

# Capitalism breeds climate catastrophe

## Report from Belgium on the floods

By Michel Collon

*Hundreds die from heat exhaustion in the U.S. Northwest and British Columbia. Unprecedented heat waves hit northern Norway and Siberia. Now, unheard of flooding in Western Europe has killed hundreds of people in Germany and Belgium. This led even the New York Times to publish a lead news article in the July 18 edition with the headline: “Climate change comes for the wealthy [read imperialist] nations.” The following spot-on article by anti-imperialist publisher Michel Collon exposes the insidious role of 21st-century capitalism in the climate crisis faced by humanity. (see [Investigaction.net](#))*

I was in Liege, Belgium, where I spent three days near my daughter. Fortunately, she lives in the hills, but many of her friends and colleagues live near the now-flooded Meuse River. Those three days were filled with intense emotions, as we anxiously followed messages and networks offering comfort and a helping hand.

“Unpredictable fate,” say our officials. Wrong. As early as 1990, the U.N. International Panel on Climate Change announced a quadrupling of heat waves and “extreme precipitation.” What has been done since to prepare for this?

Baby steps are taken to curb corporate pollution. Precious forests continue to be cut down. We continue to expand trucking, instead of promoting rail and river transportation. Nothing is done to create protective flood zones — nothing to reinforce the absorption of rain by the soil.

The north of the country has solemnly proclaimed a “concrete stop,” but never has so much been built, including on agricultural land. It is instead a “concrete flop.” And very few protective measures are taken in the areas we knew were at risk.

“We have plenty of time.” Really? Let our officials

dare go and tell the victims. Worse: The Belgian government has dismantled the Civil Protection responsible for disaster relief. Belgium once had six barracks; only two are left, and the staff has been reduced. These heroic rescuers have saved lives, but the lack of human

*Continued on page 11*



U.S. corporate media withheld photos showing popular support for Cuban socialism on the island — or falsely reported them as anti-government demonstrations.



Anti-imperialists worldwide held demonstrations supporting the Cuban government. Above, Berlin. Sign in German reads ‘Stop the economic war against Cuba.’



TEAR DOWN  
THE WALLS

**Reparations for sterilization**  
**Bryant Arroyo:**  
**Free speech and solitary**  
**Palestinians imprisoned:**  
**Dr. Amal Wahdan**  
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Workers World/Mundo Obrero joins with the Cuban people in celebrating the 68th anniversary of an event which changed the course of history for their island nation. On July 26, 1953, Cuban revolutionaries boldly attacked the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba and simultaneously conducted a siege of the army barracks in Bayamo.

These courageous acts were aimed to strike a blow against the brutal U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Although the military goals were not achieved, and the struggle suffered a temporary setback, the armed struggle had reached a new stage that continued until the dictatorship was overthrown on Jan. 1, 1959. As the guerrilla forces fought in the mountains, an underground movement spread across the country.

Cuba has not only developed in every sphere since the socialist revolution, this island nation has carried out acts of international solidarity to aid oppressed countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa, whether with military might or medical personnel and supplies. This assistance has been given generously, despite the horrific blockade implemented against Cuba by Washington for six decades.

Even now during the pandemic, despite having a dearth of medical supplies for inoculations, Cuba plans to share COVID vaccines with countries denied them by the imperialist West.

Cuba has deservedly won the support and respect of peoples around the globe. Workers World has shown our unwavering solidarity with this socialist country on this newspaper's pages and in countless activities on the streets.

Your donations count!

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Cuban medical team arrives to deliver aid and solidarity to South Africa during the pandemic.

Since the early 1990s, these donations have also helped maintain the [workers.org](http://workers.org) website.

New articles are posted daily at [workers.org](http://workers.org). During the pandemic, the weekly newspaper has been printed and mailed out once a month; and WW weekly editions continue to be posted in PDFs on our website. We plan to print more frequently when it becomes safer, as the pandemic is resolved.

For an annual donation of \$75, \$100 or \$300, members receive a year's subscription, letters with news of activities and analyses of timely issues, and one, two or three free subscriptions, respectively, for friends. Members can receive our book, "What road to socialism?" (Notify us.) Or read it free at [workers.org/books](http://workers.org/books).

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We're grateful for your help in building Workers World! □



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.

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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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this week

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# The case of Britney Spears

## Lessons on the patriarchy, mental health and art as a commodity

By Teresa Gutierrez

It is shocking to me that a 39-year-old woman cannot take out her own IUD if she so wishes. Or get in a car with her boyfriend. Or even choose the color of her kitchen cabinets!

This — while she makes millions of dollars in the entertainment business.

This is the case of Britney Spears, a well-known and popular performer who has been under a conservatorship (also known as guardianship) since 2008.

While migrants are unjustly detained, while Black people continue to be killed by police, and when “essential workers” continue to be exploited in a pandemic, it is hard to be concerned about a wealthy white entertainer.

But that would be wrong.

The case of Britney Spears should be viewed as an opening on three fronts.

First, this case shows that men can still control women’s bodies. It can therefore be used as an opportunity to widen the struggle for cis and trans-women liberation.

Second, conservatorships are an archaic, unjust institution that repeatedly abuse the absolute right to dignity and power for many, including those who are disabled, the elderly and neurodivergent people.

Last, Spears’ case exposes that art under capitalism is a commodity, preventing the masses from enjoying the right to entertainment free or at low-cost. It also creates the conditions for abuse of those with a lot of talent.

Art is a human right, not a commodity.

### Spears’ conservatorship sexist-AF

In 2008, after Britney Spears had several perceived public meltdowns, her family, particularly her father, imposed a conservatorship, a control that has dictated her life for the past 13 years.

What does this mean?

As Ronan Farrow and Jia Tolentino detailed in the July 2 New Yorker magazine, a conservatorship is “a legal structure in which a person’s personal, economic and legal decision-making power is ceded to others. Called a guardianship in most states, the arrangement is intended for people who [allegedly] cannot take care of themselves.”

The article continues: “Since [her] ... conservatorship, she has released four albums, headlined a global tour that grossed \$131 million and performed for four years in a hit Las Vegas residency. Yet her conservators, who include her father Jamie Spears, have controlled her

spending, communications and personal decisions.”

Why should we care about this woman whose net worth is valued at \$60 million? What does it matter to nurses so fatigued from the pandemic or to a mother who worries about how to put food on the table?

Spears comes from the working class. Britney’s family, originally from Louisiana, and particularly her father Jamie saw her potential to entertain, starting when she was around 4 years old. Her entire life since then has been manipulated to make money.

No one can fault a poor family for trying to uplift their lives like the Spears family did. But when the child is primarily treated as an ATM, when her rights to independence are taken away, it must be challenged.

Britney Spears, at 39 years old, has been completely infantilized. And that should make every woman very angry.

The situation is not just about kitchen cabinets. Spears has two children whom she is allowed to have with her only when the conservatorship lets her. She is not allowed to have a cell phone or have access to her social media.

As Elie Mystal, a Black journalist, pointed out: “California [has] many narcissistic male stars who have battled substance abuse, acted like rank fools ... and exuded the mental stability of a nuclear fuel rod deprived of water. ... I don’t see how Spears’s behavior ... was any worse than what a lot of men in Hollywood do.” (The Nation, June 25)

Indeed.

In June, Britney Spears finally appealed to the courts to end the control over her life.

As reported in The Hill, this was the outcome: “Spears’s dad requested the conservatorship after a series of incidents in the wake of her separation from Kevin Federline. ... Yet it remains unknown what conditions could possibly be so serious to compel the State of California to keep Britney in a conservatorship 13 years later. As recently as June 23 of this year, a judge rejected her plea ... and sealed from public scrutiny the full court records that might shed light on the rationale for her ongoing legal subordination.” (July 8)

### Under capitalism, art is a commodity, not a human right

Everyone should ask themselves why does an entertainer get paid so much money? Why is that work more valuable than, say, the important work of a teacher?

It is because the financial interests behind the entertainers are making even more money than the entertainer.

Goldman Sachs reports that the total value of the



Many Britney Spears fans support her court challenge.

recording industry in 2020 was a whopping \$21.6 billion! (Market Industry, June 14)

In some ways, Spears — worth \$60 million — is poor compared to Andrew Lloyd Webber, composer and musical impresario, whose net worth is \$1.28 billion!

When art can be sold to line the coffers of the bankers and money vultures, then it becomes not a talent appreciated by the masses, but a commodity, a product that can be bought and sold, like cell phones.

In socialist Cuba, art is not a commodity. The country’s world-renowned ballet dancers and singers are enjoyed by the people free of charge or for a few cents.

Jamie Spears turned his daughter into a commodity. But he is only a small cog in a lucrative industry, one that produces absurdities like paparazzi.

According to Celebuzz, a picture of Britney Spears was sold for \$500,000. No wonder desperate photographers swarm around her like vultures. Years of this scrutiny led to what were deemed as “unstable” actions, including chopping all her hair off, which became a factor leading to the conservatorship.

If every young adult was put under conservatorship for rebelling, there would be too many to count.

All the while that Jamie Spears controlled her visits to her children, her work was bankrolling his lavish lifestyle. At one point, in a rage, as reported by a family friend, her father declared “I am Britney Spears!” Every time a housekeeper was protective and caring toward Britney, he fired them, according to Farrow and Tolentino.

In fact, Jamie Spears used over \$2 million of Britney’s money to defend himself in the conservatorship. (People Magazine, July 9)

What Britney’s father has done to his daughter is thoroughly patriarchal.

But what the state has done in continuing to approve this conservatorship is far worse. This case, which became public because of activists, especially LGBTQ people who launched the #FreeBritney Movement, has much more at stake than the rights of Britney Spears.

### Fight for the rights of neurodivergent people

The U.S. has a long, sordid and sinister history of legal, forced sterilization, especially of people of color. Women who have Down’s syndrome have often been denied the right to reproduce, which smacks of eugenics and fascism.

The government also abuses the rights of neurodivergent people. It does not prioritize the provision of mental health care, but prefers the masses to be mentally unhealthy, as a form of exercising state control. Capitalism causes stress, yet offers no help.

Spears’ conservatorship opens up the conversation about those who have lost control over their lives over the slightest whim of those who are allowed to control them.

The ACLU issued a statement June 25, in which authors Zoe Brennan-Krohn and Rebecca McCray wrote: “Spears’ experience is part of a long history of people with disabilities. ... Thanks to Spears’ large platform ... her demands to be freed ... have been heard. But there are untold thousands of people living under this same type of restrictive structure, who have lost their rights to reproductive freedom, often permanently.”

Britney Spears’ case is an opportunity to open a wider discussion about the lack of rights for the oppressed. Let us hope that other entertainers will arise and come to #FreeBritney to help widen this discussion.

In 2017, Britney Spears called for the passage of the Dream Act (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). In response to the COVID crisis last year, she somewhat called for the redistribution of wealth and for a strike. (Jacobin, March 25, 2020)

As a result, many memes developed showing pictures of her with Karl Marx. Maybe that was the final straw for her conservators. □



## ‘Stop the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline!’

Members and friends of Philly Water Protectors, an environmental justice group, gathered July 16 outside a TD Bank in Philadelphia’s Center City. TD Bank loaned Enbridge \$10.8 billion for a pipeline project that threatens 200 bodies of water, including the Mississippi River’s headwaters, and imperils Indigenous sites, waters and lands.

With their artwork, posters, banners and musical instruments, demonstrators expressed their opposition to TD Bank for funding the Enbridge Line 3 Replacement Project tar-sands oil pipeline. This 340-mile-long conduit would transport 750,000 barrels of tar sands crude oil a day from Alberta, Canada, through untouched

wetlands in northern Minnesota to Superior, Wis.

This pipeline directly imperils the lands, heritage, sacred sites and treaty rights of the Anishinaabe peoples in Minnesota. It directly endangers their celebrated, age-old, traditional wild rice beds; wild rice is a centerpiece of Anishnaabe culture, and Line 3 is slated to cross multiple watersheds where it grows. (stopline3.org) Line 3 is being constructed through their lands without their consent.

Three Anishinaabe communities, backed by their environmentalist allies have carried out direct action protests against the construction of the pipeline. More than 500 protesters have been arrested in Minnesota

along the Line 3 route. Over 200 celebrities and activists have called on President Joe Biden to cancel the federal permits for Line 3’s construction. However, his administration filed court documents in late June indicating he would not do so.

The July 16 protest was part of a nationwide week of actions organized by Stop the Money Pipeline and NDN Collective, demanding Wall Street banks stop funding Enbridge, the Canadian-based company behind Line 3’s construction. If built, the pipeline would release as much greenhouse gas into the atmosphere as 50 new coal-fired power plants.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette



# Transforming the political, social character of the working class movement

By Larry Holmes

*Based on remarks given at a June 28 leadership meeting. Holmes is Workers World Party's First Secretary. Read the entire article at workers.org*

The Teamsters union overwhelmingly voted at its convention June 24 in favor of launching a nationwide campaign to organize the nearly 1 million Amazon workers in this country.

It's a clear indication to the working class, capitalist class and labor movement that the union drive in Bessemer, Ala., which ended in defeat several months ago, was merely the opening shot of a new epoch of class struggle. Taking on Amazon is a matter of survival for the Teamsters and several other unions because the growth and influence of Amazon is decimating unionized workers in transportation, one of the Teamsters' main union bases.

Amazon's expansion is an existential threat to unions, period. This is why everybody was watching the Bessemer vote so closely and waiting to see what would be the next shoe to drop. Well, the shoe dropped a few days ago at the Teamsters convention.

The larger question is whether militants and revolutionaries, along with the most advanced workers, whether they work at Amazon or not, can turn this struggle to organize Amazon into something that transforms the political and social character of the entire working-class movement.

Can the coming struggle — that pushes back against the nonstruggle, business unionism so prevalent in the labor movement, the top-down instead of rank-and-file approach that is equally prevalent, class collaboration, narrowness, competitiveness, fragmentation, pettiness, conservatism and idea that it's okay to have union-busting cops in the labor movement — start to break up labor's dependence on the capitalist political parties? It's something that has frustrated the inevitable reawakening of an independent, revolutionary working-class movement.

Most of us have been waiting for such a transformative development that would help the coming workers' upsurge and change the dynamics of the entire global class struggle that has favored the class enemy.

How can we prepare ourselves for the fight to make this struggle to organize Amazon one that includes the organized and the unorganized, the students and youth? The oppressed youth? The left organizations, the LGBTQ2S+ movement, the migrant workers, the women's liberation struggle, the Black Lives Matter movement?

How can we turn the struggle to organize Amazon — this global behemoth that in so many ways epitomizes 21st century technologically advanced capitalism in a profound state of decay — into a truly worldwide class struggle unlike anything the world has seen before?

This is the natural potential of a struggle to organize a global corporation like Amazon. But that's not enough.

## Open up political struggle

Some of us, then a little later a lot more of us, and then a little later, many thousands, not just tens but hundreds of thousands of us — are going to have to open up a political struggle to make this happen.

These are some of the challenges facing those who want to participate in the

reconstruction of a new working-class movement, something that would constitute a giant step on the road to socialist revolution, and an end of the dangerous and dying capitalist system that threatens all life on the planet.

What I'm saying is consistent with what I wrote in my May Day call for a need for this revolutionary transformation, not only to make the working-class struggle inclusive and revolutionary, but really to save the working-class movement.

The point is workers assemblies, workers councils, and on whatever other basis we proceed, is a broad political view that involves and encapsulates the transformation of the working class.

It's necessary to have a vision of what you want for the entire working class. And that vision has to be based on larger developments in the working class, like the question of Amazon and what the Teamsters voted to do on June 24.

We cannot know how the struggle to organize Amazon will unfold.

There are a number of other struggles such as to stop massive nationwide evictions; the moratorium on evictions is coming to an end. This struggle can be a catalyst for the transformation of the working class. That Amazon struggle, in and of itself, is distinctively important for a lot of reasons, but that isn't necessarily going to be the first transformative struggle and we would have a linear, inadequate vision to look at it that way.

## More questions on organizing Amazon

What will be the approach of the Teamsters union? Their call for militant tactics such as coordinated strikes, meaning strikes in several places, walkouts and militant mass protests in the streets is both welcoming and promising, as is stating that they're not going to rely on a NLRB election, which was the case in Bessemer.

But will the Teamsters form real trusting alliances with other labor unions? There's a lot of unnecessary competition in the labor movement, which is a relic of conservatism and fragmentation and bourgeois politics; it has to be fought.

Will the Teamsters seriously embrace communities and community organizations, not just the reverends or the more established NAACP-type organizations, but the working-class organizations, the militant organizations, the councils or assemblies that we form?

Will they work with important regional forces, like the Southern Workers Assembly, which has working committees inside several Amazon facilities in North Carolina and even other places now. Will they work with militants who are organizing an exciting union campaign in the biggest Amazon warehouse, in Staten Island, New York?

These questions are for every union, every worker — whether they're in a union



Nov. 19, 2019, New York City.



Chris Smalls organizes for the Amazon Labor Union outside Amazon's Staten Island facility.

PHOTO: AMAZON LABOR UNION

or not — every communist, every socialist, everyone who wants to help transform the working-class movement from its present state into a revolutionary force.

Sooner or later somewhere in the U.S. — the Teamsters have just announced they will be a part of it — there's going to be a strike. There's going to be a walkout somewhere, maybe even an occupation of a warehouse.

And the militancy of the Amazon workers who open this up at some location could easily spread to another and another. It could happen in Staten Island. It could happen in Iowa, where the Teamsters have been organizing Amazon workers; in Chicago, one of the places where Amazonians United has a base; in Minneapolis, where the Somali Amazon workers have been organizing for several years.

It could happen in one of the Amazon facilities in North Carolina; it could even happen in the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer where there was the union drive a few months ago.

When it does happen, it will do something that even a union drive can't do because it will be a militant action. I'm talking about a walkout or an occupation or a strike. It's going to be a dynamic chemical reaction throughout the entire working class that emboldens workers everywhere, not just Amazon workers and transportation workers and logistics workers, but Uber drivers, gig workers, migrant workers, incarcerated workers, trans workers, sex workers and the unemployed.

However, it's critical that we understand that the full revolutionary transformative potential of what is going to unfold cannot be realized if revolutionary forces stay on the sidelines.

The time has come to put aside all doubts, all cynicism, pessimism — there was a lot of pessimism after the vote in

Bessemer. And that's understandable. And that affected not just us, but everyone. But that's the reason why you have to have a long-range view and a deeper understanding of what's happening. And it will be a test to see if the Party and other forces can rise to the occasion.

## Educating the working class and political movement

If we meet the challenge, it will change the dynamics of the global class struggle. If we understand the seriousness and scope of this task, one of the first things we must do — and this is on the basis of recent experience, but also long-term experience, consistent with deep organizing and the goals of deep organizing — we have to be part of a campaign to educate the working class, as well as those in the political movement that are in or as distinct from the working class, whose development is not yet limited by bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas and politics that sometimes make it difficult if not impossible for some activists and some groups to evolve beyond where they

are. Nothing is more critical in the coming period than working-class consciousness and working-class solidarity.

This is probably the most important thing that I'm saying tonight, even though it's old. The main contradiction that capitalism imposes on the working class — and this underpins all that divides the working class, whether it's on the basis of racism, whether it's on the basis of gender, whether it's on the basis of generation, whether it's on the basis of nationality, or geography or whatever — this problem creates this competition that capitalism pushes the workers into. It creates the basis for workers to have allegiance to their bosses, temporarily we hope.

It creates a big obstacle for workers to even be caring about or being interested about the plight of workers in another country or even in another city. The dearth of solidarity, the absence of it, when it's weak, then workers don't care, and there is no basis to call for solidarity on any basis, regionally, countrywide or on a national basis.

But there's another question in this, and I'm not saying that we should be calling for general strikes more than we are; I understand the problems. But if you don't even do things, both in your tactics and strategies, that call on workers to care about, know about or be informed about (much less support) workers fighting back in another part of the world, then how are we going to rally the working class to global class solidarity, to a higher level of class coordination?

The notion of classwide coordinated struggle is going to become more important in the coming period. And it's going to be more important than most of us realize. In fact it's going to be integral to how the working class develops, with globalization and the far more complex supply chains that are now a distinctive feature of global capitalism today. □

# Workers set militant example

## Volvo Mack Truck strike ends

By Martha Grevatt

Members of United Auto Workers Local 2069 are returning to work after striking Volvo Mack Truck on-and-off since April 17. The 2,900 workers in the small town of Dublin, Va., had voted to reject three unacceptable contracts, twice with 90% voting no and the third time with 60% against.

After rejecting the most recent tentative agreement July 9, they were given the same contract as “last, best offer” for a second vote July 14, when it passed by only 17 votes.

Volvo’s truck division has made record profits, and workers wanted to get back some of what they gave up in previous contracts. They wanted to uphold the basic principle of “equal pay for equal work” and eliminate two-tier pay. This onerous system, widespread in UAW plants, means lower seniority workers make less money and/or receive inferior benefits compared to higher seniority workers doing the same jobs.

Other issues for workers were increases in what they would have to pay for health

care coverage — which would eat away the negotiated pay raises — and language allowing Volvo to put them on an oppressive “alternative work schedule” and eliminate overtime pay for work after an eight-hour shift.

Unfortunately the strikers did not have the solidarity of their union leadership at either the local or international level. Before workers even viewed the first tentative agreement, the UAW International called off the two-week strike. After the resounding no vote, the International nevertheless kept Local 2069 members on the job. The strike resumed June 7 after the second rejection of a nearly identical contract.

**Volvo’s strikebreaking**

After the third turndown, Volvo management threatened workers with firing if they did not cross the line and return to work. The company said it would deny workers a \$2,000 signing bonus, if the contract failed in the repeat vote.

Legally, striking workers can be permanently replaced in an economic strike, but not in a strike over unfair labor practices.

Union members filed ULP charges against Volvo with the National Labor Relations Board, hitting the lines with new “Unfair Labor Practice” strike signs. Only a couple dozen workers crossed the line.

The surrounding community, along with UAW members around the country, expressed solidarity with the strikers. But without the support of their union leadership, rank-and-file workers were not able to push back all the company demands.

By the end of the new six-year contract, every worker who now has at least one year seniority will make top pay — but not future workers or workers with less time. Health care costs are going up. Language on work schedules, which the UAW leadership claims “provides protections around shift scheduling and plant operations,” is seen as too vague. (uaw.org)

In 2015 Fiat Chrysler workers, including this writer, were promised that the contract they were asked to approve would help eliminate alternative work schedules. Six



PHOTO: UAW 2069

Striking Volvo Mack Truck workers, Dublin, Va.

years later, workers at the plant I retired from are still working 10-hour days and weekends for straight time, or close to it — a bonus for the company. Former UAW Vice President Norwood Jewell, who pitched the contract, was sentenced to prison for taking bribes from FCA.

Now that the Volvo strike has ended, many rank-and-file workers have joined the “One Member, One Vote” campaign to let the UAW membership elect International officers directly. Local 2069 strikers had won the support and admiration of the Unite All Workers for Democracy caucus of the union, a staunch advocate of direct elections. □

# Coal miners carry Alabama strike to Wall Street

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Coal miners on strike in Brookwood, Ala., are staying stalwart midway through their fourth month on the picket line — 24 hours a day, seven days a week — continuing a 100-year-old tradition of labor resistance in central Alabama.

The miners of United Mine Workers Local 2245 say big hedge funds that provide financial backing to Warrior Met are blocking progress toward a fair contract. The coal company is “the leading dedicated U.S.-based producer and exporter of high quality metallurgical (‘met’) coal for the global steel industry.” (Business Wire, Feb. 24)

Alabama coal miners marched on Wall Street in New York City June 22. Chanting “No contract, no coal!” and “Warrior Met Coal ain’t got no soul!” they picketed the offices of BlackRock Fund Advisors, State Street Global Advisors and Renaissance Technologies — Warrior

JOIN STRIKING WARRIOR  
MET MINERS  
AS THEY FIGHT FOR FAIRNESS

BLACKROCK  
40 EAST 52ND STREET  
NEW YORK, NY

July 28, 2021  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Created in house by union labor

For more information, contact  
Adam Banig: abanig@umwa.org

Met’s biggest investors.

On July 28 the miners and their families plan to return to New York to protest again at BlackRock. They are asking supporters to join them from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. EDT.

**Miners fighting for safety, health benefits, wages**

The 1,100 UMWA miners overwhelmingly voted down an unjust contract offered by Warrior Met Coal and walked out on April 1.

In 2016 the miners accepted a drastic \$6-an-hour cut and sacrificed health benefits to bring the company out of bankruptcy. Management promised the cuts would be restored once the business was solvent. In a 2020 end-of-year statement, Walt Scheller, CEO of Warrior, said the business was back in good shape — but the company has offered the miners a contract with only a \$1.50 an hour increase and kept in place unfair disciplinary and firing policies.

The miners labor in one of the world’s most life-threatening workplaces. The Brookwood mines are sunk 1,400 to 2,100 feet underground — some of the deepest vertical-shaft coal mines in North America. In 2001 methane gas explosions and a cave-in at one of the mines killed 13 workers, including a former high school classmate of this writer.

Meanwhile, Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, said this on July 14 about the chances of working people to stop work and retire: “People are going to have to, unfortunately, whether they like it or not, they may have to work longer because

they’re not earning the same returns on their savings.” (CNBC, cnb.cx/3rhIkIS)

At Warrior Met mines, backed by predatory BlackRock, the idea of savings surely must seem like a capitalist pipe dream to the workers. Alabama miners are just trying to survive with their lives, limbs and maybe a little breathing room every month. As for “planning” for retirement, savings are hardly possible on their diminished wages, unless the miners work underground 60 hours a week at deadly risk.

UMWA Local 2245 workers are asking all supporters of working people to come to an Aug. 4 support rally in Alabama. Planned with labor leaders and members coming from across the country, the aim is for the rally to be one of the largest labor rallies Alabama has seen in quite some time.

*For information on how to support the strike materially, go to Twitter @UMWAStrikePantry. For details on support rallies and protests, go to @LaborReporters, Valley Labor Report, Alabama’s only union radio show.*

On the

pick

line

WHEN WE  
FIGHT  
WE WIN!

By Marie Kelly

Frito-Lay production never slowed production during the pandemic. Mark Benaka, business manager for Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Union (BCTGM) Local 218 and a Frito-Lay retiree after 37 years, commented: “I’ve learned that when something’s hitting Americans beneath the belt, the two main items that never suffer are snack foods and alcohol.” (labornotes.org, July 2021)

**Snacks strike**

Exhausted by working seven days a week, 600 workers walked out on strike July 5 at the Frito-Lay plant in Topeka, Kan. The Bakery Workers hit the picket line to demand an end to abusive working conditions endured since before the pandemic.

When lousy working conditions at the Topeka plant made it nearly impossible to attract or retain new workers, management dealt with low staffing by instituting grueling overtime shifts. These include 12-hour shifts with only eight hours off between clock-out and clock-in, aptly nicknamed “suicide shifts,” as they wreak havoc on workers’ physical and emotional health and can cause serious injury.

The meager monetary compensation for employees contrasts with the billion-dollar profits Frito-Lay announced for the first quarter of 2021. Frito-Lay, a subsidiary of the Pepsi Corporation, reaps huge profits from sales of snack products like Fritos, Doritos and Lays Potato Chips.

Intimidation tactics have been Frito-Lay’s response to the strikers so far. Buses supposedly transporting strike-breakers roll past to give the impression that workers are easily replaced. However, eyewitnesses say the buses are almost empty. Though shipments appear to be leaving the plant, smokestacks are idle and the telltale odor from the plant is absent.

These indicators that business is far from usual are great for the strikers’ morale. They have community support too. Some local restaurants are refusing to purchase or serve Frito-Lay or Pepsi products. A social media campaign is calling for a wider boycott in support of the striking workers.

## Alcohol industry organizing

Production workers at Great Lakes Brewery in Cleveland have taken the first step to organize by signing union authorization cards with the United Steelworkers.

The company could voluntarily recognize the effort and preclude the need for an election under the National Relations Labor Board. Great Lakes Brewery, founded in 1986, touts a philosophy of “fostering relationships” and “sharing success” on its website.

Union organizers say that benefits at the brewery are indeed better than average, while working conditions promote a higher employee retention rate.

The Great Lakes Organizing Committee at the plant wants to keep the pluses — and improve on them.

A union will put workers on a more level playing field with management and With unionization, the bottlers, delivery drivers and plant maintenance, who are all part of the productive forces’ essential labor power, would be better able to fight for higher wages and win conditions that benefit their lives as workers. A contract would guarantee in writing what workers have come to expect — but which could be taken away — from the oldest and largest craft brewery in Ohio.

So far, Great Lakes Brewery management has not responded to the union drive. It remains to be seen if the demand for a union will result in the owners turning over to workers any more of the value they create. □



# A speech by the Cuban president

## Cubans defend their revolution

*Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba and president of the republic, spoke to the Cuban people July 11 on recent events. This report on his talk by Gladys Leydis Ramos López and Juan Diego Nusa Peñalver was published in English at en.granma.cu on July 12.*

For 60 years the example of the Cuban Revolution has bothered the United States, stated First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Republic, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, yesterday, during a special message from the Palace of the Revolution explaining to the people the most recent provocation orchestrated by small groups of counterrevolutionaries.

The president began his remarks with a revolutionary greeting to the entire people, and said, “Unfortunately, we have been obliged to interrupt our Sunday [July 11], that all our families take to rest and spend time together, to inform you and share with you a series of elements related to the events that have been taking place today, which are part of a high-level, systematic, escalating provocation, which has been promoted by the counter-revolution over these days.”

What is the background to this situation we are experiencing, he asked.

“We have been honest; we have been open; we have been clear, and at all times we have explained the complexities of the current situation to our people. I remember that more than a year and a half ago, when the second half of 2019 was just starting, we had to explain that we were heading toward a difficult conjuncture. And we used that term, which was later taken up as part of popular humor, since we have remained in this ‘conjuncture’ for a long time. ... Beginning with all the signs that the U.S. government, headed by the Trump administration, was giving in relation to Cuba.”

Díaz-Canel recalled that the adoption of an extensive series of restrictive measures to tighten the blockade began: financial persecution, energy persecution, with the goal of asphyxiating the country’s economy.

He denounced ongoing efforts to provoke a massive social explosion in Cuba, including all sorts of propaganda and ideological constructions they fabricate to call for misnamed humanitarian interventions, which end up as military interventions and interference, trampling the rights and violating the sovereignty, the independence of peoples.

This succession of hostile acts continued, he noted: “Then came the 243 measures we all know about. And in the last days of that administration, the decision was made to include Cuba on the list of countries sponsoring terrorism.”

He reiterated that this list is a totally spurious list, an illegitimate list, and a unilateral list, fabricated by the U.S. in the belief “that they are the power that dominates the world, that they are the emperors of this world.”

He noted that, unfortunately, due to the lack of principles within more than a few international institutions and national governments, many cave in and go along with these hostile measures and actions.

“It must be recognized that others do not submit to the imposition of these measures, but they are limited by the extraterritorial nature that these measures imply.

“And that further increased the impact of the restrictions, which above all implied that the country was immediately cut off from its main sources of foreign currency income: I am talking about tourism; I am talking about the trips of Cubans and U.S. citizens to our country, about the much-awaited remittances to Cuban families from their relatives in the United States.”

The president also denounced U.S. efforts to discredit Cuban medical brigades, since this medical collaboration, beyond the many instances of solidarity provided, also generates foreign currency income.

### U.S. restrictions cause shortages

All this, he said, is causing shortages in the country: “Shortages of food, of medicines, raw materials and inputs needed by our economic and productive processes, which contribute both exports and supplies for the people; therefore here two important elements are cut off: the capacity to export and to acquire foreign

currency to import and invest and the capacity of the productive processes to produce a full range of goods and services for our population.”

He pointed out that the country “has seen its fuel supply limited, access to spare parts limited, and all this has caused dissatisfaction, has exacerbated accumulated problems, which we have not been able to resolve, which have been around since the Special Period, and to all this has been added a ferocious media campaign to discredit us, as part of a so-called nonconventional war, which attempts, on the one hand, to break the unity of the Party, the government, the state and the people, attempting to portray the government as inept, incapable of providing well-being to the Cuban people, attempting to portray the U.S. government as ‘very concerned about the welfare of the Cuban people,’ whom it has unjustly blockaded, telling them how they can aspire to development and progress in a country such as ours.

“These are the usual hypocritical prescriptions and speeches of double standards, which we know very well, throughout the history of United States behavior toward Cuba. We know how they intervened in our country, how they appropriated our island, how they maintained domination of our island during the pseudo-republic and how their interests were hit hard by the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

“For 60 years the example of the Cuban Revolution has bothered them, and they have constantly tightened ... applied an unjust, criminal, cruel blockade, reinforced, worse than ever under pandemic conditions. Therein lies the manifest perversity, the maliciousness of all these intentions: blockade and restrictive measures, which they have never taken against any other country, or against those they consider their main enemies.

“This has been a work and a policy of viciousness against a small island, which only aspires to defend its independence, its sovereignty and build, with self-determination, its society in accordance with the principles that more than 86% of the population has approved, has supported in the broad and democratic exercise we held, to approve the current Constitution of the Republic of Cuba.

### The pandemic

“And in the midst of these conditions comes the pandemic, a pandemic that has not only affected Cuba, a pandemic that has affected the whole world, a pandemic that has also affected the United States, that has affected rich countries. It must be said that the United States and other rich countries did not have the capacity to confront the effects of this pandemic at the beginning.

“And in many of those first-world countries, with much more wealth, health systems collapsed, intensive care units were overwhelmed. The poor have been disadvantaged, because there are no public policies directed toward saving the people,” and these rich countries in many cases have worse results than Cuba in terms of responding to the pandemic, Díaz-Canel said.

“And we were impacted by the pandemic; and in the midst of all these other restrictions, with the reserves that the country has created, with the little we had in the country, with the little we have been able to acquire this difficult year and a half, is that we have been able to meet these challenges, these tests.

### Cuba develops vaccines, shares with world

“And we have done it with courage; we have done it without giving in, and, above all, we have done it by sharing among all the little we have, and we have not only shared within Cuba, we have shared with the world. There is the example of the Henry Reeve International Cuban Medical Brigade, which has sent teams to places brutally affected by the pandemic.

“And this is how we have moved forward, controlling one wave after another, with a tremendous capacity for sacrifice on the part of our people, of our scientists, of our health personnel, of almost the entire country involved in this.”

Díaz-Canel recalled that five candidate vaccines have been developed, one already recognized as a vaccine, the first in Latin America against COVID-19. “Cuba is already vaccinating our population, and this is a process that takes time. Vaccines must be produced, but we currently have one of the highest vaccination rates in the world, and in a few weeks we will have reached more



PHOTO: JUAN DIEGO NUSA PEÑALVER

Defending the Cuban Revolution, Havana.

than 20% of the total population.”

However, he noted, in the last few months more aggressive strains have appeared, and in the midst of this already serious situation, another group of complications began to appear.

“First of all, new cases are emerging at a speed and accumulation that exceed the capacities we have been able to create to treat these patients in state institutions. On the other hand, we have been obliged to expand capacity in other centers,” he explained.

### Priority to treatment centers

“In this sense, by opening more centers, to which energy priority must be given — in the midst of the accumulation of problems in the generation of electricity, the number of circuits that we must protect, to attend to these patients, has increased.”

With more patients, he continued, the stock of medicines is also running low and acquiring them is very difficult; and in the midst of all this, we continue to work for everyone.

“Now we have been obliged to resort to home isolation, due to the lack of capacity in a number of provinces, and call on families to participate more directly, more responsibly. One never tires of admiring the capacity for creative resistance of our people.”

With these values, he insisted, with vaccination advancing, complying with the necessary sanitary measures, “we will emerge sooner rather than later from this peak in the pandemic, which is not only hitting Cuba. Cuba managed to postpone this high point with everything we did, and we will overcome it.”

### Role of hypocritical mercenaries

“But now,” he noted, “in a very cowardly, subtle, opportunistic and perverse manner, exploiting the most difficult situations we have in provinces like Matanzas and Ciego de Ávila, those who have always supported the blockade, those who have served as mercenaries, lackeys of the Yankee empire, begin to appear with calls for a humanitarian intervention, a humanitarian corridor, to strengthen the idea that the Cuban government is not capable of handling this situation, as if they were really interested in the welfare and health of our people.

“If they want to make a gesture toward Cuba, if they really are concerned about the people, if they want to solve Cuba’s problems: Lift the blockade and let’s see how we do, why don’t they do that? Why don’t they have the courage to lift the blockade? What legal and moral basis allows a foreign government to implement such a policy against a small country and in the midst of such adverse conditions? Isn’t this genocide?”

He denounced the assertion that a dictatorship exists in Cuba: “A dictatorship that is concerned about providing health care for its entire population, that seeks welfare for all, that in the midst of this situation is capable of conducting public policies, aspiring to vaccination with a Cuban vaccine, because we knew that no one was going to sell us any, since we don’t have the money to buy them,” he said.

### No murder victims in Cuba

“What a strange dictatorship,” he exclaimed. “Now they are shouting that we are murderers. Where are the murder victims in Cuba? Where are the missing persons in Cuba? Other countries that have suffered these pandemic peaks were not attacked in the press, and they were not offered humanitarian intervention as a solution, nor were they subjected to these slander campaigns as we are,” Díaz-Canel emphasized.

“I believe that life, history and the facts show what is behind all this, which is the effort to asphyxiate us and put an end to the Revolution, and for that they are

Continued on page 7



PHOTO: ESTUDIOS REVOLUCIÓN

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez



# Cuba's streets belong to the revolutionaries

Prepared for *en.granma.cu* by Juan Diego Nusa Peñalver, Yudy Castro Morales and Milagros Pichardo Pérez, published July 13.

“We are here because the streets belong to Fidel, because the streets of Cuba belong to revolutionaries.” This was the phrase we heard the loudest walking along several Havana avenues Sunday afternoon, July 11, when an entire people came out to defend their Revolution.

We heard it, for example, in front of the Capitol, seat of the National Assembly of People’s Power, and along Prado down to the waterfront Malecon. We heard it up to the Belascoáin, and along Carlos III, where neighbors gathered, waving flags and, above all, ideas.

A woman shouted from her balcony, “Viva la Revolución!” and “Viva Cuba Libre!” Her voice joined those of many younger residents who, on the street below, waved the 26th of July Movement flag

and repeated, louder and louder, clearer and clearer: “Fidel, Raúl and Díaz-Canel are here,” “Patria o Muerte, Venceremos” (Homeland or Death, We will win).

We heard it along Infanta, from women and men, Cubans with few and many years of age, all with the same conviction: a country like ours, with so many dreams and more than a few pains, is defended tooth and nail, knowing that, as the poet [Fayad Jamís] said, “For this freedom/ beautiful as life/ we must give our all/ if necessary/ even the shadow/ and it will never be enough.”

We heard it from Julio Alejandro Gómez, a blogger who joined the honest demands of those who love and create and took to the streets, “because I am a revolutionary, and I know that this is a manipulation. They want to take advantage of our needs and problems to apply the same formula of ‘social unrest’ that they have used in other countries, but with Cuba there are no formulas that work. The

Revolution belongs to the people and is defended by the people.”

We heard Alberto Bermudez, who lives on Infanta, and in the midst of the racket, hummed “I die as I lived” with a group of buddies, and, soon thereafter, it was the notes of the national anthem they offered.

“Unity and continuity,” others shouted, while Alberto interrupted his song to affirm: “Fidel, this is your people, and the streets belong to the people. The order has been given, and we are here. We are going to win, in spite of COVID-19, in spite of whatever.”

The same phrases, shouted along the way, led our group of reporters to Alfredo Vázquez, provincial secretary of the Federation of Cuban Workers in Havana, who was injured in one of the confrontations with the “destabilizers.”

“They hit me hard on the head, and I ended up with a seven-stitch gash. But here I am, my flag stained with blood, ready to continue defending the Revolution, because to die for the Homeland



PHOTO: GRANMA

is to live,” he insisted without slowing his pace, just like Cuba, the land of revolutionaries who are never intimidated.

And there beside Via Blanca, Faustino Leonard, a resident of Cerro municipality, also spoke to us about the day, while the remains of rocks thrown were still on the street.

“The quarrel was tough here, but there were more revolutionaries. The saboteurs ran away to hide, probably to some cave, like rats usually do. Let no one doubt it, this country belongs to the people and will continue to belong to us.” □

## U.S. hands off Cuba, Haiti!

Protesters marched through Portland, Oregon’s Saturday Market July 17 chanting “U.S. Out of Cuba; Hands Off Haiti.” They joined progressives around the world who are protesting U.S. attempts to destabilize Cuba. The Portland activists handed out informational leaflets condemning the U.S. Congress for recently adding \$2 million to the more than \$20 million Washington spends trying to instigate counterrevolution in Cuba.

The Atlanta branch of Workers World Party issued a call to several progressive organizations, proposing they join together to organize a rally July 17 in support of revolutionary Cuba and the popular resistance in Haiti. Members of many groups responded and demonstrated under the slogans: “End the U.S. blockade of Cuba Now!” and “No U.S. intervention in Haiti!”

Activists within the multinational crowd held banners and signs along Buford Highway, a busy thoroughfare near the main entrance to Plaza Fiesta in Atlanta. Their signs and chants engendered a positive response from riders in passing cars, who honked in solidarity.

Representatives of many organizations spoke and urged rally participants to remain vigilant in opposing pro-imperialist propaganda being whipped up by the corporate media against socialist Cuba. They



WW PHOTO

called for solidarity with the people of Haiti and demanded that the U.S. stay out of the Caribbean country.

Speakers represented included the Atlanta Cuba Coalition, Black Alliance for Peace, Friends of the Congo, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Socialist Workers Party and Workers World Party.

— Reports by Lyn Neeley and Dianne Mathiowetz

## Venceremos Brigade defends Cuban Revolution

*This slightly edited statement was issued July 12.*

The Venceremos Brigade is in solidarity with Cuba and the Cuban people who are enduring the coronavirus pandemic on top of the U.S. blockade. The United States and its blockade literally do not allow Cuba to trade with other countries to receive basic resources like food, medical supplies and equipment. Because of the blockade, Cubans are experiencing devastating shortages of their basic necessities during a period of skyrocketing coronavirus cases.

The Biden administration is instigating a soft-coup in Cuba fueled by their continuation of Trump-era, anti-Cuba policies on one hand and on the other hand, releasing “neutral” statements denying responsibility for the current shortages and blackouts. In 2021 alone, Biden dispersed \$250 million to fund “subversion” in Cuba.

We are and we continue to be steadfast in our work to back the Cuban Revolution and their ongoing struggle for dignity and liberation in the face of U.S. repression.

Build with us!

Join your local committee! Organize with us nationally! Reach out to [vbbrigade@tutanota.com](mailto:vbbrigade@tutanota.com); [linktr.ee/vb4cuba](https://linktr.ee/vb4cuba).

Venceremos! □

## Cubans defend the revolution

*Continued from page 6*

trying to discourage our people, to confuse our people. And when the people are facing severe conditions, then events like the ones we experienced in San Antonio de los Baños take place.”

About the events in this area, he detailed:

“Who was part of the group? It included members of the population, who have needs, who are experiencing some of these shortages; it included revolutionaries who are confused, do not have all the arguments, or were expressing these dissatisfactions, but they were doing it differently, because they were seeking to understand, seeking explanations.

“But this was led by a core group of manipulators who are indeed lending themselves to the designs of the SOS Matanzas or SOS Cuba campaigns. ... Several days ago, they were preparing demonstrations or social disturbances of this type in several Cuban cities. This is criminal, at a time when people should be at home, protecting themselves.”

### Cubans confront counterrevolutionaries

Díaz-Canel reported that revolutionaries in San Antonio de los Baños, provincial authorities, a group from the country’s leadership showed up there. We confronted the counterrevolutionaries, and we talked to the revolutionaries, and to those asking for explanations, to show that Cuba’s streets belong to revolutionaries.

He pointed out that we know there are other groups of people gathering in streets and plazas, in other cities

of the country, also moved by unhealthy purposes. “I am also giving this information, to reaffirm that in Cuba the streets belong to revolutionaries, that the state, the revolutionary government, guided by the Party, are more than willing to discuss, to argue and to participate with the people in the solution of problems, but recognizing the real cause of our problems, without allowing ourselves to be confused.”

Those who are encouraging demonstrations are not interested in good health care for Cuba, he emphasized. Remember that their model is neoliberal, the privatization of health, of medical services, of education; that everyone should save themselves as best they can, that those who have the money can access health care, he warned.

“We are not going to surrender sovereignty, the independence of our people or the freedom of this nation. There are many of us revolutionaries in this town who are willing to give our lives, and this is not a slogan — it is a conviction. They will have to step over our corpses if they want to confront the Revolution; and we are ready for anything, and we will be in the streets fighting.

“We know that incidents of this type are being orchestrated in the streets of Havana and that there are large groups of revolutionaries confronting counterrevolutionary elements. We are separating the confused revolutionaries, the inhabitants of Cuba who have specific concerns, but we are not going to allow any counterrevolutionary, any mercenary, to provoke destabilization among our people.

“This is why we are calling on all revolutionaries in our country, all communists, to take to the streets in any

of the places where these provocations may take place today, from now on, throughout these days,” he insisted.

“As I said in my closing speech at the Party Congress, we revolutionaries defend the Revolution above all else, we communists on the front lines; and with that conviction we are now in the streets — we are not going to allow anyone to manipulate our situation or defend a plan that is not Cuban, that is not for the welfare of Cubans and that is annexationist. This is the task to which we call revolutionaries and communists of this country,” he concluded. □



Union Square, New York City, July 15. PHOTO: RADHAMES MORALES



# After the First Intifada 'Prisoners build their own weapons of defense and strength'

*Dr. Amal Wahdan is the founder and editor of the Arab Gazette, as well as an organizer with One Democratic State of Palestine (odspal.net). She was a member of the International Delegation to the 2021 Syrian Presidential Election, as was Ted Kelly, who interviewed Dr. Wahdan July 14.*

**Workers World:** You yourself were a political prisoner. Could you talk about your experience in Israeli custody?

**Amal Wahdan:** It all started with the First Intifada in 1987 and our forming the Unified Front for the Leadership of the Intifada. We were accused of distributing 60,000 leaflets in all of Palestine, and that's when we started to be tracked. The Israelis found out where the print shop was that printed the statement, traced one lead to another.

We were undercover for about two months until they arrested us. They arrested me, my husband and my sister-in-law on the same day, at different times in different locations.

I was in prison twice during the Intifada. The first time was during a women's demonstration. They arrested about 30 of us and held us in the Moscovitch compound, which is a convent that they turned into a detention center. It's actually the property of the Russian Orthodox Church.

After we were traced, after my second arrest, I was interrogated for about 50 days, unable to talk to a lawyer or see my kids.



**Dr. Amal Wahdan and Ted Kelly in Damascus, Syria, May 28.**

**WW:** I'm sorry, could you say that again — How long were you interrogated for?

**AW:** About 50 days.

**WW:** Oh, my god!

**AW:** Without changing, without changing my clothes, without seeing a lawyer or the Red Cross even. It was really a hard time for me, being in a small confinement cell, one meter by one meter, and without being allowed to go outside except back and forth for interrogation.

The same day when they arrested us, April 16, 1988, this was the day when they assassinated Abu Jihad [Palestinian

Liberation Organization military commander Khalil al-Wazir] in Tunisia. The interrogator came to me; [he] wanted to break us down, to tell us that they can reach as far as Tunis: "So who are you to defy us? Who are you to fight against us?"

Of course, they were trying to get information out of me. But, of course, I didn't confess anything and everything. I turned everything into a discussion, a political discussion. I was talking to them bluntly about our beliefs — that Israel is a Zionist entity, and it should be dismantled, saying: "You can't be on our land. You are, in this job, just a tool in the hands of those who are sitting down in Washington and in Tel Aviv. You are a terrorist state, a terrorist army, a terrorist organization. And your life expectancy is shorter by the day."

It was a very tough experience. But the prisoner builds their own weapons of defense and strength. You turn everything into a rosy place. For example, making necklaces and bracelets out of olive seeds. We used to steal stuff from the interrogators' room, like pens. We used to take threads from the blankets and make beautiful things. You must occupy yourself with positives, always. You have to build mechanisms for defense as well as offense.

That's how you treat these people. You show them that they are not acting as human beings.

This cell was next door overlooking a

torture area, where men and kids were tortured in a shed. And they were just next to me. I could hear them, you know, the little kids screaming. And shouting.

I started to sing. Whenever I heard them cry, I started to sing, to try to uplift their morale, talking to them, strengthening them to be able to confront their interrogators.

Later I met one of them. He said he didn't realize it was a woman's voice. He was thinking that I am another kid in the cell next to him. I remember him — he discovered me and said, "That was you in the cell next to us, praising us and giving us strength and power to confront these criminals."

Then they transferred me into a prison called Abu Kabir, for criminal prisoners. They didn't have enough places in their prisons all over the West Bank and '48 [the term describes the occupied territories] for political prisoners. So they started using other prisons.

I used to have Jewish friends send me books. Our history with our Jewish friends is based on political ideology; they are against this colonial apartheid state, and they want to live in peace as human beings.

And that's what we say — that there is a space for such a solution where people can live together. We can have this, but we cannot live with colonialists. We cannot live with Zionists under any pretext. There is no such thing as Zionist Jewishness. You are either Zionist, or you are Jewish. There is nothing in between. □



## Reparations for forced sterilizations include prisoners

**By Judy Greenspan  
Oakland, Calif.**

It's not often that incarcerated people win victories under capitalism. Incarcerated women, and transgender and gender-nonconforming people did just that.

When California's Governor Gavin Newsom approved the new state budget July 12, it included reparations for people who were forcibly or involuntarily sterilized between 1909 and 1979. The language in the bill specifically included incarcerated people in women's state prisons after 1979. California is the first state in the U.S. to offer reparations to people who were sterilized while in prison. (Press Release by California Coalition of Women Prisoners, July 13)

This budget language did not appear out of thin air. Years of advocacy and pressure, starting with the prisoners themselves who suffered this medical abuse at the hands of prison doctors, made this happen.

Kelli Dillon, now out, was one such woman prisoner who spoke out and exposed the practice of forced and involuntary sterilizations of people inside prison. Dillon is featured in "Belly of the Beast," a film released in October 2020 which exposed this illegal practice at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla. (Workers World, October 23, 2020).

Cynthia Chandler, Dillon's attorney and a longtime advocate for prisoners, was elated with the decision. "This victory is a victory for the people inside

California's women's prisons. This was a direct result of a decade-long campaign by people inside for justice," she told Workers World.

According to the CCWP press statement, California sterilized over 20,000 people between 1909 and 1979; a large percentage were people with disabilities, Latinx and Black women and poor people. While it is not known how many incarcerated people were sterilized involuntarily, the practice continued past 1979. A state audit revealed that from 2006-2010, nearly 150 people were victims of forced or involuntary sterilization. The state budget allocates \$7.5 million as reparations for these victims.

### Obstacles to obtaining reparations money

Hafsah Al-Amin, Program Coordinator of CCWP, told Workers World, "the hard part is going to be monitoring the state because it is the prison system that is taking responsibility for identifying and finding women and transgender people who were sterilized." She noted that the new budget item represents an acknowledgment by the state that an injury was inflicted. Al-Amin added, "We hope that it will pave the way for Black, Indigenous and other people of color to seek redress in the form of reparations."

The application that must be filed by people seeking reparations for involuntary sterilizations will become available Jan. 1, 2022. Chandler noted the difficulty of identifying former and currently incarcerated survivors of forced sterilization: "In order to assure that these reparations



PHOTO: WANDA SABIR

**Hundreds protest outside the Central California Women's Facility on Jan. 26, 2013 at the Chowchilla Freedom Rally.**

have an impact, it will require grassroots support of people inside to ensure that the investigations actually happen."

Chandler urged all incarcerated people who have had abdominal surgery to file an application for review of their medical records, stating: "There needs to be a movement of survivors. That's what will have real power."

Besides the tireless work of incarcerated people inside prison, the budget request for reparations was co-sponsored by Back to the Basics Community Empowerment, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, CCWP and Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, in collaboration with the Sterilization and Social Justice Lab. □

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**PROTEST AT ATTICA**  
**SEPTEMBER 9TH**

**WITH WWP ON THE**  
**50TH ANNIVERSARY**

**IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE**  
**INCARCERATED &**  
**JAILHOUSE LAWYERS**  
**SPEAK**

**WORKERS**  
**WORLD**  
**PARTY**



# Despite solitary and banning, Bryant Arroyo fights for free speech

By Joe Piette and Bryant Arroyo

Incarcerated people depend on their voices being heard outside the walls for their grievances against prison officials to be effective inside. Without public pressure from family, friends and other supporters, the prison guards, supervisors and administrators can literally get away with murder.

Bryant Arroyo has been a voice from inside Pennsylvania prisons for years. Arroyo is serving a life sentence for a crime he did not commit. He is still contesting this in court. He has dedicated himself to organizing from the inside and mobilizing prisoners to fight back against the horrendous conditions authorities impose on incarcerated workers.

Arroyo was placed in isolated custody — thrown in the hole, the Restricted Housing Unit (RHU) — for suggesting on separate phone calls to this reporter, his daughter and others that they share recordings of video conference calls with him on social media, so the public can learn how badly the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections treats incarcerated people.

No one shared such a video on social media, but Arroyo was punished just for raising the idea. ([tinyurl.com/ymma8tnv](https://tinyurl.com/ymma8tnv))

After being banned from video conferencing for 60 days, Arroyo was able to have a recent video conference with WW. The experience he described not only reveals the extent to which the DOC will go to to hide their inhumane policies by violating free speech rights, but also how Arroyo, like a good shop steward at any work site, persistently fights back.

“I want to give a salute of solidarity to

all the comrades in the nation of prisons this morning. I want them to know that despite the retaliation that has been imposed upon me, including being transferred from SCI Frackville to SCI Coal Township, it hasn’t deterred me one bit. If anything, I’ve bounced back with much more resilience,” said Arroyo.



Bryant Arroyo and Joe Piette.

### Thought-crime punishment violates constitutional rights

Referring to a decision by hearing examiner Dennis Wiederhold at his misconduct hearing April 1, Arroyo told WW: “It was a quite peculiar determination that he [Wiederhold] made, where he stated as a preponderance of evidence exists to support the charge, ‘any attempt to commit the enumerated offense is viewed as completion of the offense.’ The only thing that I could surmise is that he believes the mere thought of this expression shared to my activists, family members and supporters is the equivalent of committing the crime.

“I don’t know how he made that connection, because there’s nothing in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections policy where I violated any of the visiting regulations by merely instructing or expressing visitors to record the virtual visits.”

On April 4, Arroyo was tested negative

for COVID and returned to his cell from RHU. He describes events beginning April 6: “The prisoners in cells 37 and 38, near where I used to reside in cell 48, made the noise of ‘whoop, whoop,’ meaning cops on the way. I say, well, ain’t got nothing to do with me. Lo and behold, they came right to my door and said, ‘Mr. Arroyo, get your ID and turn around. You’re being locked up.’”

Because Insp. Lt. Dennis Newberry placed him under Administrative Custody on April 6, Arroyo had no access to his property, including legal files or to the library for law references, and could not get copies made — all necessary for filing a grievance against Wiederhold’s misconduct decision.

Arroyo explained the impact: “On April 8, I requested Superintendent Assistant Grievance Coordinator Jennifer Newberry provide me with an extension, but she claimed that ‘per policy there are no extensions to file a misconduct appeal. You have 15 business days to file an appeal.’ Ms. Newberry deliberately denied my request for extension under DC-ADM 804, 2017, Inmate Handbook Policy, Pg. 10, No. 22 which states: ‘Every request for an extension will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.’ Ms. Newberry attempted to sabotage my Misconduct D571620 Grievance by legislating her own policy, defying PADOc rules.”

On May 4, Arroyo attempted to file a grievance against Lt. Dennis Newberry, charging him with retaliation for exercising free speech rights by denying him video calls and transferring him. It was sent by Certificate of Mailing to Newberry. No grievance number was returned, as is required.

Arroyo said: “Ms. J. Newberry has enjoined her pusillanimous husband, Insp. Lt. Newberry to punitively impede my access to file and receive an official grievance number in direct contravention of DC-ADM 804, Pt., Procedures-Policy,

in violation of my First Amendment constitutional right and further proof of retaliation. I have proof via my cash slip on which I wrote ‘1st Amend. For Grievance For Misconduct #D571620. Sent to Ms. Jen Newberry under a Certificate of Mailing.’

“Article I, Section 26 of the Pa. Constitution, also known as the Commonwealth’s ‘nondiscrimination clause,’ is designed to protect Commonwealth citizens from harassment or punishment for the exercise of their constitutional rights, as determined in cases: Fischer v. Department of Pub. Welfare, 509 Pa. 293, 502 A.2d 114 (1985); and Bronson v. Lechward, 624 A.2d 799 (Pa. Commonwealth 1993). Section 26 reads ‘Neither the Commonwealth nor any political subdivision thereof shall deny to any person the enjoyment of any civil right, nor discriminate against any person in the exercise of any civil right.’

“So I just really want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Inspector Lt. Newberry and his wife for their magnanimous gesture of not only retaliating against me, but blatantly interfering with the grievance process and violating my First Amendment constitutional right.

“By her not processing my actual grievance, not only does she prove that she’s impeded and interfered blatantly with the process, in violation and direct contravention of the PADOc policy. She’s basically in contempt of her duties. And by her not providing me an official inmate grievance number, then you’ve just expedited the process for me to file a 1983 [a civil rights action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Section 1983, in which one alleges a violation of his constitutional rights.] So instead of exhausting that grievance in PADOc, I can file a civil action in federal court.”

*Next: Retaliatory transfer violates COVID protocols.*

# Israelis prevent political prisoner from attending daughter’s funeral

By Ted Kelly

The latest cruelty the Israeli state inflicted on the Jarrar family followed the tragic and untimely death of Suha Jarrar at 31 years old at her home in Ramallah July 11.

Despite international pleas for Khalida Jarrar, elected representative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), to be released from custody long enough to attend her own daughter’s funeral, Israeli officials callously denied this request. Suha Jarrar was buried July 14 without her mother present.

A fierce advocate for the liberation of Palestinians and all oppressed people, Suha Jarrar represented the human rights advocacy organization al-Haq at the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. “She researched, advocated and fearlessly pushed to mainstream within Palestinian civil society the full range of rights issues related to gender and sexuality, even where perilous and proscribed,” said Omar Shakir of Human Rights Watch.

With a background in environmental science, Suha Jarrar became a climate change researcher and authored a 2019 report, “Adaptation Under Occupation,” about how the Israeli occupation has impeded Palestinians’ efforts to confront and adapt to climate change.

In a statement, organizers of the 2020 Palestine Writes Literature Festival praised Suha Jarrar as “a powerful voice of Palestinian resistance, social justice and internationalism.” Suha Jarrar had participated in the festival’s keynote panel alongside her sister Yafa Jarrar, Dr. Angela Davis and Workers World Party’s Susan Abulhawa.

### Message from prison

Khalida Jarrar released a statement from prison that was read at her daughter’s funeral. “The occupation robbed me of saying goodbye to my little bird Suha, forcing

me to say farewell with a flower from our lands instead of a kiss.”

“When Suha came into the world, her father was incarcerated. And she is leaving it now with her mother behind bars. This is a condensed example of human life for Palestinians, who love freedom despite the cruelty of occupation and colonialism which rob us even of the



Suha Jarrar (left) and her mother Khalida Jarrar.

oxygen we breathe. ...

“Give Suha her flowers. Talk about her, her beautiful character and plant an olive tree by her grave, so that she can always be under its cool shade.”

Like thousands of Palestinians in the resistance movement, the Jarrar family is well-acquainted with the so-called “justice” under occupation. Khalida Jarrar is currently serving a two-year sentence after 70 Israeli commandos arrested her in a 3 a.m. raid on the family’s house last October — only six months after she was last released from “administrative detention.”

It was the third time since 2015 that she was arrested and held without charges. Her spouse Ghassan has also been held for extended periods of time in Israeli custody.

The Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party condemns the state of Israel for its continued imprisonment of Khalida Jarrar and joins the chorus of calls around the world demanding her immediate release.

Suha Jarrar, ipresente!  
Free Khalida Jarrar!  
Free all political prisoners! □

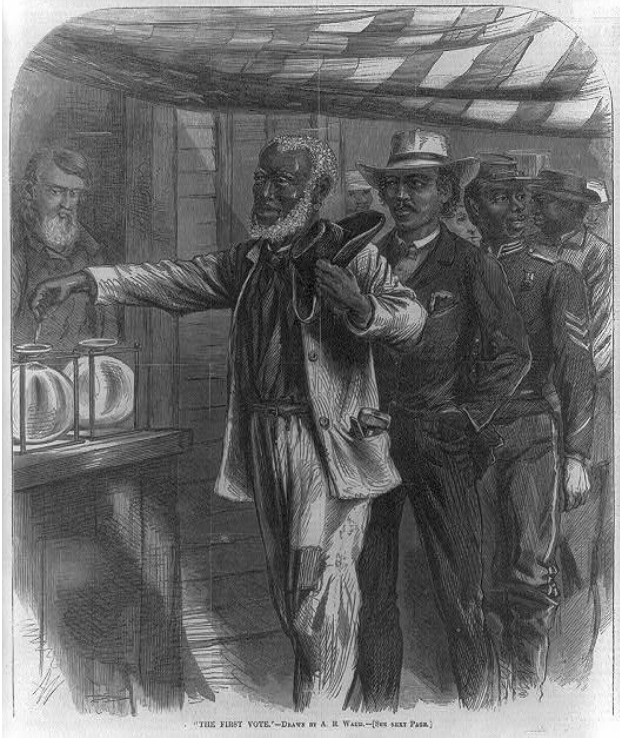


# How to defend the right to vote

The struggle for the bourgeois democratic right to one person, one vote still continues in the U.S., the most powerful imperialist country. That struggle began once the last enslaved person was freed in Galveston, Texas, June 19, 1865, known as Juneteenth.

During the next 10 years that defined Black Reconstruction, thousands of Black men gained the right to vote, resulting in their political representation for the first time in Southern state legislatures, especially in Louisiana, South Carolina and Mississippi, under the guardianship of the armed federal troops.

This right and other important gains during this radical period were tragically short-lived when federal troops were withdrawn under the Rutherford B. Hayes presidency. This allowed the former Confederacy to regroup in the form of the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens Councils, accompanied by the passage of oppressive semislavery laws used to terrorize the Black population.



A first vote under Reconstruction

Women, excluding many women of color, won the official right to vote in 1920, due to the efforts of the suffragist movement.

From the late 1880s until the mid-1960s, apartheid-like Jim Crow ruled the Deep South, until the massive Civil Rights Movement, through blood, sweat and tears, forced the Lyndon B. Johnson administration to pass the Voting Rights Act in 1965 — 150 years after the struggle to vote was first launched.

Today, in 2021, this Act is being weakened in 43 states with more than 250 bills introduced by Republicans in state houses to limit mail-in, early in-person and Election Day voting. Other constraints include stricter ID requirements, limited hours and narrower eligibility to vote absentee. Georgia has already passed a bill prohibiting mail voting altogether. These bills take vengeful, racist aim at mainly Black people whose votes were decisive in the defeat of Trump during the 2020 elections.

### Massive assault on gains of Civil Rights Movement

There has been an internal struggle within the Texas Legislature between right-wing Republicans and mainly African American and Latinx Democrats over these repressive measures. In fact, a delegation of these Democrats left Texas in an effort to stall the vote. They plan to hold a weeklong virtual press conference beginning July 19 with support from the Service Employees International Union and Mi Familia Vota, which promotes Latinx voting rights.

Republicans have threatened to have their Democratic counterparts arrested upon their return to the state.

These repressive bills are now being debated in 43 out of 50 states in the U.S. That begs this question: Why haven't the Democrats called for a national demonstration to defend the right to vote, since their main social base is Black, Latinx and other disenfranchised sectors of society?

Even with the pandemic still a factor, the unions — upon which the Democrats rely for votes — could still



Rally at World Of Coca-Cola Museum, Atlanta, March 15.

mobilize thousands of workers to come to Washington, D.C., to occupy the capital if need be. This could push back every one of the repressive bills, which are a real threat to the 1965 federal act being overturned.

What organized worker and even many of those unorganized would not want to take action to either defend or fight for this right? The Rochester Labor Council passed a resolution Oct. 8, 2020, supporting a general strike if Trump had refused to leave office; other labor councils followed suit. Why not revisit the need for labor to organize general strikes to defend voting rights, not just for Black people but for migrants, the incarcerated, those with disabilities, and youth?

The fact that such actions encouraging direct intervention from the workers, especially the most oppressed, haven't been called yet exposes once again the anti-worker, pro-bourgeois character of the Democratic Party, which seeks to keep the masses under its thumb and rendered powerless.

This is another example of why workers assemblies can be an important organizing tool — to help empower workers to become independent from the Democratic Party and to help pave the way for complete liberation from the profit-driven capitalist system and their parties. □

## Buffalo & Cuba

# How local politics shows Democrats serve imperialism

By Arjae Red  
Buffalo, N.Y.

Faced with a likely victory of his self-proclaimed socialist opponent, Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown has issued a statement supporting the reactionary “SOS Cuba” movement. His statement attempts to justify the U.S. push for regime change against the sovereign Cuban government.

Many people in Buffalo have already pointed out the hypocrisy in Brown's statement. Just last year, the Buffalo Police Department made national news for its violent mistreatment of people here protesting the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. This included Buffalo cops shoving 75-year-old Martin Gugino, inflicting serious head injuries.

The Buffalo force behaves like an occupying army on the city's East Side. Last

year, instead of siding with Buffalo's people against the local totalitarian police, Mayor Brown kept quiet.

Now Brown is speaking up, saying: “The Cuban people are fighting and protesting for basic freedoms that can only exist in a true democratic society. We are seeing a passionate movement against the socialist ideals that lead to totalitarian regimes which endorse and exploit economic suffering and inequality and deny access to the basic human rights of citizens by their own governments.”

The irony in this statement is plainly visible. For working-class Buffalonians, economic suffering and inequality is the daily norm. The 2020 poverty rate in Buffalo was 30.6%, more than double the New York state average.

Black people in Buffalo experience a poverty rate of 37.4%, while for white

people it is 19%. Buffalo has long had a reputation as one of the most segregated cities in the country.

Buffalo's literacy rate is a mere 70%, a pitiful figure compared to Cuba's 99.8%. Cuba managed to nearly eliminate illiteracy by 1962, only three years after the Revolution. Brown has been Mayor of Buffalo for more than fifteen years yet illiteracy persists.

The infant mortality rate in Erie County was 6.2 per thousand for 2016-2018, while Cuba's rate for 2018 was 4.4 per thousand and has decreased each year since.

These are just a few categories in which Cuba outstrips Buffalo, refuting Mayor Brown's claims against the Cuban government. In spite of the crushing effects of the genocidal blockade imposed by the United States over the last 60 years, Cuba is doing better — struggling to build socialism, — with socialist ideals — than Buffalo is doing under Brown in the capitalist U.S.

Is it because Byron Brown is corrupt or doesn't know how to run the city? Yes, he is hopelessly corrupt, but the real difference lies in the two economic systems. Socialist countries on average provide a much higher standard of living for their people than capitalist countries at a similar level of development.

**Behind the mayor's pandering to the right**

So when Byron Brown rails against socialism, it's not because socialism doesn't work — quite the opposite. He rails because socialism does work, and Cuban socialism is a living, breathing,

fighting example that thrives in the face of global capitalism and U.S. imperialist aggression. Cuban socialism poses a very real threat to the capitalist class, for which Byron Brown and the political elites of both ruling parties are mere mouthpieces.

If Mayor Brown truly cared about the Cuban people, he would demand an end to the blockade, which is designed to make the people of Cuba suffer — yet he failed to mention it at all.

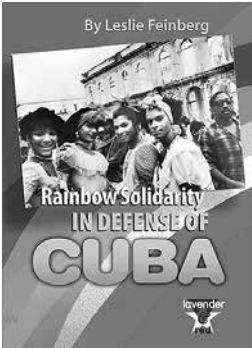
Mayor Brown's statement is nothing more than red-baiting against his political opponent India Walton, who beat incumbent Brown in the recent Democratic primary. India Walton, a Black woman with a working-class background, ties to the Nurses' Union and membership in the Democratic Socialists of America, would make history as Buffalo's first woman mayor.

Walton's victory in the primary blindsided Brown, forcing him to run a write-in campaign in an attempt to stay in office. Lacking a positive reputation, Mayor Brown resorts to red-baiting and pandering to far-right elements for support. Brown has rarely taken a position for anything during his time in office; for him this is just another opportunity to slander his opponent in hopes of winning votes from the right.

It is the duty of socialists and progressives across this city and the world to act resolutely in defense of Cuba and its socialist system against imperialist slander — and demand an end to the blockade now! □

## Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba

by Leslie Feinberg



This ground-breaking book is a compilation of 25 articles about same-sex love and sex/gender variance in Cuba's pre- and post-revolutionary history.

Available, along with complete Lavender & Red series, as free downloads at [workers.org/books](https://workers.org/books).



# Under imperialism

## Multiple crises deepen in Haiti

By G. Dunkel

Haitian authorities have arrested Colombian mercenaries and Haitian-Americans and charged them with participating in the July 7 assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse. But murky questions still remain: Who organized the attempted coup? Who paid the mercenaries? Who will benefit? Moïse was the only person killed in the attack, although his spouse was shot and left for dead. None of the president’s guards were injured, yet leaders in the guard corps were left unquestioned for days after the assault.

Previously, the United States had put Moïse’s mentor, Michel Martelly, and his Haiti Tèt Kale Party into the presidency. Then Trump and later Biden made it clear they firmly supported Moïse. But Washington may still take advantage of his disappearance.

With U.S. support, Moïse had hollowed out the Haitian government by refusing to hold elections. The result: Moïse ruled by decree while almost every other Haitian official—except for 10 senators—lost their mandate to govern.

The main political question facing Haiti now is how new elections are going to be organized—and who runs the country until elections take place. Both Claude Joseph, appointed prime minister by Moïse in April, and Ariel Henry, slated by Moïse to replace him, have close ties to Washington. Joseph has been acting as interim president since the assassination.

On July 17 a large group of Haitian organizations—unions, religious associations, political parties, business groups, artists, community associations—held a

meeting in Port-au-Prince to discuss forming a consensus to resolve the country’s political crisis—and to avoid foreign interference or intervention in Haiti’s internal affairs. (tinyurl.com/7myv2stv)

**Washington twice deposed the popular President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, while relying on despots and autocrats to keep refugees from fleeing to the U.S. and keep a lid on mass protest and organizing.**

On July 18 the Core Group—a U.S.-led imperialist alliance for intervention in Haiti—issued a statement recognizing Ariel Henry as acting prime minister and calling on him to form a government to hold fair and free elections. The group includes the ambassadors of the U.S., France, Germany, Spain, Brazil, Canada, the European Union and representatives from the United Nations and the Organization of American States. (tinyurl.com/umzxjeh6, Haiti Libre, July 18)

Political maneuvering will continue. The lines are being drawn more sharply.

### Haiti’s other crises: the economy and COVID-19

Fully one-third of Haiti’s economy is based on remittances from Haitians living and working in the United States. A large majority of Haitians survive on less than \$2.50 a day, and 42% are food insecure. The latter frequently face acute hunger, even if not actually dying from lack of food—yet.

Over the past three decades, U.S. imperialism has fostered and imposed political instability in Haiti. Washington twice deposed the popular President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, while relying on despots and autocrats to keep refugees from fleeing to the U.S. and keep a lid on mass protest and organizing. None of these measures have resolved the country’s grave economic problems.

Health conditions and medical care in Haiti have been in dire straits during the pandemic. Haitians received



Demonstrations were held worldwide in solidarity with Cuba. This one, in La Paz, Bolivia, cheers on the Cuban Revolution from a country where the mass movement reversed an October 2019 reactionary coup.

COVID-19 vaccinations for the first time July 16—given to 38 health workers and elderly people at a Port-au-Prince hospital. As of July 19, Haiti has had 20,000 cases and over 500 deaths from COVID. Since a test for the virus in Haiti costs \$60 to \$90, and most people earn less than \$2.50 a day, these numbers must be vast undercounts. (worldometers.info)

Currently Cuban doctors and medical workers provide most medical care in Haiti. Cuba’s aid to Haiti over many decades has been monumental, as CounterPunch documented in 2010. (tinyurl.com/msjeuxhe) From 1998 to 2010, Cuba performed over 207,000 surgeries, restored eyesight to 45,000, made 14.6 million patient-doctor consultations, taught over 100,000 how to read and helped in the birth of 100,000 children.

In the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Cuba was among the first responders, sending medical teams that saw hundreds of thousands of patients and performed tens of thousands of surgeries.

The COVID-19 vaccines sent to Haiti come from the U.S. and were developed by U.S. pharmaceutical giants bent on profit. Within Haiti’s context of imperialist and capitalist domination, it is unlikely the U.S. will let its vaccines be distributed by Cuban medical personnel.

Revolutionary Cuba’s history of solidarity with Haiti offers the possibility of another kind of future, a different choice for a country at the crossroads and in crisis. □

## ‘Ban killer drones!’

# Antiwar activists support whistleblower Daniel Hale

Daniel Hale, a former Air Force intelligence analyst, faces up to 10 years in prison for releasing documents relating to the Pentagon’s drone program. The documents expose atrocities and the existence of “kill lists” that name people targeted for assassination.

Hale pleaded guilty to one count of violating the 1917 Espionage Act. However, he is scheduled to be sentenced in federal court July 27 for providing classified documents on the drone program to The Intercept. The magazine’s actual anonymous source confirms it was not Hale.

Antiwar activists held a press conference in New York City July 17 to support Hale and raise the demand to “Ban killer drones!” Scheduled speakers included

Susan Schnall, member of the National Board of Veterans For Peace (VFP) and President of the New York City VFP Chapter 34; Sally Jones, chair of the

Peace Action Fund of New York State; Sara Flounders, co-director, International Action Center; Margaret Kimberley, Black Alliance for Peace; and Debra Sweet,



PHOTO: ELLEN DAVIDSON

Director, World Can’t Wait. And the Raging Grannies sang.

The press conference took place near the new installation by artist Sam Durant, “Untitled (drone).”

“Joe Biden apparently wants to see Daniel Hale buried in prison to set an example for potential whistleblowers, because the documents that Daniel so courageously released reveal the atrocities, illegality and moral impossibility of drone warfare and drone surveillance,” said Nick Mottern, co-coordinator of BanKillerDrones.org, in the press release announcing the event. “We’re demanding that President Biden pardon Daniel Hale.”

— Report by Martha Grevatt

# Capitalism breeds climate catastrophe

Continued from page 1

resources, and sometimes of equipment, has not allowed more to be saved.

Belgium’s Deputy Prime Minister Jan Jambon, who imposed this reform, and former Prime Minister Charles Michel, now President of the European Council, have literally killed people. Last year, the same neoliberal rage against public services cost the lives of many patients. Their COVID could not be treated because our various governments had cut tens of thousands of hospital beds. (France and Belgium lost 110,000 beds under former presidents Charles Michel, Nicolas Sarkozy, François Hollande and current president Emmanuel Macron.)

“This is not the time for controversy,” wrote the daily Le Soir on July 18. But of course it’s time to ask the essential question: “Could we have greatly reduced the number of victims?” It is indeed the moment to reiterate that, faced with COVID, some countries have done a hundred times better than us in terms of victims, thanks to a set of radical and energetic measures placing the protection of lives at the center of their agendas from the first day of the alert.

Among these measures, social teams went from house to house to train in protective measures, to detect cases, to assist the most fragile and thus limit the spread. During the recent floods, such teams could have saved many lives by going

from house to house as soon as the alert was given July 14, to identify the most vulnerable people and protect or evacuate them! Is one of the richest countries in the world incapable of providing a real social protection service to its elderly and disabled?

It is also a time to reflect on the remarkable French book, “Quand le dernier arbre aura été abattu, nous mangerons notre argent.” [“When the last tree has been felled, we will eat our money.”] Ludo De Witte demonstrates how the capitalist system, through its thirst for profit, leads to waste, to the plundering of resources, to the destruction of Nature and of our living conditions. Floods, viruses or other catastrophes: it is not Nature that

is violent but this society that puts money above everything.

However, in this flood of suffering, a great ray of hope appeared: The admirable solidarity among the stricken inhabitants and in the whole region. The risky rescues, the donations of food, clothing and equipment, the offers of housing, the help in clearing the mud, the messages of sympathy. As in the first wave of COVID, the solidarity of ordinary citizens was magnificent and moving.

And so the people below deserve better leaders and, above all, a better economic system, where health and life prevail over the profits of a minority. Let’s not wait for the next catastrophe to impose change. □





MO FOTO: CHAD HIPOLITO

**Durante una ceremonia celebrada en mayo en honor de los niños cuyas tumbas se descubrieron en el internado de Kamloops, Nipawi Kakinoosit, de las Primeras Naciones Sucker Creek, canta la canción del A.I.M. (Movimiento Indio Americano) en la legislatura provincial de Columbia Británica.**

# ¡Reparaciones! Traer a los niñxs indígenas a casa

No hay mayor prueba de genocidio que el robo y asesinato sistemático de los niñxs de un pueblo.

Los gobiernos de Estados Unidos y Canadá están acusados penalmente de genocidio tras la nueva revelación, a finales de mayo, de la muerte de miles de niños indígenas en “internados” y escuelas residenciales administradas y autorizadas por el Estado.

Aunque los acontecimientos siguen desarrollándose, el total de tumbas identificadas recientemente en Estados Unidos y Canadá asciende actualmente a más de 1.300. Pero incluso la Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación de Canadá de 2015 concluyó que al menos 3.200 niños murieron en los internados durante su funcionamiento desde finales de 1880 y a lo largo de 1990. (caid.ca/TRCFinVol42015.pdf)

En el siglo XXI, los portavoces de los países colonizadores siguen expresando su sorprendido “dolor” ante la noticia de los niños muertos. Pero las Primeras Naciones y los pueblos indígenas saben que el genocidio fue el objetivo oficial todo el tiempo.

El 28 de mayo, cuando la jefa Rosanne Casimir de la Primera Nación Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc confirmó que había al menos 215 tumbas de niños indígenas en el Colegio Residencial de Kamloops, en la Columbia Británica, dijo que lo que la nación llamaba “el conocimiento” de los niños desaparecidos generó la búsqueda. Su madre

y su abuela habían compartido historias de abusos en las escuelas. Dijo al Toronto Star: “Es nuestra historia, y es algo que siempre hemos tenido que luchar para demostrar”. (28 de mayo)

En Estados Unidos y Canadá, durante más de cien años, los niños indígenas y de las Primeras Naciones fueron secuestrados de sus familias y comunidades para llevarlos a escuelas cristianas financiadas por el Estado, a veces dirigidas por militares. Fueron convertidos a la fuerza al cristianismo, golpeados físicamente, abusados sexualmente, traumatizados al cortarles el pelo y torturados por hablar sus propias lenguas. Miles de personas murieron de desnutrición, enfermedades y corazones rotos. Los niños que seguían con su pueblo vivían con el miedo perpetuo de que “vendrán y se los llevarán”.

La guerra contra los niños formaba parte de una guerra general de los colonizadores contra los pueblos nativos de todo el continente norteamericano, utilizando estrategias de subyugación, segregación y asimilación que incluían el genocidio físico, el robo de tierras, el exilio y el genocidio cultural.

Esta guerra contra los niños fue inequívoca e innegablemente una política del Estado colonizador. La “escuela” más infame para niños indígenas en Estados Unidos -la Escuela Industrial de Carlisle, en Pensilvania- fue creada por el capitán Richard Henry Pratt, que sirvió durante

30 años como oficial del ejército estadounidense y como superintendente de la escuela.

Los estados colonizadores de América del Norte surgieron gracias al genocidio de los pueblos indígenas. Las “disculpas” ofrecidas por los estados ahora no tienen sentido. Nótese el amargo hecho de que la disculpa de Estados Unidos fue una resolución general metida en la Ley de Defensa de 2010 por el Congreso. Describía el genocidio suavemente como “casos de violencia, maltrato y abandono”. Era brutalmente clara: nada en la resolución “autoriza o apoya ninguna reclamación legal contra Estados Unidos, y la resolución no resuelve ninguna reclamación”. (indianlaw.org/node/529)

Continúan los crímenes contra los pueblos indígenas, desde los oleoductos contaminantes que atraviesan las tierras tradicionales hasta la confiscación de niños indígenas de las madres al nacer mediante la táctica de declarar a la madre no apta para el cuidado, junto con una epidemia de mujeres, niñas y Dos Espíritus indígenas desaparecidos y asesinados.

Las prácticas de genocidio de los colonos por parte del Estado nunca han cesado; simplemente se llevan a cabo de forma diferente.

Y la resistencia de los pueblos indígenas y de las Primeras Naciones al genocidio nunca ha cesado. Ronalee Lavallee, estudiante de una de las escuelas canadienses de los años 60 y 70, recuerda que muchos estudiantes que hablaban Cree

pasaban las noches enseñando la lengua a otros en secreto. (Washington Post, 24 de junio)

Los pueblos indígenas reclaman reparaciones. Exigen que se encuentren e identifiquen todas las tumbas sin marcar de los niños, que los niños sean devueltos a sus familias y naciones, y que se paguen reparaciones a sus familias.

Por encima de todo, exigen la reparación de la tierra: ¡Devolución de la tierra! Esto incluye recuperar las tierras natales de los Pueblos Originarios; detener la devastación del medio ambiente; garantizar que todas las comunidades tengan agua potable, viviendas adecuadas y atención médica; proteger los lugares sagrados para administrar el medio ambiente en este continente; y el poder de decir no a los proyectos, planes y políticas que afectan a los pueblos y sus tierras.

En un artículo publicado el 3 de junio en Indigenous Climate Action, Eriel Delanger resume por qué son necesarias estas demandas: “Para que podamos sanar a la tierra, y empezar a reparar las profundas heridas de la desconexión con nuestros parientes humanos y no humanos. Es necesario afirmar que somos gente de la tierra, y que nuestra lengua, nuestra cultura y nuestras identidades están conectadas a estos lugares de los que fueron arrancados nuestros padres y abuelos. Necesitamos que nos devuelvan la tierra”. (tinyurl.com/3u3wtjwr)

¡Traedlos a casa! ¡Devolución de la tierra! ¡Reparaciones! □

## Sobre la defensa del socialismo

Por Olujimi Alade

El 7 de junio de 2021 fue una reunión que esperaba con ansias. Fue la primera vez que pude reunirme en persona con camaradas en más de un año. Las reuniones por zoom fueron agradables pero nada como conversar cara a cara con tus compañeros revolucionarios.

La reunión fue genial, como siempre. Estábamos discutiendo las formas de construir una asamblea de trabajadores, y la conversación giró en torno a cómo involucrar a los miembros de la clase trabajadora y atraerlos al pensamiento radical. ¿Cómo nos relacionamos con personas que tienen opiniones reaccionarias?

Siendo un ávido espectador de YouTube, me preocupaba que los mensajes reaccionarios y la retórica sobre los países socialistas ganaran terreno en esa plataforma y me preocupaba cómo podría traducirse esto fuera de un entorno virtual. Necesitamos una forma de dialogar con los posibles cuadros que puedan haberse dejado llevar por esos argumentos anticomunistas, ya que podrían resultar perjudiciales para el movimiento obrero.

Muchos trabajadores — cuadros potenciales bien intencionados — son víctimas de creer lo que escuchan en los medios de comunicación convencionales y no necesariamente todo de la derecha. Algunas fuentes liberales ven el socialismo como un tipo de reforma, sin entender la esencia

del socialismo. Esto podría dejar a los trabajadores expuestos a comprar posiciones más reaccionarias.

La retórica reaccionaria puede adoptar muchas formas; un tipo muy común es calumniar los esfuerzos existentes que tratan de construir el socialismo, tanto del pasado como del presente. A medida que más y más jóvenes se sienten atraídos por el socialismo, la clase dominante burguesa ha adquirido un gran interés en degradar a los países socialistas del Sur Global, además de la antigua URSS.

Necesitamos una oportunidad de educación, no sólo sobre lo que es el socialismo, sino sobre cómo se pone en práctica. Sobre cómo los países socialistas existentes y los que trabajan para construir el socialismo desafían al imperialismo estadounidense. Tenemos que desmitificarlos, humanizarlos, como hemos hecho con Palestina.

**Cuanto más me educaba, más cambiaban mis opiniones**

¿Cómo nos relacionamos con la gente que no entiende esto? Hablando desde mi propia perspectiva, yo mismo tenía muchas opiniones reaccionarias, nacidas de la ignorancia. Cuanto más me formé, más cambiaron estas opiniones. Esto es válido para la mayoría de los trabajadores.

No hace mucho tiempo que creía que José Stalin era un dictador despiadado, no hace mucho que pensaba que Mao Zedong era un maniaco sanguinario que asesinó

a millones de personas. No hace mucho tiempo que creía con todo mi corazón que la República Popular Democrática de Corea era la mayor amenaza para la paz mundial y estaba dispuesta a lanzar una bomba nuclear.

Como antiguo liberal o demócrata, me he dejado engañar por los argumentos no sólo de los conservadores sino de los liberales y otros izquierdistas que se han dejado engañar por las mentiras imperialistas de Estados Unidos sobre los países socialistas. Las personas de las que obtenía esta información no eran los sospechosos habituales, Daily Wire o PragerU, eran de maestros, profesores, compañeros de clase liberales centristas, etc. Incluso durante mis primeros días como comunista, todavía tenía reservas sobre el funcionamiento del socialismo debido a las creencias persistentes sobre los revolucionarios comunistas.

A veces este subterfugio es eficaz, y en lugar de perseguir una verdadera praxis radical y revolucionaria, los cuadros potenciales, intimidados por las tonterías conservadoras sobre los países socialistas, persiguen ideologías más moderadas y reformistas como la socialdemocracia.

Cuando finalmente escuché un podcast con marxistas-leninistas que desacreditaban a fondo muchas de las medias verdades y mentiras sobre Stalin y la URSS, esto jugó un papel fundamental para convertirme en un revolucionario, y me empujó a leer más sobre la historia de la URSS. Otras interacciones con camaradas de Workers



MO FOTO: JOE PIETTE

**Jimi Alade en el May Day 2021 de Filadelfia.**

World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero me han enseñado el impacto que los movimientos socialistas han tenido y siguen teniendo en el proletariado mundial.

En el futuro, al compartir cómo podemos disipar los mitos comunes sobre los movimientos socialistas actuales, debo ser consciente de destacar mis puntos de vista y experiencias antes de llegar al marxismo-leninismo. Con el gobierno de Biden reprimiendo a los anticapitalistas, la maquinaria mediática corporativa avivando las llamas para la guerra con China y con la hegemonía imperialista estadounidense amenazando a la RPDC, Cuba, Bolivia, Venezuela y Perú, es importante que los izquierdistas nos eduquemos a nosotros mismos y a los cuadros potenciales sobre los triunfos de esos países contra probabilidades insuperables.

Los países socialistas y los países con líderes socialistas están inspirando a la clase trabajadora en todo el mundo. Tenemos que ser sus mejores defensores y argumentar en su favor. Se lo debemos a nuestros camaradas de aquí y de todo el mundo. □