

National prison strike enters week two

By Terri Kay

Prisoners across the country are striking in response to an April 15 prison-guard-incited riot at Lee Correctional Institution, a maximum-security prison in Bishopville, S.C. Seven prisoners were killed in what was the deadliest prison riot in 25 years.

A network of self-taught legal scholars called Jailhouse Lawyers Speak issued the call for a national strike, with 10 demands. Among them are “humane living conditions, access to rehabilitation, sentencing reform, voting rights and the end of modern day slavery.” The prisoners have called on outside supporters to amplify their voices.

The 19-day strike was launched on Aug. 21 — the 47th anniversary of the murder of George Jackson, a revolutionary African-American prison organizer and author, who was killed at San Quentin Prison. It will last until Sept. 9 — the 47th anniversary of the Attica Prison Rebellion, the largest prison uprising of the 1970s prison movement. A growing prisoner-led resistance movement has been shaped by national coordination of direct action inside the prisons.

Actions inside the walls confirmed by the strike website so far are:

- 200 ICE detainees at Northwest Detention Center, Tacoma, Wash., initiate hunger strike and work stoppage
- David Easley and James Ward are on hunger strike in the Toledo Correctional Institution, Ohio
- 100 prisoners organized a rally, displaying banners “Parole,” “Better Food” and “In Solidarity” in the yard at the Hyde Correctional Institution, N.C.
- Work stoppage of all prisoners in the McCormick Correctional Institution, S.C.
- Palestinian political prisoners gave a statement of solidarity from their prisons in occupied Palestine
- Revolutionary artist Heriberto Sharky Garcia declares a hunger strike at Folsom Prison in Represa, Calif.
- Nonviolent protest at Burnside Jail in Halifax, Calif., publishing their demands in solidarity

Solidarity actions outside the walls this week include:

- Aug. 21 — National Prison Strike Solidarity Demonstration, 1445 E. Grand Ave, Des Moines, Iowa, hosted by Central Iowa DSA
- Aug. 21 — Nat Turner Day Noise Demo, Metropolitan Detention Center, New York City, hosted by RAM & NYC Anarchist Black Cross
- Aug. 21 — National Prison Strike Kickoff Rally, University of Washington, Seattle, hosted by Seattle IWW Black & Pink and Sawari Mi at Durant Park
- Aug. 21 — Awareness March, Plaza de Cesar Chavez, San Jose, Calif., hosted by California Prison Focus

Continued on page 7



WW PHOTO: MAGGIE VASCASSENNO

Los Angeles, Aug. 21.

San Quentin, Calif., Aug. 25.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

SOLIDARITY with imprisoned workers 2, 6-7

Ruling class dilemma over Trump 3

WORKERS ON THE MARCH



■ UE convention 4

■ Washington state teachers 4



5

Homeless in Minneapolis 8



SAN DIEGO

Black August commemorated 9

On March 31, 1985, Sagon Penn, was racially profiled by the police.

Lessons of 1968 11

McCain: Whose hero? EDITORIAL 10

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HAITI 9

SOUTH AFRICA 10

RUSSIA 11

ATTICA UPRISING

Paris Commune of the Black Liberation struggle

Excerpted from a longer article by Larry Holmes in the Sept. 14, 2016, issue of Workers World.

By Larry Holmes

The story of Attica, Sept. 9, 1971, is the story of how prisons can be incubators of revolutionaries — like George Jackson, assassinated two and a half weeks earlier at San Quentin State Prison.

Attica has been described as the biggest deployment of state violence since the crushing of the Native uprising at Wounded Knee — 81 years before.

The significance of the Attica uprising as a prison rebellion transcends prison. Attica was a high-water mark in the Black Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It was almost the Black Liberation Movement's Paris Commune, of 100 years before, in France in 1871.

Attica was spontaneous, but to the extent that it was led, it was organized by revolutionaries — highly political individuals who considered themselves Marxists, Maoists, Black liberationists. They organized committees for food, for negotiations. They put together 28 demands in a few hours!

Their demands addressed every aspect of survival in prison: health, food, an end to solitary confinement, legal rights, the right to family visitation, the right to get political material in the mail. Particularly noteworthy, in relation to yesterday's national prison strike, is that almost one-third of their demands addressed prisoner labor rights.

This is from their statement: "We demand an end to prison labor exploitation. ... Prisoners who refuse to work are punished and segregated. This is a class issue."

Their demands included: Prisoners should be considered workers. The work day should be eight hours. Prisoners should have the right to form a union. Prisons should be made to conform to New York state labor laws, including wages and workers' compensation for accidents. Prisoners should have access to vocational training, union pay scales, union membership.



Workers World Party played an important role at Attica. The Party had a tremendous reputation with prisoners, through both Youth Against War and Fascism and the Prisoners' Solidarity Committee, and was known in all state prisons. We did work, ranging from solidarity with political prisoners and legal help, to providing buses to take prisoners' families for visits to upstate prisons. We were also known for our political program: "Prisons are concentration camps for the poor! Tear them down!" Our reputation was such that the Attica negotiating committee asked that a leading comrade, Tom

Soto, be an observer during negotiations with the state.

Ultimately the repression came. Nelson Rockefeller, the oil billionaire then the governor, gave the orders to crush the uprising. He had a reputation as an Eastern liberal, but he was actually a ruling-class monster with presidential aspirations, so he ordered in more than 1,000 troops, guards and state troopers from four to five states around, to shoot indiscriminately. The state killed more than 30 prisoners and 10 hostages. The bourgeois propaganda was that the prisoners had killed the hostages, with the media giving all sorts of lying details. But it later came out that all who died, died of bullet wounds — and the prisoners had no guns. Surviving prisoners were tortured, without their wounds being treated.

The ruling class made their point: "There is a price to pay" if there is rebellion.

But the uprising opened up the question of prisoners' rights and liberation. From then on, the cutoff, isolated prisoners became a much bigger issue in our movement, as well as the issue of prisoners as workers. ...

Revolutionaries never forget that our ultimate goal is not merely improving the conditions under which workers' labor is exploited, but rather the abolition of exploitation, the abolition of all wage slavery and capitalism. End prison slave labor! □



Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, joblessness and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it.

Join us in the fight for socialism!

Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black and Brown youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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WORKERS WORLD

this week

★ In the U.S.

National prison strike enters first week	1
Attica: Paris Commune of the Black Liberation struggle ..	2
Trump under fire – the ruling-class dilemma	3
North Carolina: UE convention advances solidarity	4
Washington state teachers vote to strike	4
Pride at Work convention: 'Proud and Powerful'	5
On the picket line	5
'Freedom Riders' closes the gap	5
Atlanta stands in solidarity with prisoners	6
Rally remembers prisoners killed	6
Texas construction site: Grim discovery	6
Homeless create community in Minneapolis camp	8
Los Angeles: Second month of encampment at ICE	8
San Diego remembers Sagon Penn	9
A street name is a struggle against white supremacy ...	9
Trump's racist redirection and South Africa	10
The Lessons of Chicago, 1968.	11

★ Around the world

Palestinians send solidarity to U.S. prison strike	7
Behind the pension crisis in Russia, Part 2	11

★ Editorial

McCain: Whose hero?	10
---------------------------	----

★ Noticias en Español

Las mujeres luchan por el derecho al aborto en Argentina	12
--	----

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Trump under fire – the ruling-class dilemma

By Fred Goldstein

Donald Trump has suffered a series of blows from the anti-Trump forces in the ruling class and the legal establishment. This has undoubtedly encouraged progressive and revolutionary forces who rightfully want to see this reactionary, authoritarian, racist, misogynist Trump go down.

Recent events have pummeled Trump. His campaign manager, Paul Manafort, was convicted at trial of eight criminal counts of fraud and tax evasion. His long-time lawyer and “fixer,” Michael Cohen, pleaded guilty and pointed the finger at Trump for campaign law violations. These developments came on the same day.

The following day it was revealed that the CEO of the National Enquirer, David Pecker, who operates a pro-Trump scandal sheet, had been granted immunity to talk about how he worked with Michael Cohen to suppress stories critical of Trump by buying and then not publishing them.

Twenty-four hours later it was revealed that the CFO of the Trump Organization, Allen Weisselberg, was also given immunity to testify. Weisselberg has been in charge of Trump Organization finances dating back to the days of Trump’s racist, pro-Nazi father, Fred Trump.

Wall Street, Pentagon draw line — at Russia and DPRK

Shortly thereafter, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was forced to call off his trip to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea with one week’s notice. Pompeo had already chosen the head of Ford Motors to lead the delegation. Last week we noted that Trump’s military parade was canceled and how the Pentagon and the ruling class were resisting his attempt to realign U.S. imperialist foreign policy toward Russia, which the establishment has blocked. (“Revolt of the spymasters,” WW, Aug. 23)

The latest move to cancel Pompeo’s trip to the DPRK is the ruling class’s answer to Trump’s attempt to realign U.S. foreign policy on the Korean peninsula. Finally signing a peace treaty with the DPRK — for a war that ended in a stalemate 65 years ago — is a condition for moving forward. The entire military and political establishment is opposed to this and finally won out, even as Trump was being weakened in court.

The ruling class has laid down the line on the essentials. They can live with Trump’s fascist atrocities on the borders, separating immigrant families. They can shrug off his support for police brutality and murder in the Black and Latinx communities. They can live with his racist slurs against Africa and Haiti.

But when it comes to basics, aggression toward Russia and opening up peaceful relations in Korea, Wall Street and the Pentagon draw a sharp line.

Bosses reject impeachment for now

It must be noted that these developments have been accompanied by a concerted effort to bury any incipient movement for impeachment, which has been quickened by Trump’s legal setbacks.

This effort to quash any talk of impeachment comes from both the Democratic Party leadership and the Republicans alike. A long story in the New York Times tells how the Democratic Party hierarchy is trying to put out impeachment fires among rank-and-file Democrats. The party line is to protect the Mueller

All the indictments, plea bargaining, immunities, exposures, etc., amount to this: The anti-Trump forces in the ruling class are doing a dance with Trump.

investigation and let it play out. (Aug. 25)

Right now, the ruling class is wary of stoking an impeachment movement. There are at least two reasons. First, they are making tons of money in profit from the Trump tax cuts and deregulation. The entire trillion-dollar tax cut directly reduces corporate expenses and goes straight to the corporate bottom line. Profits have been shooting up for two quarters. No boss or banker wants to rock that boat.

Second, they are afraid of provoking a right-wing rebellion from Trump’s base. They listen to Trump rallies, which continue on just as they were during the campaign, despite all the revelations about what a low-life racist, misogynist, bigoted crook Trump is. The bourgeoisie is always collaborative, conciliatory or cowardly in the face of the right wing — and this is a lesson the working class must always remember.

All the indictments, plea bargaining, immunities, exposures, etc., amount to this: The anti-Trump forces in the ruling class are doing a dance with Trump. Right now the ruling class is trying to weaken him primarily with legal and publicity attacks. This may change under future circumstances, for instance, if the trade war with China gets out of control or some other catastrophic development threatens their capitalist interests. But, ultimately, they hope to remove him through the 2020 election process.

The best case political scenario for the anti-Trump forces in the ruling class is for the Democrats to win the majority in the House of Representatives. This will give them the power to call hearings, bring witnesses, subpoena testimony and documents, and wage a public relations war against Trump, while leaving the question of impeachment open.

At the present time the masses are faced with three practical alternatives to removing Trump: indictment, impeachment or elections. All three are ruling-class solutions in arenas dominated by capital.

The radical and revolutionary left were definitely growing, even before Trump got in. But given the present-day relationship of political forces, and given the relative numerical weakness of the revolutionary and radical left, these ruling-class solutions are the only paths to actually removing Trump at the moment.

Ways to fight Trump and Trumpism

However, there are many ways to fight Trump and Trumpism on the ground, such as bringing down racist symbols, fighting to abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement, putting immigrant detention centers under siege, supporting the present prisoners’ strike, fighting police brutality, defending Native land

rights, demanding women’s right to reproductive justice and LGBTQ rights, demonstrating against the war drive, etc. All of these are righteous struggles that can be directly related to the struggle against Trump. They can and must be waged.

Propaganda and agitation against the Trump reaction are other important avenues to be used, especially as the bourgeois elections get closer. This is a time when the masses are open to listening to politics. The real left, the revolutionary anti-capitalist left, may not be decisive in the electoral arena, given the current relationship of forces. Some social democrats, however, are running as Democratic Party candidates.

It may be that the role of the left will be best carried out by a campaign of demonstrations and propaganda. In some states, or more likely local contests, revolutionary forces may be able to participate in elections on a revolutionary basis for propaganda purposes as well as for gaining representation.

Propaganda and agitation during the current campaign have to be sensitively crafted. They must bear in mind the anti-Trump sentiments of the undocumented who have suffered fascist-like measures on the borders, including the separation of families from their children. These fascist-like measures are not restricted to the borders, but are carried out by ICE in immigrant communities and at workplaces across the country.

This propaganda must bear in mind the anger in the cities and Black communities all over the country against the police and Trump’s open support for police brutality and Confederate racism.

It must acknowledge that there are close to a million DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients who have the threat of deportation hanging over their heads. In addition, hundreds of thousands, including Haitians, Hondurans, Salvadorans, Nicaraguans and others whose Temporary Protected Status has been lifted, are awaiting deportation.

Bearing all this in mind, anti-capitalist, pro-socialist propaganda can be fashioned which not only condemns Trump, but also shows that salvation does not lie in the Democratic Party, a party whose leadership is inextricably tied to corporate and military interests.

Socialism gaining popularity

There is much discussion and publicity about the growing popularity of the term “socialism.” Since the campaign of Bernie Sanders in 2016, the term has become respectable, particularly as capitalism decays and brings suffering and gross inequality to the masses. The term “socialist” got a further boost when Alex-

andria Ocasio-Cortez, a Puerto Rican activist, a Sanders ally and a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, won a primary against an entrenched Democratic Party hack, Joe Crowley, who was in line to be named Speaker of the House after Nancy Pelosi. Ocasio-Cortez will represent a district that spans the Bronx and Queens.

While her primary victory has inspired a great deal of enthusiasm among progressives, it has also bred illusions among many young people, especially on the left, that they are on the road to taking over the Democratic Party and bringing forward a program of wiping out inequality, winning universal health care, affordable housing, even government ownership of industries, etc.

These illusions must be dealt with by Marxist arguments, and should not be contemptuously dismissed. For example, the most progressive president of the 20th century, Franklin Roosevelt, put down the independence movement in Puerto Rico in the Ponce Massacre of 1934. Roosevelt took U.S. imperialism into World War II, not initially against the Nazis but against Japanese imperialism, and justified the internment of Japanese people in the U.S.

While Roosevelt is well remembered now for the New Deal, which granted some rights to the impoverished working class at the time, in preparation for war Roosevelt broke an aircraft strike on the West Coast, made alliances with southern Dixiecrats, allowed segregation to remain in place, including in the military, etc. And this was the most progressive Democratic Party president ever! He raged against “economic royalists” but did their bidding in the Pacific and later on in Europe. Before entering World War II, he said “Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars” — until U.S. imperialist interests were challenged.

Only struggle will win

How did the working class win concessions from the Roosevelt administration?

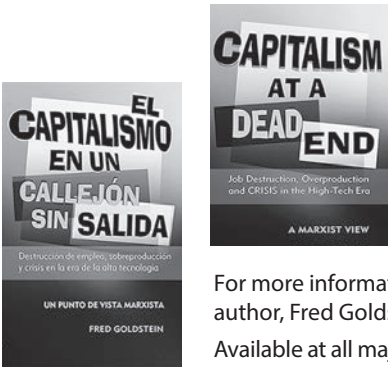
The New Deal was not a gift granted from above. It was won beginning with demonstrations of the unemployed in major cities; hunger marches; municipal general strikes in San Francisco, Minneapolis and Toledo in 1936; the sit-down strikes in Akron and Cleveland, culminating in the Flint sit-down strike the same year, which led to the organization of the United Auto Workers, the Congress of Industrial Organizations and the mass organization of the industrial working class.

This was the force that led to the Works Progress Administration, Social Security, unemployment insurance, the right to strike and to organize unions, and many other gains associated with the New Deal.

The same is true for the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act and other legislative gains, including the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision and those confirming lesbian and gay rights. Civil Rights were won first in the streets in the bloody South and then by massive rebellions and marches in northern cities.

Socialists trying to make gains by getting a foothold in the electoral system and the Democratic Party need to know that the great steps forward have come from the class struggle — the militant organization of the workers and the rebellions of oppressed communities.

In the long run, only the mass struggle can bring social progress, and only revolution can bring socialism. □



Capitalism at a Dead End Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

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For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to **LowWageCapitalism.com**
Available at all major online booksellers.

North Carolina

UE convention advances working class solidarity

By Mikisa Thompson
Raleigh, N.C.

The tenth biannual statewide convention of the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, United Electrical Workers Local 150, was held in Raleigh on Aug. 18-19. The convention brought together city, state university, state mental health, manufacturing and other workers from UE150 chapters across the state from Kinston to Charlotte.

A major theme of the conference was “Commemorating 50 years of Southern workers’ struggles from Memphis, to Charlotte, and Dr. King’s last stand” — referencing city workers’ strikes in 1968 that won important support from Civil Rights leaders and important gains in union rights, wages and working conditions.

Over the past year, UE150 has been building a statewide campaign to fight for a Municipal Workers’ Bill of Rights, which would establish basic standards. After the tragic passing of a Charlotte yard waste laborer in July 2017, the union fought for and won improved health and safety measures — such as a hazardous weather policy to protect workers from extreme temperature exposure on the job — as well as new policies in Greensboro, Raleigh and Durham.

Worker unity vs. racism

North Carolina and other Southern states have historically been the most challenging places to organize unions because of the virulent racism, which has divided white and Black workers. North Carolina was the first state to ban collective bargaining for public workers, when an all-white state legislature passed General Statute 95-98 in 1959. Denying the right to collectively bargain makes it difficult to demand and secure better work environments free of racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia and xenophobia. Yet UE150 members have been fighting and making gains for 20 years.



The convention celebrated many hard-won gains, such as in campaigns to win \$15 an hour as the minimum wage for public workers. In August 2015 Greensboro became the first city to pass a resolution granting a \$15-per-hour minimum wage for city workers. UE150 helped organize city workers to win similar resolutions and budgets, including a \$15-per-hour minimum wage in Charlotte, Durham, Raleigh and, in June, Winston-Salem.

Feeling the pressure from around the state by public workers, including state mental health workers rallying in other rural cities like Goldsboro and Kinston, and countless meetings with state legislators, the General Assembly passed a budget including \$15 an hour as the minimum wage for all state employees effective July 1. This raised the wages of over 8,000 housekeepers, groundskeepers, health care technicians, food service workers and others across the state by \$2,000 to \$6,000 a year.

The union also helped win the first public policy to provide a progressive health care cost structure in Charlotte. It allows those who earn less to pay less, effectively saving city workers \$800 to \$2,496 a year in premiums. Plus they make no payments in the month of August.

Struggle over collective bargaining

Collective bargaining is a structured process to negotiate contracts that regulate salaries, working conditions, benefits and other aspects of workers’ rights and compensation. North Carolina’s General Statute 95-98 bans public-sector collective bargaining.

After UE filed a complaint in 2007, the International Labor Organization of the United Nations ruled that North Caro-

lina’s ban violates international human rights standards. Convention participants discussed and passed a resolution to build a movement to repeal the statute banning public sector collective bargaining.

On Aug. 19, members discussed and passed 10 powerful political resolutions:

1. Expand the fight to repeal the Jim Crow ban on collective bargaining and build the campaign for a Workers’ Bill of Rights.
2. Support the Southern Workers Assembly and build the Durham Workers Assembly, including support for an upcoming Southern Workers School to be held in Durham in September and October.
3. Support the National Prison Strike — #prisonstrike2018.
4. Support Maya Little, a Black UNC grad student/worker and UE150 member who poured her blood on the Silent Sam Confederate statue in Chapel Hill, and continue the struggle to tear down all Confederate statues.
5. Fight against racism.
6. Fight against the oppression of women and LGBTQ people.
7. End all wars abroad; build workers’ international solidarity — including support for Palestinian freedom and the Boycott-Divest-Sanctions movement; support Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and the Bolivarian Revolution; U.S. hands off Syria, the Middle East and the continents of Africa, Asia and Latin America.
8. Support immigrant rights and abolish ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement], recognizing the effects of U.S. foreign and economic policy on international migration.
9. Expand internal education among

PHOTO: UE LOCAL 150

- members, including hiring staff for training and education.
10. Oppose six N.C. state constitutional amendments, including those imposing voter ID and permanently creating austerity by lowering corporate and personal income tax levels.

Korea and international worker solidarity

The convention was filled with important panels, including Organizing in North Carolina and Building a Global Labor Movement. UE150 member Darion Smith, who had recently returned from a trip to South Korea with U.S. Labor Against War, reported that the U.S. is the main force perpetuating division between North and South Korea, especially by maintaining 30,000 U.S. troops on the border and deploying the THAAD missile defense system. Smith said he learned from talking to Korean workers that “the reason the U.S. government doesn’t like North Korea is because they don’t mess with capitalism,” referencing the alternative economic model established by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea that is more worker-friendly.

UE National President Peter Knowlton was a keynote speaker, along with Jerome Scott from the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Both keynote speakers decried the insidiousness of capitalism which pits workers against each other and drives the bosses to demand more labor for lower wages and thereby to steal more of the value produced by the workers.

UE Local 150 has a long history of organizing militant members who fight for and win workers’ rights throughout North Carolina as well as nationally. An ally of UE Local 150, the Southern Workers Assembly, is hosting a workers’ school in Durham, N.C., Sept. 14-16. For registration information, go to Southernworkers.org. The program will help develop a cadre of workers with critical organizing skills and strategies to organize the South. □

Washington state teachers vote to strike

By Joshua Hanks
Portland, Ore.

Aug. 25 — Teachers throughout southwest Washington state have overwhelmingly approved potential strikes and work stoppages if their demands for better pay and new contracts aren’t met before their scheduled return to work at the end of August.

Beginning Aug. 17, a strike vote by teachers in Ridgefield won by 97.8 percent. Four days later, Washougal and Hockinson voted to strike, followed by a near-unanimous vote in Battle Ground. On Aug. 23, teachers in Evergreen school district, Clark County’s largest, approved a strike. Camas will hold a vote on Aug. 27, while teachers in Woodland have approved a new contract with a 23 percent raise.

On Aug. 20, teachers in Vancouver, Wash., directly across the Columbia River from Portland (not to be confused with Vancouver, Canada), also approved a possible work stoppage. According to Vancouver’s newspaper, The Columbian, “The union and district are at odds over a few items other than teacher pay, such as class sizes, case loads and staffing in the special education program, and a guaranteed voice in the curriculum adoption process.” (Aug. 17)

As of this writing, teachers have voted to authorize strikes in at least 10 of the state’s 294 school districts. The strike votes come in a year that has already seen large teacher strikes in several states protesting the chronic neglect of the public education system — from low pay to overcrowded, dilapidated schools contaminated with lead and lacking heat. According to the Aug. 17 Columbian, “The union and district are at odds over a few items other than teacher pay, such as class sizes, case loads and staffing in the special education program, and a guaranteed voice in the curriculum adoption process.”

The Washington state Supreme Court in its 2012 McCleary decision found that the state was failing to provide basic education and ordered it to spend billions more dollars on schools. Four years later the court found the state still was not in compliance with its decision. Teachers remain frustrated with the same problems of stagnant pay and crumbling schools that led to the court decision in the first place.

In a state frequently described as liberal or progressive, Washington’s education system and tax structure tilt decidedly against working people and in favor of the wealthiest few. With no state income tax and high, regressive sales taxes that

disproportionately affect low-income people, Washington’s tax structure has been ranked as the least fair in the country. (time.com, Jan. 14, 2015)

Billionaires profit, schools languish

Billionaires like Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos, along with their companies Microsoft and Amazon, call the state home, as do corporate titans like Boeing and Starbucks. Seattle shimmers with new skyscrapers filled with luxury condos, posh hotels and vast corporate offices. But amidst the flashiness of its largest city and stunning volcanic vistas, Washington faces serious problems like inadequate public education, an opioid epidemic and a deep affordable-housing and homelessness crisis.

Seattle attempted to ameliorate its housing crisis by taxing large companies like Amazon to pay for affordable housing. But once the large corporations came out strongly against it, the City Council quickly folded. Amazon constantly threatens to leave Seattle, even pitting cities against each other for a chance to win its second corporate headquarters — all as a way to bully the city and state into getting what it wants. Boeing also received special deals from the state to incentivize it to stay, af-

ter it threatened to move to a lower-wage, lower-regulation state.

Resources exist to fix Washington’s schools and provide everyone with housing and health care — which are crucial to stop the opioid epidemic. But those resources aren’t allocated for the benefit of the public.

A small capitalist class exercises control over the economy. What could be used to provide a decent education and home for all instead goes to stock buybacks that benefit investors or extravagant yachts for the super-rich.

The state’s endless pleading with the likes of Amazon and Boeing to stay and invest in Washington clearly hasn’t benefited the children and teachers. These corporations will take every handout they can get until they decide to go somewhere more exploitable. Submitting to their control can never deliver a good standard of living for the working-class majority, since their very existence depends on the exploited class of workers.

But the teachers have had enough, emboldened by a spate of strikes in other states that were able to win real gains — gains that cannot be achieved via endless negotiations and compromises with those in power. □

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

Contract fightback at Coca-Cola bottling plant in Alabama

A multiracial force of 275 drivers, salespeople, merchandisers, clerks and mechanics went on strike against the Coca-Cola Bottling Company United on Aug. 9 in Robertsdaledale, Ala. Represented by Teamsters Local 991, workers raised handwritten signs protesting the bosses’ obscene demands to cut new hires’ pay by \$6 to \$8 an hour and raise insurance costs. They also cited unfair labor practices. Their contract expired July 15.

“When Coca-Cola United insisted on cutting wages and wouldn’t listen to us at the bargaining table, we felt we had no choice,” said union steward David Stephens. (al.com, Aug. 9) But even without a new contract, the workers resumed their jobs Aug. 20 because they didn’t want to hurt “good relationships with their customers.” As Stephens noted, “We care about the community, but Coca-Cola United doesn’t seem to.”

As the largest privately held bottler in North America, with estimated \$2.2 billion in yearly sales, Coca-Cola United could well afford to offer a good contract. Jim Gookins, secretary-treasurer of Local 991, noted: “The wealth inequality in America is staggering, and Coca-Cola United is a prime example of how the one percent hoovers up money from the rest of us. ... For a rich corporation to demand cuts to workers’ wages is a slap in the face to workers, their families, and our communities.” (teamsters.org, Aug. 20)

Coca-Cola United’s treatment of the workers falls flat, but union pushback and solidarity can change the equation.

N.Y.C. construction workers protest sports mogul’s lawsuit

New York construction workers took to the streets Aug. 22 to protest against Miami Dolphins’ owner Stephen Ross. He heads a billion-dollar real estate business, Related Companies, which is building the ritzy Hudson Yard development. Ross sued union workers in the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York in early March, according to Crain’s, “in an effort to break the grip of the most powerful labor organizer and lobbying group in the city’s unionized construction industry.” (March 22) Ross claims the council bilked his company out of \$100 million during the first phase of the \$20 billion job. The Related company is seeking to complete the second half of the project with an open shop — non-union labor — which the workers vehemently oppose.

“Construction workers are risking arrest today to stand up against unscrupulous, anti-union developers like @RelatedCos who place workers in unsafe conditions and deny them the respect they deserve on the job,” tweeted the N.Y. Central Labor Council. Several protesters, wearing Dolphins-colored T-shirts that read “Step Down Steve,” were arrested outside National Football League headquarters on Park Avenue.

The protest accused Ross of condoning “racism, sexism and union busting” through his development business. Targeting Ross’s seat on the NFL’s so-called “social justice” committee was a clever way to draw attention to labor’s cause and show solidarity with unionized NFL players who choose before games to protest racist violence and police murders of Black and Brown people.

Trump illegally gutted federal workers’ rights, violated labor contracts

A federal judge ruled Aug. 24 that President Trump violated the U.S. Constitution and laws providing federal checks and balances when his administration tried to deny more than 2 million federal workers their legal right to union representation. The American Federation of Government Employees, the largest union representing some 700,000 federal government employees, filed two lawsuits challenging Trump’s May 25 executive orders. “President Trump’s illegal action was a direct assault on the legal rights and protections that Congress specifically guaranteed to the public-sector employees across this country who keep our federal government running,” said AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. (afge.org, Aug. 24)

However, the executive orders were felt months before they were officially issued when the Department of Education threw out its contract with 3,900 AFGE members in March. Since May, other agencies, including the Social Security Administration and Department of Veterans Affairs, both of which have large numbers of Black and women workers, tried to comply. Cox urged all agencies “to restore all previously negotiated contracts and to bargain in good faith ... as required under the law.”

Women workers protest Kavanaugh nomination

The Coalition of Labor Union Women and the National Domestic Workers Alliance were joined by several unions protesting outside the Supreme Court on Aug. 22 against Trump nominee Brett Kavanaugh. His nomination “puts the freedom of all working people on the line,” said rally organizers, during a week of action pressuring legislators to oppose Kavanaugh. “Working peoples’ rights — from the ability to make choices that are right for our families, to our right to safe, dignified working conditions and the ability to collectively bargain for better benefits, including access to a full range of health care — will be jeopardized with Brett Kavanaugh on the Supreme Court bench.” (Union City newsletter, Metro Washington, D.C., AFL-CIO Council, Aug. 22)

Pride at Work convention ‘Proud and Powerful’

By Martha Grevatt
Phoenix, Ariz.



Pride at Work, the LGBTQ Constituency Group of the AFL-CIO, held its triennial convention Aug. 23-25 in Phoenix. With the theme of “Proud and Powerful,” this convention was PAW’s tenth since its founding in 1994 as the National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Labor Organization.

Over 200 attendees represented a record number of local chapters and demonstrated the overall growth of the organization. Most major unions contributed financially to the convention and appointed representatives to PAW’s national executive board. Open and out LGBTQ union activists are represented at all levels of the organization’s leadership.

One of many speakers at the convention was Josette Jaramillo, president of the Colorado Federation of Labor. She is the first LGBTQ Latinx leader to advance to that position in any state. Jaramillo is one of eight women who are top state AFL-CIO officials. Of them she is the only woman of color. She praised the strike of teachers in Pueblo, where she lives, which ended in victory.

With the convention in Arizona, there were many positive references to the successful teachers strike there. Joe Thomas of the Arizona Education Association delivered solidarity to the convention. “Screw Janus,” he said, referring to the recent anti-union

Supreme Court decision. He noted that the AEA has gained 2,000 new members since the strike, pointing to the potential for pro-union rank-and-file organizing.

The many other guest speakers included other out LGBTQ and pro-LGBTQ labor leaders and some elected officials. They emphasized the need for both unions and the LGBTQ movement to fight back under the current political situation. Unfortunately, there was a tendency at times for speakers to equate fighting back with electing Democrats in November.

The struggle for LGBTQ worker justice is not over, especially for trans workers. They face oppression every day, whether it’s abuse in Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention or the murder of trans women of color. Even with a union, it’s still a challenge to obtain insurance plans that cover trans-specific health needs.

On the final day, convention delegates passed a wide range of progressive resolutions, including support for gender-neutral restrooms in every workplace; for a ban on anti-LGBTQ “conversion therapy”; and to defeat an anti-trans ballot initiative in Massachusetts. Other resolutions supported the “Count Me In” campaign of building trades workers in New York City; immigrant rights; the Poor People’s Campaign; decriminalization of sex work; and the upcoming International Tribunal on U.S. Colonial Crimes in Puerto Rico. □

‘Freedom Riders’ closes the gap

By Henry Hagins
New York

“Each generation out of relative obscurity must discover its mission, fulfill or betray it.”
— Frantz Fanon

Veteran human and civil rights activist Colia Clark “dropped the science” on her seasoned audience on Aug. 19 at the International Action Center here via her “missing pages from history review” of the documentary “Freedom Riders” by filmmaker Stanley Nelson. Pin-drop silence warmly greeted a number of her sharp, first-hand, knowledge-filled observations/experiences. Her unique analysis was a critical complement to this compelling film.

We learned that before Rosa Parks, there was Claudette Colvin, who had defiantly challenged racist seating arrangements on buses in Detroit. What began as a local issue later expanded to interstate travel on buses. Violence against the Freedom Riders was iconically captured in a photo of a Greyhound bus that had just been firebombed by racists in Anniston, Ala. Freedom Riders, some severely beaten by mobs, refused to be intimidated, thus encouraging many others, white and Black, to “take up the Cause.”

Faced with demonstrative state and local government resistance in the South to end Jim Crow practices in interstate travel, the John F. Kennedy administration, through its Justice Department, led by his brother Robert Kennedy, issued a nationwide ban on racist customs affecting interstate travel along with attendant sanctions. While racists fumed, Greyhound and Trailways had to sing a new tune.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott of the mid-1950s, sparked by the venerable Rosa Parks, had a number of leaders, including J.D. Nix-

on, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and others equally priceless. They played vital roles in helping to end Jim Crow segregation laws that gripped the South in the post-Reconstruction period. White anti-racists, such as Viola Liuzzo and Anne Braden, would also play strategic roles in upsetting centuries-old practices. The brutal and senseless murder of Emmett Till earlier in 1955 also spurred Sister Rosa toward an act of defiance. Historic it was.

Colia Clark’s history-laden talk cited three important phases toward “rerouting” the racist practices of interstate travel. In addition, her recollections of Roy Wilkins, James Farmer and CORE, Mary Louise Smith, Jim Forman, Katherine Brooks, John Lewis, Bull Connor, the Rev. C.T. Vivian, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Mississippi’s Parchman Prison, etc., virtually treated the audience to front-row seats, so vivid her images!

In a fitting acknowledgement of “Black August,” Orie Lumumba, a longtime defender of the MOVE 9, and Ramona Africa updated the audience about Sister Ramona Africa’s medical condition, made precarious because of “capitalist medicine’s” unceasing demand for payment and thus the need to cover present and future expenses! Stabilized for the moment, her condition can change in an instant. Financial support remains a critical element in her recovery. People who are “GoFundMe shy” can send remittances to MOVE/Ramona E. Africa, c/o MOVE Org., POB 19709, Philadelphia, PA 19143.

Orie Lumumba also briefed the audience about the significance of Black August in regard to George and Jonathan Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo, John Clutchette, Marcus Garvey, Robert Seth Hayes, the Attica Rebellion, the current National Prison Strike and the 75th birthday of Russell “Maroon” Shoatz. □

BLACK AUGUST: 8.21 - 9.

Atlanta stands in solidarity with prisoners

By Christian Noakes
Atlanta

About 60 people demonstrated in front of the Atlanta City Detention Center on Aug. 21 in solidarity with the nationwide prison strike called to begin that day and last until Sept. 9. They offered solace to people locked up in ACDC.

Their voices projected by a large speaker pointing toward the cell doors, people recited poetry, played drums and called out to let the inmates know they had not been forgotten — which the severe isolation of prison can drive many to feel.

Dark figures could be seen in the illuminated window slits from which prisoners peered out. Several inmates waved to the crowd outside, which waved back. The prisoners appeared relieved to have the monotony and pain of their seclusion broken up, but their captors wasted little time erecting barricades in front of the entrance.

However, this had no effect on the demonstrators, who directed their attention to the slits of light in the cell doors seen going up the building.

According to Kevin Caron, a local organizer for A World Without Police and Georgia Detention Watch, at the rally:

“ACDC was built in preparation for the '96 Olympics and has always been used by the city to lock away those the ruling class deems undesirable. This includes poor, mostly Black folks who are homeless, as well as others who violate city ordinances for engaging in survival economies like sex work and the use or sale of illegal substances.”

ACDC also holds immigrants for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) — an arrangement that generates \$78 per person each day for the city’s coffers.

The rally was organized by the Atlanta Prison Strike Solidarity Committee, which includes Women on the Rise, Workers World Party, the Industrial Workers of the World, A World Without Police, Anarchist Black Cross and several community members. Other participating organizations included the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Street Groomers, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, the Black Alliance for Just Immigration and Southerners On New Ground.

Thanks in part to years of hard work by organizations such as Women on the Rise and Georgia Detention Watch, the city has been under pressure to shut down ACDC, which has seen a significant decrease in the number of detainees.



WW PHOTO: JIMMY RAYNOR

The Atlanta Prison Strike Solidarity Committee is also planning other events for the duration of the strike to spread awareness of the prisoners’ struggle and encourage outside pressure in the form of boycotts and demonstrations.
Shut down ACDC!
Tear down the walls! □

At Texas construction site Grim discovery of prison

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Almost 100 graves have been uncovered in Sugar Land, Texas, a Houston suburb that was once a sugar plantation that relied on enslaved labor and that was later converted to a Texas prison. The local Fort Bend School District was building a new technology center there this spring when construction workers discovered human remains.

While most were surprised at this discovery, Reginald Moore was not. Moore is a historian, a retired longshore worker and an activist who founded the Texas Slave Descendant Society. He lives just outside of Sugar Land and had warned the school district that graves were likely on the land the district bought from the Texas prison system.

Moore spoke at the construction site on July 22 at an event called by the Houston chapter of the National Black United Front. After several dozen cars caravanned from the inner city to the construction site, activists began drumming. The Brown Berets participated as Blanca Rodriguez Alanis drummed and sang in a celebration of Indigenous lineage. Members of the Black Panther Party Alumni Association carried their Panther banner. Children carried flowers to the perimeter of the fenced-off area.

Activists listened as the national chair of the NBUF, Kofi Taharka, introduced Moore. He explained that the remains could be of enslaved people or those previously enslaved who had been incarcerated and forced to labor in the convict-lease system. This was a state-authorized system that “provided labor” to owners after the abolition of slavery in the U.S. in 1865.

Moore noted: “Yes, the 13th Amendment [to the U.S. Constitution] got rid of slavery, but the exception was for prisoners. These prisoners were forced to work under a system that was slavery by another name.”

Moore told of working at the Beauford H. Jester Unit, a Texas prison which was the Harlem Farm in the late 1800s. During the three years he worked there, even before he learned the history, he said he felt the repression dealt out to Black

convicts. He began to study and explore historical records.

Prison slavery after Civil War

According to the Texas Almanac, after the Civil War ended, the number of Black people in Fort Bend County was double the white population. They were then legally free and, theoretically, could freely sell their labor, which owners had exploited for no pay under slavery.

Used to paying nothing, plantation owners needed the labor of Black people to grow their crops and make their money. To re-enslave Black workers, the post-Civil War “Black Codes” laws were put in place legislatively throughout the states of the former Confederacy. These were designed to restrict the movement and conditions of employment of Black workers and to send any workers who violated these laws to jail to be “leased out” to plantation, mine or mill owners. The owners paid the state, not the workers, for their labor.

Moore explained that Black men were wrongfully imprisoned on trumped-up charges. “More free labor,” he added.

Just after the war ended, there were only about 200 prisoners in Texas, but those numbers began to swell. Some of the convicts, 60 percent of whom were Black, were leased to plantation owners in the Sugar Land area so sugar cane could be harvested and boiled down.

Archaeologists exhuming the remains found at Sugar Land have determined that all identified so far were African American and male, except for one, and ranged in age from 14 to 70.

Black activists led by Moore recently met with the Fort Bend School District to discuss the next steps. While the district officials talked a good line, according to Taharka, they would not formally agree to activists’ demands for reparations, for building a memorial and for trying to find family members of the deceased. Representatives from the S.H.A.P.E. Community Center, the Nation of Islam and the Black United Front contend that this struggle is far from over.

Reparations and community control

Moore’s decades of research, speaking engagements, photographs and reports

Rally remembers prisoners killed



WW PHOTO: JIMMY RAYNOR

Families remember loved ones killed in prison.

By Jimmy Raynor
Bishopville, S.C.

A rally was held Aug. 25 at the gates of Lee Correctional Facility, an infamous prison in Bishopville, S.C., to remember the deaths of seven inmates killed in April in a riot encouraged by prison staff. During the melee, the guards did nothing to stop the violence and, after it was over, did little to render aid to the injured inmates. It has been alleged that the guards provoked the fight and had been stoking tensions in the jail for months.

About 50 people, mainly from South Carolina but also from Georgia and North Carolina, attended the rally. It opened with libations for each of the seven men killed. As each name was read, a cross was placed on the side of the road in front of the prison. After a few minutes of silence for the men killed, relatives took the microphone to express their anger and hurt at what was done to their sons and nephews. Then people from the sponsor-

ing organizations spoke, chanted, and read and performed poetry.

The 10 demands of the current prison strike were read and explained as well.

Even without this kind of violence, the day-to-day routine violence in many U.S. prisons is dehumanizing. As one speaker noted, it is worse than the way animals are treated in dog pounds. Punishments such as solitary are meted out at the discretion of a guard. The process to appeal a punishment is now almost nonexistent. The administration has many ways to show displeasure over any particular inmate, and the ones that attempt to stand up for their rights must be prepared to suffer.

The rally was organized by the Free South Carolina movement, composed of friends and relatives of prisoners, ex-prisoners and prison activists. It was supported by a number of different groups, including Workers World Party, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, the Socialist Party of South Carolina and Food Not Bombs of Greenville, S.C. □

9 PRISONERS STRIKE!

PALESTINIANS SEND SOLIDARITY TO U.S. PRISON STRIKE

The following statement was released by Palestinians of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who have been jailed by Zionist colonialism for their role in struggling for the freedom of their people. They are among nearly 6,000 Palestinians currently imprisoned by the Israeli occupation. Their solidarity extends fists of resistance and hands of unity through prison bars to support the U.S. National Prison Strike, beginning Aug. 21.

We write today as imprisoned Palestinians of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, held in Israeli jails for our participation in struggle for the liberation of our land and people from colonialism and occupation. Today, we

extend our solidarity to the prisoners in the jails of the United States participating in the national prison strike beginning on Aug. 21, fighting exploitation, racism and capitalism from within the heart of imperialist prisons.

We begin by expressing our mourning for George Jackson, the imprisoned revolutionary and martyr of the Black Liberation struggle. The strike is beginning on the 47th anniversary of his martyrdom, an event that was recognized in Palestine and around the world at the time as an assassination of a true voice of struggle by the U.S. ruling class. As Palestinian prisoners, we also know that George Jackson was an internationalist and that the works of Palestinian poet Samih al-Qasem — addressing imprisonment and resistance

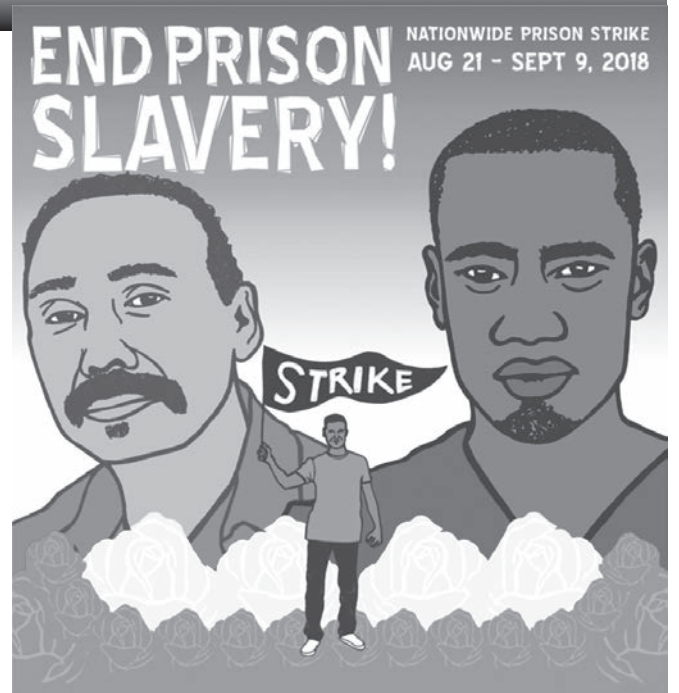
— were found in his cell after his assassination. Today, we write to you to once again forge that connection of struggle, despite our different circumstances.

The prison strike is a struggle of oppressed and exploited workers, first and foremost, confronting the unmasked brutality of capitalism behind bars. Around the world, prisoners have only protected their human rights and won victories through struggle. We know that you are demanding improved conditions, the right to fight in court for your rights and an end to excessive, lifelong sentences. You are also demanding an end to the new form of slavery found in U.S. prisons, where prison workers are paid pennies to produce goods and perform services for some of the country's largest corporations.

We also salute your struggle against racism. U.S. settler colonialism and imperialism practices its vicious racism both internally and externally, and the prison system reflects that reality. Black communities, Latino communities, Arab communities are under attack, facing mass incarceration and a system that seeks to imprison and exploit rather than support and nurture youth and elders.

Today, prison workers are some of the most exploited workers in the United States, and the same ruling class that profits from the confiscation of Palestinian land and resources and from the bombing of children in Yemen also profits from the forced labor of prisoners. Your struggle is a workers' struggle that is part of our global conflict against the vicious exploitation that our peoples face today. This struggle inside the prisons highlights the deep connections between racism and capitalism and how the struggle against them both can never be de-linked.

The boycott campaign that is part of your strike also emphasizes the critical role of boycott in confronting exploitation and oppression. While our circumstances and lives may vary greatly from one another in many ways, we too face economic exploitation through a "canteen" system that seeks to profit from our imprisonment as



Palestinians. We know that prison profiteers in the United States also profit from prison canteens, phone calls and other purchases, and we salute your campaign of boycott. This is the same reason why we call on people around the world to join the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel. We cannot and must not be the consumers of those who profit from our misery and oppression.

As you enter your strike, we salute all of you and your struggle, and we urge all who are not already committed to join in the strike. We extend a special revolutionary salute to the imprisoned strugglers of the Black Liberation Movement and other liberation movements, including Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose consistent internationalism and principled struggle is known and resonates around the world. We demand the freedom of these freedom fighters in U.S. jails, from Leonard Peltier to Mutulu Shakur.

We know from our experience that it is through struggle and confrontation that true freedom can be realized. Your strike is being launched within the heart of U.S. imperialism, the greatest danger faced by our Palestinian people and the people of the world. We know that your victory will also be a victory for Palestine — just as our victories in Palestine will be a victory for all of the struggles against imperialism, racism and oppression in the United States and globally.

With revolutionary greetings,

The Palestinian prisoners of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine inside Israeli jails, and

The Palestinian liberated prisoners of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

20 August 2018

/plantation slavery



WWW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Drummers at excavation site ceremony.

of meetings with many state agencies are now documented and housed at Rice University's Fondren Library as the "Reginald Moore Sugar Land Convict-Leasing System Research Collection."

In a July media release, the university stated: "Once the state's convict-leasing program officially ended in 1914 after 36 years, its remnants were swept under many rugs. In the 21st century, the few physical reminders of the system are at risk of being erased completely. Fort Bend became one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation as Sugar Land's suburban sprawl plowed over the fallow fields of former sugar plantations."

NBUF had a second town hall meeting about the cemetery on Aug. 28, with updates from activists. The Black community's demands regarding the cemetery include that the meaning of the graves be "interpreted by scholars familiar with the intellectual and cultural traditions of Black America and the African Diaspora;" that the cemetery be an opportunity for community and public education, with eventually the establishment of a convict-leasing museum; and that "lineal and cultural descendants be sought" using DNA testing and current scholarship.

The community demands emphasize the brutal and shameful history of convict leasing as a crime against humanity. Members said this "raises serious questions about the moral responsibility of the U.S. government at every level." The demands note that leasing convicts to companies was a state-sanctioned practice from which both the companies and the state treasury benefited.

One of those companies was the Imperial Sugar Company, established in 1843 and to this day still headquartered in Sugar Land. At its height, the company was one of the richest and most powerful corporations in Texas and was the largest sugar company in the U.S. Imperial Sugar is still in business, marketing "Dixie Crystals" and reporting \$848 million in revenues in 2011.

The state of Texas and the corporations reaping profits bear responsibility for crimes against humanity, specifically against African-American people. The fact and the meaning of these crimes are still not taught to the state's children as part of Texas history. Meanwhile, those interred in the Sugar Land cemetery cry out for justice. □

National prison strike enters first week

Continued from page 1

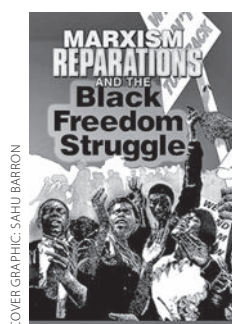
- Aug. 21 – Noise Demo, Elliot Park, Minneapolis, hosted by Twin Cities Anti-Repression
- Aug. 21 – Noise Demo, Twin Towers Jail, Los Angeles, hosted by IWW GDC
- Aug. 25 – Solidarity Rally, San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin, Calif., hosted by the Bay Area National Prison Strike Solidarity Committee
- Aug. 25 – Rally, Lee Correctional Institution, Bishopville, S.C., hosted by the Party for Socialism and Liberation and Students for Justice in Palestine at University of South Carolina
- Aug. 25 – Solidarity with the National Prison Strike, 501 S. Calhoun St., Tallahassee, Fla., hosted by the Party for Socialism and Liberation
- Aug. 26 – 13th Film Viewing and Panel Discussion, 4799 Shattuck Ave., Oak-

land, Calif., hosted by Liberated Lens

About 200 people rallied on Aug. 25 at San Quentin State Prison, in an action organized by the Bay Area National Prison Strike Solidarity Committee. Speakers included Bilal Ali, POOR Magazine; Cole Dorsey, Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee; Joey Villarreal, formerly incarcerated; Nube Brown, California Prison Focus; Steven Bingham, George Jackson's former lawyer; Jeremy Miller,

Idriss Stelley Foundation; and Terri Kay, Workers World Party.

The Bay Area National Prison Strike Support Committee is a regional network including POOR Magazine/Poor People's Revolutionary Radio, the Anti Police-Terror Project, Workers World Party, California Prison Focus, Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (Oakland) and the Democratic Socialists of America (San Francisco). □



MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.

Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes:

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination • Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery • Black Youth: Repression & Resistance • The Struggle for Socialism Is Key • Domestic Workers Demand a Bill of Rights • Black & Brown Unity • Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior • Alabama's Black Belt: • The 1965 Watts Rebellion

Available at major online booksellers.

Homeless individuals create community in Minneapolis camp

By Cullom James and Harvey Markowitz
Minneapolis

A camp of nearly 200 homeless people has sprung up along the shoulder of state highway 55, where it merges onto East 22nd Street south of downtown Minneapolis. The camp is composed almost entirely of oppressed peoples, many from the Ojibwe and Lakota nations as well as some Black and Latinx residents. These reporters interviewed residents and community volunteers there on Aug. 26.

Police ride through frequently and lately have upped patrols to as many as four a day. According to Natives Against Heroin (NAH), many people came to the encampment because the police had changed their tactics from removing the camp to gathering any nearby homeless people into the camp. Their strategy now seems to dovetail with an upcoming city plan to relocate the camp a few blocks east to a wooded area on Sept. 1.

“Trying to hide the problem,” commented Becky, a middle-aged Indigenous woman resident. “They’re trying to move the poor out of the city, out of view, while they’re planning all these restaurants, all these condos.”

Becky, a mother of six, homeless since losing her house in August 2017, explained that the encampment arose as a handful of tents on the side of the highway. The county police would sweep through, pick up everyone, confiscate their belongings, and drop them off somewhere miles down the road. However, at one point, the congregation of tents swelled “too big [and] too fast” to be swept away quickly.

The increasing population is a mixed bag for residents. The community getting too big to be bullied out of its encampment has made the police back off and has gained medical attention from the county in the form of professional visits and clean needles. But growth has also coincided with the introduction of both drug dealing and trafficking of Indigenous women.

“The police don’t police anything,” exclaimed Greg, an older Indigenous man.

After explaining how one of NAH’s most valuable contributions to the camp was sharing healing songs with the community, Greg told Worker’s World: “The only way we’re going to stop the epidemic of heroin use is by bringing back our culture.”

When Greg tried to confront a drug dealer who had entered the camp, he and another resident were shot at three times. Law enforcement proved unhelpful: “The cops didn’t care who was involved in the shooting,” he said.

Pressure from the police

NAH has been working in the camp this summer, providing food, water, ice and harm reduction for the camp’s opioid sufferers. NAH members stress that, while drugs were always present in the camp, drug dealing didn’t become an issue until the police started funneling more people into the camp and subjecting them to more pressure.

“Cops are telling people they have to get to the wall,” said Jackie, an NAH member. The encampment is on a road shoulder, with a concrete wall beyond it. Police say the encampment can stay as long as there’s enough space for cars to drive by, so residents have to live as “close to the wall” as possible.

Community members explained that the treatment they experience from cops when they’re alone is completely different from how police treat them when they are in a group. “[The police] can abuse us and get away with it, and we don’t get to say anything,” Becky said.

Samuel, another Indigenous resident, homeless for about two years, also explained: “Transit cops are bad. They can push you, and they have a short fuse. Whatever you’re going through, they don’t want to know.”

With local support, residents create community

Several organizations have been giving aid to the community since long before the police stopped trying to remove residents. In addition to NAH, the local Kingdom Power Ministries 4:20 has been providing food, clothing and water

for about the last six weeks. Its initial outreach came straight out of pocket — a common theme among those providing much needed assistance to the camp.

Kariyma Nisaa Borer Nelson, who runs KPM with her spouse Jordan Borer Nelson, said, “[The residents] don’t want to be here. If they could get out of this situation today, they would. But the shelters are full, and people need help.” The two post daily livestreams of the camp on their personal Facebook pages.

Samuel offered this commentary on the camp: “This is a community. Over there, Seward [a neighborhood on the east side of highway 55], that’s a community. This is a community.”

Nelson continued, emphasizing that what many don’t know about the people living there is how “a lot of these people come from abusive families. This tent city is like a family for them.” People driving by on Hiawatha Avenue will look on, but they don’t realize that “these people have stories.”

Echoing this sentiment, Becky states: “Some of us feel like we’re the zoo here.”

Not only do the residents of the camp have stories, they also have determination to improve their lives, as well as first-hand understanding of the systemic forces which put them in this situation.

A restrictive system and attacks on public housing

Federal Section 8 housing vouchers are issued in Minneapolis on a limited scale. Participants are given vouchers which cover a third of the rent — if they can find an apartment to accept the vouchers from a program for economically brutalized, poor, working-class and marginalized peoples.

Samuel, the father of an eight-year-old daughter, had his housing voucher revoked and was never told why. Even with Minnesota’s Group Residential Housing assistance, he was left with just \$100 a month for living expenses after paying the rest of his Supplemental Security Income toward housing fees.

These days Samuel moves in and out of stabilization and crisis centers, which

keep people for only 10 days at most. He stays on the move to keep warm through harsh Minnesotan winters, to keep his mental health stable and occupied, to find new resources and, perhaps most importantly, to keep away from the police.

“I know I have to yell and scream and bitch to get people’s attention,” Samuel said. “But I’ve been to jail and incarceration is not the answer. ... I try to get treatment [at medical facilities], and they say, ‘This is not a place to sleep.’ But I’m not there to sleep. I’m there to get treatment.”

Samuel continued, pointing at the recently installed U.S. Bank Stadium on the skyline: “There’s a huge stadium over there. It’s widely considered among locals as a handout to corporations. [It] infamously made surrounding community medical centers cease service for multiple days during the Super Bowl.

“Why can’t we stay there?” Samuel exclaimed. “I don’t think they’re even using it right now. If it can’t be there, why couldn’t it be the Armory? Or down by Raspberry Island? Or even the state fairgrounds? We can do it ourselves. Build it, live on it, farm it.”

Minneapolis Public Housing Authority has plans to get rid of its public housing facilities and privatize them, converting to a program similar to the federal Section 8 voucher program. Developers could then have a chance to profit from relinquished public property.

Many people who would be displaced belong to oppressed nationalities. In the problematic voucher system, landlords can legally exclude potential tenants simply because they’re voucher holders without the protection of Fair Housing regulations. In particular, those in the Twin Cities Somali community — many of whom are refugees from U.S. imperialism to begin with — risk being hit with an acute housing crisis.

Housing shortages and homelessness could become a problem for more people in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area than those couple of hundred in the camp at highway 55 and 22nd Street, who are getting ready to face the bitter winter. □

Los Angeles

Second month of encampment at ICE

By Workers World Los Angeles bureau

Occupy ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) held an encampment at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles throughout July and August to raise awareness about a list of demands drafted by members of the encampment. Occupy ICE LA’s statement reads in part: “We stand in solidarity with our immigrant, undocumented, migrant, refugee communities, and all victims of state violence. We believe in community safety and taking care of one another. Our goal is to uplift and support the work of the immigration and racial justice organizations that have been in this fight. We call for the abolition of the private prison industry. We call for the abolishment of prisons, immigration detention centers, and the abolishment of ICE.” (More information is available at occupyicela.org.)

A weekly vigil is held at a memorial in front of one MDC entrance. On day 50,

earlier in August, the American Indian Movement of Southern California hosted the vigil. Several AIM members spoke in solidarity with the encampment, which AIM members were involved in organizing and have since participated in. Speakers from other organizations spoke as well; Workers World Party attended in solidarity.

The Black Alliance for Just Immigration has also held events at the MDC in resistance to Trump’s racist immigration policies. BAJI organized a press conference earlier this month demanding the private prison corporation, GEO Group Inc., be shut down. Trump’s immigration policies target Black im/migrants and refugees when the reality is that Black and Brown people are fleeing from U.S.-backed wars and imperialist aggression in Central America.

The BAJI press conference denounced the inhumane policies that rip Black im/migrant and refugee families apart at

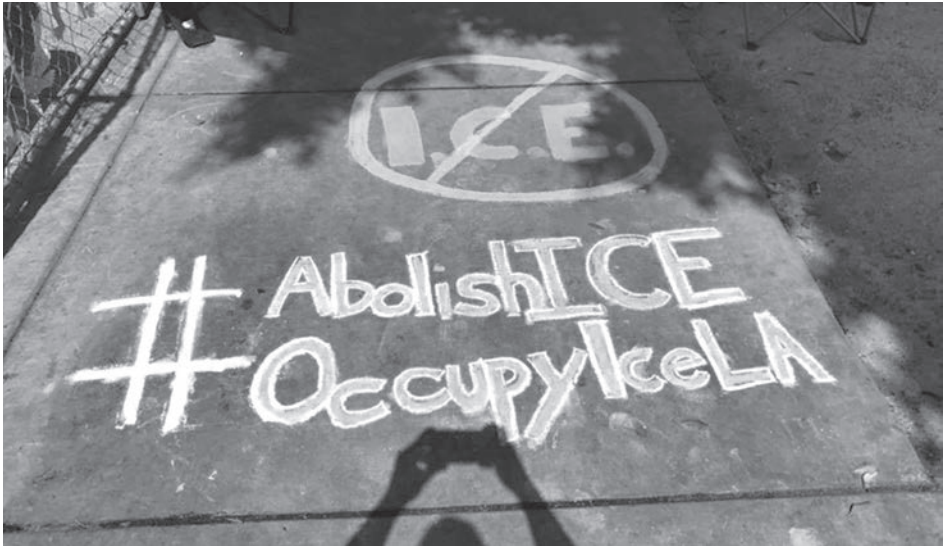


PHOTO: OCCUPY ICE L.A. FACEBOOK

detention centers and through deportations. ICE repression was linked to police targeting Black and Brown communities for mass incarceration and racist state violence.

The demands from the encampment resound: No one is illegal on stolen land! Close the detention centers now! Abolish ICE, the police and the Pentagon!

San Diego remembers Sagon Penn

By M. Matsemela-Ali Odom
and Carl Muhammad
San Diego

Members of the San Diego Committee Against Police Brutality (CAPB) and Workers World Party remembered the legacy of Sagon Penn on Aug. 18 as part of their local Black August Observance.

On March 31, 1985, Penn, a 23-year-old African-American man and other passengers riding in his truck were racially profiled as gang members by San Diego police officers Donovan Jacobs and Tom Riggs — despite no history of gang involvement by any of the young men. “I’m going to stop a truckload of Crips,” Riggs radioed.

Addressing Penn with the provocative greeting, “What’s up, Blood?” the officers asked Penn for his ID. Penn gave them his entire wallet. The officers returned his wallet and told him to remove his ID. Penn complied with their demands while asking what the problem was. As the story goes, the officers subsequently began to beat Penn, a martial arts expert. Jacobs punched Penn while Riggs kicked Penn and beat him with a baton.

Blocking some of the blows, Penn defended himself, got ahold of Jacobs’ revolver, fatally shooting Jacobs and injuring Riggs and their ride-along passenger. Subsequently charged with manslaughter and murder, Penn was found not guilty in two trials. The jury deadlocked 11-1 in favor of Penn for the involuntary manslaughter charge.

Despite his acquittals, Penn became persona non grata with the San Diego

prosecutors and police agencies. For the next 17 years, Sagon Penn dealt with their constant harassment. Stating he “couldn’t have a life,” Penn committed suicide on July 4, 2002.

For many Black San Diegans, people of color and other progressive communities, Penn is remembered as a martyr of international importance. He was a child of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements here. His family members were stalwarts in the struggle for Black Liberation. As the public rallied in defense of Sagon Penn, his case brought over two decades of Black Liberation struggles in San Diego full-circle.

Anti-police brutality campaigns and Black Liberation struggle

The economy of San Diego is vastly different than that of Los Angeles and San Francisco. Since World War II, and following the collapse of the cannery industry, San Diego lacked an industrial base. Instead, real estate speculation, private investment firms, military contracting and tourism have historically defined San Diego’s economy. In recent decades, biotechnology has also made its mark. With the exception of the military’s enlisted ranks, the economy of San Diego has been historically structured with little to no regard for Black labor or life.

Yet a contradiction arose in the 1950s and 1960s, with the rapid growth of Black San Diego. The city was not planned for Black people, but the rapid growth of the military made Black resettlement inevitable.

Under these conditions, the police became a containing force for all of Black San Diego. This has brought meaning to all elements of grassroots mobilization. Central to the National Question and Liberation of Black and Brown San Diegans, struggles against police brutality and biased policing have informed campaigns over housing, employment, education, immigration and even anti-apartheid solidarity.

In 1963, Black San Diegans organized a branch of the Afro-American Association, a proto-Black Power organization that influenced the formation of the Us Organization and the Black Panther Party in later years.

Amidst struggles for housing and economics, AAA head Joshua Von Wolfolk demanded that San Diego police “start treating Black citizens like human beings and not like dogs.” Von Wolfolk demanded the creation of a San Diego human relations commission as well as other reforms. “If you cannot do the right thing, we’ll get on with the revolution,” Von Wolfolk declared.

The next year, younger affiliates of the AAA and a new Black Power organization, the Black Conference (which included University of California-San Diego graduate student Angela Davis), organized the first solely anti-police brutality group in the city, the Citizens Patrol Against Police Brutality.

Following the lead of the Citizens Alert Patrol in Los Angeles, the CPAPB followed squad cars, observed arrests, informed the public of their rights and participated in Black consciousness-raising efforts. The CPAPB and young members of the Black Conference eventually formed the San Diego chapter of the Us Organization

by early 1967. One of its members was the longtime activist Vernon Sukumu, who served as head of the Sagon Penn Defense Committee 20 years later.

Committee Against Police Brutality in action in San Diego

From the late 1960s through the 1980s, anti-police brutality efforts united Black and Brown residents and fueled every moment of the Black Liberation struggle. The 1975 death of Puerto Rican youth Tato Rivera in National City and the 1978 killing of Tyrone Thomas by San Diego police conjoined African Liberation struggles and immigration struggles for local Black and Chicanx organizations. News of the Penn case reached as far as South Africa and garnered the support of a number of activists, athletes and entertainers.

Formed in August 1999, the San Diego Committee Against Police Brutality followed in this tradition, especially in four important cases: the Sagon Penn case, the 1999 death of former National Football League linebacker Demetrius Dubose, the 2003 death of Billye Venable and the death of Victor Ortega in 2004. With evidence of state targeting of Black and Brown people, evidence of witness and jury tampering, lying under oath and collusion between the court and the police agencies, these four cases underscore the need for the CAPB.

The San Diego CAPB now proposes a revival of the San Diego Sagon Penn Copwatch Chapter, the establishment of peace patrols, continued political education about police practices, the collection of data and the eventual establishment of a truly independent Citizens Review Board on police practices. □



Renaming a street is a struggle against white supremacy

By G. Dunkel

The attempt to change the name of a Brooklyn, N.Y., street sign to honor a hero of the Haitian Revolution, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, involved weeks of discussion in a New York City commission; articles in the Amsterdam News, the Trinidad Express, the Atlanta Black Star, a long article in the New York Times; and a segment on WNYC radio. It also aroused a vicious attack from Sean Hannity’s reactionary Fox News show.

The reason for so much discussion and controversy is that Dessalines was a key leader in Haiti’s “original sin,” namely destroying slavery’s hold over 500,000 people — two-thirds of whom, when the revolution began in 1791, had been born in Africa. That made Haiti the second country in the Western Hemisphere to declare independence from its colonial rulers on Jan. 1, 1804.

That revolution began with a Revolutionary Council in August 1791 and a prayer to “The god who created the earth; who created the sun that gives us light. ... The white man’s god asks him to commit crimes. But the god within us wants to do good. Our god, who is so good, so just, He orders us to revenge our wrongs.” (thelouvertureproject.org)

After the 1791 council concluded, Haiti’s enslaved people opened a struggle, attacking over 1,000 sugar plantations all over the north. It was a long and complicated struggle against the French rulers. The monarchies of Spain and Great Britain, competing with France for rule in the

Caribbean, also played major roles.

The United States soon after made its first intervention with foreign “aid” when President George Washington ordered Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson to give \$750,000 — a major sum at that time — to the French slavemasters to buy weapons.

In 1801 Napoleon Bonaparte, who ruled France following a 1799 coup d’état, ordered an expedition of 20,000 soldiers under the command of his son-in-law Gen. Charles Leclerc to regain control of Haiti. The expedition included a substantial contingent of some 5,000 Polish mercenaries.

Leclerc’s orders were to reestablish the slave system that had produced more than half of all the world’s coffee and 40 percent of the sugar consumed in France and Britain. This coffee and sugar accounted for 40 percent of France’s foreign trade.

A fight for freedom

Once the Haitian masses learned that Napoleon had reinstituted slavery in Guadeloupe and Martinique — two smaller Caribbean islands ruled then and now by French imperialism — their resistance crystallized. The Haitians decided to die on their feet as free people rather than on their knees as slaves.

Even though Leclerc was able to capture, through trickery, the historic leader of the Haitian resistance, Toussaint Louverture, and engage in a viciously brutal campaign against the people, he still couldn’t break the armed resistance. His army was falling apart from a multitude of small-scale but deadly encounters and from disease. Many of the Polish merce-

naries deserted, often going over to fight for the Haitians, who welcomed them.

At the beginning of October, as he was dying of yellow fever, Leclerc wrote Napoleon asking for another 25,000 men and explicitly proposing genocide. He wrote: “We must destroy all the blacks in the mountains — men and women — and spare only the children under 12 years of age. We must destroy half of those in the plains and must not leave a single colored person in the colony who has worn an epaulette.” (tinyurl.com/y7lcyq35)

Donatien-Marie-Joseph Rochambeau, who commanded French forces in the U.S. War of Independence, took over in Haiti after Leclerc died in November 1802. He was even more flamboyantly brutal, using flesh-eating dogs he imported from Cuba, but was no more successful than Leclerc. He surrendered Cap Haïtien to Dessalines after the Battle of Vertière and fled to the blockading British fleet in August 1803.

Haiti was in ruins, since all sides had used “scorched earth” tactics, but the slavemasters’ army was gone. About 200,000 people, about half the population, had died in the 13 years of the revolutionary war.

Dessalines proclaimed Haiti’s independence in the town of Gonaïve on Jan. 1, 1804, a month or so after the last French troops left Haiti. Shortly after, he ordered all the white French who had not left Haiti — men, women and children — killed.

This is what Sean Hann-



Jean-Jacques Dessalines

ity of Fox News called “genocide” and what formed his rationale for opposing co-naming Brooklyn’s Rogers Avenue for Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

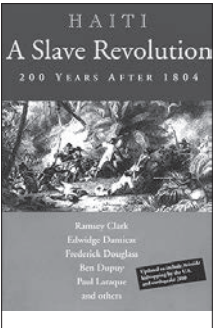
Dessalines explicitly said that the Polish soldiers who had fought for Haiti and the brothers and sisters of the Catholic Church who had provided medical care for Haitians should not be killed. In the 1805 Constitution, drawn up under his guidance, these categories of people living in Haiti were explicitly granted citizenship. Article 14 of this Constitution demands that all Haitian citizens should be called “black.”

The justified punishment of the remnants of the French slaveowners was used to inflame pro-slavery public opinion in France and to ward off those calling for the abolition of slavery in the United States.

White supremacists such as Sean Hannity still bring it up to slur Haitians who want to honor their heroes, without putting that punishment in context as a measured reply to France’s genocidal actions in Haiti.

Dunkel is one of the editors of “Haiti: A Slave Revolution 200 Years After 1804,” International Action Center, New York, 2nd edition, 2010, New York, 2004.

Read online at: iacenter.org/HAITI
Available at online booksellers.



McCain: Whose hero?

When a leading politician who has spent his life serving the billionaire U.S. ruling class dies, it is normal for the corporate media to exaggerate every act of the deceased and turn them into a hero, sometimes a genius.

The eulogies for such a political leader by leaders of both the Democratic and Republican parties attempt to win admiration and respect from the entire population, including hundreds of millions of workers and oppressed people, for the recently departed.

In the case of Sen. John McCain, there is an additional specific reason he gets so much praise. He is being contrasted to the current president: a gangster with a foul racist, misogynist, bigoted, chauvinist and warmongering mouth — or tweet. By comparison, McCain might look better. It's a low bar that most normal human beings could crawl over.

Anyone who sides with the oppressed and exploited of the world needs a different measure of heroism. A short review of McCain's life shows that his recent opposition to Trump counts for little when weighed against his life's work on behalf of the exploiters and oppressors.

His father and his grandfather were admirals in the U.S. Navy, big contributors to U.S. imperialist domination of the seas. Far from rebelling against his heritage, McCain became a Navy fighter pilot. Early biographies describe him as a reckless flier, almost a caricature of a "top gun," who was involved in five crashes.

As a naval officer, he flew 23 bombing missions against North Vietnamese civilian targets from aircraft carriers. Called "Operation Rolling Thunder," it was aimed at destroying the Vietnamese infrastructure. Tens of thousands of Vietnamese civilians were killed. On his 23rd mission in October 1967, he was shot down. He suffered injuries when he ejected and fell into a lake.

No wonder the Vietnamese civilians who captured him saw him as a mass murderer. Yet they pulled him from the lake. To them, and to many who opposed the war in the U.S. and around the world, he was a war criminal and the first group of civilians who grabbed him treated him as one. Nevertheless, when turned over to the North Vietnamese military, he was treated as a prisoner of war and held with other similar pilots, all officers, for more than five years.

If you compare him, not to Trump, but to what we would consider real U.S. war heroes, you can see how McCain measures up when the bar is set high.

Hugh Thompson was a helicopter pilot who saw the massacre of My Lai unfolding under him in March 1968. U.S. troops were rounding up and gunning down unarmed Vietnamese elders, women and even children. Five hundred Vietnamese civilians died that day. Thompson and his helicopter crew, including Larry Colburn and Glenn Andreotta, had to take a strong moral position that they knew would get them in trouble.

They landed the helicopter and told the Army officers they would fire on them if they didn't stop the massacre. This act saved the lives of at least some Vietnamese people. (tinyurl.com/ybzlmlvf)

McCain was no Hugh Thompson. Nor does he compare to the thousands, probably tens of thousands of U.S. rank-

and-file GIs who — once they began to understand what a criminal enterprise that war was — resisted it in any way they could.

We wouldn't even try to compare any of the U.S. officer pilots, including McCain, to the millions of Vietnamese heroes who gave their lives to free their country from imperialist control.

In his long political career, McCain varied between reactionary and ultra-right Republican, but always a militarist. He voted for all the wars waged during the Reagan, Bush Sr., Clinton, Bush Jr. and Obama administrations, from Grenada to Afghanistan to Yemen, and championed the war against Iraq right up to the finish. He never changed his position, even when the "weapons of mass destruction" hoax was exposed.

McCain remained a committed cold warrior even after the Cold War had ended. During the 2008 election campaign, when McCain ran against Obama, McCain joked about bombing Iran, altering a pop tune to say, "Bomb, bomb Iran." He also chose the ultra-rightist, Tea Party governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin, as his vice presidential candidate. That choice he later regretted, but only because it contributed to his losing the election. It also contributed to the Trumpist takeover of the Republican Party.

If the U.S. ruling class and the bulk of its media want to consider McCain their hero, it exposes what this class is made up of. Some love Trump, others McCain. Mainly, they love their profits and honor those who protect and extend their wealth. □

Trump's racist redirection and South Africa

By M. Matsemela-Ali Odom

This Aug. 21 was undoubtedly one of the roughest days of the Trump presidency. His former campaign manager Paul Manafort was convicted on multiple counts of tax fraud, failure to disclose foreign bank accounts and bank fraud. As well, Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen pleaded guilty to multiple crimes, including tax evasion, campaign finance violations and unlawful corporate contributions.

But the very next day, Trump attempted to redirect the national discussion and appease white supremacists by tweeting about supposed land seizures and "mass killings" of white farmers in South Africa, citing Fox News and Tucker Carlson as his source.

Trump's attempt to divert attention from the judicial woes of his associates to South Africa was flagrant but not unprecedented.

With a similar nexus of racial capitalism and settler colonialism, in many ways, the U.S. and South Africa have had comparable histories over the last four centuries. During the 17th century, in both places, Dutch and English merchants and religious zealots migrated to establish colonies. Slave plantation systems, mineral extraction and displacement of native populations eventually built their economies.

They also built a shared racialized, masculine mythology of the self-made man. In a similar separation from their parent nations, white settlers in both nations declared themselves the rightful inhabitants of these territories by declaring themselves Afrikaners or Americans.

Regardless of national myths, state power and technological advances blazed the trail for the expansion of both countries into their current dimensions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The steam engine and telecommunications shrunk the distance between vast territories, allowing for the transfer of goods and information. Advances in mineral extraction made the Indigenous territories in the middle of both nations more lucrative. The use of the gatling gun by colonial armies, in the concurrent Zulu Wars and Sioux Wars, transferred Indigenous land to the hands of not only longtime settlers but recent European migrants.

From the multiple Homestead Acts and overthrow of Reconstruction in the United States to the South African Native Lands Act of 1913, African and Indigenous people became relegated to rural land reserves, sharecropping and low-paid domestic wage labor.

As a result, whites in South Africa currently own about three-quarters of the agricultural land, down from nearly 90 percent in the 1990s — about 9 to 10 times their national representation. Interestingly, a 2002 study in Rural America magazine found that white Americans owned 97 percent of U.S. farmland.

Since the rise of post-World War II Black Power in Southern Africa, white racists in the U.S. have made support for white settler regimes paramount. In the 1970s and 80s, white U.S. mercenaries flooded the ranks of Rhodesian and South African militias. Also, myths of white land loss and white genocide have fueled the fears of diminished representation by a new generation of white racist youth, as evinced in their idolizing of Dylann Roof, the white supremacist who murdered nine African Americans in a South Carolina church.

Far from the hyperbolic claims of Trump and Fox News, the premier contradiction of post-apartheid South Africa has been the overwhelming stasis in white land ownership. For many Black radicals worldwide, this stasis has troubled the legacy of Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress. With the rise of Julius Malema and his Economic Freedom Fighters party, a revolutionary fervor not seen since the death of Chris Hani in 1993 has returned. Blasting Trump as a pathological liar, Malema subsequently warned the U.S. president to "stay out of South African affairs."

Trump's grandfather, Frederick Trump, made his family fortune "mining miners" in the Yukon Gold Rush. Trump is clearly aware of the history described above. Yet, considered alongside his recent bailout of U.S. agribusiness, Trump has placed his fortunes and political survival on this shared history that binds the white elite in both nations. □

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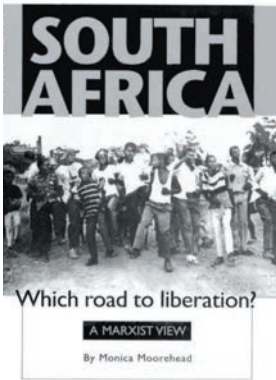
But what you may not be aware of is that our purpose goes beyond passive reporting. Our Marxist-Leninist vision of an equitable, just world based on socialist planning and plenty for all peoples spurs us to advocate for change.

That's why we're devoting so much coverage to the outcry and mobilization against the cruel, Nazi-esque Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol "zero tolerance" policy against im/migrants that has separated children from parents. That's why we put forward FIRE, Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere, to be able to intervene and play a leading, anti-capitalist role in this vital struggle. Organizing FIRE to shut down ICE is just the latest example of having our fingers on the progressive

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Eyewitness account written in 1993 by Monica Moorehead Available online at workers.org/books/

The lessons of Chicago, 1968

This is the 50th anniversary of the massive street struggles in 1968 during the Democratic National Convention. We reprint here an article by Fred Goldstein from the Workers World of Sept. 13, 1968.

By Fred Goldstein

The violence openly inflicted on liberals and radicals alike at the Chicago Democratic Convention confirms that the U.S. ruling class is entering a new phase in which their reliance upon deception is to be increasingly abandoned in favor of the use of force. The use of violence against the white population (after centuries against the Black) is part of the preparations for stepped-up attacks on the oppressed people around the globe.

All attempts to place the responsibility on the insignificant hired thug of the bosses, [Chicago] Mayor Richard Daley, are calculated to mask this fundamental shift.

Thousands of U.S. troops, tanks, jeeps, and all the other necessities of combat cannot be shifted around the country at the cost of creating great political unrest (to say nothing of the expense) on the say-so of such a relatively low-ranking political stooge as Daley. Nor can National Guard troops be called upon by a mayor.

For that matter, the Chicago Police Department would never dare to “mar the image” of the entire Democratic Party unless it had received explicit orders from the party hierarchy to crack heads. The White House, the Pentagon, the Democratic National Committee and the entire capitalist establishment were all involved in the Chicago operation.

In short, Mayor Daley was working for the ruling class and not they for him, as the bourgeois news media imply when they either condemn or condone “Daley’s handling” of the fascist attack on anti-war protesters in Chicago.

(The U.S. Department of Justice announced on Sept. 3 that it had just allocated \$3.9 million to the cities for so-called “riot-control.”)

Of course, the billionaires did not shift from fraud to force arbitrarily. It’s just that their bag of tricks is just about empty and their two war candidates are about equally discredited.

It is no coincidence that they started clubbing, gassing and breaking heads just at the moment when the “peace” campaign of Eugene McCarthy was about to come to an ignominious end. (The police attack on McCarthy headquarters was the final humiliation dealt the liberals and served to illustrate the fascist mood of the ruling class.)

The rulers who rigged the convention long in advance knew that McCarthy was to be discarded in Chicago. And they also knew that thousands of youth whom the McCarthy campaign had kept off the streets would be back on the streets, together with thousands of radical youth who had never fallen for the imperialist-liberal McCarthy in the first place.

So the bosses prepared well ahead of time to deal with the anger and indignation which was as inevitable as the Hum-

phrey-Nixon race. They decided to give the white youth a taste of the treatment hitherto reserved for the Black liberation struggle.

But an important by-product of Chicago is the wave of revulsion of new layers of youth for a parliamentary system which has to defend its candidates from the hatred of the population with bayonets and clubs.

Parliamentary illusions went up with the clouds of tear gas as the war party at the amphitheater steam-rolled over popular anti-war sentiment. The flow of blood from the heads of unarmed demonstrators in front of the Conrad Hilton made many a convert to the revolutionary struggle.

The bourgeoisie used strong-arm methods to brush the liberals aside and thus demonstrated the fraudulence and the futility of imperialist democracy.

If the liberal politicians folded up at the first show of force by the ruling class, the militant youth did not.

While McCarthy crept off to the sidelines and McGovern stepped into Humphrey’s fold, the fighting young people who really want and need to end imperialist wars were spontaneously fighting back against the cops. New and militant tactics were being developed simultaneously with the beginnings of change in their ideology.

Several hundred police, who tried to attack a Grant Park rally after someone lowered the U.S. flag, were literally driven away by the youth in the crowd. The cops were hit with everything that could be thrown and then surrounded by bar-

ricades of benches and immobilized before they withdrew in defeat.

Mobile street demonstrations were carried out, during which obstacles were strewn about to slow down police cars. Youth at Lincoln Park built such sturdy barricades to keep from being driven from the park that police had to saturate the area with tear gas many times in order to drive them out.

Occasional aggressive forays were made by small bands of youth in search of isolated police on foot or in patrol cars. In general, however, the brutality of the police produced spontaneous retaliation wherever possible.

Many so-called leftists frowned upon these new tactics as “adventuristic” and inadequate to defeat such a heavily armed force as the police. But those who are serious about leading a revolutionary struggle against imperialism must take a carefully constructive attitude towards the initial bursts of revolutionary energy shown by the young people in Chicago.

Opponents of imperialism will try to assist the militants to improve their tactics, not throw cold water on them.

In general, the Chicago events have shown that the capitalists will always resort to force if popular will stands in the way of their imperialist objectives.

These events have confirmed the Marxist analysis of the state. This resort to violence on the eve of new imperialist crises has pointed out to thousands of young people that revolutionary resistance to boss rule is the only way to stop wars of aggression.

These are the lessons of Chicago. □

Behind the pension crisis in Russia

Part 2

By Greg Butterfield

According to Labor Minister Maxim Topilin, the government plan would slash the number of people eligible to receive pensions by almost 11 percent — 4.6 million people — by 2024. Officials claim this is not a death sentence for older workers already tottering on the edge of destitution, but rather an opportunity for new, higher paying jobs through professional retraining.

This refrain will sound familiar to many workers in the U.S. In fact, Medvedev, Topilin and other proponents of the plan are explicitly looking to the U.S., with its cuts in social programs and increased pressure on workers to delay retirement, despite the steep decline in long-term, well-paying jobs.

Russian workers aren’t fooled. Among the most popular signs at recent protests are “Pension in the grave” and “Be a patriot — kick the bucket before you get a pension.”

According to Oleg Babich of the Russian Confederation of Labor, by 2024

On Aug. 16 Workers World published Part 1, a report on workers’ protests across Russia to stop a plan that would gradually increase the retirement age when workers may collect pensions from 55 to 63 years for women, and from 60 to 65 for men. Part 2 goes into what caused the crisis and why the people oppose the change.

the economy would need to generate between 7 and 7.5 million jobs to accommodate both delayed retirements and young people entering the job market. “We have figures from the same Ministry of Labor that 300,000 jobs will be created next year,” said Babich. (SVpressa, July 19)

Others point out that the destruction of the institutions that supported workers in socialist times means the “reform” would have a massive impact on the whole working class, not just those approaching retirement age. The loss of affordable housing and quality, accessible health care means working families will face the same crises that those in the U.S. with senior parents and grandparents do.

Also, with the sharp decline in child-care options for workers, grandparents are increasingly called upon to watch young children while parents work or attend school.

Academics and activists agree that the reason the Putin-Medvedev regime is pushing the unpopular attack now is an impending deadline in 2022, when retiring workers would first begin drawing on a new Western-style, investment-based pension system introduced after the destruction of socialism.

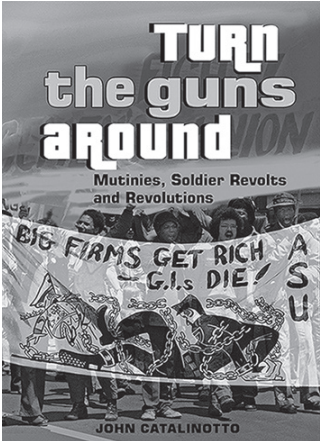
These instruments have been ruthlessly looted for short-term gains by the oligarchs. If people continue to retire at the current rate, by 2024 the government will be unable to hide the shortfall or its causes. “It was not abstract funds that were plundered,” noted Dr. Nikita Krichevsky, chief researcher at the Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences. “They plundered part of people’s salary that was deferred for many years

for use in old age.” (SVpressa, July 19)

“Let’s be honest — the pension, even before its planned cancellation, was insultingly small,” says Anatoly Baranov, a secretary of the United Communist Party (OKP). “It’s impossible to live on it, and the ‘young’ pensioners are forced to somehow earn additional income. But this tiny pension is, in fact, a small acknowledgement that at 60 years old you can’t earn as much as at 30. ...

“If the state is unable to fulfill its obligations to citizens of retirement age — then declare yourselves bankrupt! And we ourselves will take what we need from the stolen property. Give us back the factories and oil industries that were squeezed dry by the oligarchs.” (UCP.su, July 19)

Or, as a woman protesting in Tver put it: “In China, thieving officials are taken in the streets and shot, and their property confiscated. We want that too.” (New York Times, Aug. 8) □



TURN THE GUNS AROUND Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions

By John Catalinotto

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A pesar de la derrota de la ley

Las mujeres luchan por el derecho al aborto en Argentina

Por Kathy Durkin

Las mujeres en Argentina pueden haber perdido un voto por el derecho al aborto el 9 de agosto, pero no se han desanimado. No están intimidadas o asustadas. Tienen determinación. Son optimistas. Con renovada energía, dicen que seguirán organizando hasta que ganen este derecho fundamental.

La lucha actual es por la legalización de abortos electivos hasta la semana 14 del embarazo; El 62 por ciento de la población apoya la reforma. La cámara baja del Congreso argentino había aprobado esa ley el 14 de junio, en respuesta al movimiento de masas. Sin embargo, el Senado, el cual es más conservador, por muy poco derrotó la legalización el 9 de agosto con una votación de 38-31; dos senadores se abstuvieron. La mayoría de los votos con “no” fueron emitidos por hombres mayores de 50 años.

La votación dejó en vigencia una ley arcaica promulgada en 1921, que penaliza a las mujeres que abortan y los médicos que las realizan hasta con cuatro años de prisión. Los abortos legales solo se permiten cuando el embarazo es el resultado de una violación o si la vida de una mujer está en peligro, pero es casi imposible de obtener, especialmente por parte de mujeres pobres, rurales e indígenas.

Cientos de miles de mujeres, especialmente jóvenes, han estado en las calles exigiendo el aborto legal durante muchos meses. Existe el optimismo de que las mujeres finalmente saldrán victoriosas porque el movimiento de mujeres se ha multiplicado en tamaño y fuerza, ganando activistas en toda la Argentina.

Durante 16 horas, a lo largo del debate y la votación en el Senado, decenas de miles de mujeres se reunieron en un frío glacial en las afueras del Palacio de Congreso de Buenos Aires.

Protestando por el resultado del voto, las mujeres se manifestaron allí y en todo el país. A pesar de su decepción, las mujeres saben que estaban cerca de ganar, que tienen un impulso de su parte y que el cambio está por venir.

Incluso la ex presidenta Cristina Fernández, ahora senadora, que se opuso al aborto, fue persuadida. Ella dijo: “Los que me hicieron cambiar de opinión fueron las miles y miles de jóvenes que salieron a la calle”. (New York Times, 9 de agosto) El presidente antiaborto Mauricio Macri dijo que firmaría un proyecto de reforma. Su ministro de salud, Adolfo Rubinstein, apoya la reforma, citando los desastrosos resultados de los abortos “clandestinos” (ilegales).

La periodista Soledad Vallejos dijo entusiasmada al diario The Guardian el 9 de agosto: “Las cosas nunca volverán a ser iguales porque la sociedad ha cambia-

do en estos cinco meses debatiendo esta ley". Vallejos pertenece al colectivo Ni Una Menos, una fuerza líder en esta lucha. Su nombre se ha convertido en un lema. Originalmente, el nombre significaba no la vida de otra mujer perdida por la violencia de género; ahora también exige no otra muerte causada por un aborto inseguro.

Iglesia Católica: pilar de la misoginia

La Iglesia católica patriarcal intervino enérgicamente para bloquear la reforma de la ley de aborto. El Papa Francisco, cuyo país de origen es Argentino, y los obispos dieron instrucciones a los legisladores de derecha para presionar a los senadores a votar en contra del proyecto de ley. Según se informa, las organizaciones católicas insultaron y amenazaron de muerte a los senadores.

Muchos de los “no” votantes citaron creencias religiosas. Algunos dieron razones no científicas o intolerantes para oponerse al aborto. La escritora y activista pro-elección argentina Claudia Piñeiro escribió en *The Guardian* que “rechazar el proyecto de ley ... [los senadores proclamaron] que estaban salvando embriones ... e incluso [escandalosamente] sugiriendo que la violación intrafamiliar no implica violencia”. (10 de agosto)

Nora Cortinas, fundadora de Madres de Plaza de Mayo, dijo que renunciaría a la Iglesia Católica por el voto del Senado y criticó a los funcionarios de la Iglesia por intervenir en las vidas de otras personas y ser hipócritas. Esta organización de mujeres protesta por los asesinatos de 30.000 izquierdistas y activistas asesinados durante la brutal dictadura militar de 1976-83 en Argentina.

Las madres y abuelas también buscan ubicar a los niños adultos que fueron robados como bebés de las mujeres presas políticas y reunirlos con sus familias legítimas. Cortinas enfatizó la complicidad de la Iglesia en estas atrocidades, diciendo que los sacerdotes bendijeron a los torturadores, mientras que las monjas dieron los bebés secuestrados a militares y otras familias derechistas.

Cortinas explicó su posición sobre la lucha contra el aborto: "En una ley de salud como esta, la religión no tiene nada que ver con eso ... y luego esta Iglesia dice que debemos salvar ambas vidas. ... [Pero] los bebés, nacidos todos los días en nuestro país, son olvidados por la Iglesia, que viven en la pobreza". (Telesur, 11 de agosto)

Antes y durante la votación, el papel reaccionario de la Iglesia Católica fue desenmascarado para que todos lo vieran. Después de la derrota del proyecto de ley, miles de personas hicieron cola afuera del Congreso para renunciar a la Iglesia en mesas atendidas por la Coalición Argentina para un Estado Secular.

La directora de cine Lucrecia Martel

explicó que el movimiento de hoy exige la autonomía de las mujeres, pero “para algunos, su último bastión de poder es su poder sobre las mujeres, y esas personas no quieren conceder ese territorio”. (Guardian, 8 de agosto).

Sin embargo, las mujeres jóvenes y audaces desafían el patriarcado y la misoginia todos los días y en todas partes.

Dos muertes innecesarias desde el 'no'

Se calcula que 450.000 abortos clandestinos se realizan anualmente en Argentina, un país de 44 millones de personas,—uno cada 90 segundos. Alrededor de 70.000 mujeres son hospitalizadas anualmente debido a procedimientos fallidos, una causa principal de muertes maternas. La falta de aborto legal es una crisis de salud pública.

La realidad es que las mujeres tienen abortos. La cuestión clave es si las mujeres pueden tener procedimientos médicamente seguros o si deben seguir someténdose a abortos arriesgados, a menudo peligrosos, a veces con resultados potencialmente mortales. Además, a las mujeres embarazadas con cáncer rutinariamente se les niega la quimioterapia y otros tratamientos debido a que la doctrina católica prevalece en asuntos médicos. Da prioridad al estado del feto sobre el derecho de la mujer a la atención médica esencial; algunas mujeres mueren como resultado.

Trágicamente, dos mujeres jóvenes han muerto desde el “no”, ambas en hospitales en la provincia de Buenos Aires el 12 de agosto. Elizabeth, una mujer de 24 años, madre de un niño pequeño, murió de shock séptico después de usar tallos de perejil para tratar de terminar un embarazo. Otra joven murió el mismo día, también por un aborto autoadministrado.

“La ilegalidad obliga a las mujeres más pobres a recurrir a las prácticas más desesperadas”, dijo un médico en *Página / 12*, un periódico argentino. (peoplesdispatch.org, 17 de agosto)

Después de esas muertes, la Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito y la Red de Profesionales de la Salud por el Derecho a Decidir emitieron un comunicado en el que acusaban a todas las muertes relacionadas con el aborto Poder Ejecutivo “y los senadores que votaron en contra de la legalización. Las organizaciones preguntaron: ‘¿Cuántas mujeres embarazadas muertas se necesitan para comprender que el aborto debe ser legal, seguro y gratuito? ¡La clandestinidad mata! Ni Una Menos calificó a estas muertes de “femicidio” por parte del estado y dijo: [A los senadores] no les importan las vidas de las mujeres”’. (Telesur, 14 de agosto)

Telesur informó el 9 de agosto que la ley se puede presentar de nuevo al Congreso en marzo del 2019, pero para entonces se

estima que 87 mujeres más habrán muerto y 48.000 habrán sido hospitalizadas por complicaciones del aborto.

!Mujeres en movimiento!

Activistas en el movimiento de mujeres argentinas saludan a sus antepasados, las heroicas mujeres organizadoras en contra la dictadura militar, así como los líderes de las Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Un movimiento rejuvenecido protestó por la violencia de género en el 2015 y luego agregó demandas por los derechos reproductivos. Ahora las trabajadoras piden un salario igual por el mismo trabajo y el fin de la discriminación de género en el lugar de trabajo.

El programa de austeridad del Presidente Macri ha impulsado a la clase trabajadora a la acción. Sus políticas impactarían severamente a las mujeres; muchos se encuentran entre los trabajadores peor pagados y/o tienen trabajos precarios. Los docentes, en su mayoría mujeres, marcharon por un salario más alto el 6 de marzo.

En el Día Internacional de la Mujer, 8 de marzo, cientos de miles de mujeres marcharon en Buenos Aires por la igualdad, el derecho al aborto y el fin de la violencia de género. También pidieron una huelga general, que vincule sus luchas con la lucha de clases. Las trabajadoras a favor de las elecciones marcharon con sindicalistas en la huelga nacional militante del 25 de junio contra los recortes y los despidos impuestos por el gobierno.

La Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito, una organización compuesta por 300 grupos, ha luchado durante 13 años . El aborto ahora se discute abiertamente en todo el país, y se debatió en el Congreso por primera vez.

El vencimiento victorioso de una prohibición del aborto en mayo en Irlanda impulsó el movimiento de mujeres argentinas. A su vez, las movilizaciones masivas a favor de las elecciones en Argentina han electrificado el movimiento de mujeres en América Latina, donde el 97 por ciento de las mujeres viven en países donde el aborto es ilegal. En la noche de la votación argentina, se llevaron a cabo acciones de solidaridad en más de 10 países.

Las redes sociales se llenaron de mensajes de apoyo de mujeres de todo el mundo. La solidaridad internacional también se expresó en movilizaciones en Australia, Bélgica, Inglaterra, Francia, Japón, los Países Bajos, España y en otros lugares. Las mujeres argentinas están en movimiento militante y no retrocederán. Las mujeres jóvenes están decididas a luchar por sus derechos. Después de la votación en el Senado, los activistas pro-elección tuitearon que esta campaña es más que una ley: "Es la lucha por la soberanía total sobre nuestros cuerpos". (Telesur, 9 de agosto) □

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