venezolanas) no han cumplido el acuerdo. No es descabellado pensar que EE.UU. busca presionar al gobierno venezolano de todas las formas posibles.

Respecto al calendario electoral, el

gobierno de Maduro ha sido bastante “tolerante” en un tema que debería ser simplemente de la competencia del Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE) venezolano.

La oposición venezolana, sus patrocinantes occidentales y hasta Petro han recitado la necesidad de establecer “condiciones” y asegurar la presencia de misiones de observación en el terreno. Sobre el primer punto, a pesar de las docenas de acusaciones de “fraude”, nunca nadie ha presentado cualquier prueba de vulnerabilidades en el sistema electoral venezolano. Se podrá hablar del “ventajismo” del gobierno en lo que toca a usar fondos públicos en la campaña, pero ese no es un problema exclusivo de Venezuela.

Cuanto a la observación, las autoridades venezolanas siempre han tenido la puerta abierta a misiones que no tengan la injerencia como objetivo. De hecho, la Unión Europea estuvo presente en las elecciones regionales+municipales de noviembre de 2021 y sus “recomendaciones”,

aunque muy mediatizadas, eran bastante mínimas.

Un aspecto clave que la oposición busca es el levantamiento de la inhabilitación política de ciertos pre-candidatos. El gobierno, por ahora, va guardando esa carta. Entre los inhabilitados está el ex auto-proclamado “presidente interino” Juan Guaidó.

Las sanciones económicas

Por fin, el aspecto más importante: las sanciones económicas. Una vez superados los aspectos más cosméticos, la verdad es que la administración Biden ha mantenido las políticas de Trump esencialmente intactas. La economía venezolana sigue asfixiada por el bloqueo estadounidense.

Washington sigue utilizando las sanciones como un secuestrador, imponiendo un castigo colectivo a toda la población venezolana para sacar concesiones del gobierno. Además, EE.UU. sabe que necesita mantener la “presión máxima” para dificultar la vida al máximo a Maduro en las venideras elecciones presidenciales.

En paralelo, el Departamento del Tesoro ha dado luz verde para una subasta de acciones de Citgo, una empresa petrolera venezolana en EE.UU. Gracias a la complicidad de Guaidó, la empresa valorada en 8 mil millones de dólares terminará probablemente picada en pedazos para satisfacer demandas de acreedores.

En resumen, el juego sigue trancado porque Washington, aunque reconozca que las sanciones fracasaron en provocar el anhelado “cambio de régimen”, todavía no ha encontrado una nueva estrategia. Mientras tanto, el pueblo venezolano sigue sufriendo y resistiendo. □