

Mandates alone can't stop COVID

By Betsey Piette

With pandemic rates surging, President Joe Biden on Sept. 9 announced plans to mandate vaccinations for tens of millions of U.S. workers against COVID, including in the private sector, health care and federally funded programs. He also announced plans to encourage K-12 schools to mandate masks for all, require vaccines for workers and increase COVID testing. His plan would restore funding to districts risking funding cuts for violating their state's anti-mask restrictions.

Under Biden's executive order, all businesses with more than 100 employees must require workers to be immunized or submit to weekly testing. Around 50,000 health care facilities that accept Medicare or Medicaid funding would be required to vaccinate workers. Federal employees will be required to get vaccinated or lose their jobs, without the option to be tested.

Biden's order, which still must be written, will impact an estimated 80 million workers — two-thirds of the U.S. workforce. Businesses would be required to give workers paid time off to get vaccinated. Bosses who ignore the mandate could face a fine of

\$14,000 per violation. Workers face even more — the loss of their jobs.

150,000 cases and 1,500 deaths per day

The pronouncement comes while new U.S. infections have surged to over 150,000 a day, with daily deaths rising to 1,500, largely due to the delta variant. Despite these new COVID numbers — the highest since early this year — there is already widespread opposition to Biden's plan, particularly in states where governors have already restricted mask mandates and vaccine requirements.

But not all the opposition is coming from the usual suspects.

Politically, the anti-vaxxers and anti-mask movements have polarized the population, confusing many by making the issues "individual rights" vs. "authoritarian" governments. While "populist/fascist" types aggressively defend the right to refuse vaccines, not everyone opposed to vaccine mandates is a right-winger.

Many in communities of color are leery of government-backed medical campaigns. Racist, often dangerous health policies and clinical experiments have historically targeted Black and Brown communities. One



Backers of both pro-mask and anti-mask mandates for schools demonstrate before a school board meeting, Aug. 19, Marietta, Ga.

of the most infamous was the Tuskegee syphilis study (1932-1972), a study of Black men, many of whom had the disease. They were left untreated, even after penicillin was found to be an effective cure. Also, women in Puerto Rico were subjected to widespread forced sterilization from the 1930s to 1970s.

Some people with disabilities are unable to wear masks for health reasons, while others with compromised immune systems are unable to be vaccinated.

U.S. corporations, eager to force workers to return to their jobs, regardless of safety issues, may be more inclined to support Biden's plan. Several large companies already mandate vaccinations or regular testing. However, a meat-packing trade group voiced opposition to the vaccine mandates, citing fear of losing workers — although they seemed less concerned when their unprotected

workers were dying from COVID.

The labor movement is also torn over vaccine requirements. It is no surprise that both the National Nurses United and the American Federation of Teachers support the call, given the particularly deadly impact of COVID on their members. But others, including the United Auto Workers and some public employee unions, see the mandate as government trampling on workers' rights and opening the door to having other concessions imposed.

The American Federation of Government Employees challenged the implementation of the policy as not giving workers a voice in their working conditions.

Also unsurprising is the wide opposition from groups representing police and prison guards, who have tended to show some of the lowest rates of vaccination despite high incidents of contact with the public. While

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Mahoma López from Laundry Workers Center addresses Sept. 4 rally in Union Square, New York City.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

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Attica is all of us

Rally outside Soledad Prison

Running for Mumia

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Nabisco strikers say, ‘No contract, no snacks!’

By Lyn Neeley
Portland, Ore.

It’s Day 32 of the Nabisco strike in Portland. Picket lines swell every Saturday, when members of unions, groups and the community join together in a support rally for the striking Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Union Local 364. The message is clear from rally speakers, picketers’ placards and chants: “We are in it to win it!” and “Don’t buy Nabisco products.”

The picket line is four blocks long, along a highway with a constant stream of drivers honking in support as they pass by.

During this Saturday’s Sept. 11 rally, a huge semitruck was prevented from turning in to the plant, as picketers gathered together to block the driveway. The driver was stalled in the turning lane for over five minutes, until an unrelenting crowd forced him to drive away.

Doug, retired Nabisco worker said, “Our goal is to get

the word out that every cracker that stays on the shelf is a loss for Nabisco’s owner, Mondelez International.” He said some of the flour they are using is stale, because supporting protesters prevented the trains from delivering flour for three weeks.

Doug reported that Nabisco guards tried to intimidate protesters by shoving them and getting up close in their face, as they blocked scabs from getting to the plant. Scab-carrying buses and vans were pushed back into the neighborhood, and the strikebreakers were forced to walk to the plant through the “walk of shame.”

BCTWGM Vice President Mike Burlingham said at today’s rally: “Today is a personal milestone for me, as this is the official 14-year anniversary of my employment at Nabisco. That used to mean something; but now, it’s just a number. It means nothing, because I am no longer going to be able to plan with the retirement I was promised by the company when I first started.” □



Rebecca Cooper, second from the right, strategic campaign manager of the Oregon Nurses Association, stands with four members of their union. ONA union members have supported the Nabisco strike since the beginning.



Donna Marks, center, a spokesperson for the BCTWGM union, will be speaking about the Nabisco strike at a Sept. 30 WWP webinar, ‘Signs of Struggle and the Road Ahead: Workers Fight Back.’

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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

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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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A major victory

Mexican top court says abortion not a crime

By Monica Moorehead

Mexico’s Supreme Court voted unanimously 10-0 to decriminalize abortion on Sept. 7, a major victory for women and others who have the ability to become pregnant. The 11th judge was absent during the vote. Abortions have been legal in Mexico City since 2007.

The 10 judges made the decision when they ruled a law unconstitutional in Mexico’s northern Coahuila state that imposed up to three years of prison time for women who underwent illegal abortions and the people who aided them. It is estimated that hundreds of Mexican women have faced false criminal charges of homicide for the “crime” of seeking an abortion from 2007 to 2016.

Paula Avila-Guillen, executive director of the New York-based Women’s Equality Center, states, “Abortion has been effectively decriminalized in Mexico. And every woman currently imprisoned in the country for abortion can use this precedent to be freed.” (Washington Post, Sept. 7)

This overturned law is very similar to the Texas anti-abortion law, which the U.S. Supreme Court upheld, that criminalizes anyone who gets an abortion beyond the first six-week term of pregnancy. The law lets anyone sue for a “bounty” of \$10,000 against those who “aid and abet” pregnant people to get an abortion after that time period, although not the pregnant person, who would not



Tens of thousands of women protest gender-based violence, March 8, 2020, in Mexico City.

face a lawsuit or a financial penalty. These reactionary laws are likened to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 that placed bounties on enslaved Black people who dared to escape north to freedom, and on the abolitionists who helped them.

While the Sept. 7 ruling does not automatically legalize abortions throughout Mexico, it does lay the legal basis for those who have been imprisoned for either having abortions or aiding others in getting the procedures to be released in all 32 federal entities that make up Mexico.

Only Oaxaca, Hidalgo and Veracruz have taken Mexico City’s lead for the past two years in decriminalizing abortions. Medical services for abortions in those three states have been limited due to the

religious influence of the Catholic Church. Mexico may very soon join Argentina, Cuba, Guyana and Uruguay as the fifth country in Latin America and the Caribbean to legalize abortion. This will be a historic development, since Mexico has the second largest population of Catholic followers in the region after Brazil.

Melissa Ayala, speaking on behalf of the Mexican feminist organization GIRE, commented on the ruling, “This will not only have an impact in Mexico; it will set the agenda for the entire Latin American region.” (Washington Post, Sept. 7)

The ruling which decriminalizes abortion is rooted in the growing women’s movement throughout Mexico, which also

leads the struggle against gender-based violence. An average of 10 women a day are murdered in Mexico; 2,000 women were murdered during the first seven months of this year.

International Working Women’s Day 2020

On March 8, 2020, International Working Women’s Day, the country’s National Palace in Mexico City was stormed by tens of thousands of people, the majority of them women. They were armed with bats, blowtorches and hammers, demanding the government end gender-based violence, known as femicide. Thousands of women followed up on that demand the following day, by carrying out a one-day national strike.

The right to have an abortion and the right to live free from male-dominated violence are very much tied to women’s and other peoples’ right to control their own bodies.

While the Mexico ruling is a big step forward in making abortions legal, the Texas abortion law is one big step backwards and an effort to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortions for women in 1973.

Activists in Texas, which is stolen from Mexico, will no doubt take part in the Oct. 2 demonstrations scheduled to take place in every U.S. state and Washington, D.C., to demand abortion access for all. The victory in Mexico will no doubt be a big inspiration! □

Evictions threaten millions of U.S. workers

By G. Dunkel

Between 2 and 4 million households, out of 80 million rental households, will lose their homes due to evictions in the next two months, according to a survey by the U.S. Census Bureau. This is four times as many as would typically occur nationwide throughout an entire calendar year. (Washington Post, Sept. 3)

The Census report notes that nearly 40% of those at risk have an income of less than \$25,000 a year. About the same proportion are Black or Latinx. (tinyurl.com/3umvf7fx)

How many households are dispossessed, and how quickly the process goes, will depend on how quickly local eviction courts work and how many landlords practice “private” evictions with hired thugs. Neither the courts nor the landlords are known for paying any attention to tenants’ rights, especially since the legal framework around property developed centuries ago from feudal courts designed to protect landlords.

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision on Aug. 26 to cancel the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ban on evictions — a decision SCOTUS based on the CDC’s “lack of authority” to make such a ban. Research published by the National Institutes of Health has argued that eviction bans can hinder the spread of COVID-19. While some NIH conclusions are based on models, there is research that supports the conclusion, such as a paper examining the spread of SARS-COV-2 in Philadelphia. (tinyurl.com/e5zuadzj)

Resistance to evictions is growing stronger. In acknowledgement of this mounting socially disruptive problem, some major newspapers — the New York Post and the Washington Post — featured the same picture of a Sept. 4 protest in New York City where the Workers Assembly Against Racism called for “No evictions. Cancel rent!”

Failure of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Responding to the economic crisis caused by COVID-19, Congress passed a series of emergency rental assistance packages beginning in 2020 that reached a total of \$46.5 billion.

The amount allocated to the Rental Assistance Program is about 90% of the total rental arrears by some



New York City, Sept. 4.

measures. While the money comes from the federal government, some states and some cities that already have rental assistance programs can apply for this aid and set up programs to disburse it. The response from states that lack existing programs is slower, because they have to set them up.

It appears that only 7% of the money allocated to rental assistance has been disbursed.

The program has been beset by strict requirements — such as requiring landlord-tenant leases, onerous applications and problems in making information available to communities. The program has been met with significant landlord resistance, especially since rents in many areas of the U.S. are spiking, and owners see eviction as a chance to get higher rents.

Millions of renters don’t have leases, especially when they are living in illegal apartments. Los Angeles is estimated to have 200,000 illegal apartments. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio recently claimed that the city has 100,000 illegal basement apartments. In rural areas, people rent rooms or sheds.

LGBTQ+ renters are faring even worse than the general population. About 1 in 5 of LGBTQ renters are

behind on rent, according to an August brief from the Williams Institute. Of that number, nearly half fear they will soon be displaced. (tinyurl.com/2vmcjmnb)

The pressure to disburse more rental assistance more quickly is growing intense, especially with the economy stuttering in reaction to the delta variant.

The CDC eviction moratorium, which ran between Sept. 4, 2020, and July 31, 2021, helped to prevent at least 1.55 million eviction filings across the U.S. That was less than half as many cases as are usually filed over a similar period. (evictionlab.org/eleven-months-cdc)

From mid-March 2020 up until Sept. 4, landlords have filed for 504,892 evictions in six states — Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri and New Mexico. The filing was allowable under the CDC ban, which only prohibited actual evictions. Now that the ban is off, these filings can be turned into actual evictions quickly.

Evictions will be a problem for workers in the U.S. as long as workers don’t have the right to a liveable wage, health care and housing. Organizing against evictions now is part of the struggle to gain those rights. □

Workers commemorate centennial

The Battle of Blair Mountain

By Otis Grotewohl
Charleston, W.Va.

Throughout West Virginia, mine workers, activists and workers from around the world commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Blair Mountain over the Labor Day weekend. There were over 30 activities, from the northernmost part of the state close to Pittsburgh to the southernmost part of the state in Mingo and McDowell Counties.

The Battle of Blair Mountain was the longest and most violent clash between two armed forces within the U.S., aside from the Civil War against the slavocracy. As with any class struggle, the Battle at Blair Mountain developed through a dialectical process.

In 1920, thousands of coal miners of many nationalities in Mingo County were organizing and went on strike against very exploitative conditions. At that time, 90% of coal miners in West Virginia were forced to live in company houses inside company towns that were operated by coal bosses. Mine workers were limited to shopping at company-owned stores with company-issued money known as “scrip,” and they were forced to send their children to company-operated schools.

In some instances, women were subjected to sexual abuse by company town officials, in exchange for scrip. (Appalachianhistory.net, Nov. 6, 2013) According to Dr. Chuck Keeney — great-grandson of Frank Keeney, a socialist labor leader and a key figure in the Blair Mountain Battle, “West Virginia had the highest percentage of company towns than any other state.” (The Valley Labor Report, April 5)

After miners began to organize, they were kicked out of the company houses and forced to form tent colonies along the Tug River. In June 1921, coal bosses hired the West Virginia State Police — an outfit created for the specific purpose of busting miners’ strikes — to ransack, raid and surround the tent colonies with guns pointed at the miners and their families. A Black miner named Alex Breedlove attempted to surrender, but the racist, union-busting agents shot him down as his hands were raised in the air. The cold-blooded murder enraged coal miners across the state.

The evictions and murders carried out by the coal barons led one Mingo County police chief, Sid Hatfield, to cross class lines and side with the mine workers. Hatfield participated in a gun battle against union-busting gun thugs from the Baldwin-Felts agency in the town of Matewan, which is fairly depicted in the John Sayles movie with the same name. Soon after, Hatfield was falsely charged in a conspiracy of shooting up a nonunion mine camp in nearby McDowell County.

On Aug. 1, 1921, Hatfield and Ed Chambers, one of his officers who also sided with miners against gun thugs and state police, were set for a trial in the McDowell County town of Welch. On that morning, both were shot dead in front of their spouses by Baldwin-Felts goons in Welch on the courthouse steps. Hatfield and Chambers were the only two police officers in U.S. history recorded to have sided with workers against their class enemies. For that they were murdered.

Armed miners form the Red Neck Army

In late August, thousands of armed coal miners formed an encampment in Kanawha County, close to Charleston. Sporting red bandannas and identifying themselves as the “Red Neck Army,” thousands of Black

and white coal miners marched south, starting in the Kanawha County town of Marmet. Many were Italian immigrants.

Unfortunately, the miners could not reach their intended destination as they were confronted by the notoriously anti-union sheriff of Logan County, Don Chafin. Chafin was known by the miners for trying to shoot up the United Mine Workers Union District 17 headquarters in a drunken rage in 1919. He ended up shot but to the miners’ detriment, he survived.

Chafin confronted the Red Neck Army with his own private army of deputies known as the “Logan Defenders.” It was at that moment the battle ensued at Blair Mountain. Chafin’s army even flew planes that dropped homemade bombs. Luckily, the bombs did not hit their targets, but people were shot and killed on both sides.

Following the Battle of Blair Mountain, hundreds of miners were indicted on charges of murder and treason. Many other mine workers were blacklisted and red-baited to the point where even their family members were denied employment in the state, forcing them to leave.

Public school textbooks have intentionally omitted mention of Blair Mountain for the same reason they have historically ignored the Tulsa massacre, as well as other examples of genocide and murder committed by the U.S against workers and people of oppressed nations.

Workers remember, commemorate the battle’s centennial

The “Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial Kick-Off” was held Sept. 3 at the Civic Center in Charleston. Progressive and labor organizations, ranging from the UMWA to the anarchist-oriented PM Press, had information tables. Events in several parts



Armed striking miners in a snipers’ nest, Battle of Blair Mountain, 1921.



United Mine Workers (UMWA) members retrace steps of striking miners 100 years later, Sept. 3-5, West Virginia.

of the state led up to the kickoff.

Throughout the Labor Day weekend, there were art exhibits, teach-ins and reenactments, including one of the shooting of Hatfield and Chambers at the courthouse in Welch. There were storytelling dinners with food from that era and a free screening of John Sayles’ “Matewan.”

This author attended an event sponsored by the West Virginia branch of the Industrial Workers of the World at a Unitarian Universalist Congregation church, where a pro-union band from Minneapolis called the Wooden Shoe Ramblers played. Using old-time instruments with a folk and blues style, they sang not only songs related to Blair Mountain but also songs about George Floyd and the Greensboro Massacre, as well as their own unique rendition of Paul Robeson’s “Old Man River.” A song that received the most enthusiastic applause was about the 2018 education workers’ strike that started in West Virginia and carried over to other states.

Workers World spoke with one of the WV-IWW organizers, Brendan Muckian-Bates, who said, “Our local in this state wanted to participate in the activities, because we wanted to honor the legacy of those miners from a century ago by using the power of a song, a Wobbly tradition, to remember the past and inspire us to future action.”

Another event on “The Legacy of the Red Bandanna” was presented by various groups such as the Steel City John Brown

Club and the WV United Caucus, which is a rank-and-file caucus of education workers that formed because of the 2018 strike. WV United Caucus member Nicole McCormick spoke about the significance of defiant education workers wearing red bandannas as a symbolic gesture of solidarity, just as the miners did during the Battle of Blair Mountain.

UMWA marches to commemorate the Battle, solidarize with Alabama miners

Also Friday, Sept. 3, the UMWA started a three-day march, starting in Marmet in Kanawha County and ending up at a UMWA Hall in Logan County Sept. 5. The march was led by UMWA International President Cecil Roberts.

On Sept. 6, the UMWA held its 83rd annual Labor Day rally in Racine, located in Boone County between Kanawha and Logan Counties, where the historic march began and ended. While attendees emphasized the 100-year centennial of the Battle of Blair Mountain, they also showed strong support for their union siblings in Alabama, who have been on strike at Warrior Met Coal Inc. for close to six months.

As forces of reaction continue to attack the working class — whether it be through attacks on abortion rights or through the forced separation of migrant families — for our class to successfully fight back, it is important to honor and study historic struggles such as the Battle of Blair Mountain! □

A partisan pro-worker newspaper

Support Workers World

The real International Workers Day is May 1, not the first Monday in September. Nevertheless, we solidarize with all workers who take this occasion to celebrate union pride — and those who express a readiness to fight for their rights.

Since Workers World’s first issue in 1959, the newspaper has covered class struggles with a slant. WW is unapologetically biased on the side of the workers and oppressed. This is true of our strike coverage. When workers withhold their labor to extract a measure of justice from the bosses, WW pays attention.

Since former President Ronald Reagan broke the 1981 Professional Air Traffic Controllers strike, covered by WW, bosses have pushed for concessions in union contracts.

Since then, workers have fought fiercely against concessions and job cuts, from the Hormel and Pittston Coal strikes in the 1980s, to the Caterpillar, UPS, and the San Francisco and Detroit newspaper strikes in the 1990s, to the Alabama coal strike and Nabisco strike happening right now. This paper roots for our class — the

multinational working class.

We devote ink to the resistance of unorganized workers too, including the hundreds of work stoppages demanding COVID protection and sick pay, walkouts at McDonald’s and Google opposing sexual harassment, and work and hunger strikes by incarcerated workers. Many articles have supported the Fight for \$15/hour (at least) and a union.

This year’s front pages have focused on the Amazon union drive, led by Black workers, in Bessemer, Ala., the importance of passing the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and more pro-labor stories.

WW issues include at least one page devoted to workers’ struggles. Our biweekly On the Picket Line column contains timely news of organized and unorganized workers in motion.

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revolutionary socialist paper. Since the early 1990s, the fund has supported the workers.org website, where WW articles are put up daily and the PDF file of the weekly issue is posted. The newspaper is now being printed and mailed out once a month.

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Alabama coal miners on strike, nurses and students walk out

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Centreville, Ala.

Sept. 12 — At the beginning of July, Alabama’s vaccination rate was the lowest among U.S. states, with only 34% of its people fully vaxxed. Now the state has been hit by the more contagious delta variant. Hospitalizations have risen fivefold in the last two months.

On Sept. 6, the evening of Labor Day, over two dozen emergency room nurses and hospital workers refused to clock into their night shift at UAB Hospital in Birmingham to protest crisis working conditions and unfair pay during the pandemic. The hospital is the state’s largest single-site employer.

When a local WTVM 13 reporter conducted a live interview with the three spokeswomen for the multigendered, multinational group, one made this statement:



Lindsey Harris, president of the Alabama Nurses Association, speaks on Sept. 2.

“We all came into nursing because we have a compassionate heart, and we want to care for people. But going through two COVID surges and being understaffed, it’s taken a toll on all of us. ... Obviously we want to continue to do what we love. But it’s time we get the equal pay that we deserve.

“We’re not just fighting for our night-shift team, we are fighting for the ER department as a whole, day-shift and night-shift. And that goes for the whole hospital. We want to thank our day-shift team, because they are in there supporting us by staying overtime, caring for the patients coming into the ER now. Nobody is being denied care, and no care is being delayed.”

Lindsey Harris, president of the Alabama State Nurses Association, spoke after the workers later entered the hospital to clock in. Harris said Alabama nurses are paid 8% less on average than their counterparts in neighboring states.

In a protest of COVID conditions in the public schools, students at Bessemer City High School walked out

Sept. 2. The city of Bessemer adjoins Birmingham and is the site of the historic 2020 union drive by majority-Black workers at the local Amazon warehouse to affiliate with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

A ruling on whether workers will revote on union membership is still awaited from the National Labor Relations Board regional office in Atlanta. Meanwhile, 26 workers who make brake pads for Brazilian auto parts company Fras-le, in Prattville, Ala., are organizing with the RWDSU Mid-South Council. (Jonah Furman, “The week in U.S. unions, September 2-9”)

Coal miners on strike stay strong

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Alabama has a union membership rate of 8% — the highest of any Southern state except Maryland. The 2020 U.S. union membership average is 10.8% of employed wage and salary workers.

Here in Central Alabama, mine worker union organizing in defiance of state segregation dates back 100 years. Brookwood coal miners at Warrior Met are entering their sixth month on strike against that international

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Alabama has a union membership rate of 8% — the highest of any Southern state except Maryland.

coal company. The miners are hanging tough on the picket lines, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and hold a weekly solidarity rally at nearby Tannehill State Park.

The miners of Local 2245, United Mine Workers (UMWA) have travelled twice to New York to demonstrate on Wall Street against BlackRock, the mega-hedge fund that’s the main shareholder of Warrior Met. The union workers say the financial giant is blocking progress toward a fair contract.

In 2016, when the miners accepted a drastic \$6-an-hour wage cut and sacrificed health benefits to bring the company out of bankruptcy, management promised the cuts would be restored once the business was solvent. A 2020 year-end statement showed the business is back in good shape. But the company is refusing worker demands for pay increases, an end to unfair disciplinary and firing policies, and improvements in working conditions.

Warrior Met mines are life-threatening workplaces — sunk 1,400 to 2,100 feet underground, these are some of the deepest vertical-shaft coal mines in North America. In 2001 methane gas explosions killed 13 workers there.

While local cops have pulled over UMWA strikers to allow strikebreaker buses into the mines, community support for the miners is strong on the ground. This includes the union Strike Pantry, headed up by UMWA Auxiliary Locals 2368 and 2245.

Auxiliary President Haeden Wright said in a tweet: “The pantry was formed at the start of the strike to help provide mutual aid to the 1,000 families on strike. Most of us have young children. We believe we are teaching them through our actions the importance of #unions, #solidarity, and fighting for a better future.”

Minnie Bruce Pratt dedicates this article to Dennis Mobley, her former classmate at Bibb County High School, who died in the 2001 methane gas explosion.



PHOTO: HAEDEN WRIGHT

Members of the Brookwood, Ala., UMWA Auxiliary run a Strike Pantry that distributes food weekly to families of the more than 1,000 coal miners on strike.



PHOTO: HAEDEN WRIGHT

A week’s food is ready for distribution at the pantry.

Strike mood growing

UAW members tired of concessions

By Martha Grevatt

Several hundred workers at auto parts supplier ZF struck the company in Marysville, Mich., Sept. 9. They are demanding union recognition and charging ZF with reneging on a “neutrality agreement.” Management had previously agreed to recognize the United Auto Workers if a majority of workers in the plant signed union authorization cards.

The Marysville plant makes axles for Stellantis, which was formed earlier this year by the merger of French auto company PSA and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. It was jointly operated by ZF and FCA, but under the 2019 contract with the UAW and FCA, FCA workers are transferring to other FCA plants while they are gradually replaced by new hires employed by ZF. The pay scale is lower for these nonunion ZF workers than for FCA workers, who themselves are making less in the axle plant than in other FCA facilities.

The plant was opened to replace Chrysler’s Detroit Axle plant, closed as part of the 2009 bankruptcy and federal government bailout deal. The new plant, with state of the art technology, produces more axles with fewer workers.

From the closing of Detroit Axle to the 2015 contract



UAW strike for recognition at ZF plant, Marysville, Mich.

stand that even a weak union is far better than no union at all, even as they watch their Stellantis co-workers walk past their picket line to go to work — because, the UAW leadership explains, the Stellantis contract has a “no-strike clause.”

Will the UAW strike John Deere?

UAW members in nine locals at John Deere agricultural equipment plants in Illinois, Iowa and Kansas voted Sept. 12 to authorize a strike. Taking a strike vote is often a routine process during contract negotiations; while a yes vote gives a union leverage at the bargaining table, in most cases no strike takes place.

But this time around, the workers have been vocal about being ready to hit Deere with a strike. They are tired of stagnant wages, tiered pay scales — where newer workers make less than those with higher seniority — and

that created a separate pay tier at Marysville, to the latest agreement turning the plant over to ZF, the UAW leadership sold these concessions to the membership as necessary to keep FCA profitable and competitive.

But ZF management, following the examples of Nissan and Volkswagen bosses at their U.S. plants, aims to keep the union out! The striking workers under-

frequent layoffs. The last six-year contract in 2015 was nearly voted down, and it failed at two out of nine plants because the small pay raise was eaten up by higher health insurance costs.

In addition, grievances are piling up over the company’s refusal to pay a contractual bonus for making production quotas — even though workers are not supposed to be penalized for situations outside their control, such as frequent parts shortages because COVID disrupted suppliers’ production.

Deere’s profits for the second quarter of 2021 were \$1.6 billion — double the profits for the same quarter in 2020.

Workers believe they are in a strong position to wield the strike weapon, as the company is having a hard time finding workers to fill open positions. This is not so much due to a “labor shortage” per se as to a shortage of workers willing to take a physically demanding job that starts at \$15.14 an hour and where there is no job security.

In 1981, then-President Ronald Reagan broke the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization, ushering in an era of widespread contract concessions and union busting that has lasted four decades. For UAW members this pattern of givebacks began even earlier with demands made on the union during the 1979 federal government bailout of Chrysler.

Concessions have not saved jobs; the UAW membership has fallen precipitously since 1979. Instead concessions have made companies richer. The only way to reverse this trend is through class struggle. □

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

9/11 – a pretext for aggression

The 9/11 commemorations should be seen for what they are: an opportunity for the U.S. ruling class to use a collective trauma — the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City — to whip up jingoist and superpatriotic sentiment. The goal of this whipping up is to convince much of the population to rally around the U.S. flag and support Pentagon military intervention anywhere in the world.

In this 20th anniversary year, the propaganda onslaught is coated with the balm of an appeal to national unity. In 2001, the ruling group in George W. Bush’s White House used the trauma to declare a “War on Terror” — as a pretext to unleash wars of terror on the people of the world.

That’s no exaggeration. According to the latest 2021 figures, issued by the prestigious Watson Institute of Brown University, U.S.-backed wars since Sept. 11, 2001, have killed a minimum of 929,000 people in battle, with multiples of that number dying from conditions created by the wars. They have transformed a minimum of 38 million people into refugees, driving them from their homes with only their clothes, starving them and their children. The numbers include victims in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, the Philippines, Libya and Syria, for which both Republican and Democratic administrations can be blamed. (tinyurl.com/4jytx9s8)

The Bush administration’s neocons and their successors in the Democratic administration had a goal. The goal was to reconquer, for imperialist domination, parts of the world that had achieved a certain amount of sovereignty.

The existence of the Soviet Union until 1991 had, in most cases, defended that sovereignty from direct

imperialist intervention. With that defense now removed, the Empire has been waging war to replace its yoke firmly on the backs of the world’s people.

Whether refugees from this U.S. strategy fled inside their own countries, fled to neighboring states, or tried to make it to wealthier places in Europe or the United States, each one has a tale of human misery. Each piece of suffering was caused by imperialist strategists seeking obscene profits.

The 9/11 commemorations should be seen for what they are: an opportunity for the U.S. ruling class to use a collective trauma — the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City — to whip up jingoist and superpatriotic sentiment.

Recall the official public details of the September 2001 attacks. Saudi citizens in Al Qaeda, allegedly angry over the U.S. occupation of their country since 1990, targeted symbols of imperialist power: Wall Street financial capital, the Pentagon war machine and probably the U.S. Capitol. Biden just visited the World Trade Center memorial, the site of a plane crash in Pennsylvania connected to the September 11 attacks and the Pentagon.

Bush’s gang punished none of its Saudi allies. Instead, they wielded the popular trauma like a club. They first

invaded Afghanistan, then invaded and occupied oil-rich Iraq. In the name of a “War on Terror,” the Bush administration and, following it, Barack Obama’s Democratic administration intervened with weapons or fighters in the countries named in the Watson study.

Trump followed by making threats against Iran and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and imposed murderous sanctions on many other peoples, including those of Cuba and Venezuela — stretching beyond all recognition the concept of “War on Terror.”

Biden has finally withdrawn all U.S. troops from the impossible war in Afghanistan. Even there, in the last moments, a U.S. drone strike hit an Afghan man working for a humanitarian NGO, killing him and seven children in his family. The Pentagon had claimed this was an Islamic State terrorist target. The war ended as it began — with a big lie.

The 9/11 attack on symbols of U.S. oppression also had human victims — a real cross section of the U.S. population worked in the World Trade Center, including all types of essential workers who maintain buildings, serve and clean up food, as well as every type of office worker, of all beliefs and from all parts of the world including all oppressed nationalities, gender identities, able-bodied and disabled. People who wrote then and continue to write for this newspaper worked at the WTC or near enough to share the risks and the trauma, and we mourn the victims.

These losses make us even angrier at U.S. strategists who use the anniversary to again manipulate the feelings of people here, hyping up a false national identity to build toward the next imperialist war. □

Mandates alone can’t stop COVID

Continued from page 1

several states have mandated that incarcerated workers either be vaccinated or remain in solitary cells, guards and other prison employees have remained exempt from mandatory testing and vaccines.

How should a workers’ party view this? How do we promote intelligent public health measures while defending workers’ and union rights? Where have there been successful vaccination campaigns, and why did they work?

Vaccine mandate history

Mandatory vaccines are not new in the U.S. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, smallpox outbreaks triggered the establishment of vaccination mandates, so that smallpox was eventually eliminated. The growth of public schools led to vaccine mandates for diseases, including measles, polio, mumps and others. In 2007, Texas, under Gov. Rick Perry, became the first state to mandate that all girls entering sixth grade receive the human papillomavirus vaccine (HPV) to prevent infections that cause cervical cancers.

On Feb. 20, 1905, the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of Jacobson v. Massachusetts upheld the constitutionality of mandatory smallpox vaccination programs to preserve public health. In that case and others that challenged various state and local mandatory vaccine requirements, SCOTUS maintained that

it was “within the police power of a state to provide for compulsory vaccinations.” (tinyurl.com/4922h8es)

Challenges to any current COVID vaccine mandates are likely to eventually reach the Supreme Court. It remains to be seen whether the current court, dominated by conservatives, will uphold this century-old ruling. The Jacobson decision involved the constitutionality of a law, while Biden’s mandate came via executive orders.

Successes and failures of vaccine programs

Beyond the issues of mandates and anti-vaxxer opposition, other conditions have stood in the way of full population vaccination in the U.S. From the beginning, even regulations regarding mask wearing and COVID testing were left up to local politicians and officials to decide. Testing supplies were initially flawed and later limited. Many still question the accuracy of COVID cases and death counts reported in the U.S.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has often issued contradictory and confusing guidelines. Especially concerning was their May 2021 recommendation that vaccinated people did not have to wear masks, including indoors. By requiring no proof of vaccination, the CDC, which has since retreated on the policy, let unvaccinated people, often opposed to wearing masks, go out in public without them.

Even COVID vaccination programs were flawed from the start, again left up to states and localities to set guidelines on who was eligible. Access to vaccines was essentially determined by one’s zip code, with no centralized programs for vaccination distribution.

Lack of access to medical facilities and vaccination distribution centers continues to impact poor areas, both rural and urban. The requirement to produce an ID has restricted access for undocumented immigrants.

Alabama woman achieves 94% vaccine success for community

Residents in the isolated rural community of Panola, Ala., population of 400, began dying from COVID early on. The closest health clinic was over 30 miles away. Longtime African American resident Dorothy Oliver decided to try to reverse this. She launched a very grassroots campaign to educate her neighbors about COVID, have them tested and get them to sign up for vaccinations.

Oliver went door-to-door talking to every resident. At first, she drove them to a vaccine clinic 39 miles away. After she convinced nearly the entire population to sign up for vaccines, she was able to arrange for mobile clinics to come to Panola. Her efforts resulted in 94% of her town being fully vaccinated — while less than 45% of the rest of Alabama is fully vaccinated.

Oliver’s story, the subject of a mini-documentary, could be replicated by organized labor. What if unions encouraged shop stewards, usually the most active and aware members in close association with the rank and file, to carry out similar educational, pro-vaccine campaigns, that would not rely on top-down mandates from bosses or the capitalist state?

Prioritizing health and global cooperation

Prior to the outbreak of COVID, the Trump administration made major cuts to budgets of the National Institutes of

Health and the CDC. Even as the pandemic began to surface in the U.S., the CDC’s budget was reduced by another \$693 million.

When the SARS virus broke out in 2002-03, China’s public health infrastructure was less robust than it is today. Of the 800 deaths from SARS that occurred worldwide, some 65% occurred in China. By setting a quarantine in Beijing and canceling a week of vacation in 2003, the government finally controlled the SARS outbreak. (tinyurl.com/vp2xc95r)

Having learned from SARS, the Chinese government improved the training of public health professionals and developed one of the world’s most sophisticated disease surveillance systems. After initially being caught off guard with 80,000 COVID cases and 3,000 deaths in Wuhan, toward the end of 2020 China limited additional cases to 9,100, with only 1,407 recorded deaths. Today, people in China can carry on fairly normal lives. This is what the corporate media call “authoritarian.”

Contrast that to the U.S. With only one-fourth the population of China, the U.S. to date has recorded an astonishing 41 million cases of COVID and 660,000 deaths, and the numbers keep rising.

Biden can issue vaccine mandates, but restoring and expanding funding for public health agencies must be prioritized. U.S. imperialist foreign policies must change, including the lifting of economic sanctions that prohibit countries like Iran from getting vaccines, and Cuba from getting access to materials needed to produce and distribute the vaccines this socialist country has developed.

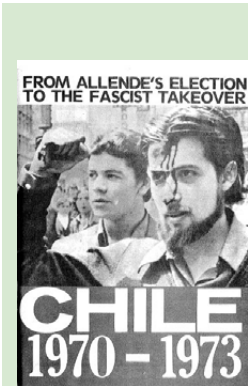
Let’s start with a cessation of hostilities toward China. Cooperation with scientists in China, as well as the World Health Organization, could go a long way in addressing what is a global pandemic. The biggest barrier standing in the way of ending this pandemic is the U.S. government’s attempt to dominate the world. □

Chile 1970–1973

From Allende's election to the fascist takeover

The articles from Workers World newspaper collected in this pamphlet cover the period from the election victory of the Popular Unity coalition led by Salvador Allende in 1970 to the first issue of the paper to come out after the fascist takeover of Sept., 11, 1973. Nearly all of the articles are polemical in nature, that is, besides reporting the events, they argue a viewpoint and a political approach to the events unfolding then in Chile that reflect the world outlook of Workers World Party.

Available as a free download at workers.org/books



Rally outside Attica prison commemorates 1971 uprising

By Arjae Red
Attica, N.Y.

Prison abolitionists from all across the country came together in the New York cities of Attica and Buffalo on Sept. 9 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the uprising at Attica prison, where prisoners stood up in 1971 to demand political rights and better conditions for living and working. The Attica Uprising ended with many prisoners and even guards being slaughtered by the state, under orders of then-Gov. Nelson Rockefeller.

These recent events paid respects to those who had been killed and the families who survive them. They amplified the calls for the abolition of prisons, police and ICE. Both events were in solidarity with the organization Jailhouse Lawyers Speak, a collective of radical incarcerated activists who made a call to action for nationwide prison abolition demonstrations on Aug. 21 and Sept. 9.

The first event was a demonstration outside Attica prison. A group gathered to read the original demands made by the Attica prisoners 50 years ago. They used a loudspeaker for those inside the facility to hear. After the demands were read, demonstrators took turns reading the names of those who had been killed. Demonstrators held a banner reading: “Attica is all of us! Abolish ICE and prisons!”



Demonstrators outside Attica prison hold banner reading ‘Attica is all of us! Abolish ICE and prisons!’ WW PHOTO: LYDIAN STANDEFORD

An event later in the evening took place at MLK Park, on the east side of Buffalo. Attended by about 75 people, it featured speakers from many organizations across the country, other longtime activists and family members of those who had been involved in the Attica Uprising.

Speakers included: Lion Blyden, son of Herbert Blyden, chief negotiator for the Attica prisoners during the uprising; Good Leaf, brother of Dacajeweiah/John Hill, a leader in the Attica Uprising and member of the American Indian Movement; Ramadan Abdullah, former Black Panther and former resident chaplain in Attica prison; BaBa Eng, restorative justice advocate and director of programs for Prisoners Are People Too.

Also Chuck Culhane, former death-row prisoner and member of the Western New York Peace Center; Solomon Brown, activist and organizer with Buffalo Democratic Socialists of America; Chrissy Stonebraker-Martínez, co-coordinator of InterReligious Task Force on Central America and Colombia; Marsha Goldberg, member of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party, who had been outside Attica demonstrating support during the uprising, Mirinda Crissman from PSC and many others.

The organizations that worked together to contribute to the event included Justice for Migrant Families, Buffalo DSA, Prisoners Are People Too, Western New York Peace Center, Queen City Workers’ Center, Cleveland Jail Coalition and Workers World Party. Narcan training was also provided on site by Western New York Mobile Overdose Prevention Services.

Out of the variety of speakers and organizations present, the message that ran through every speech was the need for working-class and oppressed people to unite and organize against the prison-industrial complex.

It is clear that the issues which plagued Attica prison will continue to persist in every prison and jail across the U.S., as long as capitalism continues to exist. With prisoners making up a fundamental part of the working class, it is crucial that the movement for prison abolition and the newly revived labor movement merge.

Workers World Party today still echoes our calls made at Attica 50 years ago: “Prisons are concentration camps for the poor! Free them ALL!” □



Soledad rally supports prisoner lawsuit against racist brutality

By Judy Greenspan
Soledad, Calif.

Sept. 12 — Activists held a press conference and rally today outside Soledad Prison, California Training Facility (CTF) to support a legal complaint by prisoners inside. Prisoners filed the lawsuit to expose the racist “cell extraction” of 200 Black prisoners last July and the subsequent criminalization of the victims of

guard violence. In the middle of the night of July 20, 2020, guards targeted 200 Black prisoners and violently forced them from their cells. The guards’ official excuse was that they were investigating possible gang affiliations of the prisoners involved. The official “evidence” for gang affiliation was possession of radical prisoner writings and books by George Jackson. After the racist assault was over, the

attack sparked an outbreak of COVID at the prison.

The guards called the Black prisoners the “N” word and shouted “Black lives don’t matter” during the raid. These facts substantiate the point that the charge of gang affiliation was a bogus, racist lie.

George Jackson, Black prisoner revolutionary and member of the Black Panther Party assassinated in 1971, was originally labeled a member of the Black Guerrilla Family. This tag has long been used to divide incarcerated activists, jeopardize their parole dates and sentence them to long terms in solitary confinement in security housing units.

A major theme of today’s rally was “In the spirit of abolition: End gang affiliation.” Family members, activist attorneys and prison abolitionists spoke out against the campaign to label prisoner activists “gang members” for their work on behalf of the incarcerated. Speaker after speaker not only condemned last year’s racist removal of prisoners from their cells, they described the continuing harassment and

criminalization of the organizing efforts of Black and Latinx prisoners inside.

In a recorded statement, Talib Williams — a prisoner inside who bravely exposed last year’s racist attack on prisoners — drew the connection between the racist attacks on Black people in the streets with the violence against the same community in the prisons.

“We are in a time where it is important for us to imagine a world without prisons. ... While this may be hard, we have to remember that there was once a time when people could not imagine a world without slavery.” Williams emphasized, “There is an alternative to prisons.”

Today’s event, which was part of national “Shut ‘Em Down” actions held Aug. 21 to Sept. 12, was organized and supported by the National Lawyers Guild-SF Bay Area, California Families Against Solitary Confinement, No Justice Under Capitalism, Anti Police-Terror Project, Oakland Abolition and Solidarity, and Workers World Party. □



Prison abolitionists gather at the gate of California's Soledad Prison to demand an end to ‘gang validation’ and repression, Sept. 12. PHOTO: NLG SF BAY AREA

Running Down the Walls raises up Mumia

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

The fourth annual Running Down the Walls (RDTW) event took place at FDR Park in south Philadelphia Sept. 12, starting with a yoga warm-up followed by a revolutionary 5K walk/run. The day of solidarity amplified the voices of comrades behind bars, lifting them up in their struggles and maintaining material support. Over 200 people participated.

This year’s event honored political prisoner and long-term Black Liberation activist Mumia Abu-Jamal. This year marks the 40th year that Mumia has been behind bars as a voice for the voiceless. Due to multiple health issues from medical neglect, he needs our support now more than ever. The

message of the event was, “We freed the MOVE 9 after 40 years — let’s do the same for Mumia!” A mammoth puppet of Mumia was on hand for the event.

Participants and speakers included many former political prisoners and exonerated juvenile incarcerates. Former Black Panther Albert Woodfox, freed after over 43 plus years, mostly in solitary confinement at Angola, Louisiana’s notorious state penitentiary, was on hand for the event.

Many speakers called out the historic 50th anniversary of the Attica prison uprising and urged participants to make 2021 the year to free all political prisoners. RDTW events have been held across the U.S. since

1999 to raise funds for numerous political prisoners. Each year, incarcerated

comrades participate in the 5k event by running inside prison walls. □



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



Guadalajara, México, septiembre 2019.

WW condena la ley antiaborto de Texas

Workers World/Mundo Obrero condena en los términos más enérgicos la sentencia del Tribunal Supremo de los Estados Unidos, de 5 a 4, del 2 de septiembre, que se negó a restringir una ley de Texas que prohíbe los procedimientos de aborto a partir de las seis semanas de embarazo.

La ley de Texas también codifica el derecho de cualquier persona, incluso de un completo desconocido, a demandar a una persona que desee abortar o a alguien que la ayude por \$10.000 dólares. Esto nos hace recordar a las recompensas que utilizaban las patrullas de esclavos para devolver a la plantación a los negros esclavizados fugados.

Este es el mismo Texas con la tasa más alta de personas sin seguro médico en el país. Texas se negó a la expansión de la Ley de Cuidado de Salud Asequible, que habría aumentado los fondos federales para los programas de Medicaid para las personas de bajos ingresos, incluidos los que viven con discapacidades, así como las madres solteras y los niños. Un número desproporcionado de afectados son personas de color, incluidos los inmigrantes. La mayoría de los trabajadores pobres ni siquiera tienen derecho a Medicaid.

Este es el mismo Texas que ha ejecutado a muchas más personas encarceladas que cualquier otro estado desde que se reinstauró la pena de muerte en 1976. Y Texas fue el último estado que concedió

la libertad a personas que habían sido esclavizadas en 1865, dos años después de que se aprobara la Proclamación de Emancipación en 1863.

Así que no debe sorprender que, en este momento, Texas se haya puesto a la cabeza en la instauración de la ley antiaborto más draconiana hasta la fecha, y que Misisipi, el estado más pobre de Estados Unidos, amenace con aprobar una ley similar este mismo otoño.

Nancy Northup, presidenta y directora ejecutiva del Centro de Derechos Reproductivos, uno de los grupos que demandan a Texas, declaró: "Estamos desolados por el hecho de que el Tribunal Supremo se haya negado a bloquear una ley que viola flagrantemente el caso Roe v. Wade.

En este momento, las personas que buscan un aborto en todo Texas tienen pánico. No tienen ni idea de dónde o cuándo podrán abortar, si es que pueden hacerlo. Los políticos de Texas han conseguido, por el momento, burlarse del estado de derecho". (Washington Post, 2 de septiembre)

Una amenaza para Roe v. Wade

Esta ley de Texas promovida por la mayoría del SCOTUS pone en serio peligro el caso Roe v. Wade, la innovadora ley que consiguió el derecho al aborto para todas las mujeres, incluidas las más pobres. La histórica decisión legal fue emitida en

1973 por uno de los Tribunales Supremos más conservadores, durante el gobierno de Richard M. Nixon. Un movimiento de masas liderado por mujeres fue decisivo para forzar esta sentencia que declaraba que las mujeres tenían derecho a controlar su propio sistema reproductivo, no la iglesia ni el estado, incluyendo todos los niveles de gobierno.

Hoy en día, debido a los avances tecnológicos, el derecho al aborto se extiende también a las personas no conformes con el género. La ley de Texas ni siquiera extiende el derecho al aborto a las supervivientes de violaciones e incesto.

Ahora la mayoría de los estados están intentando aprobar leyes similares a la de Texas que podrían anular completamente el caso Roe v. Wade.

Desde el comienzo de la sociedad de clases, hace miles de años, las mujeres eran consideradas por los hombres como una propiedad, no diferente de un caballo o una vaca. Las mujeres eran utilizadas como incubadoras para producir hijos como herederos. Esta reciente ley refuerza este estatus de segunda clase para mantener a las mujeres esclavizadas en el hogar y sin poder, lo que se ha vuelto cada vez más difícil económicamente con la pandemia en curso.

Se acaba de anunciar que el 2 de octubre tendrán lugar marchas coordinadas a nivel nacional en todas las capitales de los estados para defender el derecho al aborto, iniciadas por al menos 90 organizaciones feministas. El Partido Demócrata desempeñará sin

duda un papel destacado en la convocatoria de estas manifestaciones, que sin embargo tendrán un carácter progresista. Sin embargo, la izquierda, incluido nuestro Partido, debe adoptar una posición independiente y anticapitalista para distinguirse de este partido burgués, racista y pro-guerra, similar al Partido Republicano.

No podemos confiar en ninguno de los partidos burgueses, en la Corte Suprema de Justicia o en cualquier brazo del Estado represivo para defender o salvar a nuestra clase de las calumnias de la derecha y de los fanáticos antiabortistas. La mejor manera de derrotar a estas fuerzas anti-mujeres y anti-género oprimido, legales y extralegales, es construir un poderoso movimiento multinacional, multigénero y multigeneracional, similar a Black Lives Matter, con protestas sostenidas con tácticas masivas y militantes tanto para defender como para fortalecer Roe v. Wade.

El derecho al aborto debe formar parte de todo un programa de lucha para promover el derecho a criar niños sanos en una sociedad libre de racismo, sexismo, homofobia y transfobia; donde la atención sanitaria, incluida la atención prenatal y neonatal, la vivienda asequible, los alimentos nutritivos, un medio ambiente limpio y el derecho a un trabajo sindical y a un salario digno sean derechos para todos los pueblos trabajadores y oprimidos. ¡Defiende Roe contra Wade! ¡Abajo el SCOTUS! □

Al terminar la ocupación, Estados Unidos miente para ocultar los crímenes

La sangrienta semana final de la ocupación estadounidense de Afganistán está repitiendo los crímenes de Washington de los últimos 20 años. Una guerra cuyo pretexto era combatir el "terror" está terminando, en medio del terror que han generado los asesinatos masivos de Estados Unidos.

La culpa de la matanza, durante los últimos 20 años, se cubrió primero con mentiras. En la acelerada línea de tiempo de la inminente salida de Estados Unidos, se expuso parte de la verdad.

Un atentado suicida en el aeropuerto de Kabul dejó casi 200 muertos, entre ellos 150 civiles afganos, 30 talibanes y 13 soldados estadounidenses. En medio del luto por las víctimas -y preguntándonos cómo un explosivo de 25 libras produjo tantas víctimas- nos enteramos de que muchos de ellos fueron asesinados por tropas estadounidenses que disparaban rifles automáticos.

Joe Biden, tipo Rambo, prometió una rápida venganza por el atentado. El ejército estadounidense no tardó en declarar que un ataque con drones había matado a los líderes del grupo ISIS-K, que había asumido la responsabilidad del atentado.

Otro ataque con drones hizo estallar un coche, mostrando cómo el Pentágono "localiza" los objetivos terroristas.

Luego nos enteramos de que las verdaderas víctimas de los ataques con drones eran civiles afganos, entre ellos siete niños. Menores de cinco años.

Así es exactamente como el imperialismo estadounidense libró una guerra contra el pueblo afgano durante 20 años: Cada ataque con drones y cohetes, cada incursión nocturna en los hogares afganos, produjo víctimas civiles. Creó enemigos que, al tener pocas opciones, decidieron que incluso los talibanes eran preferibles a los yanquis.

A medida que se acercaba la fecha límite del 31 de agosto para la retirada de Estados Unidos, las mentiras de la semana pasada quedaron al descubierto rápidamente. No son más que las últimas mentiras de la agresión y la ocupación de Estados Unidos, construidas sobre mentiras. Y no sólo de la administración Biden, que tiene la poco envidiable tarea de cerrar el negocio.

Los políticos del Partido Republicano y Demócrata y los funcionarios del Pentágono mintieron constantemente

durante los 20 años de ocupación, y mintieron la semana pasada. Mintieron para encubrir el saqueo, el despilfarro y la corrupción en los que todos participaron, junto con la industria armamentística y los contratistas militares. Y mintieron para encubrir los motivos de Washington para apoderarse de Afganistán.

Todos ellos son responsables de los 20 años de horror infligido al pueblo afgano. Han destrozado la sociedad afgana y han despertado tal furia contra los crímenes de Estados Unidos que algunos afganos están dispuestos a atarse bombas suicidas si las explosiones matan a las tropas estadounidenses o a sus colaboradores.

Esta no es una guerra republicana ni una guerra demócrata. Es una guerra criminal de la que son dueños los dos grandes partidos capitalistas. George W. Bush ordenó la invasión. Barack Obama amplió el despliegue de tropas militares estadounidenses y la guerra de drones. Donald Trump lanzó una superbomba no nuclear sobre Afganistán.

El manejo de la salida por parte de Biden se desprende de la estrategia militar de Estados Unidos durante los 20 años de ocupación. El crimen de la guerra de Afganistán no es que uno u otro de los presidentes de Estados Unidos fuera incompetente o tonto - eso sería un

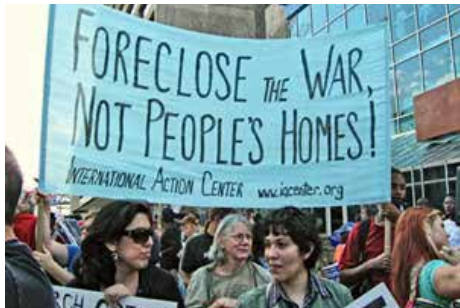


FOTO DE WW: MONICA MOOREHEAD

En 2009, personas de todo el mundo se manifestaron contra la continuación de la guerra de Estados Unidos en Afganistán e Irak, aquí en Atlanta.

crimen menor comparado con lo que se cometió contra el pueblo afgano.

El crimen de cada una de las sucesivas administraciones es que representan la dominación militar, económica y diplomática del imperialismo mundial -con Estados Unidos como centro- e infligen, amplían y defienden la explotación de los trabajadores y los pueblos trabajadores de todo el mundo, para los beneficios de un puñado de multimillonarios y banqueros. No hay manera de que lo hagan sino a través de crímenes y mentiras.

La tarea de las fuerzas anti imperialistas en Estados Unidos es desenmascarar las mentiras e impedir que Estados Unidos haga más daño al pueblo afgano.

¡No más guerra, no más ocupación, no más sanciones! □