May Day
Workers fight for their lives
By John Parker

May Day’s historical significance this year is compounded by a worldwide capitalist crisis that lays bare, for all to see, capitalism’s downright murderous neglect and contempt for humanity.

In the U.S., COVID-19 infections and deaths continue to climb. In the socialist countries of China, Cuba, Vietnam, and Vietnam (Vietnam has no deaths from COVID-19 as of this writing), the virus has been contained. The socialist countries have shown how to prioritize the means of production to save lives. Yet, the U.S. continues to rely on the failed “free market” and therefore cannot provide testing for all or even the basic medical equipment necessary to safeguard health care workers.

Cuba and China have led the way in assisting the world with doctors and equipment. Cuba also provides Interferon alfa-2b, a drug that has been proven to lower infection and death rates. The U.S. has sabotaged world efforts with lies and sanctions against countries in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

What does all of this have to do with May Day?

The day was established as one of action to empower working people towards ending exploitation, beginning with the demand for an 8-hour work day, ending the “sunrise to sunset” working day, and developing a different form of socialist society.

This is why — in spite of the challenges to activism presented by the virus with folks shut in — workers organizations and especially socialist and communist organizations worldwide were determined to mark the day in creative ways that continued the tradition of workers’ fightback.

From California to Virginia, workers and activists came out protesting at Amazon warehouses. In Los Angeles, for example, organizations including Unión del Barrio, BAYAN-USA and the Human Rights Alliance came out to Ingleswood supporting Amazon workers on May Day. Another demonstration by Amazon workers occurred at another warehouse in Richmond, Calif.

A coalition of essential workers from Amazon, Instacart, Whole Foods, Walmart, Target and FedEx called out sick or walked out during their lunch break demanding hazard pay and essential health and safety equipment.

International Workers Day Caravan in Baltimore

And one of the organizations that has been holding almost weekly creative and safe demonstrations in Baltimore is the Peoples Power Assembly, which issued a call for an International Workers Day Caravan on May 1.

The caravan also showed support for the demands of frontline workers nationwide who have called for personal protective equipment (PPE), hazard pay, paid sick leave, safe work conditions and rent cancellation.

The twenty-three vehicles that joined the caravan were covered with posters and slogans like “Our work is a right, PPE and protection now,” “Paid sick leave for all” and “Public health over profit.”

A union representing health care workers, 1939SEIU, helped lead the caravan in the union’s van along with the Peoples Power Assembly. Baltimore Peace Action, Veterans for Peace, the Prisoner Solidarity Committee, the Sunrise Movement, Communist Party Baltimore, Struggle-La Lucha/Socialist Unity Party and the International League of Peoples’ Struggle were among the other organizations represented.

The caravan drove by the Charles Village Safe Way, Mercy Hospital, City Hall, the central Post Office, Douglas Homes (the site of food distributions), Johns Hopkins Hospital, North East Market and concluded the caravan at the entrance of the Amazon warehouses. Following strict social distancing protocols, Sharon Black of the Peoples Power Assembly gave an amplified speech to the encircled caravan.

“I used to work at that [Amazon] building right over there at Broening Highway, and I have friends who are in that death warehouse right now,” Black said. “Bezos marked May 1, International Workers’ Day, by telling everybody who is on voluntary sick leave that they have to come back, or they lose their jobs.”

“And on May 15, people are going to lose their hazard pay,” she continued. “Or so-called hazard pay — it is nothing. It is pennies. Don’t believe the PR about it.

“We have to keep our fight up because capitalism is a brutal system that must go.”

As the Baltimore action shows, many other issues, including demands for rent control and fighting homelessness, were part of the day’s focus in Baltimore and nationally as well.

Millions safely celebrate in Cuba

And, the international actions of May Day were also creative.

In Cuba, for example, the millions who normally come out for May Day were in their Cuban flags and celebrated on their balconies. The Cuban government canceled the annual May Day parade to keep the population safe.

The Xinhua news service quoted Maria Rome- ro, 52, a nurse at a polyclinic in Havana, Cuba, who said: “The best way to celebrate May Day is through helping combat the coronavirus,” adding that she will “hang a Cuban flag from the balcony as a symbol of national unity.”

The day of May 1 was inspired by the events that led to the First International. It is the day when workers across Europe and America took to the streets demanding an 8-hour work day.

The day of May 1 was also an inspiration for the strikers who are in that death warehouse right now,” Black said. “Bezos marked May 1, International Workers’ Day, by telling everybody who is on voluntary sick leave that they have to come back, or they lose their jobs.”

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The day of May 1 was inspired by the events that occurred in 1846 on May 3 and May 4 in Chicago, where strikers demanding an 8-hour day at Haymarket Square were killed by police, followed by the frame-up and executions of the strike leaders. The wife of one of the framed-up labor leaders was a labor leader herself. African, Native, Mexican-American Lucy Parsons has been described as a socialist, communist and anarcho-syndicalist. Her actions after the Haymarket Square incident were instrumental in the creation of May Day. She

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Nurses suspended for demanding PPE
Union fights back and wins

By John Parker

Los Angeles — In mid-April, 10 nurses employed at Providence Saint John's Hospital in Santa Monica, Calif., were suspended for demanding the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep them from infection and possible death due to exposure to the deadly COVID-19 virus while working on infected patients.

The hospital administration claimed that the nurses already had the necessary equipment to remain safe and that N95 masks were not needed. However, one nurse at the hospital told the Los Angeles Times that she knew personally that this is not true. Angela Gadulda said she was exposed to COVID-19 while treating patients with the virus. She tested positive for the virus on April 9.

Gadulda said she should have been given the available N95 masks since she was treating COVID-19 patients.

One of the suspended nurses, Jack Cline, who is especially vulnerable to the disease due to the fact that he is also diabetic, told the L.A. Times that he refused to go into a room with an infected patient without the proper protection. Every doctor or nurse who was told to have N95 masks on and did not had N95 masks on, told him he should not enter without the proper mask. However, he was suspended and, like the other nurses, threatened by the hospital administration, saying they may pursue having his nursing license removed.

However, that’s not where the story ends.

The hospital administration underestimated the militancy of the nurses and their belonging to the largest nurses’ union in the U.S., with more than 150,000 members nationwide.

The National Nurses United is the largest union and professional association of registered nurses in U.S. history, the labor organization says on its web site.

Add to that the solidarity of the progressive movement and activists who came out consistently for the nurses. A well-attended and loud—honking car caravan protest on April 21 was organized by the union, which invited the community of folks in solidarity with the nurses to come out and demand the nurses be reinstated and given the necessary protections to do their jobs and remain safe.

For over an hour, honking horns were heard from cars adorned with signs in support of the nurses and circling the perimeter of the hospital.

The nurses’ demands included greater hospital transparency regarding PPE, the lifting of ordered leave for nurses without masks who refuse to treat patients, and the availability of hotel rooms where they can quarantine.

And on that very same day, the hospital reinstated the nurses and will now supply nurses with N95 masks for those working with infected patients.

In spite of the challenges to continuing activism that exist during this COVID-19 crisis, with unity, creativity and especially solidarity, we can still make gains!

Workers’ lives before meatpacker profits

By Stephen Millies

Donald Trump celebrated Workers’ Memorial Day on April 28 by ordering dangerously unsafe meatpacking and poultry plants to remain open.

Twenty workers in the industry have already died and nearly 5,000 have tested positive for the coronavirus, according to the Center for Disease Control. The 115 infected facilities with 130,000 workers were in 19 states.

Even the U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors have caught the virus.

Working in these slaughterhouses was always risky. Between 2015 and 2017, an average of two workers a week had one of their limbs amputated.

Workers having their hands or fingers cut off didn’t bother the bleach culture inspectors in the White House. Trump invoked the Defense Production Act in order to shield monopolies like Tyson Foods, with annual sales of $42 billion, from lawsuits.

“We’re going to sign an executive order today, I believe, and that’ll solve any liability problems,” said Trump.

Green Bay, Wis., Mayor Eric Genrich said Trump’s order gave a “good” attendance. The blood money shouldn’t take too much out of Tyson’s $2 billion fortune.

Workers at Tyson’s Camilla, Georgia, poultry processing plant.

Sacrificing workers for profit

Trump’s executive order came two days after John H. Tyson, chairman of the board of Tyson Foods, placed newspaper ads claiming “the food supply chain is vulnerable.”

Who’s really vulnerable are workers like Tara Williams, who’s employed at the Tyson poultry plant in Camilla, Ga. Her friend and co-worker, Eloise Willis, died of COVID-19 on April 1. It took management two weeks to put up a picture of Willis and tell workers she had died.

Eloise Willis worked a 10-hour shift at Tyson for 35 years. She and her fellow union members handled 100,000 chickens per shift.

Big-hearted John Tyson is now offering workers a $500 bonus in May and again in July if they have “good” attendance. The blood money shouldn’t take too much out of Tyson’s $2 billion fortune.

Work or starve

No one should have to work in dangerous conditions. If the entire U.S. workforce were exposed to COVID-19 at the same rate as meatpackers and poultry workers are, over 5 million would have tested positive.

Because of the meat monopolies’ drive for profits, employees are often placed close together on a production line. This virtually guarantees a high infection rate.

Despite the pandemic, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds is telling workers to go back to work or lose unemployment benefits.

Workers who refused to care for coronavirus patients without N95 masks are suspended, union fights back and wins

Nurses who refused to care for coronavirus patients without N95 masks are suspended, union fights back and wins

The entire labor and peoples’ movements have to organize against workers being forced to go back to unsafe companies. No worker should have to choose between losing benefits or getting sick and possibly dying on the job.

During World War II, a largely Black navy sailormen demanded to organize against workers being forced to load ammunition at Port Chicago. They were charged with mutiny, a death penalty offense.

Future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall led the defense team for the sailors loaded ammunition at Port Chicago, Calif., 48 miles from San Francisco. Unsafe conditions led to a July 17, 1944, explosion in which 320 sailors were killed.

Their families were originally supposed to get a $5,000 benefit. This was reduced to $5,000 after Mississippi Congressman John Rankin realized most of the victims were African American.

When many surviving Black sailors refused to go back to work under the same conditions, they were labeled “cowards” by the corporate newspapers. Fifty sailors were charged with mutiny, a death penalty offense.

Future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall led the defense campaign that won the sailors’ release in 1946.

Trump and the capitalist class are trying to force workers back to dangerous conditions just like the Navy brass ordered Black sailors back to loading explosives at Port Chicago. But human life is more important than meat profits.
By Gloria Verdeu and Mary Lou Finley

All of us, every one of us, when we fight, we win. So let us fight together. Never forget the love for each and every one of you for the remarkable work you have done and we have done together. Let's make it happen.

Message to my supporters from Mumia Abu-Jamal — April 24, 2020 Recorded by Noelle Hanrahan From Prison Radio

In March and April, there were several conference calls about the next steps that need to be taken in the campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is great concern among all the members of the movement about inmates in the jails, prisons, detention centers and other correctional institutions like juvenile halls. All correctional institutions are overcrowded, with little or no personal hygiene or sanitizing products, and they lack adequate medical care.

I just recently obtained the release of all prisoners now. The growing movement has to put maximum pressure on officials to make this release happen.

As explained in a recorded message by Ivan Kilgore, an inmate in the California Department of Corrections, on Prison Radio:

"All it takes is for one person to walk into this environment and you have a crisis on your hands. It is not so much getting it from prisoners, it is getting it from the correctional staff.

When asked, "If you start feeling COVID symptoms, how long would it take for you to see a doctor?" Kilgore responded, "The problem with that amongst prisoners is they would be afraid to report that because it would automatically result in them being isolated in the hole."

Inmates have very few personal hygiene products or other means of sanitizing; they don’t have adequate medical care, and most importantly, they are not able to practice social distancing — which makes jails, prisons and detention centers death traps for prisoners, staff, the surrounding community and connected communities.

The International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Mobilization4Mumia, the San Diego Coalition to Free Mumia and All Political Prisoners, Bring Mumia Home, On a Move, Workers World Party, the Socialist Unity Party, the Peace and Freedom Party, the African People’s Socialist Party, Saigon Penn Cop Watch, All of Us or None, Union del Barrio, Black Lives Matter, the Black Alliance, De-incarcerate Pennsylvania, the American Indian Movement (AIM), the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (ILP-DC), the Abolitionist Law Collective, Amistad, Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP) and the Prison Solidarity Committee are some of the many organizations that are involved in the movement.

April 15 Twitter storm

On April 15, there was a social media Twitter storm, emails and phone zaps to Gov. Tom Wolf of Pennsylvania, all day, to get the word out.

This movement alarmed the Pennsylvania Department of Correction officials. One of the supporters participating in the “phone zap” was falsely told that Mumia was hospitalized with COVID-19 symptoms. This scared many supporters, as the message spread around the world, because Mumia’s health makes him at high risk from dying from the virus. This was a cruel thing to do. Many supporters called the DOC demanding to hear from Mumia himself.

On the morning of April 16, Prison Radio released a recorded phone conversation of Mumia with Pan Africa and other members of the Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal, where he thanked everyone for checking on him and caring about him and assured everyone that he is okay. Mumia said, “What I need is freedom.”

The coalition put out an emergency press release and organized a news conference on April 16 condemning Pennsylvania DOC’s cruel hoax claiming Mumia was hospitalized with COVID-19 symptoms.

Committees met to plan and organize.

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Mobilizing for Mumia Abu-Jamal’s 66th birthday in the midst of COVID-19

By Rebecka Jackson

We need to start by understanding the nature of slavery. Slavery is a condition in which one must work for a master, follow his rules, exist within the narrow confines of property they prescribe to us. We eat scraps, bathe in poisoned water, are barred from home and land ownership, denied the right to vote.

Ahmaud Arbery like felt as close to freedom as he could on the early afternoon of Feb. 23. On an open road, unaccompanied by seemingly alone, hopefully unbothered. Though we live under the constant threat of violence, we try to move forward, to be free from fear, build our lives, shape our futures.

I have been in Ahmaud’s position too many times. As a competitive runner since age five, I was often out on country roads alone. Cars often wouldn’t come by for hours and I tended generally feel secure, protected — broken only on days an occasional “W**ker” was screeched out a car window.

It wasn’t until an evening run in my late teens when a cargo van passed me, slowed down, stopped in my path and turned off their lights. In less than moments, I had to make critical decisions. In front of me, home and the van. I would have to pass them, hope they were just trying to scare me or be ready to outrun them if they weren’t. If I turned around to run the other way, it was into nothingness, even further from help. I knew the possibility of guns. No one would even hear me scream.

I kept running forward, feeling propelled to try to make it home. As I closed the meters toward the van, another car drove by in a care stroke of luck and the van took off. I never ran in the evening again. Later, my younger sister was almost abducted by white supremacists in a truck in broad daylight.

When my grandmother tried to reach the police and the FBI, they told her there was nothing they could do. I cannot stop replaying the thoughts inside Ahmaud’s head. I know what he was living through in that moment the truck cut him off. To turn and be chased into some strange and unfamiliar place, to hope these monsters were just trying to scare him and would back away after they got their “w*****” and “boys,” or to try to run on, to just get home, to hope that there was help on the other side.

Ahmaud didn’t have a choice. Gregory McMichael and Travis McMichael had made up their minds. They were out for blood. Ahmaud was their prey. In their minds, he had stepped outside the bounds of their prescribed slavery, had violated them with his very existence, and they were intent on his execution.

They were then celebrated and exalted for their murder. Why were they not held as terrorists? Charged with committing a horrendous hate crime? Because they fulfill the white supremacist corporatocracy agenda. Just as Dylan Roof was congratulated with a delicate arrest and a Burger King treat, Ahmaud’s murderers were applauded by the police and the corrupt district attorney. These forces have historically condoned the Lynchings of Black people. It is only because of the circulation of the video that there was any accountability.

Imagine how many other Black joggers, swimmers, drivers, bus riders, bikers and sunset watchers have been gunned down in cold blood.

This one was on video. It is the only reason there was an arrest. What must his family have gone through? These months, having to fight for justice as well as his legacy. Labeled a thief. And if what he was a thief? Someone’s possessions are worth a life? What’s the police? And the corrupt district attorney. These forces have historically condoned the Lynchings of Black people. It is only because of the circulation of the video that there was any accountability.

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We must look plainly at Ahmaud’s execution, and we must look plainly at the existence of a slave state that was built on slavery and cannot exist without a slave class. Ahmaud was murdered because this system needed him dead or in servitude. His freedom, his run, did not serve the master, did not serve the system.

Without unity, without mobilization, without the complete eradication of capitalism, we will never be free. We will continue to slave under new masters and exist under the conditions they prescribe to us.
Hands off the post office!
By Stephen Millies

The post office is needed now more than ever. Postal workers are delivering prescription medicines and plenty of other mail and packages to people's homes during this health crisis.

The post office is doing so at the risk of their own lives. At least 44 postal workers have died of COVID-19 and over 1,200 have tested positive for the virus, says Cathy Hanson, a retired postal worker and editor for the Minneapolis Area Local, American Postal Workers Union, at usmailnotsale.org.

Even capitalists need the post office. So why do Trump and his fellow billionaires want to destroy the oldest department of the U.S. government that dates back to 1775? Because the Postal Service is the largest employer of union workers in the United States.

After decades of deindustrialization, many of the factory towns like Detroit and Milwaukee impoverished, the post office is like an oasis of unionism. This is particularly true in the Deep South and some Western states.

The wealthy and powerful never forgave postal employees for their 1970 rebellion. The 200,000 workers who went on a wildcat strike won a victory for all poor and working people.

Fifty years ago, the starting salary of postal workers was less than $3 per hour. On March 12, 1970, members of Congress voted themselves a 41 percent pay hike. But they offered post office employees a mere 5.4 percent raise, which was less than the inflation rate.

Letter carrier and future union leader Vincent Sombrotto urged workers in 1999 to slightly less than $3 per hour. On April 24, 1970, workers in 1999 to slightly less than $3 per hour. On April 24, 1970, they voted to strike for more money.

Postal workers are fighting back. The three-day strike beginning on April 24 and centered on Mumia Abu-Jamal’s 66th birthday, April 24.

The five days of events began April 23 and centered on Mumia Abu-Jamal’s 66th birthday, April 24.

The finale on April 26, “Poetry in Motion,” started at noon, a 24-hour dance party with DJs and music.

Becky Olingon, Janine Africa and New York State Assembly member Charles Barron were among the speakers at the news conference and teach-in. The news conference was a success with hundreds of people signing on and participating.

On April 24, a teach-in featured over 20 speakers from across the U.S. and around the world, including political prisoners and former political prisoners. The speakers included Marc Lamont Hill, Fred Hampton Jr., Sekou Odinga, Janet Africa, Rasheed Johnson, Susie Abubakha and Angela Davis. The Zoom hosts were Joanna Fernandez, Betsey Piette, Sophia Williams, Santiago Alvarez and Michael Africa Jr., son of Mike Africa of the Move 9. The teach-in was a success with over five hundred people listening.

On April 25, there was a virtual dance party with DJs and music.

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Mobilizing for Mumia Abu-Jamal’s 66th birthday

By Robert Mulliken

The Social Evolution of Humanity
Marx and Engels were right!
by Bob McCubbin
This study of the evolution of humanity focuses on sexual relations and, in particular, the changing social status of women. It offers a selection of original Marx-Engels' verbatim judgments and augments the viewpoint expressed in Frederich Engels' "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State."
Coronavirus lab story originated in the White House

By Scott Scheffer

The campaign of slander against China to deflect criticism of President Trump over the COVID-19 pandemic has ratcheted up in recent days. It isn’t only a defensive move by the Trump administration itself. A letter mailed by GOP strategists urged Republican senatorial candidates to attack China instead of attempting to defend Trump during their election campaigns.

Trump himself is pushing the phony lab story — that the virus originated in a laboratory in Wuhan. Until recently, he was even raising the possibility that the virus was created purposely as a bioweapon. On May 1, he seemed to back off the bioweapon claim but is clinging to the story that the virus “escaped” the Wuhan lab in an accident.

President Joe Biden says that Trump and his right-wing sycophants, including former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, are “traffic[ing] in China bashing.” Among others are Sens. Marco Rubio, Tom Cotton, Ted Cruz and others are all trafficking in China bashing.

It would be tempting to dismiss all of this as more absurd bluster by Trump and his right-wing sycophants, but it is not. Democratic nominee for president Joe Biden says that Trump has failed to hold China accountable and that he would be even tougher on China, were he to win the election.

According to the April 30 New York Times, so-called “China hawks” in the administration pushed so hard for U.S. spy agencies to say there was evidence to support the lab theory, that there was a disagreement, with a former CIA official even accusing the administration of “concluding the investigation before it may have been a reflection of how much is at stake in China for U.S. companies that make billions doing business there. A subsequent report by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence indicated that although they see no evidence to support the bioweapon theory, they will continue “investigating” the possibility that the virus “escaped” the Wuhan lab by accident.

Scientists are tired of explaining

The lab theory has been refuted by scientists, including the Federation of American Scientists and the World Health Organization (WHO). Both disagree that the virus could have originated from a laboratory — not by design, nor by accident. An April 26th sciencealert.com article called “Scientists Are Tired of Explaining Why The COVID-19 Virus Was Not Made in a Lab” quotes Kristian Andersen, a professor in the Department of Immunology and Microbiology at Scripps Research Institute: “By comparing the available genome sequence data for known corona virus strains, we can firmly determine that SARS-CoV-2 originated through natural processes. One strong indicator that the new coronavirus evolved naturally, are flaws in the protein it uses to bind to human cells — deficiencies that someone trying to engineer a killer virus would have almost certainly avoided.”

Vox reported that Peter Daszak, a U.S. scientist who has studied coronaviruses and bats (the animal host) with colleagues in China, and at times in the lab in question, says that there was never a sample of the novel coronavirus at the Wuhan laboratory, only samples of similar coronaviruses. The genetic differences between those samples and the COVID-19 virus are significant. Even though they are in the same family of viruses, it would take decades of mutations for any of those samples to match the virus that has caused COVID-19. Daszak said, “No one had SARS-CoV-2 in culture. All of the hypotheses [of lab release] depend on them having it in culture or having bats in a lab. No one’s got bats in a lab, it’s absolutely unnecessary and very difficult to do.”

The funding from the National Institute of Health that enabled Daszak’s collaborative work with China was cut off on April 23. The claim being pushed by Pompeo is that China underreported cases and deaths in January and didn’t disclose that there was a kind of bioweapon transmission. This, the line goes, was so that other countries wouldn’t grasp the potential spread of the disease, and then China could stealthily stockpile and hoard medical equipment and supplies through regular trade. The implication is sickeningly, given the level of cooperation and aid to other countries that China has exhibited, even after gaining control in the battle against the virus at home.

Chinese doctors first reported the outbreak to the WHO on Jan. 1. All they knew at the time was that there was a cluster of cases of pneumonia. The WHO issued an online guidance on Jan. 10 that said, “Based on experience with SARS-CoV and MERS, recommending droplet and contact precautions when caring for patients, and airborne precautions for aerosol generating procedures conducted by health workers.”

For scientists, medical professionals and the American public, that is a clear warning about contagion. The WHO, along with the most prestigious medical journals, the journal of the American Medical Association, the New England Journal of Medicine and Lancet have all published guidelines, and closely watched the casualty statistics. None have reported any suspicion that China was underreporting at any time.


Soviet victory in Berlin ended Nazi terror

By Bill Dores

May 9, 2020, is the 75th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany and the end of World War II in Europe. At least 80 million people died in the Second World War, 3 percent of the world’s population. Among them were millions of Jewish, Roma, disabled, LGBTQ2S and other people who were_events of monopoly capitalist rivalry and a capitalist economic crisis not unlike the one we see today. The Soviet Union, the world’s first socialist state, played the decisive role in ending it.

Operation Barbarossa, the Nazi invasion of the USSR, was the largest military operation in history. The Nazis controlled all the resources of occupied Europe. Italy, Finland, Hungary, Romania and Spain joined Germany in the invasion.

Twenty-seven million Soviet soldiers and civilians lost their lives. Seventy thousand Soviet cities, towns and villages were destroyed. In one of the war’s most iconic images, Red Army soldiers raise Soviet flag over the ruins of the Reichstag, Berlin, on May 2, 1945.

On the night of April 30, 1945, Soviet soldiers first raised the red Soviet flag atop the Reichstag, high over Berlin. A few hours earlier, below the streets of the German capital, Adolf Hitler shot himself in his underground bunker.

Fighting continued for two more days. On May 2, German forces in Berlin surrendered and this famous picture was taken by Soviet war photographer Yevgeny Khaldei. On May 9, the German high command surrendered. The war raged for three months into May. World War II ended with the surrender of Imperial Japan on Aug. 15. Four hundred and twenty thousand U.S. soldiers and sailors died in the war, but for the U.S. capitalist ruling class, many of whom had supported Hitler before the war, World War II was the best thing that ever happened.

The global devastation put U.S. banks and corporations at the center of the world capitalist economy and gave birth to the U.S. military-industrial complex and the permanent war economy that is still with us today.

The bodies of the dead were not buried, and ruined cities still smoldered when the U.S., Britain and West European capitalists signed off on their World War II allies — the Soviet Union and anti-fascist partisan movements in Europe and Asia. They launched the 68 years of the Cold War, which was in reality a bloody onslaught against the rising forces of socialism and national liberation all over the world.

These events will be the topic of an upcoming series in Struggle-La Lucha.
**Political prisoners continue fight as Grup Yorum member perishes**

By Greg Butterfield

May 7 — Today, musician and political prisoner İbrahim Gökçek died in prison, after an early morning hunger strike against the repressive NATO government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Two days earlier, Gökçek had called a temporary pause to his fast, but it was too late.

"We're not palace clowns. We don't kill people. We sang songs. Damn this system," said Gökçek shortly before his death.

Bass player Gökçek was the second member of socialist music group Grup Yorum to die in just over a month. His bandmate and fellow hunger-striker Helin Bölek died on April 3.

Both Gökçek and Bölek were released from prison earlier this year on medical grounds, as a result of a major international pressure campaign. But Erdoğan’s regime still refused to meet their demands, which include the unblocking of Grup Yorum’s website, the release of other band members, and so the two continued their hunger strike. In March, the government briefly kidnapped them from their beds and attempted to force feed them, but failed.

In a May Day appeal to fellow musicians, İbrahim Gökçek wrote: "I want to live, of course. So, friends, how do I leave the resistance when the resistance has come to this stage, when I cannot complete my work?"

"Now, with all our strength, we must put pressure on the powers to make demands. The people, our musicians friends should now meet with the relevant ministry and the presidency by establishing delegations among themselves without delay, and ensure that our demands are met. I greet you all with the warmth of Helin and Mustafa and thank you once again for your support," he concluded.

**Support hunger strikers’ demands**

Four years ago, at a May 2016 anti-fascist conference in Krasnodor, Lugansk People’s Republic, Ukrainian insurrectionary activists introduced me to Aytaç Uslan from the People’s Law Office in Turkey. Today, Uslan and many other attorneys who represent political movements, including Grup Yorum, have themselves become political prisoners in Turkey.

Uslan and his colleague Erbu Timlik are now on their 96th day of their hunger strike, the following the example of İbrahim Gökçek and Helin Bölek. Aytaç is on day 96 of his death fast. Erbu is on day 127 of hers.

The blood of the Group Yorum musicians is on the hands of Erdoğan. It is also on the hands of U.S. President Donald Trump and the leaders of the NATO imperialist powers who allow the fascist regime in Turkey to run rampant against the working class and peasants, leftist and Kurdish movements at home, while carrying out genocidal wars on NATO’s behalf in Iraq, Syria and Libya.

By Aytaç Uslan

For updates, follow Free Grup Yorum on Twitter and People’s Law Office on Facebook.

**STRUGGLE • LA LUCHA**

Venezuela smashes mercenary coup attempt

By Scott Scheffer

In the early morning hours of May 3, sixty trained mercenaries in speedboats left Colombia and motored toward the northern coast of Venezuela, near Maracaibo.

Their plan was to inspire a counter-revolutionary mutiny among Venezue- lan soldiers and kidnap President Nicolás Maduro to take him to the U.S. But there was no mutiny.

The Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB) killed or wounded them. Six mercenaries were killed in the encounter, and so far 23 have been arrested, including two U.S. Green Berets who spent months in Colombia training the right-wing assassins.

A statement issued by FANB on Sunday indicated that they had infiltrated the plot and, as the speedboats attempted their amphibious landing, FANB forces attacked and vanquished them. Interior Minister Nestor Reverol and Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino López said that defensive operations were continuing.

National Constituent Assembly leader Diosdado Cabello said that weapons had also been seized at a safehouse that had been set up inside the country, and that much of the weaponry matched what was stolen in a failed coup attempt in April 2019. The mercenary outfit fitted with machine guns, AR-15/M16-type rifles, Glock pistols, ammunition belts, night vision goggles, hand grenades, machine guns, tablet computers and body armor.

On May 6, President Maduro announced the capture of four more mercenaries. One of them was captured by the people of the town of Cepe in Aragua state. Maduro thanked the FANB and offered a special thanks to the Bolivarian people of Cepe, Puerto Mayo and Chuao, in the state of Aragua and Carayaca in La Guaira state for their assistance in the subsequent arrests of the mercenaries.

**Coup planned for a year**

It was a coup plan that was a year in the making. The training took place in camps in Colombia, and there was an agreement that the force signed with Juan Guaidó would pay more than $200 million for the operation.

One of the leading figures was a former U.S. Special Forces soldier named Jordan Goudreau, who, according to a lengthy Associated Press article that came out two days before the raid, was charged with stealing $62,000 in housing stipends from the military before he retired. Goudreau later formed a private mercenary outfit called Silvercorp and has provided bodyguard services for Trump. The Silvercorp website boasts being active in 50 countries.

Goudreau initially collaborated with a former Venezuelan general, Cliver Alcalá, who has since surrendered to the U.S. after having been indicted on drug trafficking charges. Goudreau continued organizing the plot along with former Venezuelan National Guard Capt. Javier Nie- to and a handful of other traitors to the Bolivarian revolution. Together, they trained a group of defectors who had fled to Colombia after being defeated in an earlier coup attempt a year ago. The firefight was over quickly and Goudreau’s mercenaries were crushed.

**Contract signed by Guaidó**

Now that the attempted putsch was defeated, the Guaidó forces deny any connection with the raid at all. But Goudreau, who stayed at home in Miami during the raid, has since produced a contract, dated in October 2019 and signed by Guaidó and two of his cronies.

The contract details the payment of $213 million. Guaidó apparently attracted investors to finance the operation by paying 55 percent interest on loans and preferential treatment regarding contracts in the energy industry in his intended new government. Since the raid was defeated, members of Primero Justicia, one of the main political parties in Guaidó’s coalition, condemned “Operación Gesedón” as the raid is called, and called on Guaidó to denounce it.

The White House also denies any connection. “Whatever it is, we’ll let you know, but it has nothing to do with our government,” said Trump.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper denying Pentagon involvement, and the CIA said that they tried to talk the coup plotters out of it. In another denial that was also a threat, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, “If we had been involved, it would have turned out differently.”

But Guaidó’s chief strategist, Juan José Rendón, inadvertently revealed U.S. involvement in a CNN interview. When he was questioned about the nature of contracts among the signers — he described the document as “an exploration to see the possibility of capture and delivery of justice for members of the regime who have an arrest warrant.”

The contract was signed in October 2019, but the arrest warrants issued by the U.S. against President Madu- uro and others didn’t happen until mid-March 2020. In other words, the plan was hatched knowing the arrest warrants would be issued by the U.S. five months before they were issued.

Once again, would-be coup plots greatly underestimated the commitment of the people to the Bolivarian political process. They thought they could inspire an uprising amongst soldiers who have shown again and again that they are with the revolution. But we can’t take the oppression of the Venezuelan people for granted. The fact that another attempt happened, shows that U.S. imperialism is always a threat, and that the threat is even greater due to the crisis the billionaires find themselves in.

The people’s movement has to be ready to respond against the possibility of a direct U.S. intervention and to strengthen the fight against the U.S. hands off Venezuela!
Dr. Roh Kil Nam: Advocate for peace and the reunification of Korea

On April 25, the world lost a great person dedicated to the Korean people's revolutionary solidarity, with an unflinching determination to expose the truth — all motivated by his love for humanity. Dr. Roh Kil Nam, also known as Ken Roh, was the founder of “Minjok Tongshin,” an online news publication started in 1999 in the U.S. dedicated to reporting the latest news about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and countering misinformation from the U.S. media about North Korea.

Dr. Roh was born in 1944 in Gangneung, Gangwon-do, Korea, while under Japanese colonial rule. Roh began his political struggle for the democratization of South Korea during the dictatorship of U.S.-supported Park Chung-hee. Being born into the brutal Japanese colonial rule and enduring dictatorship in South Korea helped forge the spirit of activism and justice in Roh. Dr. Roh lived his life determined to provide the movement for democracy in South Korea and the struggle for international solidarity with the North with the necessary tools to counter imperialist power and its disfigured part of the republic. Labor with a white skin cannot emancipate itself where labor with a black skin is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new vigorous life sprang. The first fruit of the Civil War was an agitation of 6-hour day — a movement which ran with express speed from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California.

And, to further the point of May Day’s relevance to socialism let’s bring it home with an article written for May Day in the International, by the revolutionary socialist Rosa Luxemburg: “In the United States of America, any sort of independent labor movement was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the republic. Labor with a white skin cannot emancipate itself where labor with a black skin is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new vigorous life sprang.”

The brilliant chief idea of the May Day celebration is the independent action of the proletarian masses, is the political mass action of the millions of workers — combined with the direct international mass manifestation of the working class. The greater guarantee we shall have that from the world war, which will inevitably take place sooner or later, there will result an ultimately victorious settlement of the struggle between the world of labor and that of capital.

On behalf of Karl, Lucy and Rosa, thank you to all the workers and oppressed peoples of the world and their organizations that kept May Day and its mission alive, even during this pandemic.

Dr. Roh Kil Nam: Advocate for peace and the reunification of Korea

MAY DAY
Workers fight for their lives

Continued from page 1

As part of a series of Marxism classes sponsored by the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper, a webinar was held on April 26 to mark the 150th birthday of V.I. Lenin, founder of the Bolshevik (communist) Party and leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Presentations and discussion focused on Lenin’s contributions to revolutionary Marxism as a tool for the emancipation of workers and oppressed peoples, including what we can learn from his example at this moment of global political, social and economic crisis.

The webinar kicked off with a diverse group of activists reading passages from Vinge Copeland's pamphlet, “Lenin: Thinker, Fighter.” Copeland described Lenin as “The beginner’s guide to revolutionary Marxism as a tool for the emancipation of workers and oppressed peoples, including what we can learn from his example at this moment of global political, social and economic crisis.”

The webinar closed with a diverse group of activists reading passages from Vinge Copeland’s pamphlet, “Lenin: Thinker, Fighter.” Copeland described Lenin as “The beginner’s guide to revolutionary Marxism as a tool for the emancipation of workers and oppressed peoples, including what we can learn from his example at this moment of global political, social and economic crisis.”

John Parker, a leader of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles and national spokesperson for the Socialist Unity Party, talked about Lenin’s historic contribution to understanding the struggle of oppressed nationalities and people with special identities and their movements.

How to build unity?

“The question for the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution was, how were they going to build unity? How could they convince oppressed non-Russian workers and peasants, who historically didn’t trust the majority Russian population, to even desire a socialist state?

“The solution came through trying to build trust through political and economic solidarity, using the right of self-determination.”

Miranda Eitel, an activist with Youth Against War and Racism and the Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore, recalled Lenin’s Marxist analysis of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, and urged participants to review Lenin’s five-point definition of imperialism:

1. imperialist division of the world
2. monopoly of capital
3. colossus of monopoly capitalism
4. accumulation of capital
5. military force as the mightiest weapon of imperialism.

In her analysis of imperialism, Eitel highlighted how imperialism was used to support the liberation struggles of all oppressed peoples. She was also dedicated to the building of unity between progressive organizations in the U.S.

Dr. Roh was a tireless advocate for peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula. He traveled 75 times to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and each time brought back the truth of North Korea, her people and their efforts to defend their sovereignty.

Our heart goes out to his family, and to all those who worked with Dr. Roh to end the imperialist division of beautiful Korea. Long live Dr. Roh Kil Nam! Korea is one! For the Los Angeles Branch, Socialist Unity Party / Partido de Socialismo Unido: Maggie Vascasenno, Rebecka Jackson, Scott Schefer, Jefferson Azevedo, John Parker.

Webinar celebrates Lenin's contributions to socialist struggle

STATEMENT FROM THE SOCIALIST UNITY PARTY PARITDO DE SOCIALISMO UNIDO

May 11, 2020

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Contesta los ataques contra Cuba con más solidaridad — Cuba salva vidas

Por Cheryl LaBush

En las primeras horas del 30 de abril, balas fueron disparadas contra el embajador cubano en Washington, D.C. El Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores cubano Bruno Rodríguez Parilla reportó por un tweet esta mañana que "el personal de la misión no resultó herido y está a salvo. La investigación está en proceso." Rodríguez Parilla enfatizó, "Es la responsabilidad de los Estados Unidos de proteger a sus diplomáticos acreditados a ellos y en sus instalaciones."

Este ataque fue el mismo día después que U.S. Secretario de Estado Mike Pompeo y otros funcionarios de la administración hicieron declaraciones públicas vilificando a Cuba.

Pompeo y otros funcionarios de la administración hizo declaraciones públicas vilificando a Cuba. "It is the responsibility of the United States to protect our diplomats and their facilities." Parilla enfatizó, "Es la responsabilidad de los Estados Unidos de proteger a sus diplomáticos acreditados a ellos y en sus instalaciones."

There are now more than 20 countries with Cuban medical professionals helping to fight COVID-19, plus even more countries requesting the Interferon Afa-2b recombinant of Cuba. There are going to have cooperation with Qatar, and the South Africa welcoming its second brigade.

Until this capitalist system — "the look like a burglary suspect." No charges of any kind had been kept us divided in order to facilitate the super exploitation of Black and Brown peoples, and is discarded, these lynchings will, unfortunately, continue.

Part of that fight to change society includes fighting for our demands. We should demand from this racist system that any communities of color, which have been victimized by police murder, should have the right, and be given the resources, to replace the existing police force in their communities with one of their own making, hiring trusted members from their communities — a police force controlled and created by them.

In addition, we must protect all communities of color no matter where they live, laws protecting victims of racist terror and murder cannot go unenforced and must fall under a stricter set of guidelines with regard to criminal justice. There should be immediate arrests when people of color are murdered by racists or police and Immigration and Customs Enforcement or any other state or local criminal justice agency.

And those complicit in those crimes, including criminal justice officials from cops to judges who ignore the demands to stop killing and to do their jobs.

For those who want to oppose the latest attack on socialist Cuba in words and deeds, please go to SavingLives.US–CubaNormalization.org for more information.