

# DO IT LIKE DURHAM!

## Activists mobilize, support each other

By Leilani Dowell  
Durham, N.C.

Sept. 4 — As community members, activists and allies gear up for actions to continue their fight against white supremacy here on Sept. 12 — and as national and international solidarity grows with them — fascist individuals and forces of the state have colluded in an attempt to instill terror against them.

Rather than retreat, those struggling for justice and liberation are uniting, supporting each other and continuing to mobilize.

A national call to action has been issued for the week of Sept. 11 through Sept. 17, with organizations and individuals coming to Durham from around the country for Sept. 12 and planning local actions throughout the week. Sept. 12 is the one-month anniversary of the resistance to white supremacist forces in Charlottesville, Va., where Heather Heyer was murdered by a fascist who plowed into protesters with his car. It is also a court date for some of the arrestees in Durham. Activists will converge on the courthouse on the morning of Sept. 12 to show their solidarity with the arrestees, then march in a “victory parade.” The next court date for the others arrested is Oct. 11.

To date, 14 Durham activists have been arrested in relation to two events: the toppling of a Confederate statue in front of the old Durham county courthouse on Aug. 14, and a rally to oppose a planned Ku Klux Klan march on Aug. 18. Despite outcry by members of the City Council and community members who lined up to be arrested in solidarity on Aug. 16, these 14 have been slapped with charges ranging from misdemeanors to felony offenses, including charges of incitement to riot and carrying open weapons “to the terror of the people.” Of course, no Klan members, neo-Nazis or the police — who routinely use weapons and racism to terrorize and incite violence — have been charged with any of these offenses.

Protesters see the attacks by the state against them as a form of direct retaliation by Durham County Sheriff Mike Andrews, who has insisted on the felony charges and has come under attack in recent years for his policies. Conditions at the Durham county jail, under Andrews’ auspices, are so horrific that at least five imprisoned people have died there as a result, including 17-year-old Uniece “Niecey” Fennell in March. In Andrews’ most recent outrage, prisoners have been restricted to video-only visits with their loved ones. The Durham sheriff’s office has also colluded with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Beyond Durham, at least two students have been arrested who were engaged in an occupation in front of a “Silent Sam” statue at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The statue was erected in 1913 to pay tribute to UNC alumni who joined the Confederate army during the U.S. Civil War. In addition, a young African-American man was arrested in Graham, N.C.,

Continued on page 7

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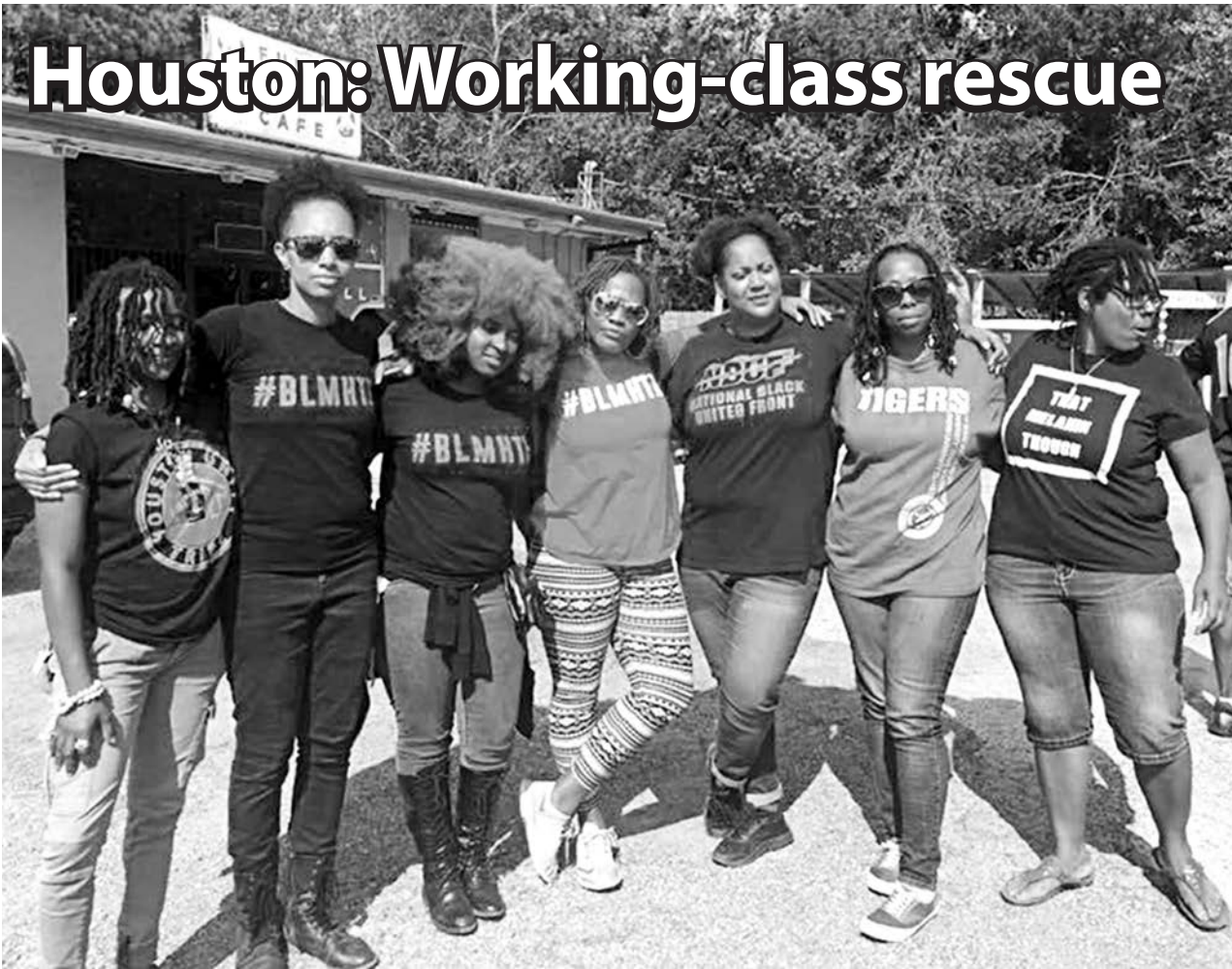
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In Houston and South Asia, capitalism intensifies natural disasters 8-9

### IMMIGRANT RIGHTS NOW

Stand with Amanda Morales 5

Defend immigrant ‘Dreamers’ 5

Fight for DACA Editorial 10

### BLACK AUGUST

Providence, San Diego 3

### SMASH WHITE SUPREMACY

2, 6, 7

Defend Antifa Editorial 10



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

Boston workers show love for Durham freedom fighter Takiyah Thompson.

Korea or U.S. – Which is M.A.D.? 11



# Pensacola rallies against white supremacy

By Devin Cole  
Pensacola, Fla.

Roughly 30 to 40 white supremacists from the Pensacola/Escambia County area convened in Robert E. Lee Square in downtown Pensacola, Fla., on Aug. 26. They were there to protest the proposed removal of a Confederate statue that sits atop a large obelisk overlooking downtown. They held many signs defending their bigoted, racist views while standing around the statue for four to five hours.

They were not unmatched, however. At 9 a.m., over 130 counterprotesters also converged on Lee Square to demand the statue be removed and to run the white supremacists off. This counterprotest, led by communists and other leftists, was met with outright hatred and disgust from the right-wing reactionaries. They soon dropped their guise of “protecting their heritage” and began screaming racist slurs and epithets at the counterprotesters, mainly Black people.

One reactionary admitted in a heated argument with a counterprotester that he believed his life as a white man mattered more than any Black person’s life. That once again proved the ongoing battle over Confederate monuments goes much deeper than “heritage” or “honoring fallen soldiers” and is really about upholding white nationalism and white supremacy.

Another limb of white supremacy was at the rally: An overwhelming number of cops were standing by, in either uniform or plainclothes, and a SWAT team sat nearby, waiting.

Both the monument and the grassy area across the road where most of the counterprotesters assembled were heavily barricaded by metal gates. One cop from the local sheriff’s department wore a visible bracelet that read, “Don’t Tread on Me.” When asked about it, he got aggressive with counterprotesters, saying, “Don’t talk to me.” That once again showed how cops side with right-wing reaction, including white supremacy.

The opposing rallies proceeded largely without any issues until the end, when almost all the counterprotesters moved past the barricades en masse to defend counterprotesters who had already gone over to confront the white supremacist side. Tensions rose high, and more



WW PHOTO: DEVIN COLE

At community protest against racism, lead organizer Haley Morrisette faces down white supremacists in Robert E. Lee Square in downtown Pensacola, Fla., Aug. 26.

militarized police were brought in to “secure” the area. At one point, a white supremacist, who was later revealed to be in the military, was apprehended and charged with battery after he attempted to attack a Black Muslim girl standing by the statue. A second white supremacist was arrested on Aug. 28 after a warrant was issued charging him with battery against a counterprotester.

At midday, counterprotesters took over Lee Square and the white supremacist rally, vastly outnumbering the reactionaries whose numbers had dwindled throughout the morning. This takeover, led by Black revolutionary organizer Haley Morrisette, resulted in leftist radicals from Workers World Party, anarchists and the Alabama Green Party all gathering together around the monument to demand its removal.

While one reactionary kept calling for re-segregation of schools, white supremacists failed to regain control of their rally. By the end of his harangue, only 16 white supremacists remained, while the number of counterprotesters still topped 100.

This was a victory for anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-Confederate counterprotesters, most of whom were Black and Southerners themselves. This victory shows that many Southerners are trying to truly organize the South while removing all of its racist, white supremacist legacies and throwing them aside. The South is rising — this time with Black leftist revolutionaries leading the way.

*Devin Cole is a Southern transgender organizer, president of Strive, operations director of Florida Transgender Alliance and a Workers World Party candidate.*

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## WORKERS WORLD this week

### ★ In the U.S.

Do it like Durham! Activists mobilize, support each other...	1
Pensacola rallies against white supremacy .....	2
Michigan activists fight home auctions .....	3
Leonard Peltier has triple-bypass surgery .....	3
Black August: San Diego commemoration .....	3
Black August: Providence honors Black prisoner .....	3
National protests demand \$15 and a union .....	4
Will labor purchase of Sun-Times make it working-class?..	4
Save the date: Workers World Party Conference .....	5
Rally says ‘Stand with Amanda!’ .....	5
NYC rally defends immigrant ‘Dreamers’ .....	5
On the picket line .....	5
Mumia Abu-Jamal: The battles of history .....	6
Italian communists: ‘U.S. anti-racist struggle important’ ..	6
Sept. 11-17: Topple white supremacy! .....	7
Boston workers show love to Durham freedom fighters...	7
Anti-masking laws collude with white supremacy .....	7
Eyewitness Harvey: working-class rescue, gov’t neglect...	8
Hurricanes, floods and capitalism .....	8
Pennsylvania inmate fights toxic prisons .....	9

### ★ Around the world

Floods devastate South Asian countries .....	9
The Koreans are not ‘mad’ .....	11
Yemen: Saudi bombs backed by U.S., Britain .....	11

### ★ Editorial

Hands off DACA! .....	10
Defend Antifa! .....	10

### ★ Noticias en Español

Millonarios estadounidenses sancionan a Venezuela ....	12
Testigo de Houston 12 .....	12

Workers World  
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.  
New York, NY 10011  
Phone: 212.627.2994  
E-mail: ww@workers.org  
Web: www.workers.org  
Vol. 59, No. 35 • Sept. 7, 2017  
Closing date: Sept. 5, 2017

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly  
except the first week of January by WW Publishers,  
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone:  
212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institu-  
tions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and  
edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to  
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10011. Back issues and individual articles are available  
on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing,  
Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A  
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Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.  
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# Michigan activists fight home auctions

By Jerry Goldberg

A demonstration at the Wayne County treasurer’s home on Aug. 31 and a subsequent action at the treasurer’s office on Sept. 5 demanded that Wayne County Treasurer Eric Sabree suspend the auction of 3,100 homes, including 1,400 occupied homes, scheduled to begin Sept. 5 and to extend into October.

The suspension will give time for the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to seek federal approval for a plan to amend the Step Forward program, which administers the use of the federal Hardest Hit funds in Michigan.

At a meeting between the head of MSHDA, the MSHDA administrator of the Helping Hardest Hit program, and representatives of the Coalition to Stop

Unconstitutional Tax Foreclosures on Aug. 30, the MSHDA agreed to have coalition members draft an amendment to the Step Forward rules.

The amendment would allow for Hardest Hit funds to be used for the city of Detroit and/or Wayne County to pay delinquent property tax bills if these entities exercise their right of first refusal on the 1,400 occupied homes facing auction, and then eviction, starting next week. Under Michigan law, either Wayne County or the city of Detroit can exercise their right of first refusal to pull occupied homes out of the auction.

The MSHDA said they would submit this proposal for approval by the Treasury. This was a major concession to anti-foreclosure activists led by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, who

have been fighting for use of the funds to save homes — as intended under the program.

At the meeting with the MSHDA, it was revealed that only 193 Wayne County families, of the thousands who have faced tax foreclosure this year, had received benefits from the Hardest Hit fund. This is a result of the Step Forward regulations being out of step with the reality of those facing the loss of their homes in Wayne County, and especially in Detroit.

It also came out that there is currently \$130 million in unspent Hardest Hit funds available to keep families from losing their homes. In contrast, only \$12 million is needed to pay the delinquent bills of the 1,400 families scheduled to see the homes they occupy auctioned off.

The agreement by the MSHDA to pur-

sue using Hardest Hit funds to pay the delinquent taxes offers a practical way forward to save 1,400 more families from being thrown into the street. This plan would actually bring money into the treasuries of Wayne County and Detroit, who only stand to recover pennies on what are owed in delinquent taxes through the auction.

Once the delinquent taxes are paid, the occupants will have the opportunity to pursue poverty tax exemptions to which they are entitled and have their home assessments reset to the true market value, in conformity with the Michigan Constitution.

For more information on this struggle and the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, see [moratorium-mi.org](http://moratorium-mi.org) or [facebook.com/MoratoriumNowCoalition/](https://facebook.com/MoratoriumNowCoalition/). □

By Gloria Verdieu  
San Diego

Over 60 people filled the Malcolm X Library and Performing Arts Center for a successful event commemorating Black August in San Diego on Aug. 30. When the call for this event was first issued by email from the San Diego International Action Center, questions arose such as “What is Black August?” and “Why August?”

Included in the message was a 1993 essay by Mumia Abu-Jamal entitled “Black August.” A sentence in it reads, “August, in both historic and contemporary African American history, is a month of meaning.” Mumia lists historic events and movements that unfolded in August and their participants, beginning with brothers George and Jonathan Jackson.

Individuals from the African-American community responded to the call for event organizers. Some were members of organizations, but most people joined in order to participate in a positive event for the community. The San Diego Black August Planning Committee was formed, and its members spent several weeks discussing many of the individuals and movements in Black history whose stories are connected with the month of August. The first challenge was getting out a flier that would spark an interest in Black August that centered on the truth about individuals and events in African-American history.

The committee met weekly, developing a program that was informative, educational and entertaining — and that highlighted Black movements and historical events that occurred in August. They chose George Jackson, Harriet Tubman, Huey Newton, the Move 9 and Emmett Till. Next, they selected a dynamic panel to speak on the meaning of Black August and the significance of commemorating it today.


The panelists selected were John Parker, Workers World Party organizer; Laila Aziz, co-director of media relations for the iamWe Prison Advocacy Network; and Dr. Suzanne Forbes-Vierling, clinical psychologist, educator and artist.

**Program a success!**

Everything came together. With this writer chairing, the program began with a poem by a 7th-grade poet entitled “Black Is Beautiful.” There were written scripts using Mumia’s essays to focus on George Jackson, Harriet Tubman, Huey

San Diego commemoration

WW PHOTO: CARL MUHAMMAD



Black August

Providence honors Black prisoner resistance

By mYia X  
Providence, R.I.

Behind the Wall, a prisoner rights program of Direct Action for Rights and Equality, along with Workers World Party and CommUNITY members, gathered to commemorate and build upon the legacies of George Jackson, Black August and the longstanding solidarity with Indigenous nations on Aug. 31.

According to the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, “Black August originated in the concentration camps (prisons) of California in 1979 and its roots come from the history of resistance by Black/New African/African brothers in those prisons.” ([mxgm.org](http://mxgm.org)) In the spirit of Black August, organizations are encouraged to have political, cultural and educational events of commemoration and observance, and not celebrations or

Newton, and the Move 9. Local singer Wilnisha “Trut7h” Sutton portrayed the voice of Harriet Tubman.

Kalif Price, local actor, author, storyteller and musician, was the voice of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The San Diego Gospel Mime Group T.R.U.T.H. performed an amazing, heartfelt piece on the legacy of Emmett Till entitled “More Than I Can Bear.” The first segment ended with another powerful poem entitled “Michael Brown,” written and read by poet Sylvia Telefaró, of African American Writers & Artists.

The event then broke for delicious, nutritious food prepared by committee members and supporters; the aroma filled the

## Leonard Peltier has triple-bypass surgery

*The following edited email was sent by the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee on Sept. 2.*

Good morning friends and family,

I just talked to Leonard, and unknown to us, he was just released from the hospital and this is his message to all his supporters and friends.

“Good morning, everyone. OK. I know everyone did not know this, but it’s been a rough ride for me, BUT I’m one step back from passing away.

“I was taken to an outside hospital in Leesburg, Fla., for what I was told was a routine heart stress test. And it turned out that they found clogged arteries, three of them! They decided to operate right away, and I just returned from triple-bypass heart surgery. My chest was opened and they took arteries from my legs and placed them in the blocked arteries. I had to be given a liter of blood. Now I am back at the prison and getting around in my wheelchair. They said this would help my shortness of breath and the pressure in my chest.”

[Leonard] was still a little short of breath, but said he is looking forward to seeing his grandson next weekend, and I will be visiting him the following weekend, as well as speaking at an event in Gainesville on Sept. 15.

I will keep you all updated as he will be able to call and give us reports on his progress of recovery.

This incident in Leonard’s health struggle has shown us how quickly things can happen and how important it is that we do everything possible to get Leonard out of prison and home to Turtle Mountain. Please continue to fund his legal struggle as it will take our lawyer and all of us to make this happen! Donate at [whoisleonardpeltier.info](http://whoisleonardpeltier.info).

Send Leonard a card at Leonard Peltier 89637-132, USP Coleman 1, P.O. Box 1033, Coleman, FL 33521.

Thank you for all your support, Paulette

parties. Black August was designed and brought to our communities to educate, agitate and activate the spirit of revolution, resistance and rebellion in our people.

A banner stating “Not One More Lynching” and featuring political prisoners Shaka Sankofa and Mumia Abu-Jamal was draped across the podium. A multinational collective of Djembe drummers, led by Brother John Prince, provided the call and response as Sister Moni Solaa and Brother Marco McWilliams engaged the community in the powerful tradition of libation, calling the names of our fallen revolutionaries.

This writer shared excerpts of a letter that political prisoner Leonard Pel-

tier wrote to Abu-Jamal, which included quotes by Irish revolutionary Bobby Sands. Archival footage of Brother George Jackson, Malcolm X, Assata Shakur, the MOVE 9 and Abu-Jamal deepened the revolutionary fervor and connectedness of our movement against fascism and white supremacy. Brother TwoHawk of the Pokanoket Tribe delivered an urgent call and update on the encampment and struggle against Brown University.

The event also featured a mini-exhibit that included archival Workers World coverage of George Jackson and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee at Attica between 1970 and 1971.

A video promoting the event is available at [youtu.be/p5qhmY68jJw](https://youtu.be/p5qhmY68jJw). □

entire performance annex. Then the last and most important part of the program began — the presentations by the panelists and open discussion. The speakers brought everything together and discussed the events in Charlottesville, Va., that sparked activists to take down the Confederate statue in Durham, N.C., resulting in officials in many U.S. cities quietly taking down other monuments of intimidation.

Panelists took up the Aug. 19 Millions for Prisoners Human Rights March in Washington, D.C., which focused on the need to abolish the 13th Amendment, which still sanctions slavery in the U.S. Discussion topics included the school-to-prison pipe-

line, the prison-industrial complex, police brutality, the educational system, housing, unemployment and health care. Some steps proposed to resolve these issues included working together, taking control of our own destiny, supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, organizing, building coalitions and holding community forums like this one year-round.

Importantly, many youth were introduced to George Jackson for the first time. In closing, all participants agreed that this was the beginning of something significant. Stay tuned for the next Black August Planning Committee educational and informative community forum. □



# National protests demand \$15 and a union



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



WW PHOTO

Fight For \$15 protest at McDonald's in Roanoke, Va., on Labor Day, Sept. 4.

\$15 hourly minimum wage so they could better care for their families. McDonald's workers struck in several cities, joined by union members and other allies; they

"Fight for \$15" and "Unionize" resonated in 300 cities around the U.S., chanted by workers marching on Sept. 4, Labor Day. Thousands of low-paid fast food and other workers, many of them African American, Latinx and immigrants, demanded a

called for not only better pay and working conditions, but the right to organize unions to defend their rights.

In Philadelphia, Fight for \$15 PA, Service Employees Union 32BJ and other unions representing fast food, home care, airport and retail workers and immigrants, joined by community activists, rallied and marched around a South Philadelphia McDonald's restaurant. They demanded a raise in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour from Pennsylvania's \$7.25 hourly wage. A contingent of immigrant workers energized the rally with chants of "Lucha por \$15 y DACA" ("Struggle for \$15 and DACA"); their signs had the same slogan.

— Kathy Durkin and Joe Piette

## Will labor purchase of Sun-Times make it working-class?

By Jeff Sorel  
Chicago

Aug. 31 — In July, an investment group led by the Chicago Federation of Labor and businessperson Edwin Eisendrath announced that the group had acquired the Chicago Sun-Times. The Sun-Times is one of the two remaining daily newspapers in the country's third-largest media market.

According to CFL President Jorge Ramirez, who was named Sun-Times chairman, the buyers constitute "a historic coalition of workers and like-minded investors" who will "preserve independent media entities in Chicago" and amplify "the diversity of voices and perspectives of Chicago stories." ([tinyurl.com/ycp3kruq](http://tinyurl.com/ycp3kruq))

The CFL is made up of more than 300 affiliated unions in the city and Cook County, representing roughly 500,000 members. Does the CFL's new ownership role mean that the Sun-Times will now become the independent media voice that the working class so badly needs? History suggests that the answer is no.

### Prior venture into radio

This is not the first time that the CFL has ventured into media ownership. The CFL founded radio station WCFL in 1926. Calling itself the "Voice of Labor," WCFL was the only labor-owned station in the country for most of its half-century on the air.

It began as a noncommercial, listener-supported station, providing airtime to unions and progressive groups throughout the Midwest and featuring labor and public affairs programming.

Programs in 1926, for example, focused on the struggles of locked-out British miners; a textile strike in Passaic, N.J.; and prospects for organizing white-collar employees. WCFL also put a pro-labor spin on its other programming, including quiz and variety shows and popular entertainment.

But by trying to operate as a workers' island in a capitalist ocean, WCFL was beset by difficulties. Federal policy favoring large commercial stations over small, public-interest stations resulted in restrictions on WCFL's hours and power. Big broadcasters adopted "ethics" codes that barred airing of such "controversial" issues as labor struggles.

The most powerful station in the Midwest, for example, Cincinnati's WLW (owned by a wealthy manufacturer), issued an order that "no reference to

strikes is to be made on any news broadcasts over this station."

WCFL also met with resistance from the conservative American Federation of Labor. To the AFL, WCFL's attempt to voice labor's independent interests threatened the AFL's "business union" elevation of union-management cooperation over class struggle. Rather than give the working class its own voice, the AFL preferred to purchase placid spots on established commercial outlets that would curry the bosses' favor by portraying unions as respectable and patriotic.

Moreover, running a radio station was costly. Unions themselves could not make up the shortfalls, especially given the challenges of the Great Depression, and bank loans came with intrusive conditions.

By the end of the 1930s, financial and external pressures had morphed WCFL into a more typical commercial station dependent on advertising. Discussion of labor struggles was anathema to commercial advertisers, which forced WCFL to drop much of its initial focus and revert to standard entertainment programming.

It continued to provide some time for labor announcements and labor analyses of contemporary events, but even these had to give way to the demands of profit, and the station ultimately became a Top-40 rock music vehicle in the 1960s and 1970s. After this writer moved to Chicago in 1970, he often listened to WCFL with no idea of the significance of its call letters or that it was anything other than the voice of rock-and-roll.

The Mutual Broadcasting System bought WCFL in 1978. MBS was a radio-network affiliate of Amway (which was founded in part by the ultraconservative DeVos family) that sought to promote right-wing and anti-union ideology over the air waves. The call letters WCFL did not fit that agenda and were later dropped.

### Workers need their own voice

With this history in mind, we cannot expect a Sun-Times partly owned by the CFL to serve as a tribune for an independent working-class perspective. Placement of a labor official instead of a rapacious tycoon as chairperson cannot

undo the capitalist relations that govern big media in this society.

Small media outlets, however progressive, must confront the daily economic and political constraints of capitalist society. The Sun-Times remains a privately owned enterprise run for profit. As with other businesses, chasing profits means squeezing more work hours from employees for lower pay and fewer benefits, a management agenda not conducive to a pro-labor editorial slant.

And any profits must rest on sales of big blocks of commercial ads to anti-union companies like Walmart and Target, which will not allow the Sun-Times to advance a pro-labor agenda.

Moreover, the Sun-Times begins this new page in its history deep in debt. Although the CFL and its partners purchased the paper for only a symbolic dollar, they also assumed the paper's substantial debts, borrowed an additional \$11 million to cover anticipated initial losses and pledged to invest borrowed millions in operations. The need to service this debt will reinforce reliance on advertising, giving advertisers leverage over broadcast content and undermining any attempt to align news coverage and editorial policy with working-class interests.

Regardless of who owns it, the Chicago Sun-Times operates in an industry wrenched by economic, technological and social change. Nominal labor ownership cannot override harsh economic realities stemming from technological advances that make news instantaneously and freely available on multiple platforms.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in the past 15 years, more than half of news industry jobs have disappeared. A Pew Research Center report shows that newspaper circulation has seen 28 straight years of declines.

The appointment of a labor official to run the Sun-Times is related to this crisis in the news industry. In his great work, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," Lenin noted that "lucrative and soft jobs ... on the editorial staffs of 'respectable,' legally published newspapers" are "bait by which the imperialist bourgeoisie attracts and rewards" collaborative labor officials. ([tinyurl.com/yc6j2j5g](http://tinyurl.com/yc6j2j5g))



Painting depicting Jane Addams delivering Women's International League for Peace and Freedom address over WCFL in May 1935.

Looking to labor federations like the CFL to rescue capitalist enterprises in crisis is a prime use of such bait.

Unsurprisingly, the content of the Sun-Times has not noticeably improved since the CFL-led purchase. At most, it leans a bit more towards the Democratic Party in its debates with the Republican Party. But the workers are not represented in those debates, which are primarily over how to most effectively run the U.S. empire and exploit the workers and oppressed.

The workers and oppressed need their own media voice, one not muffled by commercial pressures. Only such a voice can express their needs, defend their interests, broaden their horizons and pave the way for a socialist world.

### Working-class media must be expanded

The few media outlets with a working-class perspective currently lack the resources needed to reach a mass audience. One example is the Labor Beat cable-TV show broadcast from Chicago. It describes itself as "an independent rank-and-file labor media organization" which tells "the untold stories of the working class."

Labor Beat covers labor struggles on its TV shows and videos, including "Fight for \$15" and the ongoing strike by Chicago-area auto mechanics against retail auto dealers. It also has reported frequently on labor involvement in anti-war and immigrant-rights movements. But its availability and budget are quite limited, as is its impact.

Revolutionary socialist newspapers like Workers World offer a more comprehensive working-class alternative to the corporate media version of the world. Their circulation and impact are currently small but will increase as the socialist movement grows. Indeed, a strong socialist newspaper can itself spur the growth of such a movement.

As Lenin observed, a politically astute and class-conscious workers' newspaper "is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer." ([tinyurl.com/yc6j2j5g](http://tinyurl.com/yc6j2j5g))

At bottom, the struggle for the emancipation of the workers and oppressed requires their own independent media. Collaborating with capitalists on a bourgeois paper like the Sun-Times leads nowhere but to a dead end.

Sources: Nathan Godfried, *WCFL: Chicago's Voice of Labor 1926-78* (U. Ill. Press 1997); Elizabeth A. Fones-Wolf, *Labor and the Struggle for Democratic Radio* (U. Ill. Press 2006)



# On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

## Support Texas Workers Relief Fund

To help the millions of Hurricane Harvey survivors on the Texas Gulf Coast, consider donating to the Texas Workers Relief Fund, a 501(c)(3) charity. The Texas AFL-CIO set up TWRF years ago to provide solidarity to union members dealing with environmental and other disasters. After vast wildfires in 2016, it was opened to the public for donations. Calls to donate to TWRF are coming from many national unions, including the Teamsters, the United Auto Workers, the International Longshoremen’s Association, the National Association of Letter Carriers and the American Federation of Teachers. Visit [texasaflcio.org/donate/](http://texasaflcio.org/donate/).

The Registered Nurse Response Network, a national group of volunteer nurses affiliated with National Nurses United, deployed its first delegation to Houston on Aug. 31. Unionized carpenters, electricians, plumbers and others with trade skills in the area and from across the country are also volunteering their time and know-how.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler announced major support on Sept. 1 from the national organization to help survivors and rebuild after the floodwaters subside. In addition to an immediate donation of \$100,000 to TWRF, the AFL-CIO pledged to raise \$5 million in cash aid. Its Housing Investment Trust plans to invest \$500 million over five years in affordable housing in the area. (aflcio.org, Sept. 1)

## Seattle’s Uber, Lyft drivers fight for union

For-hire drivers in Seattle are battling for their rights, trying to improve their working conditions for the benefit of themselves and their families, while Wall Street-backed Uber and Lyft companies put up roadblocks.

In 2015, Seattle drivers formed the ABDA (App-Based Drivers Association) and helped pass a law that started the engine on unionizing with Teamsters Local 117. Currently, this multinational, multigendered workforce gains no benefit from Seattle’s \$15 per hour minimum wage, nor from paid sick day or safety ordinances.

But Uber management and its cronies in the National Right to Work Defense Fund won an injunction against the law. They argued it would violate the National Labor Relations Act as drivers are “independent contractors” who have no rights under the NLRA. A district court judge ruled in favor of the union by dropping the injunction on Aug. 24. But after Uber appealed, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals countered on Aug. 30 with a second injunction supporting the bosses. (The Stranger, August 2017)

Despite the second ruling, a Local 117 statement was optimistic: “For-hire drivers should have the same right to self-determination shared by millions of working people across the country.”

Implementation of the Seattle minimum wage law would set a far-reaching precedent for thousands of workers currently misclassified as “independent contractors,” such as truck drivers at Los Angeles ports and janitors in the Twin Cities hired by contractors to clean big box stores. ¡La lucha continúa!

## Painters union rallies behind immigrant workers

One of the most racist arms of the state, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, is wreaking havoc in people’s lives even when they simply show up to work. That happened on May 3, when two immigrant workers from Mexico, Hugo Mejía and Rodrigo Núñez, were assigned construction jobs at an Air Force base in Fairfield, Calif. Base security demanded to see their papers. When the workers didn’t have valid Social Security numbers, security called ICE, which detained them. Unfortunately, Núñez, a member of the Carpenter’s union (UBC), was deported in early August, leaving behind U.S.-born children.

In early June, the Painters union (IUPAT) launched a national campaign to defend Mejía, who has been a member of Local 83 of District Council 16 in the Bay Area for four years. The union and community allies have held national call-in days to the ICE regional director and actions in front of the San Francisco field office. Other IUPAT locals took up the struggle. In Providence, R.I., Local 195 teamed up with Jobs with Justice and the worker center Fuerza Laboral/Labor Power to hold weekly demonstrations in front of the federal building.

In a statement, the IUPAT president wrote, “We will not allow the act of showing up to work to be criminalized.” A member of the union’s Strategic Organizing Division stated, “If we want to be any type of a union, ... we have to organize immigrant workers.” (Labor Notes, Aug. 23)

Join the struggle to free Hugo! Sign an IUPAT petition on [freehugo.com](http://freehugo.com). And call ICE Regional Director David Jennings at 415-844-5503. □

Save the date!

WORKERS WORLD PARTY NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Saturday and Sunday **NOV 18-19**

NEW YORK CITY Place TBA

Plenaries, discussion groups and workshops will take up:

- Commemorating Centennial of Russian Revolution and Its Lessons for Today’s Struggles
- Building a United Movement Against All Forms of White Supremacy, Led by Trump Regime
- Connecting Racism to All Class Issues, Such as Hurricane Harvey
- The Fight Against Imperialism and Occupation Continues



# March defends immigrant ‘Dreamers’

Just across the street from Trump International Hotel at Columbus Circle in New York City a powerful cry arose from 3,000 people as they gathered for the March to Defend DACA on Aug. 30. They yelled: “Say it loud! Say it clear! Refugees are welcome here!”

Demonstrators showed their outrage at the White House’s proposal to eliminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program — despite the support of two-thirds of the U.S. population. DACA protects the “Dreamers,” immigrants younger than 30 who were brought to the U.S. as children.

Some 800,000 young people participate in the DACA program, which allows them to live, work and attend school in the U.S. If the program is overturned, they face deportation.

Steven Choi, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition, a major organizer of this protest, explained, “Donald Trump needs to take a strong stand now to protect DACA rather than continue to sympathize with white supremacists like [former Arizona Sheriff] Joe Arpaio.” (Daily News, Aug. 31)

Supportive individuals and groups joined the demonstrations. They included members of the Service Employees Union, Local 32BJ; UNITE HERE, Local 100; and the Professional Staff Congress of



the City University of New York. Immigrant rights, community, and other anti-racist and progressive organizations attended, as well as students and teachers from nearby John Jay College.

This large, multinational demonstration went on for hours, followed by a march to Trump Tower, another large Manhattan building with the bigot-in-chief’s name emblazoned on it in huge letters. The protest showed the growing strength of pro-immigrant forces in this city who chanted, “Say it loud! Say it clear! DACA kids are welcome here!” See #Defend DACA and #March for DACA.

Report and photo by Anne Pruden

# Rally says: ‘Stand with Amanda!’

By Workers World New York Bureau

Over 150 people attended a rally in solidarity with Amanda Morales Guerra in New York City on Aug. 28. Although she has lived in the U.S. for 13 years, Morales is fighting deportation to Guatemala by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Instead of reporting to ICE on Aug. 17, Morales sought sanctuary with her three U.S.-born children in the Holyrood Episcopal Church in Washington Heights in Manhattan. This courageous 33-year-old woman is the first undocumented worker to publicly take sanctuary in New York City since bigot-in-chief Donald Trump became president and intensified anti-immigrant policies.

With legal assistance, and the aid of community groups, immigrant rights advocates and elected officials backing her struggle to remain in the U.S., Morales was able to gain a 90-day stay in which to fight for her case to be opened by ICE and for her request for asylum to be granted.

At the rally, the Rev. Luis Barrios introduced local politicians, faith-based leaders and other speakers who stated they were in solidarity with Morales’ struggle to stay in the U.S. and keep her family together and safe. If she is deported, as speakers



WW PHOTO: JOHNNIE STEVENS

emphasized, there would be no one to care for her children. Rev. Barrios asserted that his church will continue to shelter her for as long as necessary.

Activists joined the rally from the church and the community, as well as from organizations, including the New Sanctuary Coalition and Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees. The People’s Power Assembly and NYC Shut It Down! members marched over from a nearby People’s Monday event for Kim Doreen Chase, an African-American, 52-year-old woman who mysteriously died in police custody in Baltimore on Aug. 20.

The chant of “¡Sí, se puede!” (“Yes, we can do it!”) reverberated throughout the rally, as the crowd vowed to keep on fighting for Morales and the rights of all undocumented workers. □



# Mumia Abu-Jamal: The battles of history

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

The events surrounding Charlottesville, Va., have a resonance far beyond the borders of Old Dominion. Even though they began as a strictly local affair, they quickly assumed a national character, because this strictly local event stems from the nation’s history — a history that remains not only contested but bitterly unresolved.

That history, of course, is the toxic poison of white supremacy, and the trigger thereof — African slavery, the intentional, centuries-long economic, social, communal and psychic exploitation of Africans for the financial and psychological benefits of the white nation. This toxin has tainted the bloodstream of the nation and infected all segments of society. It was integral to the very development of white-

ness as a core identity for millions of people who call themselves “Americans.”

As we look at protests rolling throughout the country, the first thing we must recognize is that this isn’t about monuments. Nor is it about the Civil War.

It is about the Present. It is about how this country will define itself, how it sees itself and how it understands its future.

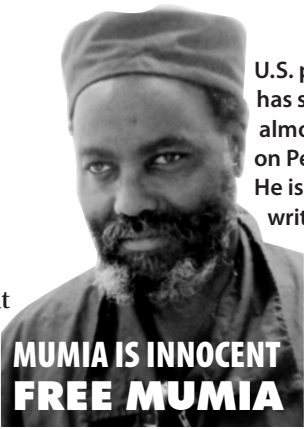
But history, true history, is more about today than yesterday. For it is the pathway to tomorrow, and it lives or dies in the minds of the young who learn, or unlearn, how this country came to be, and what role they play in the days to come.

The great Black freedom fighter Malcolm X repeatedly said, “Of all our studies, history best rewards our research.” He knew this not only because he was taught this by his teacher (the Honorable

Elijah Muhammad), but because he learned this in the very expression of his life. As a state prisoner and a man so hated that he was called “Satan,” his learning of a deeper history of Black people literally made him a new man. It gave him confidence, it turned his loathing into loving, it gave him purpose — and perhaps more importantly, perspective.

Perspective. How to look at the world. How to interpret it. How to understand why things are the way they are. That’s the real value of history.

It teaches perspective of now, not then. And that’s the reason why monuments, turned green by oxidation and pigeon poop, are seemingly at the center of these controversies.



U.S. political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has spent the last 30 years in prison, almost all of it in solitary confinement on Pennsylvania’s Death Row. He is an internationally acclaimed writer and journalist; an organizer and inspiration in the movement against mass incarceration. At the time of his arrest he was a member of the Philadelphia Black Panther Party and supporter of the MOVE organization.

The Trump presidency signaled a great leap backwards. It was the expression of a deep, profound fear of the future, of change, of transformation. So, they hold on to yesterday, invoking tradition, as if the central tradition of America wasn’t — and isn’t — Black slavery, which launched the country into an economic and world power.

Charlottesville is thus a turning point — a pivot point upon which the nation turns back or moves forward, creating a new history.

This, only the people of America can, and will, decide. □

## Italian communists: ‘U.S. anti-racist struggle important to us’

By Alessio Arena  
Secretary of the Fronte Popolare (Popular Front) organization in Italy  
Aug. 26

*Translation by John Catalinotto, of the International Department of Workers World Party, U.S., and a managing editor of the Marxist weekly newspaper, Workers World.*

**Part I, not yet translated, is a Marxist historical analysis of the nonmonolithic nature of the big imperialist states, and especially of the United States as the iconic representation of the world imperialist empire. It argues against the idea that, because the U.S. is the ultimate imperialist state, it has somehow eliminated all class and national contradictions and is now a monolithic geopolitical entity, not to be shaken by class and internal national struggle. It argues, instead, that the U.S. working class can have an independent role and can be a protagonist on the stage of world history. As evidence, Arena references the Occupy Movement, the enthusiasm for Bernie Sanders despite his limitations, and especially the Black Lives Matter movement. Part II, translated here, discusses recent events in the U.S. in Charlottesville, Va., and Durham, N.C., saying these show the potential for developing a nationwide anti-racist and anti-fascist struggle with revolutionary leadership. Arena points to these events as reason for encouragement for revolutionaries in Italy and other imperialist states.**

### PART II

It is in this framework [detailed in Part I] that the events of the past weeks have taken shape, and with this lens that we examine the mobilizations that have shaken the U.S. and sunk their roots during the major developments under President Barack Obama — from Occupy Wall Street to Black Lives Matter and the Black revolt against police violence, and the widespread and growing protests of militarism and war — all of which have been continually suppressed by local police and the FBI.

At this point, building a timeline to reconstruct the recent events is in order.

Last Aug. 12, in Charlottesville, Va., the fragmented but numerous white-supremacist right wing came to protest the removal of a monument honoring Gen. Robert E. Lee, who led the army of the Southern slavocracy during the U.S. Civil War of 1861-1865. In response to this

challenge, thousands of anti-fascists and sincere democrats came into the city to give life to a massive repudiation of the Nazis and Ku Klux Klan. In the midst of the clashes that followed, in which the powerful anti-fascist march clashed with the white supremacists — whom the police defended — a far-right militant crashed his car into defenseless demonstrators, killing the 32-year-old Heather Heyer and injuring [at least] 19 others.

The tense climate in the country following the terrorist attack was exacerbated when Trump, whose ties with the far right are well-known, made a disgusting attempt to downplay the gravity of the incident, describing it as a clash between opposing extremist positions based on ideology, and condemning violence on both sides. In the meantime, the bulk of the corporate media’s gossip acted as a megaphone for the hypocritical appeals of the two parties of power to cease violence. As the state institutions struggled to repair Trump’s serious error — several times he came back himself and reiterated his story in the impossible effort to maintain a balance between his need to appease the growing public disgust at right-wing extremism and his wish to keep these rightists’ support — the protest extended throughout the country and grew more radical.

On Aug. 14 in Durham, N.C., during an outdoor meeting on the city campus, the communist militants of the Workers World Party (read the interview with the WWP International Department representative on our site made earlier this year) toppled and demolished a monument dedicated to the Confederate Civil War troops, erected in 1924 by the segregationist government at that time, to the cry of “No Trump! No KKK! No racist USA!” the slogan that symbolized the mobilization throughout the country. Takiyah Thompson, who had a leading role in the demonstration, was arrested shortly after and released within a few hours. This leader now faces heavy charges and will face a criminal trial. Other comrades at the time the statue was toppled face the same future. [As of August 31, 11 people have been arrested. Translator]

Over the next few days, the demonstrations continued, getting stronger and involving more people, taking place in many of the major cities in the U.S. while mobilizing tens of thousands of demonstrators. In this climate of growing popular support

against the ultraright, Trump on Aug. 18 fired his own ultraright-wing ideologist, Steve Bannon. Meanwhile, entire pieces of his administration — here we just mention the members of the presidential committee for art and culture — resigned to “dissociate themselves from the false equal sign between white supremacists and anti-racists” that the president proposed. As we write, protests are still ongoing.

How should we, as international observers, evaluate the events of the last few days? Certainly, we must avoid assuming that this struggle has already accomplished what still has to be done and for which the struggles already carried out are only the groundwork. The object will be to bring together a social opposition that is willing to organically question the state of the existing current society, going beyond merely combating Trump himself and beyond confronting the far right.

Such a result is not yet at hand, although many of the conditions already exist that make it possible. The political work required to achieve this growth requires a rapid maturation of the U.S. left, which will have to overcome differences in political program as well as the territorial distances across the U.S. Signs showing this is possible exist and have multiplied for years. However, to be able to face from all sides the frightening repressive power of the spy and police apparatus on which the federal government and the individual states can rely, a unified effort will be needed as well as a wide-ranging synthesis.

Work in this direction is already under way, but it has not yet born fruit. Such a goal anticipates work of greater scope in the entire society, aimed at unifying and creating a disciplined corps of the most advanced sectors across the continent, despite the national and racial differences that the dominant classes have always exacerbated and exploited. The old slogan of the workers’ movement — Black and white, unite and fight! — thus contains all its profound validity. From the attainment of these goals to the emergence of an organic political alternative, the path will still be long and difficult.

The risk of overestimating the impact of recent events, however, seems remote. The trend in our ranks [in Italy], on the contrary, has been to ignore, minimize or even openly denigrate and mock the developments of these recent days. And this leads to our avoiding becoming aware of

the opportunities that open up in the advanced capitalist countries in this crisis phase of capitalism and, therefore, to deal with the increasing inadequacy of both the mass response and, above all, of the elements that would like to claim the role of the vanguard in our country.

The most common excuse for avoiding action has been to put the hope for a better future in the development of the geopolitical conflict (and, therefore, we repeat, going in an anti-Marxist direction) between the Atlantic imperialist bloc and the emerging powers [such as the BRICS]. This represents, ultimately, a way out for those who have internalized their defeat and the belief that peoples cannot emerge as protagonists of history. By moving the arena of conflict to a wide and far-off horizon, they create frustration and a sense of inadequacy, and justify the marginality we feel.

A widespread temptation, for years inspired by the ingenious hegemonic work of the so-called red-brown alliance of fascist ideology, is, however, now encountering an obstacle. This obstacle is the manifestation of social and political conflicts now taking place right in the heart of the Empire [the U.S.]. There are many people who try to ignore this conflict, to mock it or, in the most delusional cases, to promote the idea of conspiracies (by helping to spread the myth of Soros’ omnipotence and the invincibility of Big Capital). This myth is the only gimmick they can use to overcome the contradiction between their fallacious worldview and the rejection of this view that the real class struggle offers.

We Italian communists, on the other hand, have something to learn from our U.S. comrades. It is our duty to revive, by observing their example, the awareness that organized and disciplined collectives, even when small, thanks to revolutionary theory can properly interpret the contradictions that open within society at a given moment, even for a brief moment, and to intervene to work politically on those contradictions and elevate the level of their action. Doing this lets them increase their role as protagonists by putting themselves in the front line of a struggle born from the very bosom of society and felt as urgent and necessary by the most sensitive elements of the class.

True revolutionaries do not merely agitate and go “against the current” in the

*Continued on page 10*



# Sept. 11-17: Topple white supremacy!

## Come to Durham Sept. 12! Host local actions!

An informal alliance of national, regional and local organizations is pulling together a national call for a coordinated week of actions to topple white supremacy and oppose state repression from Sept. 11 through Sept. 17, in the wake of events in Durham, N.C., and Charlottesville, Va.

We are asking folks to come to Durham on Sept. 12, when activists who allegedly took down a Confederate statute on Aug. 14 will appear in court — and to organize local actions in their cities to protest monuments and institutions of white supremacy, including statues, prisons and the brutal police. The goal is to spark hundreds of actions — and find hundreds of new organizers.

### National Call to Action to Smash White Supremacy!

In the wake of the violent attacks in Charlottesville, Va., on Aug. 12, by organized neo-Nazis, white supremacists and the Ku Klux Klan, with complicity by the police, we are calling for organizations and individuals to join this call to smash white supremacy.

Take action between Monday, Sept. 11, and Sunday, Sept. 17, in solidarity with Charlottesville and Durham, in your own community, with activities such as rallies, marches, direct action, press conferences, teach-ins and other manifestations of resistance.

**Durham, N.C.:**  
**The people**  
**emerge as**  
**protagonists**  
**of history**

Actions across the country have shown that now — more than ever — is the time to take bold and courageous action. We must act now to counter the rise and emboldening by the Trump administration of white supremacists in our communities, states and around the country.

Tuesday, Sept. 12, is the one-month anniversary of the murder of anti-racist protester Heather Heyer in Charlottesville. It also marks a day of righteous resistance to white supremacists in that city.

Sept. 12 is also the court date for the courageous young people in Durham, N.C., who allegedly toppled a Confederate monument in their city on Aug. 14. Organizers are mobilizing in defense of these arrestees and the Durham community. Will you join them by coming to Durham on Sept. 12 and/or planning a solidarity action in your city?

Durham's Sheriff Mike Andrews has been attempting to intimidate the anti-racist movement by targeting activists who allegedly toppled the Confederate statue and others involved in protesting a planned Ku Klux Klan rally on Aug. 18.

Andrews has been strongly opposed by activists for allowing horrible conditions to exist at the Durham County Jail, where at least five people have died, and where, in the most recent outrage, prisoners are only

allowed visits from their loved ones via video. They also decry his department's collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The struggle against white supremacy in all its forms is just! The events in Charlottesville, followed by the Durham action that took down a Confederate monument, are part of a growing movement to combat the most heinous and racist sections of the far-right, which have been emboldened by Trump.

In response, city officials across the country have pre-emptively taken down Confederate monuments — not because their political officials want to “do the right thing” — but because they fear the strength of a united, multinational movement and outright rebellion.

Yet Trump's bellicose attacks on our movement have continued. His egregious pardoning of archracist former Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio provides an opening for the Durham sheriff's witch hunt against anti-racist activists and for far-right attacks.

The days of action from Sept. 11 through Sept. 17, both in Durham and around the country, will continue the march forward to tear down white supremacy.

### Join us! Sign on here!

[iacenter.org/supportsep11-17durhamweekofaction/](http://iacenter.org/supportsep11-17durhamweekofaction/)

**List your local action.**[facebook.com/events/267032350459968/](https://www.facebook.com/events/267032350459968/)

[twitter.com/unitysolidarity](https://twitter.com/unitysolidarity) □

# Boston workers show love to Durham freedom fighters

**By Steve Gillis**  
**Financial Secretary, USW Local 8751**  
**Boston**

Members of United Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston school bus drivers' union, gave a raucous, pre-school, fight-back orientation to the Veolia/Transdev corporation at the Roxbury bus yard on Aug. 31, when Takiyah “Tear ‘Em Down” Thompson from Durham, N.C., showed up to a sheroe's welcome.

Drivers had heard that Thompson — the North Carolina Central University student and Workers World Party leader who, on Aug. 14, climbed a ladder to topple a mass produced, Jim-Crow-era Confederate statue — would be in town, and conspired to welcome her right. When she came to the floor, the crowd erupted in a celebratory dance to Grievance Chair Garry Murchison's blasting of the song “Ain't No Stopping Us Now!”

Many drivers who grew up in Southern states knew Thompson's name before she arrived, as they had been closely following the action, news of which has swept the country. Some remarked about how as children they had witnessed these Ku Klux Klan propaganda tools go up in their hometowns during the Civil Rights Movement, and they had always wanted to tear them down.

Many drivers who grew up in Haiti had also participated in similar actions, tearing down symbols of the brutal French slavocracy and U.S. dictatorship and replacing them with liberation fighters like Toussaint L'Ouverture, Jean-Jacques Des-salines and John Brown. Everybody wanted their picture taken with Thompson.

Angie Cardosa, a union stalwart and pastry chef extraordinaire, presented Thompson with a red-velvet sheet cake smothered in glorious cream cheese frosting on which she had inscribed, “Thank You Takiyah Thompson AKA Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Dr. Betty Shabazz, Monica Moorehead, Coretta Scott King, Local 8751.” Drivers presented Thompson with Local 8751 honor placards that read, “Build Monuments to Freedom Fighters! Tear Down White Supremacy!” and “Drop the Charges on the Durham, N.C., Freedom Fighters!”

As part of the national days of action Sept. 11 through Sept. 17, USW Local 8751 will be calling the witch-hunting Durham County Sheriff Mike Andrews off the hook to demand he drop the bogus charges; propagating resolutions in the labor movement; and sending material aid for our sheroes' and heroes' legal defense. □



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

Aug. 31 meeting at Roxbury bus yard in Boston celebrates Takiyah Thompson, second from right.

## Do it like Durham!

*Continued from page 1*

after he allegedly posted a comment on social media regarding a Confederate statue there.

In an extension of the fascist violence used against protesters in Charlottesville on Aug. 12, community members in Durham have faced a number of attacks, including death threats and doxxing (the posting of activists' contact and identifying information on right-wing websites). Twice a brick was thrown into the glass door of a West African restaurant that regularly hosts progressive community events. A white supremacist recently walked into a movement-friendly Indian restaurant and threatened everyone inside.

Yet, the community has vowed, in the words of Assata Shakur, to “love each other and support each other.” Squads of activists with electrician and carpenter skills have gone to movement homes and offices to install security systems. Others have volunteered to stand guard. With each new arrest warrant, protesters have gathered at the jail to rally around those who have turned themselves in, chanting, “We see you! We love you!” A weekly protest at the Durham county jail continues.

Meetings to strategize and organize are multinational and multigendered, with people of all ages coming together against fascism and racism. A Sept. 9 block party held at the Hayti Community Center, in the heart of the Black community, will be a space to celebrate the Durham community's unity, resilience and resistance. □

# Anti-masking laws collude with white supremacy

**By Workers World Party**  
**Durham, N.C., bureau**

The world is witnessing righteous resistance against fascist and white supremacist mobilizations across the United States: in Charlottesville, Va.; Berkeley, Calif.; Durham, N.C.; Boston and many other cities.

As the left unites to fight back against emboldened racist and fascist elements, the state is focusing its energy on repressing the movement against white supremacy. An emerging tactic that has been employed in Charlottesville, Durham and New York City is the use of antiquated “anti-masking” laws to criminalize left forces at protests.

Anti-masking laws were created during the Civil Rights era to prevent the Ku Klux Klan from donning their hoods in order to terrorize communities in anonymity. These laws, which were rarely enforced during the Civil Rights era, did nothing to prevent the KKK and other white supremacists from concealing their identities and unleashing violence across the U.S.

Today, the state has leveraged these laws to target and criminalize protesters, while continuing to allow white supremacists to hide their identities and torment whole communities.

On Aug. 12, members and friends of Workers World Party stood side by side with masked and unmasked leftists in

Charlottesville as we confronted armed white supremacists. In preparation for our mobilization, we briefed everyone on the anti-masking law in Virginia, which has made masking a felony offense since 1950. We warned that during an anti-Klan mobilization in Charlottesville on July 8, four anti-racist activists were charged with a felony for masking after being assaulted by the police with noxious tear gas and pepper spray.

We also carried items to cover ourselves in the event of similar state repression on Aug 12. Many of us utilized masks that day after being tear gassed by white supremacists, police and army reserves.

None of the white supremacists were arrested for donning masks or hoods while terrorizing Charlottesville.

In North Carolina, where masking has been a criminal offense since 1953, the state has targeted protesters at peaceful demonstrations by identifying people who were supposedly masked and arresting them on site and through video surveillance.

We must expose the state as a champion of white supremacy, as evidenced through its selective enforcement of anti-masking laws. As the state ramps up its efforts to quash the left's united fightback against fascism and racism, we must also support those who are arrested for violating anti-masking laws while resisting white supremacy. □



Eyewitness Harvey:

# Working-class rescue, gov’t neglect

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

Sept. 4 — The flood waters have not receded in parts of southwest Houston. Cities near the Louisiana border are still flooded. Things are easing up, but it’s certainly not over and won’t be for a long time.

As I write on Labor Day, I am reminded of Dr. Martin Luther King’s quote, “All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”

I’ve seen a young selfless undocumented man who was helping rescue people. No one asked for his papers then. He drowned yesterday, and tears for someone I didn’t know came flooding down. His labor was appreciated by many, except for the president, the governor and the right-wing, anti-immigrant crusaders.

Folks walk down my street with lawnmowers, trying to make a dollar. I’m getting Facebook messages and phone calls about donating and/or distributing cleaning supplies, water, food, diapers, wipes and formula. The needs are massive. Many need wet carpet and sheet-rock ripped out.

I just spoke to Shaka Sankofa’s elderly mother, Elnora Graham — Sankofa was an innocent man executed by Texas in 2000. She was relieved that someone helped get wet carpet out of her aging wood frame house.

There’s a lot on TV about Red Cross aid, but there are also people who have no paid staff, no funding, but are doing heroic work in the most oppressed communities. The National Black United Front here regularly does “Feed the Hood” events. So when they asked, donations came flooding in from around the country, including two full 18-wheelers from



Dallas. Along with Black Lives Matter, RBG Unity and the JOHARA Initiative have worked for four days straight in the heat, humidity and mud to clean homes, feed people and leave them with water and supplies.

Today the Nation of Islam was in northeast Houston giving out water and supplies. Local rap artists Paul Wall, Slim Thug and Z-Ro joined them, attracting a crowd. The Brown Berets de TejAztlan are collecting donations to distribute in neighborhoods overlooked by mainstream agencies. (tinyurl.com/HarveyTejAztlan)

**Environmental racism at petrochemical plants**

On Houston’s east side, where all the oil and chemical refineries are located, up to 1,000 tons of pollutants are now in our air, soil and water. In Crosby, the Arkema chemical plant burned off the remaining trailers of decomposing chemicals that were supposed to be kept under refrigeration. Once their electricity flooded and the tanks warmed, several exploded last week.

Residents in a mile-and-a-half radius of Arkema, who had been evacuated, finally got to return to their flooded homes today to find the destruction. The French-owned plant wasn’t providing any details. Exxon and Shell refineries are attempting production again. Since the hurricane, gas prices have jumped almost 50 cents a gallon here.

The Sept. 2 Guardian reports: “A cocktail of nearly 1 [million] pounds of particularly harmful substances ... have been emitted by more than 60 petroleum industry plants operated by ExxonMobil, Shell, Chevron and other businesses since the hurricane.”

In the same article, Bryan Parras, who lives in the East End area of Houston, was quoted: “It feels like someone has a hand on the crest of your nose and is pushing down on your nose and eyes. You start to get headaches, your eyes start itching, your throat gets scratchy. I noticed it going outside for just a second. And then I realized that the air conditioning was sucking it into the house.”

Parras has been a commanding force in the local environmental movement in the neighborhood he grew up in, where overwhelmingly Latinx and Black com-



munities live next door to Houston’s petrochemical industry. People there report elevated levels of leukemia, asthma, cancer and other ailments.

“The Latino community here is full of good people. They do the dirtiest jobs and they don’t ask for much and yet they are over-policed, criminalized and targeted. These people have very little political power and the city knows it,” Parras told the Guardian.

**Prisoners suffer from lack of planning**

Prisoners are suffering because of the state and federal prison systems’ failure to plan for emergencies. Some prisons have been evacuated several times in the last few years. Yet it’s always the same — not enough water, no cots for evacuees and only peanut butter and bologna sandwiches.

According to prisoner and activist Nanon Williams, whom I visited yesterday, he and 580 other men are sleeping on a gym floor with ants, roaches and snakes crawling on them!

“The water is brown and oily and the rumor is that it has saltpeter in it,” Williams told me. “Officials say it is OK to drink. We need to be allowed to go to commissary and buy clean water, buy bleach and cleaning products for the porta potties because they are disgusting. We may get to commissary tomorrow but can only spend \$10. The food here is unrecognizable and we want to buy food. We need toiletries and stamps, too.”

Williams asked people on the outside to call Warden Rocky Moore at 936-348-3751 and Region 1 Director Tony O’Hare at 936-437-1770, and tell them prisoners need clean water and the ability to buy what they need from the commissary.

At the federal prisons in Beaumont, 90 miles east of Houston, conditions are worse. Rachel, the spouse of a man imprisoned there, told me, “They are only giving them eight ounces of water a day, two sandwiches a day since last Sunday.



Northeast Houston on Sept 1. Many homes were flooded with no aid in sight. Members of community organizations went door-to-door giving out supplies and cleaning up.

The [prisoners] are using the restroom in bags because the water that’s in the toilets is what they are drinking. People are fainting because of dehydration and no food. They have no air conditioning. It’s freaking hot in there. These are GROWN ASS MEN, not animals. They haven’t taken showers since last Sunday. ... My husband is so dehydrated his eyelids were sticking to his eyes. His tongue was sticking to the top of his mouth.” This is the federal prison system where one of the Cuban Five, Ramón Labañino, spent several years. Political prisoner Ramsey Muñiz is in this prison.

**Defend immigrants!**

The Houston metropolitan area is home to more than 600,000 undocumented people. The fear of deportation has prevented untold numbers of them from seeking help or going to centers during the flood. More than 26,000 people are registered under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and they now fear being deported if President Donald Trump ends DACA.

Houston ranks just behind Dallas and Atlanta in the number of deportations since Trump took office. Even Republican leaders are urging Trump to rethink deportations and ending DACA. They are concerned about their profits, of course, not the workers.

The one joy I’ve seen since Harvey is that working-class folks have done a massive job of rescuing people, without money or recognition. It’s the little neighborhood churches and community organizations; it’s places like S.H.A.P.E. (Self-Help for African People through Education) Community Center that are raising funds and helping people navigate the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

It’s immigrant organizations like FIEL, Familias Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en Lucha, who spend night and day organizing against reactionary Texas laws and are now aiding immigrants living in their cars. FIEL has invited people to their offices on Sept. 5 to hear Trump’s announcement on DACA. Then, they say, “We will make plans to follow our dreams.” □

# Hurricanes, floods and capitalism

By Tony Murphy

In “Capital,” Karl Marx described capitalism as a system that is designed entirely around the exploitation of labor — but its true character is hidden.

Unlike previous social systems like slavery and serfdom, where the use and abuse of slaves or serfs to produce wealth was evident to everyone, capitalism’s exploitation is hidden underneath a bunch of ideas that workers and bosses are equal, independent agents, and part of a democratic system that guarantees complete freedom for all.

For capitalism to survive as a system of exploitation, it needs to constantly hide the true character of all phenomena. No matter what’s at stake, what’s important, what any given struggle is really about — the dominant, ruling-class interpretation of events has the effect of obscuring reality.

There is a very public struggle for truth over whether Hurricane Harvey was preventable or unprecedented. In this struggle the opposing sides are, on the one hand, scientists and environmental activists who tried to warn the public about both global warming and how Houston’s sprawl prevented the ground’s absorption of flood water. On the other hand are climate-change deniers and politicians who deliberately ignored the warnings of scientists for reasons of expediency, improper planning or greed.

This debate is crucial. Climate change is affecting millions. The experience of the Gulf Coast is magnified tenfold in India, Nepal and Bangladesh, whose populations are right now suffering massively — 1,200 killed and millions left homeless — under another record-breaking monsoon made worse by climate change.

But even this struggle over how disas-

ters happen, with excellent points from the scientific climate-change crowd (the “500-year flood” has happened three times in the last three years), obscures the true nature of what is unfolding in Houston, the Gulf Coast and South Asia: a massive societal breakdown because of a global social system that prioritizes the right to exploit people for profit over human needs.

**U.S. capitalist reaction vs. Cuba’s socialist preparation**

Largely left out of the discussion is that the emission of greenhouse gases is caused by capitalism. Also ignored is the crime that, unlike the wealthy 1%, the vast majority of this society are left to their own devices in extreme-weather crises caused by the system.

This becomes more strikingly apparent when you compare the massive

preparations made by the socialist Cuban government for and with its people whenever a hurricane hits. The loss of life there is overwhelmingly less than in capitalist countries.

This fact is readily admitted by rescue and humanitarian agencies like the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, the United Nations, Oxfam, etc. A person is 15 times more likely to be killed by a hurricane in the U.S. as in Cuba, admitted the Center for International Policy in 2013. But they never attribute these amazing results to Cuba’s social system.

The first thing that sets Cuba apart from capitalist countries is that the response to hurricanes take place well before they hit. Every sector of society is involved, and annual trainings start with people when they are young.

With regular annual training exer-

*Continued on the next page*



# Floods devastate South Asian countries

By G. Dunkel

The wet monsoons, which hit South and Southeast Asia between April and September, normally bring some flooding. This year's monsoon has brought devastation. At least 1,200 people died from drowning and mudslides in India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh; two-thirds of Bangladesh is underwater. (Weather Channel, Aug. 29)

Some 18,000 schools across the entire area have been damaged, which means that approximately 1.8 million children are indefinitely unable to attend school.

With the devastation in Texas and Louisiana — the result of a criminal conspiracy among the politicians, the oil billionaires and the big banks — the Asian catastrophe 8,000 miles away has barely been covered in the U.S. press. While the weather patterns are different, the root cause of both catastrophes — global

warming — is the same.

According to an Aug. 24 U.N. statement, 41 million people have been severely affected. However, very heavy rains hit Mumbai, India's financial center, and Karachi, Pakistan's capital, after Aug. 24, so the U.N. estimate is probably too low.

Mumbai got a month's worth of rain in a single day. The wealthy entrepreneurs and capitalists who live in its fancy apartment buildings had their commute disrupted.

Poor families — about 60 percent of Mumbai's population — live in huts and shacks behind the big buildings, and many lost their shelter. The estimated 150,000 to 300,000 people who are homeless also went hungry; they couldn't cook in the rain.

Thousands of small Indian villages were underwater in several states, including Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Relief efforts in India appear to have been direct-

ed to the relatively well-off sectors with access to the internet and cell phones. The homeless and the poor don't have access.

According to the U.N., the flooding in Nepal, where 150 people have died and 90,000 homes destroyed, is the worst the country has seen in a decade.

In Bangladesh, "[M]ore than 600,000 hectares (nearly 1,500,000 acres) of farmland have been partially damaged and in excess of 10,000 hectares (nearly 25,000 acres) have been completely washed away," the Independent reported Aug. 29.

Besides flood damage, Bangladesh is facing another major immediate problem. The U.N. stated Sept. 4 that 87,000 mostly Rohingya refugees had arrived in Bangladesh from Myanmar since Aug. 25, with around 20,000 more massed on the border and waiting to enter. Some 400,000 refugees are already living in Bangladesh, which is having trouble even providing minimal food aid for them

since its farm-based economy has been severely damaged this past year.

"Heavy rain in the Asia monsoon is normal," Jonathan Erdman, senior meteorologist at weather.com, said, "[B]ut, this was above the norm over a large area of Bangladesh, east India." (Aug. 30)

Due to global warming, the sea level around Bangladesh has risen, and the snow pack in the Himalayas has melted earlier and quicker. What this means is that the tremendous amount of water the monsoon has dumped in the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta is going to drain slowly. The devastation will take a long time to clear.

The weather patterns of hurricanes in the U.S. Gulf Coast and monsoons in South Asia both existed before global warming.

What is new is their intensification. It is becoming clearer and clearer that the carbon pumped into the atmosphere by the profit-driven oil and gas companies is a danger to the whole world. □

# Pennsylvania inmate fights toxic prisons

By Bryant Arroyo

*This is the lightly edited text of a speech given at the Fight Toxic Prisons 2017 National Convergence Conference, held June 3 in Denton/Fort Worth, Texas. Arroyo's remarks were recorded for the occasion by Prison Radio.*

Hello there, environmentalists, ecologists, bioneers, blue-gold/rain forest protectors, movers/shakers, GMO opponents, Green Tech innovators, Indigenous leaders and social/environmental justice activists gathered here today. I want to thank you for your magnanimous invitation to join all of the "environmental regulators" at this unprecedented conference.

The environment includes everything around an individual: the air one breathes, the water we drink and the place in which we live. As such, the environment serves as a protective factor and

promotes one's overall physical, mental and spiritual well-being. ...

This is why we are here to deliberately fight toxic prisons together in support of those inside the Nation of Prisoners. I believe it is important that the voices be heard of all who are directly or indirectly impacted by the building of this massive \$444 million project, the plan proposed by the [Federal] Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to build their facility on a toxic coal mine site in Letcher County, Ky.

I'd like to start off by quoting the words of [anthropologist] Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Many states have already learned a painful lesson from their dealing with projects such as the one being proposed by the BOP. And this is because, in every one of those cases, the tragic consequenc-

es of allowing similar projects to operate in those other communities could not have been fully appreciated until it was too late to stop the devastation to both human lives and the environment.

Indeed, too often, the problem is that the people in those communities are unaware that [prison] companies have a specific set of criteria for targeting their next victim community, that is, communities with high unemployment rates where people are in financial trouble. And once those factors are in play, they got what they need to get their foot in the door. Sadly, even when some might feel apprehensive about the potentially bad consequences of having these projects in their communities, those real concerns compete with the fear of an uncertain financial future for themselves and their families. This is when the seduction dance begins on the part of these giant

corporations and the BOP.

First, they come into the community offering a bright future for those who would support their BOP plans by promises of good paying jobs. Then, to do away with any real concerns about personal health and environmental toxic-site damage, they bring in their so-called experts in their expensive suits with an air of respectability, pretending to be pillars of society, when they are nothing more than hired guns who come into an unsuspecting community speaking the latest impressive-sounding scientific jargon. With the skill of a master illusionist, they complete the deception started by company executives.

The tragic success of this deceit is reflected in the readiness with which average tax-paying citizens unwittingly welcome these corporate environmental terrorists into their communities, only to

*Continued on page 10*

# Hurricanes, floods and capitalism

Continued from page 8

cises, emergency stockpiles, round-the-clock alerts in the media and evacuation preparations beginning 48 hours before landfall, the dominant mode of Cuba's handling of hurricanes is preventive. The dominant way capitalist regimes respond to hurricanes is reactive.

Another outstanding approach in Cuba is called "community risk mapping." A 2004 study by Oxfam reported how this is carried out by community leaders. A member of the Cuban Women's Federation explained: "If a hurricane hits, I know that inside one multi-family unit is an old woman in a wheelchair, who is going to need help to leave. I have 11 single mothers on second and third floors of apartment buildings with children under two who will need more support to evacuate and special needs in the shelters. I have two pregnant women, one in that block and one on this one, who will need special attention."

Some argue that having to contend with more frequent hurricanes is what makes Cuba's hurricane defense superior — not its social system.

But Cuba's approach to other health and human welfare issues is also superior. Take the Zika virus, a phenomenon that was devastating to the people of Haiti, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Colombia and other countries, as well as in south Florida.

True, Cuba's response to Zika was helped by its years of fighting the mosquito-borne dengue and chikungunya diseases. But that doesn't explain why its Zika infection and death rate have been so much lower than in the capitalist countries around it — and, like its hurricane system, universally praised by health experts.

Carlos Espinal Tejeda, a tropical disease specialist at the University of Miami, told the health publication STAT: "In Miami and in places in Latin America, they waited until they had cases and then mobilized. ... In Cuba, it's the opposite. When they see a virus about to arrive, they mobilize."

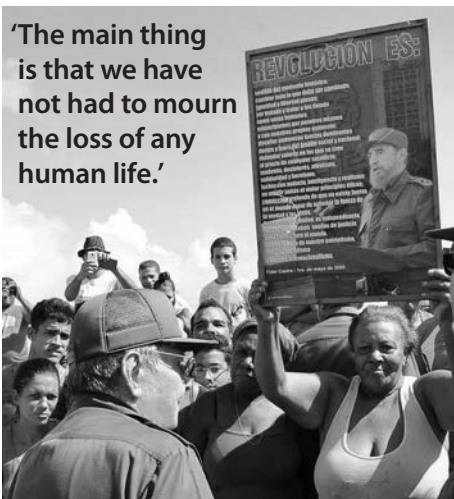
On Sept. 1, HuffPost published the aptly named article "Houston, We Have a Problem." Referring to the extreme weather in both the U.S. Gulf Coast and South Asia, the author issued a clarion call for humanity to address the scourge of climate change.

"By continuing with business as usual, we exploit and use oil and gas at record levels, despite the warnings of scientists," writes the author. "We must not live in a fool's paradise thinking that we can continue on our current course and that everything will be okay."

This is true. But a social system like capitalism is focused on making money



Above, Maisí, a municipality of 29,000 in Guantánamo Province, Cuba, after Hurricane Matthew in 2016.



Cuban President Raul Castro talks with residents of Baracoa. Poster quotes Fidel Castro's May 1, 2000 speech enumerating what revolution is.

killed." (Fred Goldstein, Workers World, Jan. 13, 2005, "Deaths not just act of nature — Socialist organization & planning can save lives." The article, available online at workers.org, gives a detailed explanation of how Cuba is organized on every level to deal with such problems.)

What appears to be possible and true depends on a society's social system.

Yes, Houston, we have a problem. The problem is capitalism. Capitalism is hostile to people's needs and ability to keep ourselves and loved ones healthy.

What has caused so much suffering in the Gulf Coast also causes layoffs, racism, poverty and war. We have to overthrow capitalism and replace it with socialism. □



# Hands off DACA!

The Bigot in Chief is supposed to announce, on Sept. 5, his decision on whether to eliminate the ruling on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. DACA was put in place by President Barack Obama to defend — at least temporarily — the rights of children to stay here who were born elsewhere but grew up in the United States.

There is no doubt that anyone who is not brainwashed by xenophobic propaganda, or part of the racist clique with all too much power in this country, defends the right of young immigrants — the “dreamers” — to remain in the United States should they wish to do so.

Since these children, now grown-up workers, really have no home country to go to, since their relatives, friends, schools, jobs and roots are all here, any decision to deport them against their will is not only unjust, it is cruel and unusual punishment for people who have committed no crime.

Most of their parents came here during the 1990s and early 2000s. Many of them were driven off their farms and out of their homelands when “free trade” agreements opened up their countries to U.S. agribusiness and other monopolies. They are also innocent of any crimes. They were part of the workforce that built the relative boom economy during those years in the U.S.

The dreamers’ right to remain here is supported by two-thirds of the population, according to polls. It is supported by labor unions that have immigrants among their members and by any unions with progressive leadership. That was

shown by a pro-DACA demonstration in New York City on Aug. 30, with participation from UNITE HERE Local 100, Service Employees Union 32BJ and the Professional Staff Congress/City University of New York.

DACA is even supported by some big businesses, including agribusiness, which need their labor and strive to keep paying lower wages to a workforce that is less sure of its rights and vulnerable to the bosses’ threats of calling in Immigration and Customs Enforcement authorities.

But the working class should avoid being disoriented by the support dreamers apparently have from a section of the ruling class. Much more important is the need for working people of all nationalities in the United States to build solidarity with workers across all borders and across all seas.

Only by building such international working-class solidarity can workers inside the U.S. ever hope to defeat our imperialist rulers — or even win higher wages and benefits.

The first step, on Sept. 4, is to demand that the chief bigot, who built his presidential campaign by slandering Mexican workers, keep the DACA program intact. If he doesn’t do this, and instead maintains his ties to the most reactionary Republicans and the ultra-right super-bigots, he should be met with even greater protests by the masses of people here.

Join the DACA Fights Back: Trump Tower Take-over demonstration on Sept. 5, 11 a.m., at Trump Tower, 725 Fifth Ave., New York City. □

# Pennsylvania toxic prisons



*Continued from page 9*

regret it later when their tax-paying citizens’ lives are devastated by an unlivable environment and their bodies are ravished by terminal diseases.

One of the strongest examples we have that this project is being proposed without any thought of the consequences to environmental justice, water quality, prisoners’ rights, endangered species and the lack of assessing alternatives to incarceration can be found in the [Letcher site] environmental impact statement. That’s where the BOP states they have “determined there is no significant new information relevant to environmental concerns and appreciable changes to potential impact as a result of modifications to the Roxana site.” ([tinyurl.com/ycpp774f](http://tinyurl.com/ycpp774f))

It is very clear from that portion of the statement that the BOP has no idea as to what detrimental impact the building of this federal facility on top of a toxic mine site, costing taxpayers \$444 million out of the federal budget, will have on both human life and on the environment for that matter.

In light of this revelation, we have to ask, can anyone see the insanity in this? In effect, the BOP doesn’t mind experimenting to gather data in which close to several thousand federal prisoners, federal corrections officers, civilian staff and the rest of the population of the Roxana-site community will be reduced to the status of guinea pigs. In effect — lab rats.

In closing, there are two reasons for doing anything: a good reason [and] then there is the real reason. Is there any economic feasibility to waste the taxpayers’ \$444 million on a federal prison that will eventually promote sickness and cancer, causing diseases to both the federal prisoners and civilian staff members alike?

Fight the BOP and prevent them from building on a toxic mine site in Roxana. Mutual allegiance is our support system. That is our contract. Protest! Fight, fight, fight!

Bryant Arroyo © 2017  
*Letters can be sent to Bryant Arroyo, #CU-1126, SCI Frackville, 1111 Altamont Blvd., Frackville, PA 17931.*

# Defend Antifa!

Last week, the media was full of hand-wringing articles intended to terrify the masses against a new spectre haunting the United States. Not Trump, nor the failed state that sows death and spreads sickness in the wake of Hurricane Harvey in Texas. Not the prospect of nuclear war. No, the masses are now supposed to fear “antifa” militants and their “violence.”

Communists and anarchists have proudly worn the mantle of antifa (short for anti-fascists) since the very beginning. Communists led tens of millions of people in the fight against fascism in Europe, and multinational communist fighters have long battled the Klan’s fascist terror in the South. Anarchists in Europe and the U.S. have long been on the frontline against militarized cops and their Nazi running dogs at protests and through direct action.

These are the antifa militants that the Washington Post encourages us to fear. They want us to fear the brave heroes in Durham who brought down a racist statue symbolizing oppression, and they want us to fear the brave heroes who defended the disabled, elderly and children alike in the streets of Washington, D.C., on Trump’s inauguration day. They want us to fear the brave fighters who faced down fascists in Charlottesville, Va., despite extreme violence from cops and Klan alike.

The media and ruling class have never been so divorced from the sentiment of the working class and oppressed. Antifa is not a group or a tendency, not a party or a structure. It is a sentiment that all freedom-minded people cherish in their hearts and minds across the world: an end to racism, capitalism and war.

In a week in which the criminal U.S. regime threatened to revoke immigration status for millions of young people across the country, a week in which chemical leaks and explosions happened across Texas in the wake of Harvey, the ruling class thought it necessary to point the finger at the vanguard forces who are fighting for justice. It really shows the level of utter contempt the bosses and their enforcers have for our class — that they would terrorize, torture, imprison and murder us, and then encourage the masses to hate the people struggling for liberation.

Fascists, the Klan and the police have a body count that stretches into the millions. Here in the U.S., they have been responsible at all levels of power — from the Oval Office to the streets — for the murder, incarceration and lynching of countless Black and Brown people. Those who fight them — from those who are facing felony charges to those who are martyred in the struggle — are heroes, not enemies. □

## Italian communists: ‘U.S. anti-racist struggle important’

*Continued from page 6*

hope that by preaching they will bring the masses to the side of the cause: their task is to intervene in real conflicts, to give them a political expression and on that basis build a new and more advanced consciousness, without being discouraged if the political sensitivity of masses in motion does not entirely correspond to the most advanced political goals. This is what the true communists in the U.S. have been doing for a long time, and there is no doubt that the events of these days also bring with them the deep impression of their untiring work.

To develop a renewed awareness of the strategic imperative for the whole movement for liberation on a global scale, we should see that in the heart of the “imperialist metropolis” there exist conflicting and transformative pressures that can be oriented and driven by revolutionary organizations capable of combining a correct strategic approach with tactical skill. Whether in the United States or in Italy, it is only in this way that we can offer real aid to the peoples in revolt in the countries that are already seeking a path for national independence and socialism. We can provide this aid by confronting the dizzying economic, technological and military imbalance the imperialist powers have accrued in their favor over the decades if we are able to interpret the aspirations of

our peoples and make them the disruptive force they already potentially represent.

This lesson is very alive in the U.S. left, bound by origin and composition to peoples around the world by the permanent link represented by the historical memory of the theft from and genocide of the Indigenous peoples, the deportation of enslaved African people, present in the Black communities, as well as by the uninterrupted flow of migrants coming from all the corners of the earth most afflicted by misery and neocolonial oppression.

From Charlottesville to Durham, the struggle in the United States today gives us all a message of enormous value: In spite of the difficulties, in spite of facing all sorts of repressive apparatus, the profound contradictions of the society in decay in which we live are constantly opening the way for change. Our task is to act in a way to open a gateway for our class to join in the struggle. This is what gives a profound meaning to the minute actions of our daily militancy. We must be grateful for the sacrifice of Heather Heyer and the courage of Takiyah Thompson for having brought back to us the wonderful gift of being able to look forward to the struggle, armed with confidence in the future.

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## THE KLAN & GOVERNMENT: Foes or Allies?



### WHY COLIN KAEPERNICK IS RIGHT

Articles from Workers World/Mundo Obrero Newspaper  
[www.workers.org/books](http://www.workers.org/books)

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

Anthology from WW newspaper edited by Monica Moorehead.

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes  
Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy  
Black Youth: Repression & Resistance Leilani Dowell  
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The 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker



# The Koreans are not ‘mad’

By Deirdre Griswold

The news media, taking their cue from the political and military establishment of the U.S., are full of alarm, asking, “What do these Koreans want? Why on earth are they testing bigger and bigger nuclear bombs? They must be mad!”

The answer to why the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is developing a nuclear defense is not hard to find. In fact, the answer is all around us — throughout the world, in the form of U.S. missile silos, warplanes, warships and submarines.

The U.S. at present maintains a nuclear arsenal of almost 7,000 warheads. A “nuclear modernization program,” initiated under the Obama administration, is continuing under Trump. The Arms Control Association estimates that the total cost of this program over the next 30 years will come to “between \$1.25 trillion and \$1.46 trillion.”

Mutually Assured Destruction — MAD — is the actual name of the military doctrine that has guided U.S. nuclear weapons development since at least 1962. In fact, U.S. military planners credit the MAD doctrine with preventing a nuclear exchange between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Let’s not forget how the nuclear arms race began. The U.S. started it when, as the world’s only nuclear power, it dropped atomic bombs on two Japanese cities at the very end of World War II, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians. This included tens of thousands of Koreans who had been forced to work there by the Japanese colonial rulers of Korea at that time.

By 1946, the U.S. had stockpiled many more of these fearsome weapons and announced a new war, the Cold War, against the Soviet Union, its former ally in the fight against Hitler’s armies. The implication was that the U.S. could use its nuclear arsenal to impose its will on the Soviet Union. But by 1949, the USSR successfully tested its first atomic bomb. The nuclear arms race was on.

The U.S. claimed it had to build thousands of such weapons to prevent a nuclear

exchange with the Soviet Union. Even though the USSR ceased to exist in 1991, the U.S. continued to stockpile nukes, and is now expanding that deadly arsenal.

### MAD, not ‘madness’

Today all the voices of U.S. imperialism — from the political leaders to the generals to the commercial media — are saying that the leaders of the DPRK must be “mad” because they have successfully tested and built nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them.

But it is MAD, not “madness,” that drives the DPRK’s efforts to prevent a war by maintaining a powerful defense.

After all, if the U.S. military, with all its power enforced by ships, planes and bases around the world, can still be guided by the “mutually assured destruction” doctrine, why is it “mad” for a much smaller country to seek nuclear weapons in self-defense?

The threat the DPRK faces from the U.S. is not imagined or delusional. The country was invaded by 5 million U.S. troops from 1950 to 1953 in a horrendous war. For 64 years now, the U.S. has refused to sit down with the DPRK and sign a peace treaty formally ending that war. This allows the U.S. to continue its military occupation of the south, despite the opposition of the people there.

The U.S. has 38 military bases in south Korea. Every year, the Pentagon conducts military “exercises” in Korea simulating another war and invasion of the north. Just days before the installation of the current south Korean government, the U.S. rushed to install a THAAD missile base in the south, against popular opposition and the incoming president. The U.S. calls THAAD a “missile defense” system, but in fact it is offensive, and would facilitate an attack against the DPRK.

The DPRK knows war all too well. It understands the real need to defend itself against another invasion by the U.S.

### What drives U.S. MADness?

Separated by two great oceans from any would-be invader, the U.S. has been through two world wars relatively un-

touched by comparison to Europe, Asia and North Africa. One would think this should ensure a thriving and comfortable life for the people of this country. Think again.

Even as the U.S. government earmarks over a trillion dollars to upgrading its nuclear arsenal, infrastructure here is crumbling. Global warming is bringing ever-more destructive storms, yet there is no planning to save lives on the tremendous scale now needed. Bridges, trains, subways, levees and dams are in terrible shape. Where is the \$1.46 trillion plan to rebuild the infrastructure — and provide work at the same time for the tens of millions who can’t find living-wage jobs?

U.S. governments — under Republicans and Democrats — have been so wedded to maintaining economic and military domination over the world that they have scuttled any efforts to make major improvements to the infrastructure. This deterioration is only accelerating under Trump, who wants to cut taxes

for the rich while throwing billions more to the Pentagon, at the expense of everything else.

Behind all this MADness is the insatiable appetite of imperialism, the last stage of capitalism, in which the system becomes dependent on super-profits sucked out of the world’s people, like a vampire on steroids. Millionaires cannot be content with what they have — they must become billionaires or sink under the fierce competition that continues even in monopoly capitalism.

Why do the U.S. rulers hate the DPRK so much? Not because it is a threat to the people here, but because it is socialist, not capitalist. The DPRK refuses to subject its people to exploitation by U.S. transnational corporations and banks. To the imperialists, that’s enough motivation to risk a horrible war.

The workers and oppressed peoples of the U.S. have nothing to gain, and everything to lose, from this Pentagon MADness. □

## War crimes in Yemen Saudi bombs backed by U.S., Britain

By Randi Nord  
Editor, Geopolitics Alert

With international silence and virtually nonexistent media coverage, Saudi Arabia continues carrying out its war crimes in Yemen. The Saudi-led coalition has accelerated its strikes against Yemen on a daily basis, targeting homes, farms, cars and more.

The U.S.-backed Saudi forces bombed a hotel near the Yemeni capital, killing 60 people on Aug. 23. At least 30 civilians were killed or wounded. An Aug. 25 coalition airstrike killed at least 16 people, including seven children. The Saudi government called the attack, which destroyed two residential buildings, a “technical mistake.”

In the southern governorate of Taiz, nearly a dozen air strikes have destroyed civilian infrastructure, including a farm.

Air raids and hovering drones have become a nightly occurrence in Yemen’s capital city of Sana’a. The Saudi coalition attacks have hit several areas, including the September 21st Park, which commemorates the victories of Yemen’s Ansarullah revolutionary movement. The raids in Sana’a damaged civilian homes and businesses. Along Yemen’s western coast, war planes launched over a dozen air strikes against areas of Hodeidah and Midi.

### Fighting back

Despite the air raids, Yemen’s Army and Popular Committees successfully repelled Saudi-backed mercenaries in Taiz, Marib and Hajjah. Yemen’s resistance also launched strong offensives in Najran and Jizan, where forces targeted Saudi

mercenaries with rockets and destroyed military equipment.

Yemeni forces have increased their assaults in Najran, Jizan and Asir provinces in retaliation for Saudi Arabia’s ongoing war. These provinces are technically on the Saudi side of the border, but were previously part of Yemen’s territory. Yemen’s highly skilled Sniper Unit operates specifically in these areas.

### Humanitarian disaster

According to a leaked U.N. report, Saudi coalition forces operating with support from the U.S. and Britain have killed 502 children and injured at least 838 more. (foreignpolicy.com, Aug. 16) They have also destroyed nearly 30 schools. Local organizations estimate the number far higher.

The report also recommended adding Saudi Arabia to a list of banned international countries for its chronic human rights violations abroad.

Saudi Arabia and its allies have killed thousands in Yemen since 2015 — with full support from the U.S. government and Western powers. The U.N. Human Rights Office has documented 13,829 civilian casualties, including 5,110 people killed, in the two-year war. Many believe the overall death toll is much higher.

The impoverished country is also experiencing a globally unprecedented epidemic of cholera, which is mainly caused by unsafe drinking water — in Yemen’s case, from widespread bombing of the infrastructure. Some 500,000 are estimated to have become infected, and more than 2,000 have already lost their lives to the disease since April.

*For updates, visit [geopoliticalalert.com](http://geopoliticalalert.com).*



## Millonarios estadounidenses sancionan a Venezuela

Continúa de página 12

Mientras que la mayor parte de las ganancias de petróleo de Venezuela fueron sustraídas por los Rockefeller, había suficiente para enriquecer a una clase alta de venezolanos leales al imperio. Fueron los antecesores de la "oposición" de hoy, que ha utilizado tácticas cada vez más violentas para intentar derribar al gobierno bolivariano. Llamada así en honor a Simón Bolívar, que luchó para liberar a América Latina del colonialismo español.

Pero mientras que Venezuela, antes de Chávez, era controlada por una clase burguesa acomodada, tenía, a pesar de su riqueza petrolera, una mayoría del pueblo terriblemente pobre, tan empobrecido y hambriento que en 1989 decenas de miles se rebelaron por los altos precios de los alimentos en lo que llegó a ser llamado el Caracazo.

Fue ese levantamiento lo que hizo que Chávez, entonces oficial del Ejército venezolano, dirigiera un intento de golpe de estado contra el gobierno corrupto. Fue encarcelado pero se hizo tan popular que después de su liberación fue elegido

presidente.

Los imperialistas estadounidenses están usando la comida como un arma en sus esfuerzos por devolver a Venezuela al estatus neocolonial que la mayoría de su gente una vez sufrió. Mientras el presidente Trump amenaza al gobierno bolivariano con la intervención militar, sus colaboradores, la burguesía dentro de Venezuela, que anteriormente intentaron pero no lograron cerrar la industria petrolera, ahora están saboteando la distribución de alimentos.

Las nuevas sanciones estadounidenses han cortado el acceso de Venezuela a fondos en un momento en que la caída de los precios mundiales del petróleo ha afectado profundamente al país, que obtiene el 95 por ciento de sus ingresos de la exportación del petróleo.

El presidente Maduro califica estas sanciones de guerra económica contra Venezuela y promete que no tendrán éxito. La nueva Asamblea Constituyente tendrá sus manos llenas al frenar a aquellos que intentan someter al pueblo mediante el hambre. □



### WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

*“By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”*

— Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann,  
President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;  
Foreign Minister of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

Available at all major online booksellers.

PentagonAchillesHeel.com





WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Ciudad de Nueva York, 31 de agosto.

# Testigo de Harvey: Productos químicos tóxicos, cobertura sesgada y prisiones

Por Gloria Rubac  
Houston

29 de agosto de 2017 - Crecí en el “callejón de tornados” de Oklahoma. He vivido en la Costa del Golfo de Texas por casi 50 años. Sobreviví a la tormenta tropical Allison en 2001, que causó lo que entonces se llamó “inundaciones históricas sin precedentes”. Perdí mi casa por el huracán Ike en 2008 y todavía veo las lonas azules de FEMA en los techos de la comunidad afroamericana del 5to Distrito.

Pero nada me preparó para Harvey. Escucho los reportajes en la televisión: 9 billones de galones de agua descargados en Houston; 56.000 llamadas al 911 en 15 horas; 12 personas ahogadas.

Pero pienso, que significa esto para la familia que quedó atrapada en la parte superior de su complejo de apartamentos tratando de ser rescatada con sus tres hijos y dos perros? ¿Qué pasó con la joven embarazada a punto de dar a luz, pero se auto está inundado? ¿Qué pasa con los 9.000 prisioneros en el centro de Houston, encerrados en uno de los complejos más grandes de cárcel de condado en el país?

Texas representa aproximadamente una cuarta parte de la capacidad de refinamiento de petróleo del país, con 27 refinerías. Texas también lidera el país en el número de plantas químicas de alto riesgo que almacenan y usan productos químicos altamente peligrosos con el potencial de lesionar o matar a miles de trabajadoras/es y residentes de la comunidad.

Uno de los mayores conglomerados de petróleo, gas y refinerías químicas del país está en el lado este de Houston. El aire tóxico se ha intensificado durante la tormenta.

Juan Parras, activista medioambiental en el este de Houston con los Servicios de Defensa de Justicia Ambiental de Texas, dijo que le preocupaba que inundaciones severas o una oleada de tormenta pudieran causar fugas o desalojar tanques químicos. Esto sucedió hoy. Ahora suena una sirena de emergencia en La Porte. Una orden de refugio se emitió después de producirse una fuga en una planta química en la ciudad.

El Houston Chronicle del 28 de agosto escribe, “los bomberos de La Porte y un equipo de hazmat del Condado de Harris han contenido un derrame de sustancias químicas el lunes después de que un ducto se rompiera en el lado noreste de La Porte, en el distrito petroquímico, a unas 20 millas al este del centro de Houston”. Sin mencionar las sustancias químicas causantes de cáncer que están siendo liberadas en los vecindarios principalmente latinos de estas plantas.

Bryan Parras, organizador de la campaña “Beyond Dirty Fuels” del Sierra Club en Houston, habló esta mañana en “Democracy Now” sobre los peligros de las refinerías cerca de Houston.

“Mi preocupación es donde vivo en el lado este, debido a las muchas instalaciones petroquímicas, tanques de almacenamiento, y otros sitios peligrosos que están a lo largo 30 o 40 millas en esa región. Durante lluvia normal, estas instalaciones, que tienen décadas de antigüedad, tienen situaciones donde tienen que cerrarse para prevenir y evitar estas explosiones y eventos catastróficos. ...

“Así que el viernes, ... en Texas Petrochemical, creo, hubo un incidente. Y más tarde esa noche, hubo durante horas, fuertes olores químicos desde el este de Houston hasta el centro de la ciudad. Esto se discutió y se habló en las redes sociales, y no se habló, no se discutió en las noticias aquí en Houston.

“Escuchamos más tarde que todas las refinerías entraron en modo de apagado voluntario. Cuando eso sucede, a menudo tienen que pasar por el proceso de quema del exceso de productos químicos. Pero es una quemadura sucia ... que añade miles de kilos de químicos cancerígenos al aire”.

**Medios no cubren barrios negros y latinos, ni prisiones**

La cobertura de los medios es extensa e intensa sobre Harvey. Sin embargo, mis amigas/os afroamericanos en Facebook se están preguntando por qué sus vecindarios no están siendo notados. Cynthia dijo: ¿“Alguien ha visto alguna cobertura de medios del 3er Distrito, 5to Distrito, Sunnyside, Settegast, Acres Homes o alguna otra área que los medi-

os de comunicación no parece preocuparse? ¿O TAL VEZ ESTOY SIENDO EMOCIONAL Y TODO ESTÁ BIEN EN AQUELLAS ÁREAS?! ¿QUIZÁS”?

Perri respondió: “No, todo no está bien. La CNN fue a Dickinson, vio el lago frente al centro médico de los envejecientes, pero no había fotos del 288 y 59, donde los desamparados estaban bajo el viaducto”.

Todos vemos la tragedia de este huracán en la televisión. Pero no he oído ni una palabra sobre la increíble angustia mental, la carga emocional, el miedo, la ansiedad, el estrés que incluso en un buen día plaga a la gente de color, las/os pobres y las/os trabajadores que apenas pueden sacar dinero para alquiler y comida, la comunidad LGBTQ, las/os discapacitados, las/os presos, las/os indocumentados.

Así que ahora con las inundaciones aterrorizando a Houston y a sus 6,5 millones de personas, estas condiciones mentales se agravan. No sólo la gente necesitará ayuda para reconstruir hogares o encontrar lugares que puedan alquilar, arreglar autos, conseguir ropa para reemplazar la perdida, comprar artículos de higiene personal; necesitarán tratamiento para sus problemas de salud mental por toda esta agua. Me pregunto si esto va a suceder. ¿Proponerá esto FEMA?

“Si la población carcelaria de Texas fuera una ciudad, sería la 20a más grande de nuestro estado, de acuerdo con el Dallas Morning News. Texas encierra a un montón de gente. Cerca de Houston, tanto al norte como al sur, hay decenas de prisiones. Y hay inundaciones.

El viernes, los activistas hablaron con amigos en prisión a sólo 45 minutos al sur de Houston y descubrieron que el agua estaba comenzando a entrar en las cárceles. Hicimos algunas llamadas telefónicas y nos dimos cuenta de que los funcionarios estaban mintiendo cuando nos dijeron que no había inundaciones allí. Comenzamos una campaña telefónica y al día siguiente las prisiones comenzaron la evacuación.

Un amigo prisionero el sábado me dijo

que tenía un minuto para llamar y agradecer a todos los que habían pedido la evacuación de los prisioneros. Podía oír al guardia gritándole para que cortara la llamada. Dijo que estaban encadenándolos y poniéndolos en autobuses en ese momento. Los guardias no les dijeron a dónde iban, pero finalmente salían. Mi amigo dijo que el piso inferior de la Unidad Ramsey tenía agua en el piso.

Hay 9.000 personas en nuestra Cárcel del Condado de Harris. Ni una palabra en la televisión. Ni una palabra en la prensa. ¿Dónde están? ¿Los evacuaron?

Según el Instituto Nacional de Correcciones, hay casi 164.000 presos estatales en Texas y otros 66.000 en las cárceles del condado. La gran mayoría está en el área que está inundada ahora mismo. Sin embargo, no se están publicando planes de evacuación, las familias no están siendo notificadas y los medios de comunicación no están investigando ni informando sobre estos prisioneros.

Tengo noticias y fotos que muestran inundaciones en Livingston, a 70 millas al norte de Houston, donde está la Unidad Polunsky y su corredor de la muerte. Hablé con el personal allí y me dijeron que no hay planes para evacuar, y de hecho, han recibido prisioneros evacuados de dos unidades al sur de Houston. Hay un estado altamente emocional; la gente está deprimida, asustada y preocupada por sí misma, por su familia y amigos. Es agotador ver las noticias por 24 horas sobre el horror.

Una cosa que destaca de toda la cobertura continua de noticias es que la gente de Houston es un grupo generoso.

Es increíble cuánta gente ha usado sus propias lanchas para rescatar a otra gente. Cómo la gente ha ayudado a personas que no conocen a encontrar refugio, pañales, sillas de ruedas.

El alcalde afroamericano de Houston fue preguntado en una conferencia de prensa hoy sobre la gente indocumentada que teme pedir ayuda. Él dijo con vehemencia que cualquier persona que necesite ayuda debe pedirla. Si alguna gente es detenida por su estatus migratorio, eso NO debería suceder. ¡”Yo personalmente los representaré en la corte”! □

## Millonarios estadounidenses sancionan a Venezuela

Por Deirdre Griswold  
31 de agosto de 2017

Después de que unos 8 millones de venezolanos/os ejercieran su derecho a votar por una Asamblea Constituyente el 30 de julio, Estados Unidos respondió imponiendo las sanciones económicas más duras contra el país sudamericano.

Sí, así es — sólo porque el pueblo venezolano votó de una manera que desagradaba al imperio estadounidense, Washington ejerció su "derecho" a intentar someterlos por medio del hambre.

Esto de un gobierno que consiguió su puesto con elecciones el año pasado que costaron \$6.8 miles de millones, según

el Centro para Política Responsiva. En otras palabras, el precio para comprar las elecciones en EUA, que dio lugar a que Trump se convirtiera en presidente —incluyendo todo el dinero gastado por candidatos, partidos políticos y grupos de intereses independientes— fue de \$6.800 millones. Se aseguró de que los elegidos paguen muy bien a sus patrocinadores reduciendo impuestos a los ricos, permitiendo a las empresas contaminantes a salirse con la suya, y recortando los servicios sociales y muchos otros regalos a los súper-ricos.

Fue un tipo diferente de elección la que se llevó a cabo en Venezuela. Las/os candidatos no tenían mucho dinero detrás

de ellos. Las 545 personas elegidas para la Asamblea Constituyente incluyen 364 escogidos en base regional y 181 cuyos escaños se asignan para representar a diferentes grupos sociales: 79 de asociaciones de trabajadoras/es, 28 jubiladas/os, 24 miembros de consejos comunales, 24 estudiantes, 8 agricultoras/es, 8 pescadoras/es, 5 con discapacidades y 5 de negocios.

Las/os miembros de la Asamblea Constituyente están encargados de redactar una nueva Constitución para el país. Los grandes empresarios estadounidenses temen que esto fortalezca aún más a las/os trabajadores, campesinos y jóvenes que han sido el pilar de la Revolución Bolivariana, iniciada bajo el presidente Hugo

Chávez y continuada desde su muerte por el presidente Nicolás Maduro.

**Rockefeller quiere ‘su’ petróleo**

Las sanciones de EUA contra Venezuela están dirigidas a su industria petrolera, la principal exportación del país. Durante décadas, la riqueza petrolera de Venezuela fue una bonanza para el imperio Standard Oil de Rockefeller. Es interesante que hoy, la política exterior estadounidense está en manos de Rex Tillerson, ex jefe de ExxonMobil — el descendiente directo de Standard, que se transformó en Esso y luego en Exxon.