Fight attacks on unemployed workers coast to coast

By Scott Scheffer

Governors of 26 U.S. states have opted to reject federal benefits for unemployed workers that were enacted in March 2021 as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The move presages a crisis for millions of workers, and activists in Maryland’s Unemployed Workers Union are building an organization to turn back the attack. Thousands have contacted the newly-formed organization to join in the fight.

As news of the corporate-backed assault on the unemployed started to make headlines in May, resistance began to appear in different states, a demonstration in Miami, a petition signed by thousands in Pennsylvania, and a lawsuit that currently has halted the cutoff of benefits in Indiana are all examples.

Activists from the Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore, a group with a long history of fighting against police brutality and for justice for working-class people, helped form the Unemployed Workers Union. Many thousands of distraught and angry unemployed workers across Maryland have responded, as well as people inquiring about forming chapters in other states.

The conditions revealed by the work of UWW has surprised even these seasoned organizers. Even before the announcement of the cancellation of benefits and the launch of UWW, tens of thousands of workers had been struggling to resolve their unemployment claims. Hours-long attempts to reach the state’s unemployment office were spent on hold. Messages went unanswered indefinitely. In the rare cases when callers reached a live person, they were sometimes assured they would be paid, and it simply never happened. There are reports of some people just being told “to find a job.” Some claims were filed more than a year ago.

Many people have been evicted or are facing eviction; cars have been repossessed and credit records have been ruined. The severity of the crisis has only been aggravated through the efforts of the UWW, and certainly is similar in all the states where unemployed workers are under attack.

On June 24, Alec Sommerfield, pro-bono attorney for the organization, announced a class action lawsuit challenging the governor’s refusal to dispense the federal unemployment supplement, and demanding benefits for countless workers who have been disqualified without explanation or whose cases have been pending for months.

On July 6, the Unemployed Workers Union (UWW) picketed the Maryland Labor Department office in Baltimore, demanding an emergency meeting with Secretary of Labor Tiffany Robinson. “We’ve heard from people all across the state who are literally losing every single thing — their homes, their apartments, their belongings, their cars, everything,” said UWW organizer Sharon Black. “It’s a state of emergency and Secretary Robinson has to hear our pleas.”

In response to a class-action lawsuit by the UWW, Baltimore Circuit Court Judge Lawrence Fletcher-Hill issued a temporary restraining order against Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan’s plan to end enhanced federal unemployment benefits early. The July 3 ruling came just hours before the $300 weekly payments were scheduled to be cut off.

Most affected Maryland residents are only receiving payments from the federal program. The lawsuit is also pushing for people who have filed state unemployment claims but have not yet received payments to get their benefits. A follow-up hearing was scheduled for July 12.

“The class-action suit is very important to us, and we hope that the courts do the right thing, but we know that our fight has to continue regardless of what takes place inside or outside the courts,” Black said. “That means that we will not rest until every single unemployed Marylander gets their benefits.”

On the weekend of July 10-11, unemployed workers’ speak-outs are planned in cities across Maryland. For info on the campaign, visit UnemployedWorkersUnion.org.

Picketers carrying a hand-painted banner marched outside the courthouse. The group has created a grievance form that has been filled out by thousands, picketed Gov. Larry Hogan’s office, and filed in court for a temporary restraining order.

At least 4 million denied

Based on data provided by the Century Foundation, as of now at least 4 million unemployed workers will be denied nearly $1 billion in federal money that was intended to help them survive after the massive job losses from the pandemic. The national unemployment rate is still double its official pre-pandemic rate, which is a woefully inadequate count. There are 8 million fewer jobs than before the pandemic, which is far from over as case rates and death rates are beginning to creep up due to variants of the virus and the general failure in the U.S. of efforts to end the outbreak.

Unemployment insurance was part of a package of measures enacted by the Franklin D. Roosevelt White House when a militant workers’ movement rose up against the horrible conditions of the Great Depression. The corporate ruling class was divided over how to react to the movement. Germany’s response to the crisis was fascism, and there was support for going in that direction.

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Unemployment and inflation

Economic recovery for capitalists doesn’t mean recovery for workers

By Gary Wilson

President Joe Biden said after the June jobs report: “Our economy is on the move.”

Biden was referring to the Department of Labor report released July 2 which showed the growth in June was higher than expected. That’s the politician’s spin.

The details of the report (not in the news) show that the unemployment rate rose to 5.9% from 5.6% the month before; 9.5 million people are still considered “unemployed,” almost double the number of unemployed in the month before the coronavirus shutdowns began in February 2020. And 14.7 million people are still claiming unemployment benefits under all programs, according to the Department of Labor.

Looking more closely at the jobs report, the Labor Bureau says that in June some 6.2 million people wanted a job but did not actively look for a job over the previous four weeks or were unavailable to take a job. Therefore, these are unemployed workers who are counted as official unemployment figure of 9.5 million.

There are many reasons why workers are not looking for work or are unavailable. This includes having to take care of children when schools and daycare centers are not fully open, as well as those who have been unable to get vaccinated.

Many of the unvaccinated are working class. Vaccinations have been more available for the millionaires and managers, but for the working class there are a great many obstacles. As of July 1, only 47.6% of the U.S. population has been vaccinated and this has been done mostly on class lines.

The main obstacle to vaccination is access, says Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, a former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Racism and class have meant that vaccines are often unavailable, which has increased the level of distrust in the vaccines. The lowest vaccination rate is for “Public Charity”—those hit by high poverty rates, crowded housing and poor access to transportation,” the New York Times reports.

Whose wages increased?

Another part of the Labor Department’s report that’s getting the spin is the indication that average hourly earnings rose for “everyone.”

What the figures reflect is that higher-paid workers who have kept their jobs and switched to working from home have gotten a pay increase. A closer look at the Labor Department report shows that Black and Latinx workers aren’t getting jobs, much less a meaningful pay increase.

Center for Public Integrity’s Alexa Fernández Campbell reports: “Black and Latino employees, many of whom work in the service industry, lost their jobs at a higher rate than everyone else. They were also less likely to qualify for unemployment aid because many live in states that have made it harder to access the benefit.

... If you look closely at the numbers, a familiar theme emerges. The recovery is not the same for everyone.”

The Labor Department report does show that employment in the leisure and hospitality industry — which includes restaurants and hotels — is slowly restarting, but employment in this service industry is still down by about 2.18 million workers compared to the peak in February 2020.

Employment in manufacturing rose by only 15,000 jobs in June. The number of workers in manufacturing is still down 481,000 from February 2020.

While employment is down, manufacturing production fully recovered in May compared to February 2020. During every capitalist downturn, manufacturers respond by investing in automation or by moving production to low-wage areas, if possible.

While employment in manufacturing peaked in the 1970s and has since fallen by about one-third, production, boosted by high-tech automation, continued to rise until the end of 2007. During the Great Recession (2007-2009), manufacturers mostly relocated production to other countries. Production never recovered to the 2007 peak.

Then, in March 2020, factory production in the U.S. practically disappeared. But by May 2021, production was back to February 2020 levels, but with 481,000 fewer workers.

The number of employed workers won’t return to its pre-pandemic level until 2024, according to a Congressional Budget Office report. The same report says that the “economy” is near a full recovery. That is, the profits of the capitalists are recovering, not the jobs of the workers.

Inflation: pay cut for workers

Meanwhile, there has been a general increase in prices across the U.S., also known as inflation. Prices are rising at their fastest rate since 2008. For workers, inflation is not good, because it cuts into their pay as the prices of necessary food, housing and transportation rise. Capitalists, on the other hand, tend to like some general inflation as it gives them an opening to raise prices.

When the news reports claim that wages are going up, they never honestly explain if the raises are even keeping up with inflation. The wage rise in the Labor Department report does not meet the rate of inflation.

The prospect of higher wages sounds like good news for layers of workers previously on minimum wage levels or even below. But wage increases that are being reported in the news at best have been about 3%. With the official U.S. inflation rate hitting 5% in May, real wages are actually falling.

The “economic recovery” is being driven by the Federal Reserve’s “printing” enough money to keep interest rates from rising as the growing budget deficits of the government are holding up the economy. This, they hope, will cause the economy to recover and boom. A booming economy means high profits for business while “full employment” means rising wages for workers.

The rise of inflation threatens to disrupt capitalist economic recovery at this time and could lead to a serious downturn.

The Biden administration and the Federal Reserve hope that the current surge of inflation reflects shortages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and will die down as the economy returns to “normal.”

However, if inflation does not die down, it could deteriorate into stagflation — that is, persistent high inflation combined with high unemployment and slow economic growth.

The Federal Reserve can always halt inflation by making money “tight” and allowing interest rates to rise, but if it does that any recovery would stop with many millions still unemployed.

Consuewella Africa, presente!

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

For many, the name Consuewella Africa is like many of the Americas: about interchangeable, for unless you spend time with them, how could you know them? Consuewella, called Swella by her MOVE brothers and sisters, was a woman who earned strength and confidence. My memories of her cause me both to chuckle and to ruminant.

Once, while on a bus going down Powelton Avenue, I saw her sunning in the summer heat, surrounded by work. I quickly grabbed my camera and clicked off a shot, and she tore into me cursing furiously at the intrusion.

Secondly, I interviewed her several times, and one stands out more for her answer than for my question, which, honestly, I can’t remember.

She was describing MOVE and said they were the children of God. The children of God: who can forget that? Swella was the mother of three kids, Tree, Netta and Lobo, a boy. The two girls, remember May 13th, 1985? Again, who can forget? Tree and Netta were among the 11 men, women and children slaughtered, martyred, and bombed by the city of brotherly love and its federal and military co-conspirators.

And now we’ve learned that this region’s leading universities have been essentially playing with the bones of Consuewella’s daughters, Tree and Netta — not for years, for decades.

Consuewella Africa (center) during a rally in Philadelphia on the 36th anniversary of police terror-bombing of the MOVE house, May 13.

What must this have done to Swella, their mother?

We don’t have to imagine, for a doctor examined her in her final hours and found nothing wrong with her physically. How could her sheer anger or rage have affected her?

Consuewella Africa was named MOVE’s Minister of Confrontation, and she rumbled in and out of jail to promote MOVE’s beliefs. She fought her entire adult life for freedom, and recently, after the news about her daughters’ bodies, she fought for this commentator’s freedom as well. Consuewella Africa, remembered.

From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal. Source: Prison Radio

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From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal. Source: Prison Radio

Consuewella Africa, presente!
New Orleans firefighters turn up the heat, march on City Hall

By Gregory E. Williams

On July 1, the New Orleans Firefighters Association led a march downtown. In the heat of the day, they set out from Fire Station 14 to City Hall, where they entered the City Council chambers and forced a vote in favor of a pay raise for firefighters. "The contingent was made up of firefighters of different nationalities and genders, all united behind the unmistakable demands for increased pay and better working conditions."

When they entered the chambers, the council was voting on a resolution to raise pay for city contract workers to $13.25 per hour by 2022, and to $15 per hour by 2023. This pay increase falls far short of what is necessary to keep up with the increasing cost of living from workers’ struggles across the country.

Firefighters Association President Aaron Mishler was clear that the union supports this measure 100%, because the workers who create all the wealth of society deserve to thrive. But he said that firefighters and other city employees need a raise just like the contract workers.

"Mishler said, "We have a 26-year firefighter who makes $15 an hour." Right now, the starting pay for a New Orleans firefighter is only $13.60 per hour.""

Firefighter Sean Thomas spoke before the council. "I work three other jobs. I only see my 2-year-old son once a week for about an hour while he’s awake."

"Thomas’ story is not unique. The union has been battling City Hall for 10 years, once a week for about an hour while he’s awake."

When they were put on the spot, the council voted unanimously for the pay raise. According to the agreed-upon timeline, the chief administrative officer must give a report by mid-August on the logistics of the pay raise. Additionally, the Civil Service Commission will give a report by October.

The fight may not be over, but this is a major victory for the city’s firefighters, who have been organizing for so long.

Palestine solidarity infuses Queer Liberation March

By Greg Butterfield

"New York — Chants of “Free, free Palestine!” echoed through the streets of lower Manhattan on Pride Sunday, June 27, as the third annual Queer Liberation March took to the streets from Bryant Park to the historic Stonewall Inn and Washington Square Park."

Coming just a month after the latest devastating U.S./Israel bombing assault on Gaza and amidst ongoing settler terrorism in Jerusalem and throughout occupied Palestine, the solidarity infusing the march of many thousands of lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer and Two-Spirit people and supporters was very significant.

Members of the NY4Palestine Coalition, Queers Against Israeli Apartheid, the Socialist Unity Party and others spread the pro-Palestinian message from front to back of the thousands-strong demonstration, which stretched many blocks.

The Queer Liberation March began in 2019 on the 50th anniversary of Stonewall Rebellion. Organized by the Reclaim Pride coalition, its purpose was to put the spirit of protest back in Pride, after decades of corporate floats, capitalist politicians and police hijacking the “official” Heritage of Pride parade.

Under pressure from the QLM, the Black Lives Matter struggle and the LGBTQ2S+ community, Heritage of Pride this year banned uniformed cops from marching in the Pride events. For the second year, in-person activities were sharply curtailed, including the parade that usually draws millions of spectators.

’Queer people face unemployment’

“From Stonewall to Palestine, resistance is justified,” declared a banner carried by the contingent of the Socialist Unity Party and Struggle–La Lucha newspaper. Two cars of activists from Baltimore drove to New York to join local activists in the revolutionary contingent.

Among them were Lars and Russ, two organizers of the Unemployed Workers Union that is fighting against the cutoff of federal unemployment benefits by Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan.

Asked why they made the trip hundreds of miles amidst such a big struggle, Lars told Struggle–La Lucha: “Plenty of queer people are facing unemployment and issues on the job... We need to come out and show up for each other!”

“We have to be in solidarity with the queer community as well as fighting racism and many other issues to support and engage working-class people, all across the country and the world,” explained Russ.

At the end of the march, as people celebrated in Union Square Park, the New York Police Department once again showed that it is no friend of LGBTQ2S people.

“The NYPD did it again — violently attacking peaceful queer marchers near the WSP Arch — for absolutely no reason. Several were brutally arrested as the NYPD pepper-sprayed random bystanders.”

“The Reclaim Pride Coalition. A news conference denouncing this police brutality was held June 29.”

Pride fight-back action at historic Los Angeles site

In Los Angeles, hundreds gathered for a Pride event June 26 that began with a spirited rally at the Black Cat Tavern — the historic site of one of the earliest LGBTQ2S demonstrations against brutality by cops.

The action, “Pride & Resistance: Stonewall Means Fight Back,” was initiated by the ANSWER Coalition. Protesters took over a lane of traffic and marched behind a sound truck for miles along the famed Sunset Boulevard to Echo Park.

The Social Evolution of Humanity

Bob McCubbins

Paperback or Kindle

At: tinyurl.com/wvarcv7
By Stephen Millies

July 4 — Frederick Douglass knew the Fourth of July was a phony. So does the December 12th Movement.

Douglass was honored today in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY, for black liberation, slave rebellion, and his annual July 4th challenge to all oppressed people. Banners reading "Health care is a right! Fight! Fight! Fight!" lined the street.

Protesters held portraits in front of Sistas’ Place at Frederick Douglass Square. D12 members renamed the corners of two streets named after slave owners—Jefferson and Nostrand—for Douglass.

The program started with a rec- ording of James Earl Jones reciting the famous 1852 speech of Douglass in his resonant voice: "What to the American slave is the Fourth of July?"

"I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross body of itsinesis and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unavailing. Your national greatness, a heaping mockery; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denuncia- tion of tyrants, brass-bronzed impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy.

"International human rights at- torney Roger Wareham demanded a $50 billion down payment on repa- rations from the Biden administra- tion. Wareham emphasized that this money is desperately needed to right inequality in health care. Black, In- digenous and Latinx people have died of the coronavirus at twice the rate of whites.

"The D12 leader, Omowole Clay, pointed out the genocidal character of the mass graves of Indigenous African American women writers and public figures such as Mary Ann Shadd, Francis Watkins Harper, Ida B. Wells—Bar- nett and Anna Julia Coop- er, who was remembering the 19th and 20th centuries, published books, news- papers, pamphlets and speeches—were repeatedly targeted by the consciousness of African people. A censorship regime in denial about institutional racism and national op- pression would not allow the works of these pioneers in African American Studies and mass organizing to be read within the public school system.

During the 20th century, books by scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois, William Leo Hansberry and Drusil- la Dunjee Houston laid the founda- tions for the African and Black Studies programs which emerged during and after the 1960s. Similarly, as in the 21st century, these scholars were subjected to political attacks by the right."

Du Bois, a Harvard graduate with a doctoral degree in History awarded in 1906, was denied a teaching position at the private institution. After being labelled a troublemaker and later communist, his name and works were generally ignored within higher education.

Hansberry, also a Harvard grad- uate, was unable to acquire a Ph.D in African Studies in the 1920s and 1930s due to the fact that not one university in the U.S. had anyone that could supervise his disser- tation. Efforts were made to have him removed from the same African American Studies program he created at Howard University, the first in the U.S. Later in life, Hansberry’s con- tributions were recognized when a former student of his, Dr. Nnmadi Azikiwe, challenged the Federal Republic of Nigeria, invited him to establish an African Studies program at the University of Nigeria, and after the 1960s. Similarly, as in the 21st century, these scholars were subjected to political attacks by the right.

Houston worked as a journal- list and publisher in Oklahoma and other states during the 20th century. Her prodigious research on African history in the eastern region Continued on page 5
No tears for war criminals: Donald Rumsfeld was U.S. torturer-in-chief

By Stephen Milles

For the people of Iraq, Donald Rumsfeld was their Hitler. The former Pentagon boss killed over a million people in Iraq. The country is still occupied by Big Oil. Nobody in Iraq is mourning Rumsfeld, who died June 29. Neither should we.

The world was horrified in 2004, by the picture of Abdou Hussain Saad Faleh being tortured by U.S. interrogators in the Abu Ghraib, Iraq, prison. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld oversaw the torture of thousands.

He and former Vice President Dick Cheney called waterboarding and other painful cruelties “enhanced interrogation.” Torture centers were set up in Iraq, Afghanistan and the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo, on land stolen from Cuba.

On Dec. 2, 2002, Rumsfeld approved one interrogation method with one reservation—referring to prisoners being forced to stand. He wrote, “I stand for 8-10 hours a day. Why is standing limited to 4 hours?”

Capitalism produces pigs like Donald Rumsfeld and Derek Chauvin, who tortured George Floyd to death. A century before Iraq was invaded in 2003, U.S. occupation forces used waterboarding to torture Filipinos. Enslaved Africans were regularly tortured on plantations.

So was the hanging of 38 members of Dakota Sioux nation in Mankato, Minn., on Dec. 26, 1862. Texas Rangers regularly brutalized Mexican and Black people.

Lies are a weapon

The road to invading Iraq was paved with lies. Within five hours after the Pentagon was attacked on Sept. 11, 2001, the U.S. military was giving false information to start making plans to invade Iraq. There was never a link between Iraq and the 9/11/01 attacks. That didn’t prevent President George W. Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld from claiming there was.

Even more lies were told about Iraq having “weapons of mass destruction.” The Bush administration was aided by the capitalist media, including the New York Times, which hyped the alleged threat.

Half of the Democrats in the U.S. Senate — including Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and John Kerry — voted to authorize an invasion of Iraq. The blood of a million people is on their hands too.

There was almost no opposition in Congress to the U.S. invading Afghanistan. The Watson Institute at Brown University estimates that 221,000 civilians were killed in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Since 2016, 40 percent of those killed by U.S. air-strikes were children.

These wars were a bonanza for Big Oil. ExxonMobil was making profits of $900 million per day. The rise in oil prices is what made fracking possible.

Iraq became a bloody playground for the Project for the New American Century, whose members included Rumsfeld and Cheney. They were convinced they could return to the days of open colonial rule since the Soviet Union had been overthrown.

Rumsfeld — and Cheney — allowed the National Museum in Baghdad to be looted. Rumsfeld’s response to oil pipelines, which anti-imperialists were trying to save, was “stuff happens.”

White mercenaries who had fought for apartheid South Africa were recruited to kill Iraqis.

Rumsfeld was hired to be drug maker G.D. Searle’s artificial sweetener aspartame vice president — with Rumsfeld on Reagan’s transition team — Searle filed for bankruptcy. Almost all of the Black, Latinx, Asian and Gender Studies programs at universities and colleges around the U.S. emerged as a result of mass demonstrations during the 1960s, 1970s and beyond. These programs and hiring of staff and faculty from African American and other oppressed communities were the products of political pressure exerted by student and community organizers.

African Americans in several former Confederate states created the framework for public education during the 1860s and 1870s. One source on the history of Georgia noted: “Before the Civil War (1861-65), Georgia had no system of public education. It was a system that assisted poor white children with tuition at private schools. In 1870 the state made a move to support public schools and found that, in the Black community at least, the rudiments of such a system were already in place. Reconstruction-era legislation required segregated schools and allowed discrimination in the distribution of school funds to white and Black students.”

Therefore, recent and long past events suggest that the attempts to outlaw the teaching of African American, Latinx, Asian, Native American, Indigenious and working class histories which are rooted in the experiences of these peoples, will prompt the continuation of the struggle against racism in all its forms.

And poor people drowned and starve in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

As a Republican member of Congress from Illinois in the 1960s, Rumsfeld voted against establishing the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), part of the “War on Poverty.”

President Richard Nixon then hired Rumsfeld to wreck it. A particular target was the Legal Assistance Corporation, which provided lawyers for poor people.

Rumsfeld hired Dick Cheney to be his sidekick at OEO. After Nixon was thrown out, Rumsfeld became President Gerald Ford’s chief of staff. Cheney was his assistant.

The tag team covered up the CIA murder of germ warfare expert Frank Olson. He had allegedly jumped to his death from Manhattan’s Statler Hotel (now the Hotel Pennsylvania), across from Penn Station, on Nov. 28, 1953. Future Watergate burglar James McCord made sure there weren’t any clues left in Olson’s hotel room.

More than 20 years later, a congressional committee revealed that Olson had been the subject of a previous LSD experiment. Cheney suggested that President Ford express regret to stop Olson’s family from filing a lawsuit.

Congress appropriated $750,000 in 1980 to use to hire a family. Olson met with them in the White House. Olson was killed a few months after the armistice that ended the Korean War. The World Peace Council charged that the U.S. used germ warfare against Korean and Chinese soldiers.

Frank Olson had been a scientist at the U.S. Army’s Fort Detrick, Md., germ warfare labs and worked on the CIA’s Operation Artichoke, which experimented on human beings. Was he about to blow the whistle on U.S. war crimes? Frank Olson didn’t commit suicide. In 1994, forensic pathologist James Starks examined Olson’s body and concluded that he “was intentionally, deliberately, with malice aforethought, thrown out of that window.”

Like the lies they told about Iraq having weapons of mass destruction, the corporate media is trying to blame the COVID-19 pandemic on the People’s Republic of China. It’s the CIA and Fort Detrick that should be investigated instead.

Drug money

President Ford nominated Rumsfeld to be secretary of defense, the FIA of two times that he ran the Pentagon. But within 14 months he was out the door following Ford’s defeat in the 1976 presidential election.

Now the time was to make real money. Going back to Illinois, Rumsfeld was hired to be drug maker G.D. Searle’s boss. Between 1979 and 1984, Rumsfeld collected nearly $4 million in salary and bonuses.

Rumsfeld didn’t know much about chemistry, but he knew what palins to grease in Washington. He used all of his insider knowledge to get Searle’s artificial sweetener aspartame approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

For years the FDA refused approving aspartame because it kept flunking safety tests. But one day after Ronald Reagan was inaugurated president — with Rumsfeld on Reagan’s transition team — Searle filed again for approval.

Six months later Reagan’s new FDA Commissioner Arthur Hayes Jr. gave the green light to aspartame. In 1985 Monsanto gobbled up Searle for $2.7 billion — quite a payday for the Searle family and Rumsfeld.

During the 1980s Rumsfeld traveled to Baghdad twice on behalf of President Reagan to push for continuing the terrible Iran-Iraq War. U.S. big business wanted both these neighboring countries destroyed.

Rumsfeld later became CEO of Gil-ead, another big drug maker. It later wanted to sell its medication to cure hepatitis C for $1,000 per pill. The medical-industrial-complex is much like the military-industrial-complex.

Rumsfeld made money of both. He ended up with a stash of $200 million. War crimes do pay.

Hurry up Henry Kissinger. It’s time to join Donald Rumsfeld in hell.
Longshore union backs Cuba’s fight against U.S. blockade

By Cheryl LaBash

A National Network On Cuba press conference on the eve of the June 23 United Nations General Assembly vote urged the U.S. to “Vote Yes” on the “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba” — Item 42.1

The 42,000-member Interna- tional Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) voted to call on the U.S. to “Vote Yes” on the resolution at its International Convention held June 14-18.

Significantly, the union’s resolution also approved a $10,000 con- tribution to the $Yrings$Cuba Campaign to aid Cuba’s vaccina- tion program using its effective COVID-19 vaccines. Gabriel Praw, chapter president of the Seattle A. Philip Randolph Institute, Millen Worker March Movement and ILWU member, reported this significant news at the NNOC event June 22.

The NNOC resolution is the latest example of the widespread and growing support inside the United States for finally ending the unilater- al, six-decade regime-change war on Cuba. The world has voted with Cuba at the U.N. General Assembly annually since 1992.

This year the U.S.-based Saving Lives Campaign mobilized to show how, in contrast to the Biden and Trump administrations, the U.S. people want to “Vote Yes” to end the blockade.

Nancy Yamada from Building Re- lations with Cuban Labor summarized the work that has gathered res- olutions from city councils and labor councils, state legislatures, county commissions, school boards and more. These combined resolutions represent at least 30 million people inside the United States.

Hard copies of the resolutions were sent and received at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, with email copies to President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer.

Individual “Vote Yes” letters came from the mayor of Cambridge, Mass., and Central Labor Councils of Sacramento and Fresno, Calif.

The U.S. government is intention- ally imposing hardship on the Cu- ban people. Cuban-American Felix Sharpe-Caballero from Project EL PAN and award-winning filmmaker Liz Oliva Fernandez, speaking from Cuba, gave testimony about the hu- man cost in daily life. This includes long lines for limited food, and un- availability of even common medi- cines and feminine hygiene supplies.

Two elected officials from De- troit, Wayne County Commission Chairperson Alicia Bell and former state representative and current Detroit school board member the Hon. Sherry Gay-Dagnogo, spoke at the NNOC event. Also speaking was Gail Walker, executive director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization/Pastors for Peace.

The full event can be viewed at Tinyurl.com/pz9k2zdm.

Biden’s failure to end Trump’s war on Cuba

Continued from page 8

on the front lines, helping the world’s poor and underserved populations weather the worst of the crisis. For Cuba, health is not just a right for its own people; it’s a right to be upheld and shared with all peoples.

When the administrations of Barack Obama and Raúl Castro charted a new course toward Cu- ba-U.S. diplomatic relations, there was hope that an end to the embargo was on the horizon. President Obama engaged the Cuban government to establish full diplomatic relations, eased restrictions on travel and re- mittances, removed Cuba from the state sponsors of terror list, and expanded U.S. exports to the nation.

All of this progress was undone by the Trump administration, which tightened sanctions on Cuba in the middle of the pandemic. On top of that, it pressured U.S. allies in Latin America, notably Brazil and Bolivia, to expel Cuban doctors. There is no doubt that these decisions cost lives.

On the first day of the new admin- istration, President Biden issued a national security directive calling for review of U.S. policies and sanc- tions on the response to the pan- demic, with an eye toward offering relief. Hope for a sensible U.S. policy toward Cuba was once again kindled. Now, almost a half a year into the Biden administration, the Trump- era policies of “maximum pressure” remain in place. The White House has made it clear that improving Cu- ba-U.S. relations—and with them, the daily lives of the Cuban peo- ple—is not a priority. Hope is quickly turning to indignation among U.S. and Cuban citizens alike who be- lieved Biden’s promises to reverse the Trump administration’s policy of threats, interference in Cuban internal affairs, and obstruction of ac- cess to basic human needs.

The Biden administration is facing mounting pressure from Congress to take decisive action and put us on a path toward peace and friendly re- lations with Cuba. In March, 80 U.S. congressional representatives sent a letter to the president, urging him to reverse the Trump administra- tion’s policies. More than 100 orga- nizations, from the American Public Health Organization to Amnesty In- ternational, made a similar request to Biden. On the grassroots level, activists have organized monthly car caravans in over a dozen cities to demand an end to the embargo. Civil society organizations and so- cial movements have raised over $200,000 to send syringes to Cuba.

If human rights are to be a core pillar of U.S. policy, as a White House spokesperson recently declared, then the embargo must end. It is a policy that inflicts pain and harms civilians. It is a system- atic violation of human rights on a massive scale.

Secretary of State Antony Blink- en’s eloquent speeches about a

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Baltimore joins world demand to end Cuba blockade

By Bayani


The motion was adopted by the City Council.

The move came after almost two years of unanswered requests from activists to introduce the res- olution and work with Baltimore City Council members.

The resolution urges the U.S. Con- gress and President Joe Biden to im- mediately end all aspects of the U.S. blockade against Cuba; to remove Cuba from the U.S. list of “state sponsors of terrorism”; and to re- turn Guantanamo Bay to Cuba.

The resolution will be transmitted to the Biden, the Maryland Congres- sional Delegation, the City Council president’s legislative staff and the mayor’s legislative liaison to the City Council.

On July 12, 2021, the United Na- tions voted overwhelmingly in sup- port of ending the blockade on Cuba for the 29th consecutive year. Only the U.S. and Israel voted against the U.N. resolution. Colombia, Brazil and Ukraine abstained.

Now, Baltimore City joins the rest of the world in coming out against the blockade.

The Baltimore Cuba Resolution Committee consists of members of the People's Power Assembly, Friends of Latin America, CPUSA Baltimore, Baltimore Peace Action and the D.C. Metro Coalition in Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution.

The adopted resolution can be found at Tinyurl.com/2xzctak32.

GRAPHIC: CARLOS LATUFF
Happy birthday to China's Communist Party!

By Stephen Millies

The Chinese Communist Party was born a century ago on July 1, 1921. Several dozen courageous revolutionaries came to Shanghai to start building a party that led China out of its misery.

At that time, China was being picked apart by imperialist powers, including the United States. Foreign gunboats prowled along the mighty Yangtze River.

Shanghai itself was divided into foreign “concessions,” which were occupation zones. In one of them a whites-only club displayed a Jim Crow sign saying “Chinese and dogs not allowed.”

The Chinese Revolution swept away all that filth. As Mao Zedong declared in founding the People’s Republic on Oct. 1, 1949, “China has stood up!”

Lenin led the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that helped unlock the path for workers and oppressed people everywhere. The socialist revolutions in East Asia — China, Korea, Laos, Vietnam — smashed into truth.

The transformation of China since 1949 has been stunning. China’s women stepped forward with unbound feet. Life expectancy has doubled.

Illiteracy has been virtually wiped out, while over 30 million Chinese students are attending college.

China has built more miles of high-speed railways than the rest of the world combined. Over 900 million metric tons of steel are made in China, over half of the world’s production.

It’s taken New York City 90 years to open three stations on the unfinished Second Avenue subway. Just between 2009 and 2019, China opened 21 new subway systems. Just between 2009 and 2019, China opened 21 new subway systems.

None of this progress is to the liking of the billionaires and banksters who run the United States. Even before 1776, Massachusetts shipowners dreamed of China’s “unlimited market.”

John Jacob Astor smuggled opium to China. His profits helped make him the biggest slumlord in the Americas.

Another big drug lord was Warren Delano, whose opium profits established the family fortune and helped put his grandson Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the White House.

The pivot and the lies

Thirty years ago, the overthrow of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Eastern Europe was a terrible defeat for every poor person.

The next target of the Pentagon was China. The White House proclaimed a “pivot to Asia,” which meant aiming their bombs and nukes at China.

They keep China’s Taiwan province from being restored to the People’s Republic. The U.S. Navy continues to throttle the Pacific Ocean like it’s Lake Michigan.

U.S. generals have never forgiven China for helping to defeat them in the Korean War. Chinese volunteers died alongside their Korean comrades.

By Stephen Millies

The ILWU has opposed trade sanctions against Cuba, policies that punish workers and their families and ultimately aggravate international peace.

President Ronald Reagan’s campaign — without provoking a workers’ push backwards against already inadequate workers’ wages as a whole — without provoking a workers’ movement like the one in the 1930s.

The first wave of federal pandemic emergency measures included billions in forgivable, 5%-interest loans intended to help “mom and pop” businesses. Big banks were the administrative and steered those loans that went to big corporations. Small family-owned businesses were left out, and thousands of companies that reaped the benefits laid off workers anyway.

Some of those very companies made billions in profits during the pandemic. Not enough was said about this in the media — nothing like the current slander against unemployed workers.

Workers deserve a living wage, homes, quality medical care and accessible schools. None of that will be granted without an organized, determined struggle.

The work of the Unemployed Workers’ Resistance Network must carry that struggle out, from Florida to Alaska, from Montana to Texas. For more information, visit UnemployedWorkersUnion.org.

By Stephen Millies

China today is helping Cuba, Iran, Venezuela and Zimbabwe, whose economies have been strangled by the U.S. and Europe.

Every progressive person should reject the slander against the People’s Republic of China. Hands off China!

By Stephen Millies

Happy Birthday to the Chinese Communist Party!

War on Cuba

Continued from page 6

rules-based international order ring false when it comes to U.S.-Cuba policy. Under international law, the U.S. embargo of Cuba is illegal. Since 1991, the United Nations General Assembly has held a yearly vote to adopt a resolution calling for an end to the embargo. Every year, the United States finds itself isolated as nearly every country in the world votes in favor of this resolution. This year was no different: The June 23 vote showed 184 nations against the embargo, with only the United States and Israel in favor.

If he truly wants to show global leadership, Biden should reverse a policy that isolates the United States, not merely Cuba. Instead of recalling the U.S. ambassador to Havana, he should return to Obama’s path breaking efforts towards normalization. He should applaud and facilitate Cuba’s pledge to provide 10 million doses of its vaccines, which it will share with the world.

As the pandemic decimates workers’ wages, the Global South, the world needs the United States’ cooperation with Cuba, not confrontation.

By Stephen Millies

The work of the Unemployed Workers’ Resistance Network must carry that struggle out, from Florida to Alaska, from Montana to Texas. For more information, visit UnemployedWorkersUnion.org.

Mobilizing in OUR OWN NAME

MILLION WORKER MARCH

An Anthology by Clarence Thomas

MillionWorkerMarch.com tinyurl.com/46d9e23h

“The ILWU-Cuban solidarity work started in the years leading up to the 1959 socialist revolution... The ILWU has opposed trade sanctions against Cuba, policies that punish workers and their families and ultimately aggravate international peace.”
Biden’s failure to end Trump’s war on Cuba is threatening lives

By Danny Glover

Imagine a country developing and producing its own COVID-19 vaccines, enough to cover its entire population, but being unable to produce syringes to be able to vaccinate citizens. That is the Cuba of today. The country is facing a shortage of millions of syringes.

It makes little sense that a country so advanced in biotechnology and pharmaceuticals should have trouble sourcing syringes. This reality is a consequence of what amounts to U.S. economic warfare, which makes it extremely difficult for Cuba to acquire medicine, equipment, and supplies from vendors or transportation companies that do business in the United States, because U.S. goods are in short supply internationally, so no company wants to be bogged down navigating the complex web of banking and licensing demands the U.S. government places on transactions with Cuba.

The irony is that Cuba’s achievements in health are a model and a demonstrable benefit for the entire world—one that the United States should be supporting. This is a country that is developing its economy through health and education—a project that began 60 years ago with rural literacy and health campaigns. Cuba’s public health system has allowed it to outperform much of the world in terms of life expectancy, infant mortality and, most recently, per capita pandemic statistics.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Cuba’s cutting-edge biotech industry shifted rapidly to produce treatments and develop COVID-19 vaccines. At the same time, Cuban health authorities were able to vaccinate about 11 million people, and hopes to have the 70% of the population vaccinated in August. Millions of agujas.

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