

Jailers lock down striking prisoners

By Ted Kelly
Philadelphia

Thousands of prisoners across Pennsylvania have been confined to their cells since Aug. 29. That's when the state's Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel declared an indefinite lockdown of all facilities under his jurisdiction.

The lockdown, which began just days into the National Prison Strike (Aug. 21 to Sept. 9) is the most blatant in a series of repressive tactics that the state has resorted to in response to the strike. It was timed to preempt some major strike actions planned by prisoners.

Attacks on right to legal counsel

One week into the lockdown, Wetzel appeared alongside Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf, who announced a sweeping series of new policies that constitute an unprecedented crackdown on the rights of prisoners. Among the many petty and punitive policies, like banning prisoners from taking photos with their visitors, there are also new measures that will systematically deny prisoners their right to privacy with legal counsel.

All correspondence sent to prisoners is now to be transported to a third-party facility in Florida, where it will be opened and photocopied before copies are sent to the respective prisons to be delivered to the intended recipients. Since prison officials are at least in theory not allowed to open any mail containing legal correspondence, except in the presence of its recipient, a farcical new method has been introduced to get around this protection.

A prisoner in one state facility described how this is done: The mail is put into a laboratory glovebox meant for handling hazardous material where it is opened. The envelope and contents are then passed to another corrections officer wearing neoprene gloves, who photocopies them. The copies are then given to the prisoner, while the originals are kept in possession of the prison authorities for 15 days. After that, the authorities say they will be destroyed.

In both theory and practice, this arrangement shatters any remaining rights that prisoners have to private communications with counsel. Prison officials and corrections officers will now know ahead of time whenever a prisoner is planning to meet or correspond with lawyers, as well as the legal strategies they plan to use to win their case. "And since the prisons are a wing of the District Attorney's office, this constitutes an egregious violation of our rights," says Bryant Arroyo, a jailhouse lawyer and environmen-

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Chicago hotel workers strike for health



'They work us like dogs when it's busy and then kick us to the curb in the winter.' Page 4.

WW PHOTO: JEFF SOREL

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DECOLONIZE PUERTO RICO!



WEEK OF ACTION Sept. 20-27

1 One year since Hurricane Maria - Day of Action

Sept.
20

1. Support Boricua-led actions in your area!
Check the list of actions at **PuertoRicoTribunal.org**
2. Organize a demonstration at Santander Bank or U.S. Federal Building to demand: *Reparations & Decolonization for Puerto Rico!*

2 Defend Public Education in P.R. - Call-in Day

Sept.
21

- Tell Puerto Rico's Secretary of Education, gringa Julia Keleher, to demand: *Stop Closing Schools! Stop privatizing education! Quality education is a right!*
Call: (787) 759-2000 **Tweet:** @educacionPR, @SecEducacionPR

3 Grito De Lares - Commemorates P.R. Uprising for Independence

Sept.
23

- This day marks the 150th anniversary of the historic uprising for independence in Puerto Rico
1. Support Boricua-led actions/events in your area!
Check the list of actions at **PuertoRicoTribunal.org**
 2. Organize a film screening of a P.R. film or other cultural event.

4 Sign & Share the Petition to the U.S. Government

Decolonize & Pay Reparations to Puerto Rico now: <http://bit.ly/PRSolidarity>

5 Build the Int'l Tribunal on U.S. Crimes in Puerto Rico

October 27, 2018 - Holyrood Church (715 179th Street) in New York City

1. Attend: organize a delegation to the Tribunal
2. Donate: gofundme.com/tribunalpuertorico
3. Endorse: Get local unions and orgs to sign up at puertoricotribunal.org/endorse/

Planning an action? Sign up here and tell us what you are doing at <http://bit.ly/PRDaysofAction>



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#DecolonizePR

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

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

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

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

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

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

National Office
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
PO Box 18123
Atlanta, GA 30316
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
c/o Solidarity Center
2011 N. Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
443.221.3775
baltimore@workers.org

Bay Area
1305 Franklin St. #411
Oakland, CA 94612
510.600.5800
bayarea@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.286.6574
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
335 Richmond Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14222
716.883.2534
Buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
1105 N. Ashland Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60622
312.630.2305
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
detroit@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9970
durham@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Indiana
Indiana@workers.org

Madison
Madison@workers.org

Los Angeles
5278 W Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90019
la@workers.org
323.306.6240

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Pittsburgh
pittsburgh@workers.org

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
585.436.6458
rochester@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
SLC@workers.org

San Antonio, Texas
SanAntonioWWP@workers.org

San Diego
P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92163
sandiego@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org

Virginia
Virginia@workers.org

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300
Washington, DC 20037
dc@workers.org

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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. 60, No. 37 • Sept. 13, 2018

Closing date: Sept 11, 2018

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell,
Monica Moorehead, Minnie Bruce Pratt;
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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
Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY
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
searchable archive is available on the Web at
www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription.
Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011.



In Washington and New York Show solidarity with Cuba!

By Cheryl LaBash
Washington, D.C.

Education is under attack in both the United States and its colony of Puerto Rico. In socialist Cuba, however, education is a national priority.

The International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity will examine this contrast in its Days of Action against the U.S. blockade of Cuba Sept. 24-28 in Washington, D.C.

On Wednesday, Sept. 26, a double-feature film screening will premiere “Lucha Sí!” about the fight for public education in Puerto Rico, along with “Maestra” (teacher), the story of Cuba’s 1961 National Literacy Campaign. The women filmmakers of the productions will engage in a postviewing discussion, along with actual participants in the struggles depicted on screen.

Direct from Puerto Rico, “Lucha Sí!” co-director Jinnette Morales will bring the frontline struggle of Puerto Rican teachers, students and parents to Washington. More than Hurricane María, the Fiscal Control Board and Puerto Rico’s colonial U.S. handcuffs are endangering all levels of education, particularly for children with disabilities.

From Cuba, Norma Guillard joins the discussion. She is one of the nine women whose interviews in “Maestra” are combined with archival footage and still pictures to bring alive Cuba’s revolutionary transformation and what it has meant for the lives and futures of these young

women. A Cuban of African descent, Guillard, now a retired psychologist, has played a role in issues of gender, education against homophobia and prevention of HIV/AIDS. She is a poet as well as a theater and documentary producer.

Space at the Landmark E Street Cinema, where these films will be shown, is limited. Tickets are available online at tinyurl.com/ydbtzgc8/.

Other activities during the week include public meetings at the University of Maryland’s Nyumburu Cultural Center and Howard University; a screening for high school students promoted by a parent-teacher organization; and visits to congressional offices showing the strong popular support for ending the unilateral U.S. economic, financial and commercial blockade of Cuba. See the schedule of activities and trailers for the films at tinyurl.com/y7cendu8/.

Cuban delegation to visit New York

A high-level Cuban delegation will be in New York for the opening of the 73rd United Nations General Assembly. Organizations in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution are planning a public event on Sept. 26 at the historic Riverside Church, near Harlem, to welcome and hear from the Cuban delegation. In September 2000, Fidel Castro spoke at Riverside Church while at the U.N. for the Millenium Summit.

Harlem has held a special place in U.S.-Cuba relations since the Hotel Theresa opened its doors and welcomed Fidel Castro and the Cuban delegation in 1960.

Cuban youth pictured below: today in class (left), involved in society (right) and during the 1961 Literacy Campaign (center) bearing huge symbolic pencils on May Day (center).



They went to Harlem after the delegation was disrespected by the racist Hotel Shelburne in midtown Manhattan, and it was there that Fidel Castro met Malcolm X.

Cuba’s revolution has been and still is a beacon for the world’s oppressed people, particularly Black and Latinx communities in the U.S. It is not forgotten that Cuba allied with Angola at Cuito Cuavale to decisively defeat invading troops from the white supremacist and U.S.-backed South African apartheid regime. Cuba exports literacy with its “Yo, sí puedo” teachers and brings health care, training of doctors and new medicines to the people of the world.

It was Cuba’s Fidel Castro and Bolivarian Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez who developed a model of solidarity trade for countries stunted and diminished by centuries of colonialism, slavery and economic exploitation. That model promotes mutual development through cooperation and barter to avoid the imperialist financial system.

U.S. imperialism is sharpening its knives to undo the advances made by the people of Latin America and the Carib-

bean. This makes an event like the one planned for Sept. 26 in New York more than just a meeting. It will be an important demonstration of solidarity.

Advance tickets are required; a \$5 donation is requested. Ticket distribution centers are:

- IFCO, 418 W. 145th St., Harlem, N.Y. Tickets can be picked up Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call 212-926-5757 ext. 6 before coming. Contact person: Gail Walker.
- International Action Center, 147 W. 24th St., Midtown Manhattan. Tickets can be picked up Monday through Friday from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. Call 212-633-6646 before coming. Contact person: Sharon E.
- Holyrood Church, 715 W. 179th St., Washington Heights, N.Y. Tickets can be picked up Monday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Contact person: Radhames Morales.
- Sistas’ Place, 456 Nostrand Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. Tickets can be picked up Monday through Friday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Call 718-398-1766 before coming. Contact person: Roger Wareham. □

Reform and revolution

This article about the Cuban Revolution by Workers World Party founder Sam Marcy first appeared in the WW issue of Feb. 17, 1994.

What has made the Cuban Revolution unique? Why is it such a beacon to the workers and oppressed masses, not only of Latin America and the Caribbean but around the world?

There have been many uprisings, guerrilla wars, progressive electoral victories and military coups in Latin America in the course of this century. But the triumph of Fidel Castro’s guerrilla army over the Batista dictatorship did something that no previous struggle had accomplished.

It broke up the old state apparatus. The revolution did not merely change governing groups, as had happened so many times before. It unseated the bourgeoisie itself from its role as the ruling class by demolishing its instrument of rule, the bourgeois state.

It once again proved the monumental words of Karl Marx on the Paris Commune: that one of the fundamental characteristics of a change of class structures is the crushing of the old state apparatus and its replacement by a new state based on the popular consent of the masses.

This is what happened in Paris in 1871, when popular revolutionary committees took over the functions of government. Such committees of the urban masses had first appeared in the French Revolution of 1789, when the bourgeoisie had to call out the workers and artisans to be able to completely uproot the old feudal order. In 1871, the popular committees or communes appeared again, but this time they represented the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

In Cuba, the Committees in Defense of the Revolution became the eyes and ears of the new class power and its most important line of defense against U.S. imperialist sabotage and invasion. The bourgeoisie especially scorned and maligned the CDRs because they were the living proof that a new type of state, based on the workers, had taken over in Cuba in 1959.

Political revolution in Mexico

It is instructive to compare this to the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917 which, for all its great achievements, did not go beyond progressive, bourgeois democratic reforms. It did, of course, expropriate the big land owners and distribute much of the land. This is a great revolutionary measure in the struggle against the big land holders, both feudal and capitalist. But it is not a socialist measure.

The history of peasant rebellions in both Europe and Latin America demonstrates that they ultimately deteriorate. The landlords eventually lay their hands again on the best and most fertile areas, and the struggle continues until another round of revolutionary peasant uprisings.

Peasant uprisings alone, even if they have some working-class support, do not abolish the basis of landlord and capitalist exploitation.

The Mexican Revolution was a political revolution that reformed the state. This explains why Mexico today, despite all its historically important great reforms, is a bourgeois country. Different groupings may hold the governing positions, even at the summits of power, but this does not change the class structure of society.

The imperialists themselves recognize that such reforms do not alter the char-

acter of their exploitation. They have cynically described their relations with Mexico in its revolutionary period as “continuing to do business during alterations.” Even when Mexico nationalized the lands of the foreign oil companies in the 1930s, its relationship with the U.S. continued more or less as before.

The Cuban Revolution came more than 40 years after the Mexican Revolution. It came after the great October socialist revolution in Russia and the revolutions in China, Vietnam and Korea. The industrial development of Cuba was greatly advanced compared to some other areas of Latin America, despite the constraints imposed by imperialist control and ownership — and the poverty and underdevelopment of much of the countryside.

Why Cuban Revolution went further

While Cuba had not reached the level of the European capitalist states, the objective basis for socialist revolution had matured there. It must always be remembered that Cuba lives in the shadow of U.S. finance capital, which until the revolution controlled its most important economic arteries.

Liberal writers in the U.S., some of them very well-meaning, spread confusion about the socialist revolution in Cuba. Some of it was actuated by friendly desires not to cast Cuba in communist revolutionary colors, for fear of giving aid to imperialism.

Projecting a moderate image of Cuba seemed necessary in order to withstand the utterly unprecedented vileness of the imperialist press and the increasingly shrill calls by the most extreme elements for intervention. It continued even in the face of a possible nuclear confrontation

between the U.S. and Cuba over the latter’s alliance with the USSR.

Many liberal and socialist elements in the U.S. closely studied the Cuban Revolution. Probably the best account was by Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy in the book “Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution” (Monthly Review Press, 1960). While the Cuban leaders at that time spoke of the revolution only in terms of specific reforms, Huberman and Sweezy had “no hesitation” in concluding that “the new Cuba is a socialist Cuba.”

In the United States, the discussion of the class character of the Cuban Revolution came to a rather abrupt end when Comrade Fidel Castro, in a speech made just as CIA planes were bombing Cuba during the April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, for the first time put it quite explicitly: “What the Yankee imperialists will not forgive is that we have made a socialist revolution right under their very noses.”

Strong unions and Communist Party

It’s important to note that before the rise of the 26th of July Movement that launched the revolutionary struggle for power, Cuba had for many years had a strong Communist Party and trade unions that survived years of repression. The early liberal and progressive literature in the United States about the Cuban Revolution often overlooked this. But objective and subjective conditions in Cuba had matured to the point where a strong Communist Party was possible.

Mexico in 1910 did not have the conditions for the existence of a revolutionary working-class party. There were no communist parties yet in existence anywhere.

Continued on page 10

Anti-union bosses hold Michigan motorists hostage

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

Polls of Michigan residents repeatedly indicate that fixing the state’s dilapidated road infrastructure is a top concern. Yet most construction work has been at a standstill since Sept. 4, when members of Operating Engineers Local 324, which represents equipment operators in the whole state of Michigan, were told not to report for work by the anti-union contractors’ consortium, Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Associates.

In metropolitan Detroit alone, dozens of road repair projects are shut down. If work is not resumed soon, the driving public can expect to spend another winter navigating a maze of inconvenient detours that lengthen their daily commute.

Let’s be clear: The union members, who operate heavy equipment, are not on strike. MITA is calling the work stoppage that it initiated “a defensive lockout.”

It’s important to note, however, that OE’s master contract with MITA and other Michigan contractors expired June 1, at which time their bargaining relationship with the contractor group ceased. The union contends that “the lack of a contract means the employees are effectively ‘at-will.’ As such, the contractors have no authority to lock workers out. Therefore, this is an involuntary layoff.” (oe324.org)

So far, Local 324 has ratified a new master contract with roughly half of all union road building companies in Michigan; only a few of them are affiliated with MITA.

The other half, as MITA members, have laid off all of their OE member employees indefinitely. According to OE, some MITA contractors would be willing to adhere to the terms of the master contract, but the anti-union companies that control MITA have threatened to use their clout to deprive such contractors from getting jobs. MITA has threatened out-of-state companies that they will not get work in Michigan if they negotiate directly with Local 324.

MITA says it will bring OE members back to work if the operators ratify a contract that the association drafted unilaterally. The me-

dia have emphasized that the MITA contract raises pay and benefits by \$8 an hour over five years.

But the contract the union signed with several dozen companies actually has a smaller pay increase than what MITA is offering. Why then did the union decide not to deal with MITA?

The major contract improvements OE secured from other companies had stronger language on subcontracting and new apprenticeship opportunities. This assures job security for current employees and opportunities for the next generation. These improvements are exactly what MITA is steadfastly resisting.

As OE spokesperson Dan McKernan explained to WW, even if the union signs with a MITA contractor, if that contractor secures a bid with the state, they will turn around and subcontract the work to a nonunion outfit, throwing OE members out of work.

MITA counts about 600 companies as members, over two-thirds of them nonunion. Only 40 of those companies have contracts with OE 324. Thus, nonunion and anti-union contractors are using the weapon of income deprivation to weaken the union.

In the process they are holding Michigan’s driving public and taxpayers hostage. Will the Michigan Department of Transportation, which does not employ OE members directly, fine the companies — as state law allows — for creating unnecessary delays? Or will the state pass additional costs onto the public?

MITA has encouraged its member companies to allow untrained workers to operate equipment. However, this is skilled work requiring years of training. Ultimately, this reckless position endangers communities.

When MITA threatened to stop work, the union held eight meetings across the state, seeking membership approval for its decision not to negotiate with union-busting MITA. Worker support for this course was overwhelming; at one meeting of over 1,200, only seven members stood in opposition.

Local 324 is asking supporters to call MDOT (517-373-2090) and demand that the state pressure the contractors to resume project work and get the roads reopened. □

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

Marriott workers march coast-to-coast on Labor Day

On Labor Day, Sept. 3, thousands of Marriott workers in at least nine cities, including Boston, Detroit, San Francisco, Seattle and more, flooded the streets carrying signs reading, “One job should be enough!” while banging homemade drums and demanding a fair contract. UNITE HERE! represents these hotel and food service workers, many of them immigrants, workers of color and women. Other unions, like Service Employees 32BJ, and union members representing nurses and higher education workers marched alongside.

UNITE HERE! members are fighting for a new contract after theirs expired in the spring. Where automation is cutting workers or hours, they want job replacement as well as regular schedules. Workers in Seattle said they never know if they’ll have enough hours to support their families. (Seattle Times, Sept. 4)

Workers faced intimidation and arrest at the demonstrations: The Sept. 4 San Francisco Chronicle reported that cops arrested 75 people for sitting on trolley tracks. In Seattle, 21 people blocking Fifth Avenue were arrested. In Boston, a cop attempted to divert the crowd down Belvedere Street, but marchers surged past, shouting, “¡Si se puede!” and “What kind of power? Union power!” (Boston Globe, Sept. 4)

Detroit union activist Martha Grevatt reported: “Over 100 UNITE HERE Local 24 members rallied outside Marriott-owned hotels in downtown Detroit. As in other cities, they are fighting for a better contract that pays enough money so that workers only need to work one job.”

In Boston, the union stopped in front of the Sheraton and announced a national strike authorization vote on Wed., Sept. 12, in which 12,000 union members could be voting. Locals in four cities — Boston, Maui, San Francisco and Honolulu — have already scheduled votes. Locals in five other cities — Detroit, Oakland, San Jose, San Diego and Seattle — may follow them. D. Taylor, UH’s international president, said members were willing to go on strike to raise working standards across the industry.

Workers at 25 Chicago hotels go on strike



WW PHOTO: JEFF SOREL

Chicago hotel workers strike for health care.

Thousands of downtown Chicago hotel housekeepers, servers, cooks and doormen hit the bricks on Sept. 7. Represented by UNITE HERE Local 1, which has over 15,000 hospitality and food service workers in the greater Chicago area, the workers are demanding year-round health care. “Hotels may slow down in the wintertime, but I still need my diabetes medication when I’m

laid off. ... Full-time jobs should have year-round benefits,” said Q. Rivers, a house attendant at the Palmer House Hilton. “They work us like dogs when it’s busy and then kick us to the curb in the winter.” (unitehere1.org, Sept. 7)

Union support for tribunal on U.S. crimes against Puerto Rico

The Delegate Assembly of the National Writers Union, United Auto Workers Local 1981, passed a resolution unanimously on Aug. 12 in New York City supporting the International People’s Tribunal on U.S. Crimes against Puerto Rico scheduled to take place there on Oct. 27. The tribunal is of particular concern to the NWU because Puerto Rico is part of UAW Region 9A, of which Local 1981 is a member.

The resolution noted that while the two devastating 2017 hurricanes negatively affected all aspects of life on the island, “this crisis is not new or even due primarily to the hurricanes, but is the culmination of the colonialist domination and capitalist exploitation that the United States has imposed ever since its 1898 military invasion of Puerto Rico.” In conclusion, the NWU agreed to “endorse and support [the tribunal] in the spirit of solidarity ... and will help publicize it in Region 9A and in the rest of the UAW.”

Pride at Work, the LGBTQ Constituency Group of the AFL-CIO, which includes unions in Puerto Rico, passed a similarly worded resolution at its triennial convention in Phoenix on Aug. 25. The resolution pointed out that “the LGBTQ community of Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican diaspora is suffering the consequences of colonial domination and capitalist austerity.” In vowing to endorse and show solidarity with the tribunal, the Pride@Work resolution agreed to help publicize it in its local chapters and in the rest of the AFL-CIO.

Tribunal organizers are requesting that other unions pass similar resolutions. For more information, email TribunalPuertoRico@gmail.com (type “Puerto Rico Tribunal” in the subject line); on Facebook like Puerto Rico Tribunal. □

NYC Labor Day



IBEW Local 3 on strike 18 months

Unionized workers turned out by the thousands for New York City’s Central Labor Council annual parade on Sept. 8. Because many city workers of Caribbean origin attend the annual Carnival parade in Brooklyn on the official U.S. Labor Day, NYC’s Labor Day is usually scheduled for the following Saturday.

The CLC march advanced down Fifth Avenue past a tenacious stand of cable technicians who have been on strike against Spectrum/Charter since March 2017. The stalwart workers appealed to fellow members of the International Electrical Workers

Local 3 and other marchers to buy and wear a T-shirt in support of the 18-month strike. Shirts were neon green, appropriate for safety on all construction sites.

The workers’ fight against the greedy bosses now includes legal cases filed by state agencies detailing the company’s failure to deliver on internet access for all. Read more about the struggle of IBEW Local 3 in the members’ own voices at UnplugSpectrum.com. To read about community support, visit tinyurl.com/y965s8g3.

— Report and photo by Workers World
New York City bureau

Red for Ed energizes West Coast struggle

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Education workers' strikes in this state continue. Some 2,600 teachers in Tacoma, Wash., walked out on Sept. 6. Thousands of teachers in the Washington Education Association are on the picket lines across the state to impact the allocation of \$2 billion in state funding won by teachers after a protracted court struggle.

The Washington state strikes are also a show of strength after the U.S. Supreme Court's Janus decision, which declared that government workers can't be required to pay union dues. Educators here have been energized by the Red for Ed workers' movement in many states.

In 2012, the state Supreme Court ruled in favor of the WEA in the McCleary decision, which was supposed to make \$2 billion in funds available for education. The money was to cover salaries, staffing for special programs, classroom sizes and other needs. The court found that public schools in Washington state were greatly underfunded. Reactionary state legislators dragged their feet on implementing the ruling for years.

Now, though the funds are being made

available, the implementation is such that school districts are being given different funding allocations. The intent by the state seems to be to pit teachers in different districts against each other, in order to prevent educators from going out on a state-wide strike.

WEA locals have demanded that their labor contracts be reopened to provide increased wages for over-worked teachers. Due to strikes and strike threats, many WEA locals have won wage increases of 18 percent.

But in Seattle the teachers and staff received only a 10.5 percent pay increase in a one-year contract. The district took a hard position against any further increases. This is in a city where rents went up by 13.5 percent in 2017, according to Adobo, an apartment rental site. However, members of the Seattle Education Association gained a full contract, with progress made in several areas besides wages, so



Members of the Portland, Ore., branch of Workers World Party join striking teachers on the picket line in Vancouver, Wash.

they voted not to strike.

Meanwhile, after difficult negotiations, educators in Tacoma are being offered only a 3.1 percent wage increase.

The Tacoma and Seattle experiences

expose that the state has given more to some districts and less to others. For instance, in the Seattle area, many suburban districts have gained 20 percent wage increases without striking.

The state legislature has used complicated formulas to increase funding for schools, while capping the amount that teachers can receive from local property tax levies. Because of this, schools in working-class Tacoma lost \$30 million due to a recent \$70 million property tax levy that voters approved in February.

The legislature's sleight-of-hand allocation formulations are pitting teachers in different districts against each other as workers in an attempt to undermine worker solidarity.

While the state's underhanded methods of funding are blatantly discriminatory and another grave injustice to public education, the struggle of education workers across so many communities may ultimately lead to greater unity for a statewide struggle. □

Arizona educators resist state treachery

By Otis Grotewohl

Arizona education workers are once again in motion, following a stunning, reactionary decision on Aug. 29 by the state's corporate-backed Supreme Court to remove Proposition 207, the Invest in Education Act, from the November ballot. The initiative would have increased school funding by \$690 million. The ruling cannot be appealed.

Following the Arizona #RedForEd school workers' strike in April and May, education employees initiated a petition campaign to collect the signatures required to get the proposal on the ballot for the upcoming general election. They worked hard all summer and got 270,000 signatures, many more than the 151,000 legally required. The signatures were certified, and the measure was officially on the Nov. 6 ballot.

State officials had promised education workers a pay raise, as well as money for school supplies, materials and support staff. The funding would specifically be used to reduce the overcrowded class sizes in a state where a majority of the student population is Latinx, Indigenous and African-American. Smaller class sizes have been proven to create a more productive learning environment, especially important for oppressed youth.

The Invest in Education Act would have imposed a progressive tax increase on wealthy Arizonans. However, the ballot measure was nixed as a result of intense pressure from a union-busting front group for the state's Chamber of Commerce called Arizona for Great Schools and a Strong Economy.

Both the state Supreme Court and the pro-business, anti-worker Chamber of Commerce have the blessings of the far-right Republican-led Legislature, as well as Gov. Doug Ducey. Ducey once served as the CEO of Cold Stone Creamery, notorious for paying its workers low wages. He also served as state treasurer under his openly racist predecessor, former Gov. Jan Brewer. Most notably, the fascistic former sheriff of Maricopa County

in Arizona, Joe Arpaio, endorsed Ducey.

Ducey and his legislative cronies did everything they could to defeat funding for public schools before, during and after the strike. Arizona is a haven of for-profit charter schools. The state's leaders would like to keep it that way.

More school employee actions ...

Comments and posts flooded the Arizona Educators United (AEU) Facebook page on the evening of Aug. 29, calling for immediate action. Arizona Education Association (AEA) President Joe Thomas invoked words attributed to labor activist Joe Hill: "Don't mourn. Organize!" (An immigrant from Sweden and later organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World, Hill was executed by the state of Utah in 1915.)

In the days after the state Supreme Court ruling, education workers rallied at the state capital in Phoenix.

Thomas encouraged AEA members to wear red to school to show strength in numbers and express solidarity. In the spring, education strikers had donned red in West Virginia and Oklahoma, while Arizona school employees created the #RedforEd movement.

The National Education Association called on all its members to wear red at least one day a week, and declared Tuesday, Sept. 4, national #RedforEd day. On that day, thousands of education workers across the country wore red in solidarity with their Arizona colleagues.

The next day, education workers and their supporters picketed the Chamber of Commerce in Phoenix for funding the legal challenge that got the #InvestinEd Act removed from the ballot. An action also took place in Tucson.

... and more on the horizon

The wave of education worker walkouts has spread into the 2018-2019 school year. Thousands of education workers walked out on the first day of school in Washington state. Some 98 percent of teachers in Los Angeles, the majority of them African-American and Latinx, voted to

authorize a strike for the first time in 30 years. While labor leaders are focusing on the November elections, promoting the pro-capitalist Democratic Party, rank-and-file education union members are weighing all options.

Despite the state of Arizona's broken

promises to fund public schools, educators are not giving up their struggle. In fact, the AEA and AEU are now using the phrase #StillInvestedInEducation. Arizona's education workers are using the betrayal as a teachable moment to build the fightback. □



'Labor Day' unmasked — Build Workers World!

Did you know that the federal holiday "Labor Day," held the first Monday in September, was founded in 1894? The reason Labor Day is not May 1, celebrated today in more than 100 countries as International Workers' Day, has nothing to do with honoring the role of labor in building this country. Rather, it has everything to do with denying the role of socialists, anarchists and other radical organizers in the labor movement.

The American Federation of Labor, ever fearful of alienating the ruling class, suggested in 1887 that Labor Day be "celebrated" in September to take attention away from May Day and the fight of working people for the 8-hour day in Chicago. A police riot against organizers there on May 4, 1886, known as the Haymarket Massacre, resulted in cops killing four workers (and seven of their own), and rounding up leading labor organizers. Most of these were well-known socialists or anarchists who had not even been on the scene. Four were executed by the state in 1887.

There is nothing honorable, worthy or celebratory behind "Labor Day." Its roots

are deeply embedded in the most vile kind of capitalist lies, police terror and fear of working people's rights — including our righteous demands for a socialist revolution.

That's the kind of information you've come to expect from Workers World — hard-hitting, anti-racist, anti-sexist, pro-LGBTQ and pro-working class truth. But Workers World can't do it without your help. We established the Workers World Supporter Program 41 years ago so readers could invest in the paper and promote working-class truth that heralds revolutionary change.

For a donation of at least \$75 or \$100 a year — and much more if you're able — members receive a year's subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends. Write checks (either monthly or once a year) to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at workers.org/donate/; it's easy to set up monthly deductions. Know that we're grateful for your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future. □

African-American suffrage: Voting rights and suppression

By Dolores Cox

At the end of the U.S. Civil War, the 13th, 14th and 15th Reconstruction Amendments to the U.S. Constitution were ratified.

In 1865, the 13th Amendment abolished “slavery and involuntary servitude” — except for people convicted of a crime. In 1868, the 14th Amendment granted citizenship to African Americans, albeit second-class citizenship. The 15th Amendment, passed in February 1870, prohibited the denial of the right to vote based on a citizen’s race, color or previous condition. This included Black men, but not women.

On March 31, 1870, in Perth Amboy, N.J., Thomas Mundy Peterson became the first African American to vote, one month after the passage of the 15th Amendment. Some whites were appalled at a Black man voting. In the 1700s, Perth Amboy had served as a slave port.

Peterson’s father was enslaved by the Mundy family. His mother was enslaved by Hugh Newell in the Freehold Township of New Jersey. She was freed in Newell’s will in 1822, two years before Peterson was born. Peterson died Feb. 4, 1904, in Metuchen, N.J.

While working in a horse stable, Peterson had been approached and encouraged to exercise his voting right by attorneys who had worked hard but unsuccessfully to acquit abolitionist John Brown, leader of the 1859 anti-slavery Harper’s Ferry raid.

Peterson, who cast his vote in a campaign to revise Perth Amboy’s town charter, was subsequently appointed to a committee to work on the final version of the charter, approved by the state Legislature in 1871. A delegate to the Republican Convention, Peterson was also the first African American to hold elected office

in Middlesex County and Perth Amboy’s first “colored” person to serve on a jury.

On Memorial Day (then called Decoration Day) in 1884, Perth Amboy awarded Peterson a gold medallion for being “the first Negro voter.” He later had to pawn the medal because of financial circumstances.

In 1989, the school where he worked as a custodian and handyman was re-named the Thomas Peterson Elementary School. A plaque honoring Peterson was recently unveiled in Perth Amboy’s St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, where he was a member and is buried. Peterson’s gold voting medallion is currently held by New Orleans’s Xavier University, a historically Black college.

Criminalizing Black voters

Following the post-Reconstruction era, whites sought to deny Black citizens the right to vote and to serve on juries. Blacks have had to consistently struggle to secure and retain those rights unimpeded.

When the 13th Amendment abolished slavery and involuntary servitude “except as punishment for a crime,” that clause was deliberately added. Thus, Blackness was criminalized.

The amendment didn’t really abolish slavery but allowed it to live on legally in prisons and now in the current prison-industrial complex. The system of free or “for-pennies” prison labor is just another form of slavery.

Now, inmates and formerly incarcerated people who have been convicted of certain charges also lose their voting rights.

The 15th Amendment, ostensibly, prevents states or the federal government from giving preference to one citizen over another in the exercise of voting rights. Before the amendment was adopted, African Americans were excluded from voting, and there was no constitutional pro-

tection for anyone against discrimination imposed on the voting process at the federal or state level. After the amendment, Congress could enforce voting rights by “appropriate legislation.”

But courts interpreted the protections of the 15th Amendment quite narrowly. Limitations and exclusions were imposed on eligible Black voters, such as property ownership, poll taxes, literacy tests and repressive Black Codes throughout the South. Whites were exempted from these requirements by a “grandfather clause” if their grandfathers had been registered to vote. “White men only” primary elections reduced the influence of Black men in the political system.

White supremacists prevented Blacks from voting by threats, terroristic vigilante attacks, beatings and murders of Blacks who attempted to register themselves or others. Federal civil rights protections were not enforced, allowing implementation of racist, discriminatory, “Jim Crow” apartheid laws.

Ongoing struggle for right to vote

Organizing struggles and some broader interpretations of the 15th Amendment meant that African-American voter registration in the South gradually increased between 1940 and 1960. Registration had previously been as low as 7 percent of the eligible Black population.

By the 1960s, a massive voting rights campaign was underway in the South, spearheaded by local leaders like Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi and national leaders like the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Under pressure after the sacrifice, torture and martyrdom of many in this movement, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act in 1965, under President Lyndon Johnson, to further racial equality in voting in Southern states. This act made



it illegal to prevent African Americans from exercising the right to vote. In 1966, the Supreme Court ruled that poll taxes were in violation of the 14th Amendment’s equal protection clause.

By 1976, 63 percent of Blacks in the South were registered to vote. The Voting Rights Act gave Congress the power and courage to establish additional legal coverage which determined that states and localities with a history of disenfranchising minorities, mainly in the South, must get federal approval before changing their voting procedures. This coverage was to be reauthorized seven times.

In 2013, however, the U.S. Supreme Court threw out the preclearance provision of the 1965 Voting Rights Act in its ruling in the Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder case. That decision stated that it was no longer necessary for Congress to enforce protections of the right to vote since discrimination is not as pervasive, flagrant, widespread and rampant as it was in 1965. No new coverage formula now exists for these protections.

People are left asking: Did the South really lose the Civil War?

As the 2018 midterm elections approach, Blacks face more subtle voter suppression methods, gerrymandering of state and local districts, and restrictive voter ID laws. Gloria J. Brown-Marshall, constitutional lawyer and professor at John Jay College in New York City, refers to the current situation as part of a centuries-long “Voting Rights War” of white resistance, power, dominance and rage stemming from a white supremacist ideology and fear that a growing number of people of color in the U.S. will eventually surpass the number of whites.

Voting while Black in the U.S. is still an issue as the racist system of oppression lives on. □

Disability groups reject racist Georgia voter suppression

By New York Disabilities Bureau of Workers World Party

A proposal by the Randolph County, Georgia, Board of Elections to close seven out of nine polling places in one stroke before the November election has been defeated. The board’s rationale for its vote-suppressing plan was that the polling places are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Randolph is a rural county with a 61 percent Black population. One of the seven precincts designated for closure is 95 percent African American. Had the U.S. Supreme Court not gutted the Voting Rights Act in 2013, the closures would likely have been blocked by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Randolph County has no public transportation. If seven out of nine polling places were closed, voters without vehicles would have had to walk long distances, in one case 15 miles, to vote.

The election board’s move contradicts the intent of the Voter Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984, a law that disability groups fought hard to pass before the ADA existed. This statute focuses on federal presidential, not midterm, elections. It requires “polling places across the United States to be physically

accessible to people with disabilities for federal elections. Where no accessible location is available to serve as a polling place, a political subdivision must provide an alternate means of casting a ballot on the day of the election.” This law also requires states to provide registration and voting aids for disabled and elderly voters, including information by TTYs (text telephones, also known as TDDs) or similar devices.

Nse Ufot, executive director of the New Georgia Project, a nonpartisan civic engagement group, said county election officials could have moved polls to local churches and other sites that are ADA compliant. “This is a blatant attempt at voter suppression,” she said.

It is highly significant that the election board voted to close the sites ahead of the upcoming midterm elections. African-American gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams is favored to become the first Black female governor, not just in Georgia but in the history of the United States.

The Georgia chapter of ADAPT, the national grassroots community that organizes disability rights activists, did not mince words: “[We] strongly condemn suppressing voting access under the semblance of protecting people with disabilities. ... [C]ounty officials’ decision to

invoke the ADA in order to suppress the vote of the predominantly black community is racist, ablest and deplorable.”

The REV UP Campaign (Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power!) also opposed the ruling, calling it “a total misuse of the ADA and all that it stands for. REV UP Georgia rejects this justification on every level.”

The Arc Georgia, an organization of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, found it “shocking to learn that instead of working to fix inaccessible polling places and bringing them into compliance with the ADA, officials are willing to close them.”

A spokeswoman for the National Council on Independent Living pointed out that one of the polling places selected to be closed was a middle school. “If it’s inaccessible, how are disabled kids going to get an education?”

Successful fightback

Community reaction was swift and sure. The American Civil Liberties Union began mobilizing immediately. Activists scrambled and collected enough signatures to stop the plan before the next meeting of the election board. Voting rights groups and disability rights advocates joined the fight. “We’ve been here

before,” commented one veteran of the Civil Rights and voting rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

The proposal was soundly defeated.

Randolph County is not the first to invoke the ADA as a pretext to disenfranchise minority voters. Jim Tucker, an attorney and member of the Native American Voting Rights Coalition, said he learned earlier this year that the Department of Justice is targeting at least three majority Native counties where polling places lack paved parking lots, designated disabled parking spots, entrance ramps, wide doorways and other ADA-required features.

The online news source ThinkProgress revealed this was a new focus under the Obama administration, but the pace has accelerated under the Trump administration.

Four of the five locations targeted by the Justice Department — Chicago, Chesapeake, Va., Coconino County, Ariz., and Richland County, S.C. — have significant minority populations.

Andrea Young, executive director of the ACLU of Georgia, described using the ADA to close polling places in minority areas as “putting sheep’s clothing on a wolf. ... We support bringing public building into compliance with the ADA. Closing these places will not do that.” □

Serena Williams fights back against sexist attacks

By Monica Moorehead

The 2018 U.S. Open will be most remembered for how the 23-time Grand Slam tennis champion Serena Williams challenged the sexist behavior of chair referee Carlos Ramos — rather than for how her opponent, the young, talented Naomi Osaka, won the championship on Sept. 8 in Flushing Meadows, New York. Ramos accused Williams of cheating when her coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, admittedly made a coaching gesture to her from the stands. Williams stated repeatedly that she deserved an apology for being accused of cheating, since many coaches have made similar gestures for decades without retribution.

Ramos called a second violation after Williams smashed her racket on the court out of frustration. The third violation, after Williams called him a “thief” for taking a point away from her, resulted in having a full game taken away from her.

On Sept. 9, the tournament referee fined Williams \$17,000 for three code violations: \$4,000 for the coaching violation, \$3,000 for racket abuse and \$10,000 for verbal abuse.

In her postgame interview, Williams stated, “I’ve seen other men call other umpires several things, and I’m here fighting for women’s rights and for women’s equality. ... For me to say ‘thief’ and for him to take a game? ... It was a sex-

ist remark. He’s never took a game from a man because they said thief. For me, it blows my mind. But I’m going to continue to fight for women.” (thecut.com, Sept. 9)

Williams’ actions and words on and off the court must be viewed within a historical context. Serena Williams and her sister, Venus, have endured at least 20 years of both sexist and racist abuse as tennis champions who happen to be African American. Despite these obstacles, they are currently the collective winners of an unprecedented 30 Grand Slam titles. Serena is considered by many to be tennis’s GOAT — greatest of all time.

A year ago Serena was punished by tennis officials by having her No. 1 ranking stolen after giving birth to her daughter, Olympia, on Sept. 1, 2017. The GOAT was given an outrageously low 421 ranking.

The form-fitting cat suit, black from neck to toe, that she wore in the French Open to help control her chronic blood clots exacerbated after child birth, was later banned by French Open officials. This is not the first

time that authoritative male sports figures have policed Serena’s powerful, muscular body.

Legendary tennis player Billie Jean King, who is a lesbian, wrote a Sept. 9 op-ed piece in the Washington Post in defense of Serena Williams. It reads in part, “Did Ramos treat Williams differently than male players have been treated? I think he did. Women are treated differently in most arenas of life. This is especially true for women of color. And what played out on the court yesterday happens far too often.”


After the match, King tweeted, “When a woman is emotional, she’s ‘hysterical’ and she’s penalized for it. When a man does the same, he’s ‘outspoken’ & there



Serena Williams demands a public apology, Sept. 8.

are no repercussions.”

Kudos to Serena Williams for not being afraid to defend herself, inspiring other women, especially women of color, to do the same. □

A statement from FIRE – Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere

Stop the war on migrants!

Jobs, services and permanent residency for all migrant workers!

Hands off public assistance and benefits! Abolish ICE!

It’s the 1% who are a drain on resources — NOT MIGRANTS.

We can now add child starvation to family separation, deportation, detention, raids, passport denials and ICE/police cooperation to the growing list of attacks on migrant workers and their families.

The first week in September, news broke of a nationwide pattern of migrant families de-enrolling from Women, Infants and Children (WIC) — the government program that provides nutrition to about half of all babies born in the U.S.

That’s because word is out that the Trump administration plans to deny work status or green cards to migrants if they or their dependents — including children born in the U.S. — use public benefits.

The archaic, racist law being used to deny citizenship based on public-assistance usage is called the “public charge” rule. It is derived from the Immigration Act of 1882, passed the same year as the Chinese Exclusion Act.

The idea is that migrants who apply for citizenship must prove they won’t end up being a “burden on the state.” This threat against status is already having the effect intended by Stephen Miller, Trump’s far-right policy “advisor.” Because it’s been leaked without being formally announced, it is now spreading fear through the immigrant community.

To counter this sick strategy and the insidious propaganda behind it, the first step is to say loud and clear: Nobody is a bigger drain on the “state” — or society in general — than the exploiting U.S. corporate class!

This month is the 10th anniversary of the \$700 billion bailout — paid from the public treasury to Wall Street gamblers who crashed the economy and took people’s homes away. That amount soon ballooned to at least \$12 trillion. Since

then, inequality has only gotten worse.

Whether it’s billions in subsidies for the mega-rich oil companies, or Trump’s \$1.5 trillion tax giveaway for billionaires, every day the super-rich loot our budgets at the expense of public needs.

They’re quiet about it now because midterm elections are coming up. But in June Congress members released a 10-year plan that would reduce Medicaid by \$1.5 trillion, Medicare by \$537 billion and Social Security by \$4 billion. This is all to cover the plundering from the December tax cut.

Meanwhile, teachers have to strike just to get decent wages and money for textbooks. Yet the rich and the politicians allow the Pentagon to rob from public funds — \$717 billion in the latest annual budget.

The architects of the attacks on migrants want people to think there is only so much of the public pie to go around and that it must be protected from migrants. But it is billionaires like Trump who are gobbling up that pie and leaving crumbs for everyone else.

How dare anyone paint migrants as a drain on resources — when it’s their labor, along with the labor of every low-wage worker in this country, that subsidizes programs like Social Security, Medicare and private health insurance. It’s outrageous that undocumented workers can’t even use the programs they help fund because of their precarious citizenship status.

Migrant workers, just like U.S.-born workers, have more than earned every right to health care, Social Security and every other program that was won through the people’s struggle. All the attacks on migrants require a vigorous fightback to push back the racists and defeat them. A win for migrants is a win for all workers.

FIRE has been in the streets, protested ICE/police collaboration, organized a solidarity delegation to the border and participated in the occupation of ICE offices. We will continue to fight to push back this vile attack. □

Chicago mayor gives up on third term as Killer cop heads to trial

By Sav Ray
Chicago

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced on Sept. 4 that he would not run for a third term, bringing joy and relief to the many organizers who have fought to get him out of office. This news came the day before jury selection began in the trial of Jason Van Dyke.

Van Dyke is the Chicago police officer who fatally shot unarmed 17-year-old Laquan McDonald 16 times in 2014. He is now on trial for first-degree murder — one of the first cops in the U.S. to face this charge for killing a Black person while on duty. Hundreds of people gathered outside the Cook County Criminal Courthouse for a rally the morning Van Dyke’s trial opened.

Immediately following the shooting of McDonald, protests demanded the release of police dashcam footage. Mayor Emanuel was in the midst of a reelection campaign. It was only after he had secured his reelection in April 2015 that his office released the incriminating footage. In fact, the city paid a \$5 million settlement to the McDonald family the week after the election, yet did not release the footage until November 2015. Only then was Van Dyke arrested and charged with murder. Shortly thereafter, community pressure forced Emanuel to fire Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy, a prime participant in this racist coverup and so many others.

The role that city officials played in covering up McDonald’s murder has shaped the political scene in Chicago ever since. Emanuel and Anita Alvarez, at that time

state’s attorney for Cook County, were the main targets of a campaign to oust officials who placed protecting murderous cops over obtaining justice. Led primarily by Black organizations, including Assata’s Daughters, Black Lives Matter Chicago and BYP100, a massive grassroots campaign moved to get Alvarez voted out of office in the March 2016 elections. Activists organized train takeovers and rallies and used the hashtag #ByeAnita on social media to successfully garner support for voting her out, without expressly endorsing any of her competitors. They then turned their focus to Rahm Emanuel.

During Emanuel’s seven years in office, he has closed 50 public schools, shut down half of the city’s public mental health clinics and initiated the building of a \$95 million police academy. Had he released the damning dashcam footage of Laquan McDonald’s execution before the 2015 election, he likely would have lost to his main challenger, Mexican community activist Jesús “Chuy” García.

When the dashcam footage of Jason Van Dyke’s crime was released to the public, it was already clear to many that the mayor had anything but Chicago’s best interests at heart. Today, the struggle is far from over. Emanuel still holds \$7 million in campaign funds in a massive war chest, so he will likely continue to influence Chicago politics. But now that he’s been forced to step down and join coverup co-conspirators McCarthy and Alvarez on the political sidelines, justice demands that the actual triggerman get convicted and sentenced. Jail Jason Van Dyke! Jail all killer cops! □



Laquan McDonald

Solidarity with national prison strike

FIRE targets notorious Bristol County, Mass., sheriff

By Sam Ordóñez
Dartmouth, Mass.

A crowd of 30 people gathered at the entrance to the Bristol County Jail here on Sept. 8 for a noise demonstration. It was called by the Boston chapter of FIRE (Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere) in solidarity with the national prison strike scheduled to end the next day, as well as with earlier acts of resistance inside Bristol County Jail itself. Most of the demonstrators travelled from Boston or Providence, R.I., to show solidarity with prisoners in the jail.

The rally began with a land acknowledgment by Nat Heathman of the United American Indians of New England, who emphasized that the prisons in this country are illegitimate and against the beliefs of the rightful owners of the land they are built on.

The demonstrators took turns giving speeches aimed at reaching the prisoners. A number of different organizations were represented, including Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston School Bus Drivers; the Providence chapter of the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee; the Party for Socialism and Liberation; Justice4Siham; the Stonewall Warriors; Workers World Party; and more.

A notable speaker was Bishop Filipe Teixeira of the heavily im/migrant St. Martin De Porres parish in Brockton,

Mass., who has a long history of work in Bristol County Jail and other facilities. He drew parallels between the treatment of prisoners and migrants today and the crimes of the Nazi regime in Germany.

Two of the speakers led the demonstrators in singing “Which Side Are You On?” and “Solidarity Forever.” Recognizing that prisoners are also members of the working class, both these songs come from the early 20th century union movement, with the former updated during the 1960s’ Civil Rights Movement.

Conditions in Bristol County

Bristol County Jail has a long history of abuse and terrible conditions, particularly around medical neglect and the use of chain gangs.

At the end of July, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainees in Bristol County Jail went on hunger strike to protest inhumane living conditions such as inedible food, medical neglect and exploitative phone and commissary rates. They were joined by prisoners in the general population in a powerful show of solidarity.

Siham Byah, a Moroccan activist who spent two months in the ICE detention center in Bristol County before being deported, phoned in to the rally: “It is a facility that takes pride in mistreating and dehumanizing its inmates. ... Health care is nonexistent. The food is inedible. It’s not



WW PHOTO: STEPHANIE HOUTEN

Bishop Teixeira, left, with FIRE at entrance to Bristol County Jail.

something you would give an animal, never mind people. We did not see the shadow of a fruit or vegetable unless you have a special order from a doctor, and even then you get a rotten apple once a day. People have their basic rights stripped away from them. I certainly didn’t feel like a human being when I was kept in there.”

Sheriff’s response

Despite the presence of guards with flak jackets, three cars of state troopers patrolling the area and a K9 unit with barking dogs, the demonstrators refused to be intimidated and held a two-hour rally outside the entrance, using a powerful sound system. They had been barred

entry onto the property.

Thomas Hodgson, the notorious, fascist sheriff of Bristol County, recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to give an award to President Trump. He arrived at the jail shortly after the rally began, wearing an ICE shirt.

Several speakers confronted Hodgson directly, calling attention to the fact that he was visibly laughing and making mocking faces as speakers exposed the crimes committed in his facilities.

The sheriff also made headlines earlier this year when he offered to send his prisoners to the Mexican border to be used as slave labor in the construction of Trump’s racist border wall. □

Pennsylvania jailers lock down striking prisoners

Continued from page 1

talist at SCI Frackville with a history of successfully challenging DOC abuses.

Health crisis: phony and real

The DOC claims that a number of prison staff have fallen ill in recent weeks, mostly in the western region of the state. The first such accounts began as early as Aug. 6, but skepticism has met the few details that have been disclosed. No clear pattern of illness has emerged. In one incident, an officer was administered Narcan, used to treat emergency overdoses, but it is not clear under what circumstances.

Another case that allegedly contributed to the lockdown involved a guard escorting a prisoner who, he claimed, “appeared” to be under the influence of a drug. Later, that guard developed “bumps around his forehead” and went to the hospital for a few short hours before being discharged. The DOC is using these minor incidents to suggest that a widespread and sudden health crisis among staff is the reason for the unprecedented statewide lockdown.

Actually, there is a widespread health crisis in prisons across the country, which is one of the factors that incited the national strike. Toxic water, unsafe temperature levels and denial of medical care are all extremely dangerous conditions that are caused by DOC policies, not ameliorated by them.

WW newspaper banned, prisoners harassed

This lockdown is just the latest in a series of new instances of repression

that prisoners have reported in recent months. Workers World newspaper itself has been notified that three recent issues have been banned from distribution in Pennsylvania facilities, where over 300 inmates are subscribers and perhaps thousands are readers. The reason given for this censorship — the third such incident of Workers World being banned in Pennsylvania prisons this year — was its reporting on the National Prison Strike.

For weeks running up to the first day of the strike, the ion scanner that supposedly tests for toxic or illegal substances began issuing dozens of false positives at SCI Frackville. Guards turned away upwards of 20 visitors per day, which only inflamed tensions between inmates and officers. Since the lockdown, inmates at Frackville report they’re being served inedible food (rotten bananas, for instance, and cold, watery rice with broccoli and cauliflower mashed into it) and experience delays in the delivery of commissary food — which they have to pay for.

This summer also brought the long-awaited closure of the notorious SCI Graterford, site of one of the worst toxic water conditions in the state. Inmates were

moved to a new \$400 million facility called SCI Phoenix, only to be met by guards who had destroyed their property, smearing their clothes with food and dirt and shredding their mail and legal paperwork while it was in transport. Multiple prisoners reported their property had been vandalized with scrawled racial slurs and drawings of swastikas. At least one inmate was hospitalized because of inconsistent access to his needed medication.

Among those moved to SCI Phoenix was Michael Africa Sr., one of nine members of the MOVE Organization who was arrested in 1978 and falsely convicted of shooting a Philly cop. He is one of several remaining MOVE 9 members who are finally up for parole in the coming months. The lockdown not only coincides with Michael Africa’s next parole hearing, which is just weeks away, but also preempted a major strike action. Prisoners had intended to launch a boycott of telephone and commissary purchases on Sept. 2.

Since the Aug. 29 lockdown, prisoners have been protesting by chanting and banging on their doors in unison for hours on end. Some cell blocks have now also started refusing food. That same tactic was deployed by prisoners held in the Pennsylvania Industrial Correctional Center, who launched a hunger strike earlier this summer to protest a lockdown.

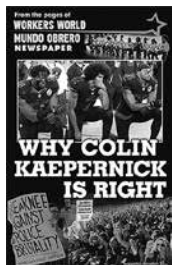
When Wetzel and Wolf announced their sweeping new policy changes, no announcement was made in Spanish or any other language, despite the state’s sizable non-English speaking prison population, according to Bryant Arroyo, who is bilingual.

Repression continues under Democrats

Governor Wolf is one of several Democrats who assumed office with a supposedly “progressive” agenda — and have since entered into high-profile partnerships with reactionary white supremacists. Wolf came into power alongside Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, who was so eager to remove protest encampments springing up around the city that he empowered the police to beat demonstrators and destroy their property. He even brought out bulldozers to dig up the earth all around City Hall the same morning that the encampments were removed.

The new prison policy regarding legal mail is a huge boon for chief prosecutor Larry Krasner, whose district attorney office has entered into an obvious pact with the Fraternal Order of Police to keep Mumia Abu-Jamal in prison until the conditions there kill him. Lawyers for Mumia, who is held at SCI Mahanoy, are in an ongoing struggle with the DA’s office over the release of files that would prove prosecutorial and judicial misconduct in Mumia’s case. Krasner’s office has either destroyed the documents or is withholding them from the court. That should demonstrate just how dangerous it is that all legal mail for prisoners across the state will now basically be up for inspection by prosecutors and prison officials.

Workers World will continue to protest on behalf of the prisoners whose right to read this publication is being unlawfully denied. Additionally, the Abolitionist Law Center asks that any reports of abuse or violations of rights related to the lockdown be reported to ckeys@alcenter.org. □



WHY COLIN KAEPRNICK IS RIGHT

Articles from Workers World/
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Syria's war With an end in sight, more obstacles remain

By G. Dunkel

As the war in Syria enters its apparent end phase, it's obvious that this country has paid a grim price for U.S. imperialism's attempt at regime change. By some estimates, over 500,000 Syrians, out of a total population of 17 million, have been killed in fighting since 2011, when armed conflict broke out. Hundreds of thousands more were wounded, many gravely.

Some 3 million Syrians have fled to Europe or live mainly in Turkey and Jordan in foreign exile. Other hundreds of thousands are "internally displaced," forced to flee their homes because of violence and threats but remaining in Syria.

Syria's economy has been devastated. Social relations between various communities have been disrupted and envenomed.

The major powers trying to replace Bashar al-Assad and his government — U.S. imperialism and its major European partners, Britain and France — have intervened mainly through proxies, while avoiding sending large numbers of troops. Sometimes, they even funneled money and arms through Qatar, the Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The Turkish regime from the start intervened to try to overthrow the Syrian government and always against Kurdish forces. Israel has bombed Syrian targets.

Washington made its largest troop intervention with Special Forces in the mainly Kurdish region of northeastern Syria. The U.S. has collaborated with Kurdish fighters, who have, on the one hand, been fighting Turkish repression and, on the other hand, fighting reactionary religious fighters of the ISIS type. The Turkish regime considers all Kurdish groups that are pro-independence as terrorists and linked to the Kurdish liberation movement inside the Turkish state.

Some of these proxy groups that retreated to Idlib have allegiance to the Islamic State (ISIS) and others to al-Qaida. These are groups that Washington calls "terrorists," although the U.S. provided arms to them before 2014 and still does to some. Some of these forces have grown out of local groups that opposed the Damascus government. These forces not only fought the Syrian government, but they also, from time to time, fought each other.

Turkey is the only country that has had significant land troops in the mix, mainly just across its southern border. However, the U.S., France and Britain, as well as Israel, often conducted airstrikes in support of the proxy force they were backing at the time and against the Damascus government.

China and Russia gave Syria essential political support in 2011 and 2012 by vetoing United Nations Security Council resolutions that would have provided a cover for a strong military intervention by the U.S. and European imperialist powers. Imperialist intervention could have allowed the jihadis opposed to Damascus

— ISIS and al-Qaida — to gain the upper hand, much as happened in Libya in 2011.

The Syrian army managed to survive and keep control of the country through the most difficult days of the war. When Russia, Iran and Hezbollah fighters from Lebanon began to assist the Syrians in 2015, the Bashar al-Assad government began recovering the territory it had lost to the reactionary groups.

As the Syrian army began to win back areas that had been under reactionary control in the cities of Aleppo and Homs, as well as the suburb of Damascus called East Ghouta and the southern border with Jordan, it would make agreements to limit casualties suffered by civilians and to both sides. A typical deal allowed the fighters who refused to surrender to Syrian control to leave and take their families on a one-way bus trip to Idlib, a province in northwestern Syria.

Astana agreement and military pressure on Idlib

A series of meetings among belligerents was first held in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, in 2017. The Astana goal was to de-escalate the struggle in Syria through exchanging prisoners and bodies, providing services like water and electricity, and reducing violence. These meetings were held between the Syrian opposition and the Syrian government in the presence of observers from Turkey, Russia and Iran — the countries which guaranteed the process. There has been no participation of "Western Powers," the

term Al-Jazeera uses to refer to Washington and its European allies.

The opposition fighters still remaining are concentrated in Idlib. Most observers believe that the Syrian government, with aid from Russia and Iran, can regain control of Idlib. Once Damascus reconquers Idlib, most Syrians will be under the protection of the Syrian government.

A large area of eastern Syria, mainly desert but containing most of Syria's known oil reserves, is under the control of Kurdish groups. Some 2,000 U.S. troops are also in that region.

In a special U.N. Security Council meeting on Syria held Sept. 7, U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley fulminated about the "humanitarian crisis" that is threatening to engulf Idlib and "the atrocities committed by Assad." The representative of the Russian federation said, "Western countries are preparing aggressive plans to prevent the last terrorist-held area from falling." (U.N. news report for Sept. 7)

The U.S., Britain and France also threatened to intervene should Syria use chemical weapons against opposition forces in Idlib. Russian speakers warned of a possible "false-flag" operation to create a pretext for intervention.

This U.S. threat to Syria is the height of hypocrisy, especially given the chemical weapons the U.S. dropped in Vietnam and Laos during the Vietnam war, euphemistically known as "defoliants." They were designed to destroy the croplands and starve the people, as well as destroy the jungles covering troop movements,

and are still producing horrible birth defects and genetic damage after 50 years.

According to Karin Leukefeld, a journalist for the progressive German daily newspaper Junge Welt, the day after the U.N. meeting, the presidents of Russia, Turkey and Iran met in Tehran in the framework of the Astana accords. She says the presidents felt "a decision should be taken on the extent of a military operation in Idlib and how civilians can be protected."

She adds: "According to reports in the Arab media, a sophisticated military operation plan for Idlib has been drawn up. The aim is to separate troops ready to accept an agreement from al-Qaida-related forces. A humanitarian corridor for civilians wishing to leave the area has already been established. In the province, up to 100,000 armed troops face the decision of whether to accept an agreement with the government or to face military action." (Junge Welt, Sept. 8)

Even the New York Times, in a major editorial on Sept. 9, recognized that Turkey, Russia and Iran have been trying to help Syria come to a political settlement for some time, to achieve a resolution to this conflict. However, the resolution proposed by these countries has been rejected, since it doesn't conform to the interests of U.S. imperialism.

The 2011 imperialist provocation of Syria's war has led to horrible suffering that remains, even as the end of shooting is in sight. Peace and reconstruction remain complicated and difficult tasks. □

Israel punishes jailed Palestinians for support of U.S. prison strike

By Kathy Durkin

Palestinians confined in Israel's brutal prisons issued a statement of solidarity on Aug. 20 with the National Prison Strike in the U.S. Members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine expressed the utmost support for their sisters and brothers jailed in this country's horrific system of mass incarceration who courageously launched a nationally coordinated protest against their imprisonment and the oppressive conditions they face. The prison protest against "modern-day slavery" began on Aug. 21 and ran through Sept. 9.

For bravely carrying out this act of international solidarity and other acts of defiance, Israeli prison officials retaliated against imprisoned PFLP leaders on Aug. 29. They transferred Ahed Abu Ghoulmeh from Hadarim prison to Ramon prison, moved Wael Jaghoub to Gilboa prison and sent Mohammed Musa Khdeir to Ramon. All PFLP members held in Megiddo prison were put into solidarity

confinement after protesting the horrendous conditions in the facility and denial of their human and legal rights.

The blog of Samidoun: Political Prisoners Solidarity Network reported this story. It explains Israel's fury after the PFLP prisoners "recently released a widely distributed statement in solidarity with U.S. prisoners engaged in work stoppages, boycotts and hunger strikes against forced prison labor, racism and exploitation inside U.S. jails."

The strike began on the 47th anniversary of the murder of George Jackson, "an event that was recognized in Palestine and around the world as an assassination of a true voice of struggle by the U.S. ruling class." The prison strike is "a struggle of oppressed and exploited workers" who are "confronting the unmasked brutality of capitalism behind bars" and demanding "an end to the new form of slavery" — corporate exploitation of the incarcerated.

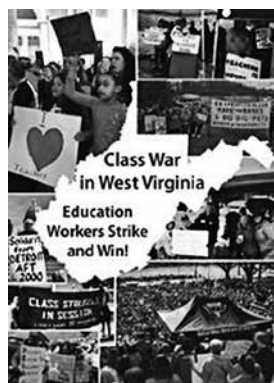
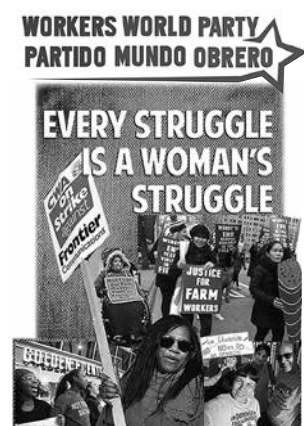
The statement expresses solidarity with Black, Latinx and Arab people who face mass incarceration. The same ruling class that "profits from confiscating Palestinian land and resources and bombing children in Yemen also profits from the forced labor of prisoners." And it adds: "Your struggle is a workers' struggle that is part of the global conflict against the vicious exploitation that our peoples face today."

The Palestinians behind bars extend a "revolutionary salute to the imprisoned strugglers of the Black Liberation movement and other liberation movements, including Mumia Abu-Jamal," and call for the release of freedom fighters, from Leonard Peltier to Mutulu Shakur. They

recognize the prisoners' strike "within the heart of U.S. imperialism, the greatest danger faced by our Palestinian people and the peoples of the world.

"[Y]our victory will be a victory for Palestine," they stress, just as Palestinians' victories "will be a victory for all struggles against imperialism, racism and oppression within the United States and globally."

Workers World newspaper published the entire PFLP statement in its Aug. 30 issue; read "Palestinians extend solidarity to U.S. prison strike" posted at workers.org. The introduction expresses solidarity with the heroic 6,000 Palestinians currently incarcerated by the repressive Israeli regime for the "crime" of fighting for the liberation of their people. There is also extensive coverage of the prison strike and support actions across the U.S. at the website. □



From the pages of
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New U.S. threat to Venezuela

A lot of words in the corporate media this week have been devoted to remembering Sept. 11, 2001. That attack has served as a pretext for U.S. aggression ever since.

But there was another Sept. 11 — seldom mentioned. On Sept. 11, 1973, generals in Chile working with the CIA carried out a military coup to overthrow the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende. What followed was the brutal torture and assassination of thousands of progressives in the country, including the president.

Now Washington is threatening a direct invasion of Venezuela.

In May, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro said that top U.S. diplomats were engaged in a military conspiracy against his country. Maduro's charges were roundly dismissed by both the U.S. administration and the billionaire media.

Until Sept. 9.

Then the New York Times finally admitted the U.S. plan for regime change in an article headlined: "Trump administration discussed coup plans with rebel Venezuelan officers."

The Times ran this story, not to warn the people of Venezuela, but to criticize the Maduro administration, which it considers dangerous to strategic U.S. imperialist interests.

The Times spreads its own vicious propaganda against President Maduro and his country's attempts to be free of U.S. domination. It continually blames the Bolivarian government for economic difficulties in Venezuela without mentioning the full-press sabotage by U.S. and Western European imperialism.

Max Weisbrot of the Center for Economic and Policy Research has filled in what the Times omits — stressing that the U.S. economic war on Venezuela is behind the country's current depression. In early 2017 Washington began imposing sanctions against Venezuela, including freezing the country's billions of dollars in U.S. accounts.

Weisbrot notes that "with Trump's [recent] executive order, even if Venezuela were to stabilize the exchange rate and return to growth, it would be cut off from borrowing, investment, and proprietary sources of income such as dividend pay-

ments from Venezuela-owned but U.S.-based Citgo Petroleum." (The Nation, Sept. 7, 2017)

The Venezuelan oligarchs hate that Maduro is a former bus driver. They hated Venezuela's late revolutionary President Hugo Chávez for siding with the poor and oppressed. They prefer the people they exploit and oppress to remain subservient. So do their U.S. imperialist masters.

Since the right-wing parties in Venezuela that represent the rich are completely discredited and disgraced among the people, U.S. imperialism has to consider a more direct intervention.

The Times article said that for the last two years high-ranking U.S. diplomats have been meeting with Venezuelan military officers to discuss a military rebellion and the extent of U.S. military support. Is this an admission — or a threat?

Whatever the details, the record of U.S. interventions south of the border makes the overall message believable: The U.S. has intervened in Haiti starting in 1804, in Cuba, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Guatemala and Mexico — not to mention most of South America. This includes training Latin American officers in the U.S. in torture techniques, along with direct U.S. invasions.

Despite the country's crisis, however, the Venezuelan military — both the officers and now the politicized rank-and-file troops — have in their great majority remained loyal to the democratically elected president.

And the working people of Venezuela continue to affirm their belief that the development of the Bolivarian Revolution is the path to a better future. In the May presidential election, Maduro won a new six-year term in a landslide, with three times the votes of the next candidate.

What lessons are we workers in the U.S. to take from this struggle?

That capitalism will do anything — lie, cheat, rape, conspire, invade, plunder and murder — to keep its profits and its system in the ascendancy.

Our solidarity and our hope remain with the international struggle of the workers — a struggle that has no borders. □

Solidarity with the DPRK

The following message of solidarity was sent on Sept. 9 to Kim Jong Un, Chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea, by Workers World Party.

Dear Comrade Kim Jong Un,
We join you and the Korean people in celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. For 70 years, the Workers' Party of Korea has led the DPRK in fierce resistance to the imperialists' attempts to thwart your socialist development. During the 1950-53 war of aggression, begun only two years after the founding of the DPRK, the imperialist blood suckers, led by the U.S., thought the horrendous destruction they wreaked would crush your aspirations and force your surrender.

But the people of the DPRK, led by the legendary Kim Il Sung and the Workers' Party, heroically stood up to this genocidal assault. For the first time in its history,

U.S. imperialism had to admit the defeat of its plans for conquest.

However, the U.S. rulers still have not agreed to sign a peace treaty to end that infamous war, even though the DPRK has since achieved great scientific and technological development, based upon socialist planning, and become a nuclear power that must be respected, even by the most aggressive forces in the imperialist camp.

Your steadfastness is a great victory not only for the DPRK but for people struggling everywhere against capitalist exploitation and national oppression. We in the United States will continue to demand an end to Washington's hostility to the DPRK and express our deepest solidarity with the Workers' Party of Korea.

Signed: Larry Holmes, First Secretary, and Deirdre Griswold for the Secretariat of Workers World Party □

Reform and revolution

Continued from page 3

Nor were conditions ripe for such a party. The party that came out of the Mexican Revolution was the Institutional Revolutionary Party, a bourgeois party that has ruled until the present day.

Isolation of socialist states

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the first workers' state faced imperialist intervention, civil war and isolation. One basic reason it was able to overcome all this, even after the failure of revolutions in Europe, was the enormous size of the country.

The Chinese revolution was less isolated because of the existence of the USSR. Nevertheless, no sooner had the Chinese Communists marched into Beijing in 1949 than the U.S. imperialists opened an attack right next door in Korea.

The French, meanwhile, opened an offensive in their former colony of Vietnam. And the British were fighting an insurgent movement in Malaya. For many years, it seemed as though China would be the target of an open imperialist war in Asia led by the U.S.

Until 1971, the U.S. and its imperialist allies on the United Nations Security Council prevented People's China from taking its rightful seat in the UN, and blocked diplomatic recognition of China by other capitalist countries.

So when the Cuban Revolution began to break the bonds of imperialism, the U.S. quickly moved to isolate this island of 10 million people. Washington thought the revolutionary government would not long survive an economic blockade coupled with military intervention.

It is an incontestable fact that without the very significant material, political and diplomatic support extended to Cuba by the Soviet Union, Cuba's position at that time would have been almost impossible. It took a nuclear confrontation to bring the U.S. military colossus to a rational temporary standoff in its struggle to overthrow the Cuban socialist government. The hearts and minds of the bulk of humanity during the entire course of the missile crisis were almost wholly on the side of Cuba and the USSR.

Regardless of the further exigencies of the relationship, that historic experience is not likely to be forgotten, either in the camp of Cuba's friends or of its foes.

Attempts to isolate Cuba fail

The fact that the U.S. attempt to isolate Cuba has failed was confirmed once again in November [1994] when the UN General Assembly voted 88 to four for an end to the embargo. The three countries that voted with the U.S. were Paraguay, Israel and Albania. The U.S. imperialists could not even get one of their own imperialist allies on board, nor one country of any size.

Despite the attempts at isolation, Cuba is a most cosmopolitan place. It is constantly hosting international conferences and exhibits on science, technology and the arts. It has contacts with all the progressive movements in Latin America and the Caribbean, ranging across a broad political spectrum. All over the world, Cuba retains its diplomatic and political standing.

When President Fidel Castro travels anywhere in Latin America, the populace turns out to greet him.

Cuba is being hurt economically because of the vast array of U.S. forces against it. But it cannot be isolated politically.

Breaking the ice here

Finally, resistance to imperialism's war against Cuba is rising inside the U.S. as never before. The old hate campaigns against Cuba are disintegrating, from Miami to New York to San Francisco.

The ice was first broken in January 1992, when a rally for Cuba in New York's spacious Jacob Javits Convention Center was filled to overflowing. The splendid turnout made a mockery of counter-revolutionary Cubans' threats to disrupt the rally.

Another Peace for Cuba rally, set to take place in New York Feb. 12, is already sold out. Plans are being made for a second rally for the overflow crowd. What does that show but that the ice is cracking?

As we said on an earlier occasion, the need of the hour is not only to challenge the U.S. blockade but to change the political climate in this country toward Cuba. Now we are beginning to see the results of just such a campaign.

Despite the 30-year U.S. effort to isolate Cuba diplomatically, economically and politically, the Cuban Revolution stands tall as an unconquerable fortress of the world revolution. And no force on the face of the earth will overturn it. □

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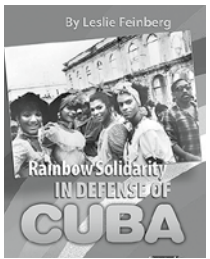
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A compilation of articles from the Workers World series entitled *Lavender & Red*, online at workers.org.

The book is available at major online booksellers



Brazil’s presidential elections jolted by events

By John Catalinotto

Sept. 10 — As Brazil heads for the first round of its presidential and national assembly election on Oct. 7, three dramatic events are shaking this massive country. Encompassing nearly half the land area of South America and more than half its people, Brazil has the biggest economic, diplomatic and military weight of any single country on the continent.

The first event was the Aug. 31 decision to forbid Luis Inácio “Lula” da Silva, an historic leader of the Workers Party (PT), from running in the election. Lula is in prison for alleged corruption — a pretext used to keep him from running. The real reason Brazil’s ruling class wants to keep him out of the election is that he has been getting about twice the support of any other single candidate in opinion polls, and could again be elected president.

Lula led Brazil’s government for eight years, winning two terms in 2002 and 2006, followed by PT’s Dilma Rousseff in 2010 and 2014. During the governments of Rousseff, and even more so with Lula, government programs improved the living conditions and standards of tens of millions of the poorest of Brazil’s 210 million people. Partly for this reason, PT candidates were elected and Lula became the most popular political figure.

Despite the PT’s compromises with right-wing parties and Brazil’s capitalist bosses, the ruling class maneuvered to rid themselves of this social democratic party and make a frontal attack on Brazil’s working class. They targeted any gains made by Black people, women and Indigenous peoples during the PT period. This led to the illegal impeachment of Rousseff on phony charges regarding the federal budget, which finally removed her from the presidency in August 2016 in what many call a “parliamentary coup.”

The “coup” government, led by former Vice President Michel Temer, immediately attacked workers’ rights, turned over

natural resources to corporations and opened the country further to foreign corporations and investment. Temer also unleashed the police and army against the impoverished shanty towns of Rio de Janeiro to bring “law and order” by massacring youths.

This government also aligned its foreign policy closer to Washington and was openly hostile to progressive governments in Venezuela and Bolivia. Temer quickly lost support of all but about 5 percent of the population in opinion polls.

Fearing that Lula would win the coming election and bring the PT back into office, Brazil’s wealthy turned to the judiciary, which charged him with corruption and jailed him in the southern city of Curitiba.

After months of struggle in the courts and with demonstrations of tens of thousands supporting Lula in the streets, he was ruled off the ballot on Aug. 31. A subsequent legal decision has even prevented the PT from using Lula’s name or image on the electoral material for their substitute candidate.

The substitute, Fernando Haddad, a former mayor of Sao Paulo, has been campaigning for the electoral coalition called “The People Happy Again.” The coalition is made up of the PT, the Communist Party of Brazil and the small Party of Social Order. Haddad will now head the ballot.

Compared to Lula, who is known by everyone in Brazil, Haddad is little known nationally. In polls Lula led with 39 percent support. Haddad gets 8 percent, which climbs to 14 percent if the people polled know that Lula supports him — which is why there is a ruling to prevent educating voters about that.

Some other leftist parties have not joined the coalition and are running their own candidates, although most support Lula’s right to run for office. One candidate is Guilherme Boulos, a leader of the Homeless Workers’ Movement who

is running on the Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL) ticket.

Three center and rightist candidates each poll 8 to 10 percent. The most right-wing candidate, Jair Bolsonaro, was second to Lula in polls, with about 22 percent. With Lula absent, Bolsonaro led the polls for the first-round vote.

Candidate stabbed

A second dramatic political event occurred on Sept. 6. While campaigning in the city of Juiz de Fora in the state of Minas Gerais, Bolsonaro was stabbed in the abdomen and needed an operation to repair severed intestines. He is expected to survive the attack, but may not be able to campaign.

Bolsonaro is a former captain in the Brazilian army, who praises the military dictatorship that ran the country from 1964 to 1985. He is openly and viciously misogynist, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-LGBTQ and calls for even more police murders of Brazil’s poor and Black population. Brazil has the second-largest number of people of African descent, after the West African country of Nigeria.

One example gives an idea of how vicious Bolsonaro can be. When he voted in the National Assembly to depose Rousseff in 2016, he dedicated his vote to the military officer who ran the prison where Rousseff was tortured for three years. She had been imprisoned for combating the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil for more than two decades.

While Bolsonaro now leads polls that, since the attack, show he has gained some “sympathy” votes, there are questions whether he will hold on to them. If no candidate gets more than 50 percent, a second round between the two leaders of the first round will be held on Oct. 28.

With the class struggle as sharp as it seems to be now in Brazil, formal election results do not necessarily determine which ruling-class grouping takes over the government, let alone which controls

state power.

This was brought home earlier this year when Brazilian political activist Marielle Franco, 38, died in downtown Rio de Janeiro on March 14 in what officials have deemed a political assassination. Franco was a bisexual woman of African descent born in a favela and a member of PSOL elected to the city government.

National Museum destroyed

A third dramatic event was the Sept. 2 fire that burned the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro to the ground, destroying valuable and irreplaceable collections. This event was especially tragic since it involved the loss of history and languages relating to the many different Indigenous nations and peoples who inhabited Brazil when it was first seized by Portuguese colonialists 500 years ago.

The first grievous loss was the extermination of these peoples and the elimination of their language and culture. The second is the loss of even the history of their existence.

Though this event may seem distant from the election struggle, a Sept. 5 article in vermelho.org.br by writer and former minister of Science and Technology, Roberto Amaral, explains: “The destruction of the National Museum was no accident, but an intentional crime: thought out, calculated, planned, executed with precision. It is a holocaust ordered by neoliberalism” — that is, by the privatization of state property and opening the country to foreign investment.

Amaral blames the fire on the coup regime’s so-called “austerity policy” that froze public funds and attacked education, science, research and culture. “According to the Budget Consultancy of the Chamber of Deputies, the amounts received by the National Museum fell from 979 million reais in 2013 to 98 million reais in 2018.” That is from approximately \$450 million to \$20 million, given the different exchange rates in those years. □



India throws out British colonial anti-sodomy law

On Sept. 6, India’s Supreme Court struck down the country’s law criminalizing consensual sex between same-sex partners. The law, known as 377, was imposed during British colonial rule and carried a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Out of an estimated 48 former British colonies that outlawed homosexuality, 30 still have such laws, according to a 2017 International LGBTI Association’s “State-Sponsored Homophobia” report. (CNN)

The following analysis of British colonial anti-LGBTQ law is excerpted from part 112 of Leslie Feinberg’s series on LGBTQ history and socialism, “Lavender & Red.” A free download of the complete “Lavender & Red” series is available at workers.org/book/lavender-red/.

By Leslie Feinberg

Western rulers imposed anti-gay laws throughout the world, including British colonialists and imperialists. The sun never set on British anti-sodomy laws.

The British imposed on the people of Ireland a 1634 law that made same-sex relations between males punishable by death. Later, the 1885 British Labouchère Amendment was the law under which feminine homosexual writer Oscar Wilde was sentenced to hard labor.

Laws criminalizing same-sex relations in India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei all have the same name — “Article 377” — because the same colonial power wrote the law: Britain. The colonial-drafted legislation is misleadingly

named the “Indian Penal Code.” Hindu law had not punished consensual sexual relations.

Historian Douglas Sanders explains: “Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code of 1860 made ‘carnal intercourse against the order of nature’ an offence.”

The British also imposed this legislation in the Straits Settlements of Singapore, Penang and Malaca in 1872. By the late 19th century, Britain also enforced the law in Hong Kong, Fiji, the Malay Peninsula and Burma.

Korea Herald journalist Benjamin Jhoty quotes Utopia-asia.com, which offers information about the same-sexuality scene in Asia: “Asia has rich and unique homosexual traditions almost everywhere you look. The true enemy of homosexuality in places like Korea,

Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are antique colonial laws and homophobic non-Asian religions that bully citizens with skewed views of the natural world.”

Sanders notes, “This provision, or something very close to it, is presently in force in all former British colonies in Asia with the exception of Hong Kong.” He adds: “Sri Lanka, Seychelles and Papua New Guinea have the key wording from 377, but different article numbers. Parallel wording appears in the criminal laws of many of the former colonies in Africa.”

Historians Kevin Botha and Edwin Cameron write, “The systems of law the colonial powers (both Dutch and later English) introduced significantly influenced the customary law of the African communities they subjugated.”

The British “Queensland Penal Code” of 1899 was “adopted in Northern Nigeria in the nineteenth century, later becoming the basis for a uniform federal code in Nigeria in 1916. The Indian Penal Code had been used in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, but those laws were later replaced by drafts based on the Nigerian criminal code. Sudan used the Indian Penal Code. In 1960, Northern Nigeria enacted a separate criminal code, based on the Sudan code.”

Similar laws were forced on “British” Honduras (today Belize), Jamaica, Anguilla, the “British” Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Bahamas, Tobago, Turks and Caicos, and St. Lucia.

The British also imposed anti-“sodomy” legislation on Canada in 1892, New Zealand a year later, and Australia in 1788 and again in 1899. □



Trump bajo fuego: el dilema de la clase dominante

Por Fred Goldstein

Donald Trump ha sufrido una serie de golpes por las fuerzas anti Trump en la clase dominante y el establecimiento legal. Esto sin duda ha alentado a las fuerzas progresistas y revolucionarias que legítimamente quieren ver a este Trump reaccionario, autoritario, racista y misógino caer.

Los eventos recientes han golpeado a Trump. Su gerente de campaña, Paul Manafort, fue condenado en el juicio por ocho cargos criminales de fraude y evasión fiscal. Su abogado de muchos años y “reparador”, Michael Cohen, se declaró culpable y apuntó con el dedo a Trump por violaciones de la ley de campaña. Estos acontecimientos llegaron el mismo día.

Al día siguiente se reveló que el presidente ejecutivo del National Enquirer, David Pecker, que operaba una hoja de escándalo pro Trump, había recibido inmunidad para hablar sobre cómo trabajó con Michael Cohen para suprimir historias críticas sobre Trump comprándolas y luego no publicarlos.

Veinticuatro horas después se reveló que el CFO de la Organización Trump, Allen Weisselberg, también recibió inmunidad para testificar. Weisselberg ha estado a cargo de las finanzas de la Organización Trump desde los días del padre racista y pro nazi de Trump, Fred Trump.

Wall Street y Pentágono trazan línea sobre Rusia y RPDC

Poco después, el Secretario de Estado Mike Pompeo fue obligado a suspender su viaje a la República Popular Democrática de Corea con una semana de aviso. Pompeo ya había elegido al jefe de Ford Motors para dirigir la delegación. La semana pasada notamos que el desfile militar de Trump fue cancelado y que el Pentágono y la clase dominante se resistían a su intento de realinear la política exterior imperialista de Estados Unidos hacia Rusia, que la clase dominante ha bloqueado. (“Revuelta de los espías”, WW, 23 de agosto)

El último movimiento para cancelar el viaje de Pompeo a la RPDC es la respuesta de la clase dominante al intento de Trump de realinear la política exterior de EUA en la península de Corea. Finalmente, firmando un tratado de paz con la RPDC - para una guerra que terminó en un punto muerto hace 65 años - es una condición para seguir adelante. Todo el establishment militar y político se opone a esto y finalmente gana, incluso cuando Trump estaba siendo debilitado en los tribunales.

La clase dominante ha establecido la línea en lo esencial. Pueden vivir con las atrocidades fascistas de Trump en las fronteras, separando familias inmigrantes. Pueden hacer caso omiso de su apoyo a la brutalidad policial y el asesinato en las comunidades afroamericana y latina. Pueden vivir con sus insultos racistas contra África y Haití.

Pero cuando se trata de lo básico, la agresión hacia Rusia y la apertura de relaciones pacíficas en Corea, Wall Street y el Pentágono trazan una línea cerrada.

Los jefes rechazan la destitución por ahora

Debe notarse que estos acontecimientos han sido acompañados por un esfuerzo concertado para enterrar cualquier movimiento incipiente para la destitución, que ha sido acelerado por los reveses legales de Trump.

Este esfuerzo para anular cualquier conversación sobre el juicio político proviene tanto del liderazgo del Partido Demócrata como de los republicanos por igual. Una larga historia en el New York Times cuenta cómo la jerarquía del Partido Demócrata está tratando de apagar los incendios de destitución entre los demócratas de base. La línea del partido es proteger la investigación de Mueller y dejar que se desarrolle. (25 de agosto)

En este momento, la clase dominante es cautelosa de avivar un movimiento de destitución. Hay al menos dos razones. En primer lugar, están sacando toneladas de dinero por los beneficios de los recortes tributarios y la desregulación por Trump. El recorte total de un billón de dólares reduce directamente los gastos corporativos y va directamente al resultado final de la empresa. Las ganancias se dispararon durante dos trimestres. Ningún jefe o banquero quiere sacudir ese bote.

Segundo, tienen miedo de provocar una rebelión de derecha desde la base de Trump. Escuchan los mítines de Trump, que continúan tal como fueron durante la campaña, a pesar de todas las revelaciones sobre lo que es un racista de mala vida, misógino y fanático, Trump. La burguesía es siempre colaboradora, conciliadora o cobarde frente a la derecha, y esta es una lección que la clase trabajadora siempre debe recordar.

Todas las acusaciones, negociación de culpabilidad, inmunidades, exposiciones, etc., ascienden a esto: las fuerzas anti-Trump en la clase dominante están bailando con Trump. En este momento, la clase dominante está tratando de debilitarlo principalmente con ataques legales y publicitarios. Esto puede cambiar en circunstancias futuras como por ejemplo, si la guerra comercial con China se sale de control o algún otro acontecimiento catastrófico amenaza sus intereses capitalistas. Pero, en última instancia, esperan eliminarlo a través del proceso electoral de 2020.

El mejor escenario político para las fuerzas anti-Trump en la clase dominante es para que los demócratas ganen la mayoría en la Cámara de Representantes. Esto les dará el poder de convocar audiencias, traer testigos, citar testimonios y documentos, y librar una guerra de relaciones públicas contra Trump, mientras deja abierta la cuestión de la destitución.

En la actualidad, las masas enfrentan tres alternativas prácticas para eliminar a Trump: acusación, juicio político o elecciones. Las tres son soluciones de la clase dominante en arenas dominadas por el capital. La izquierda radical y revolucionaria definitivamente crecían, incluso antes de que Trump entrara. Pero dada la relación actual de las fuerzas políticas, y dada la relativa debilidad numérica de los revolucionarios y radicales izquierdistas, estas soluciones de la clase dominante son las únicas vías para eliminar realmente a Trump en este momento.

Formas de luchar contra Trump y el Trumpismo

Sin embargo, hay muchas formas de luchar contra Trump y Trumpismo sobre el terreno, como derrocar símbolos racistas, luchar para abolir el Servicio de Inmigración y Aduanas, sitiar los centros de detención de inmigrantes, apoyar la actual huelga de prisioneros, luchar contra la brutalidad policial, defensa de los

derechos de las tierras nativas, exigiendo el derecho de las mujeres a la justicia reproductiva y los derechos LGBTQ, manifestaciones en contra de la guerra, etc. Todas estas son luchas justas que pueden estar directamente relacionadas con la lucha contra Trump. Pueden y deben emprenderse.

La propaganda y la agitación contra la reacción de Trump son otras vías importantes para ser usadas, especialmente a medida que las elecciones burguesas se acercan. Este es un momento en que las masas están abiertas a escuchar a la política. La izquierda real, la izquierda anticapitalista revolucionaria, puede no ser decisiva en la arena electoral, dada la actual relación de fuerzas. Algunos socialdemócratas, sin embargo, se postulan como candidatos del Partido Demócrata.

Es posible que el papel de la izquierda se lleve a cabo mejor mediante una campaña de manifestaciones y propaganda. En algunos estados, o concursos locales más probables, las fuerzas revolucionarias pueden participar en las elecciones sobre una base revolucionaria con fines de propaganda, así como para obtener representación.

La propaganda y la agitación durante la campaña actual deben elaborarse con sensibilidad. Deben tener en cuenta los sentimientos anti Trump de los indocumentados que han sufrido medidas fascistas en las fronteras, incluida la separación de las familias de sus hijos. Estas medidas fascistas no se limitan a las fronteras, sino que las lleva a cabo ICE en comunidades de inmigrantes y en lugares de trabajo en todo el país.

Esta propaganda debe tener en cuenta la ira en las ciudades y comunidades negras de todo el país contra la policía y el apoyo abierto de Trump para la brutalidad policial y el racismo confederado.

Debe reconocer que hay cerca de un millón de destinatarios de DACA (acción diferida para las llegadas de niños) que tienen la amenaza de la deportación colgando sobre sus cabezas. Además, cientos de miles, incluyendo a haitianos, hondureños, salvadoreños, nicaragüenses y otros cuyo Estatus de Protección Temporal ha sido levantado, están esperando la deportación.

Teniendo esto en cuenta, se puede diseñar una propaganda anticapitalista y pro-socialista que no solo condena a Trump, sino que también muestra que la salvación no radica en el Partido Demócrata, un partido cuyo liderazgo está inextricablemente ligado a intereses corporativos y militares.

El socialismo gana popularidad

Hay mucha discusión y publicidad sobre la creciente popularidad del término “socialismo”. Desde la campaña de Bernie Sanders en el 2016, el término se ha vuelto respetable, particularmente a medida que el capitalismo decae y trae sufrimiento y gran desigualdad a las masas. El término “socialista” recibió un impulso adicional cuando Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, una activista puertorriqueña, una aliada de Sanders y miembro de los Socialistas Democráticos de América, ganó una primaria contra un entrometido miembro del Partido Demócrata, Joe Crowley, que estaba en línea a ser nombrado presidente de la Cámara después de Nancy Pelosi. Ocasio-Cortez representará un distrito que se extiende por el Bronx y Queens.

Mientras su victoria primaria ha inspirado un gran entusiasmo entre los progresistas, también ha creado ilusiones entre muchos jóvenes, especialmente de izquierda, que están en el camino hacia hacerse cargo del Partido Demócrata y presentar un programa para erradicar la desigualdad, ganar atención médica universal, viviendas asequibles, incluso la propiedad estatal de industrias, etc. Estas ilusiones deben ser tratadas con argumentos marxistas, y no deben desdenarse despectivamente. Por ejemplo, el presidente más progresista del siglo 20, Franklin Roosevelt, sofocó el movimiento independentista en Puerto Rico en la masacre de Ponce de 1934. Roosevelt llevó al imperialismo estadounidense a la Segunda Guerra Mundial, no inicialmente contra los nazis sino contra el imperialismo japonés, y justificó el internamiento de japoneses en los Estados Unidos.

Mientras que Roosevelt es bien recordado ahora por el New Deal, que concedió algunos derechos a la clase trabajadora empobrecida en ese momento, en preparación para la guerra, Roosevelt rompió una huelga por los trabajadores la nave aérea en la costa oeste, hizo alianzas con Dixiecrats del sur, permitió que la segregación permaneciera en su lugar, incluso en el ejército, etc. ¡Y este fue el presidente más progresista del Partido Demócrata! Se enfureció contra los “realistas económicos” pero cumplió sus órdenes en el Pacífico y más tarde en Europa. Antes de entrar en la Segunda Guerra Mundial, dijo: “Sus muchachos no serán enviados a guerras en el extranjero”, hasta que los intereses imperialistas de Estados Unidos sean desafiados.

Solo la lucha ganará

¿Cómo ganó la clase trabajadora las concesiones de la administración Roosevelt? El New Deal no fue un regalo otorgado desde arriba. Se ganó a partir de manifestaciones de los desempleados en las principales ciudades; marchas de hambre; huelgas generales municipales en San Francisco, Minneapolis y Toledo en 1936; las huelgas de brazos caídos en Akron y Cleveland, que culminaron en la huelga de brazos caídos de Flint ese mismo año, lo que condujo a la organización de United Auto Workers, el Congreso de Organizaciones Industriales y la organización masiva de la clase obrera industrial.

Esta fue la fuerza que condujo a la Administración de Progreso del Trabajo, la Seguridad Social, el seguro de desempleo, el derecho de huelga y de organizar sindicatos, y muchas otras ganancias asociadas con el New Deal.

Lo mismo es cierto para la Ley de Derechos Civiles, el Acta de Derechos de Voto y otras ventajas legislativas, incluida la decisión Roe v. Wade del Tribunal Supremo y las que confirman los derechos de lesbianas y homosexuales. Fueron ganados primero en las calles del sangriento Sur y luego por rebeliones masivas y marchas en las ciudades del norte.

Los socialistas que tratan de obtener ganancias al afianzarse en el sistema electoral y el Partido Demócrata necesitan saber que los grandes pasos hacia adelante han venido de la lucha de clases: la organización militante de los trabajadores y las rebeliones de las comunidades oprimidas.

A la larga, solo la lucha de masas puede traer progreso social, y solo la revolución puede traer el socialismo. □