

On the “War on Drugs”

Released on the so-called “International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking” (June 26th) 2024



“International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking” was established by the United Nations in 1987 and, because the U.N. now takes a much more humane approach to dealing with the issue of substance use, there is an urgent need to rename this day of observance.

The fact is that this international “war on drugs” has done untold damage to working people across the globe. Here in the United States, pharmaceutical companies and their owners, most infamously the Sackler Family, have intentionally targeted the most destitute and vulnerable communities for distribution of their drugs, all the while minimizing and outright denying the highly addictive nature of the substances.

Because of this horrific display of corporate greed and disregard for human dignity, millions of working people have fallen victim to substance addiction and hundreds of thousands of people have died as a result of substance addiction overdose.

Unsurprisingly, none of the companies nor their owners have been held responsible and faced criminal charges for their crimes against working people. The occasional fine, amounting only to a small percent of the massive profits the owners have reaped off of the untold suffering and death of millions, is woefully insufficient to begin even attempting to right the wrongs committed.

Adding insult to injury, others within the owning class have profited off of this horrendous epidemic of human suffering:

These include the owners of private prisons and jails and numerous substance use treatment organizations... institutions more interested in securing “repeat business” and funding than actually aiding the working people who have been so devastated by this international injustice.

All the while, millions of sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, parents, friends, neighbors, and fellow workers suffer and die on the unholy altar of “profit-maximization.”

Not to be outdone, the U.S. government, bought, paid for, and controlled by the international owning class, has willfully targeted the victims of this epidemic for prosecution while shielding corporations and their owners from criminal justice. Millions of American workers have been thrown into inhuman jail and prison cells for simply possessing these substances, have been branded felons for life, have been forcefully separated from their community, have been exposed to cruel conditions and abuse within these punitive institutions, and have often been introduced to even more volatile and addictive substances while incarcerated, only exacerbating the problem. Simultaneously, while waging class war against working people, the government, representing the interests of the owning class, has sent the U.S. military to protect drug cartels and their interests abroad.

Politicians and corporations, as stated, have benefited greatly from this through lobbying “donations” and massive profits.

In the interest of the international working class, The Louisville Workers Brigade joins our voice with the voices of countless progressive working class forces across the globe in demanding the following:

- The immediate end to the disastrous “war on drugs” and the decriminalization of substance use and addiction.

- The transition to a humane, scientific harm reduction approach to dealing with the substance addiction overdose epidemic.
- A thorough worker-led investigation into the actions of corporations and their owners regarding the epidemic along with an investigation into the role of the U.S. government in perpetuating the problem here and abroad; following such an investigation, we demand swift and immediate criminal prosecutions of guilty persons and corporations.
- The end to the privatization of jails and prisons.
- The immediate release of all non-violent persons currently incarcerated for substance possession.
- The immediate expungement of the records of all those convicted under these unjust substance-related laws.
- The transition to community- and worker-control over policing.

Though so much human damage and destruction has resulted from the substance addiction overdose epidemic and the international “war on drugs” (and the owning class that has perpetuated them both), The Louisville Workers Brigade sees a day when healing, dignity, and compassion may guide our approach to these issues.

Through solidarity, understanding, determination, and love, working people can, and must, unite to begin building this better society!