

# Puerto Rico strike

# Twelve days rattle the empire

By Makasi Motema

Thousands crowded in front of the governor’s mansion—La Fortaleza—as riot cops, armed to the teeth, locked shields. “The Fortress” was under siege. Here and there, the night sky was aglow with the amber light of distant flames. For 12 days, protesters stormed barricades and braved fusillades of rubber bullets, tear gas and flash grenades. Why? Their demand was the immediate abdication of the governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló.

This latest conflagration was sparked by the release of confidential text messages between the governor and his allies. His messages were loaded with homophobic and sexist language and callous “jokes” about the rising death toll following Hurricane Maria. That was the last straw.

Repeated attempts were made to storm the governor’s mansion, and crowds quickly grew from thousands to hundreds of thousands. Rosselló attempted reconciliation, vowing to stay in office but forgoing a reelection

campaign. It was not enough.

On July 22, after 10 days of agitation, Puerto Ricans launched a general strike.

Millions shut down the major highway running through San Juan. Two days later, Rosselló announced his resignation. How were the people of Puerto Rico able to unseat the governor in less than a fortnight? And what drove them?

Corporate media have focused on Rosselló, and his despicable comments, out of convenience. Attributing the blame for the current upheaval to one man’s disgusting lack of character is convenient for corporate interests. It obscures the role of finance capital in spurring the pain and anger of the Puerto Rican people. Any accurate recounting of the current crisis must begin at least as far back as 2016.

### Underpinnings of the current uprising

The Puerto Rico Management, Oversight and Economic Stability Act, or PROMESA (promise), was

enacted in 2016. PROMESA was designed by U.S. federal law to restructure the debt acquired by the Puerto Rican government over the last several decades. The plan was simple: unrelenting austerity.

The unelected PROMESA board members rolled out a plan of crushing budget cuts. Almost 200 schools were closed, pension and health care spending was reduced, and the hourly minimum wage for workers under the age of 25 was reduced to a paltry \$4.25 (compared to \$7.25 on the mainland). It was clear what was being promised — and delivered — to the Puerto Rican people: humiliation piled on top of indignity.

No peoples could endure such degradation indefinitely, nor could they survive such hardship. Under these conditions, rebellion was inevitable.

What’s worse is that Puerto Rico’s debt crisis was entirely due to the machinations of Wall Street. The Puerto Rican economy was dealt a fatal blow when the

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PHOTO: GREEN PARTY ALLIANCE OF PUERTO RICO FACEBOOK



PHOTO: PLENA COMBATIVA FACEBOOK

Top: San Juan, Puerto Rico, July 19 march.  
Left: San Juan, Puerto Rico, July 23 protest.

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Immigration time bomb

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# Freed MOVE members welcomed in Brooklyn, N.Y.

By Monica Moorehead  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Long-time MOVE supporter, Orie Lumumba, organized a welcome-home reception on July 27 for Janine Africa, Janet Africa and Eddie Africa, members of the MOVE communal family. These fighters for environmental justice and for revolution were falsely arrested and convicted in 1978 for killing a white cop in Philadelphia, when their house was attacked and destroyed by the police. The three of them, now out on parole, became known in the progressive movement as members of the MOVE 9, political prisoners sentenced to 40-100 years in prison.

Five MOVE members have been released from prison — Janine, Janet, Debbie, Eddie and Mike Africa — after spending at least 40 years or more behind bars. Two of the MOVE 9 — Merle Africa and Phil Africa, Janine’s



Monica Moorehead gifts Workers World publications featuring Mumia’s essays to Janine Africa and Janet Africa.



Orie Lumumba with Janine Africa, Janet Africa and Eddie Africa.

partner — died in prison. Delbert Africa and Chuck Africa are still incarcerated.

Delbert Africa called into the reception, held at the historic House of the Lord Church in Brooklyn, to bring greetings to the gathering of close to 50 activists and other MOVE family members. Delbert, who has a parole hearing in September, told the crowd that the Workers World newspaper he receives on a regular basis is shared and welcomed by many prisoners.

Janet, Janine and Eddie Africa told the gathering that they will not rest until all the MOVE 9 are released, along with African-American political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, also a MOVE supporter, imprisoned since 1981 for supposedly killing a white police officer. □

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Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment 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, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans

## Join us in the fight for socialism!

people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

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

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

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# Brown Berets commemorate historic march against Vietnam War

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

On the 49th anniversary of Houston’s historic Chicano Moratorium Against the Vietnam War, Brown Berets from around the country gathered in Houston and marched the same route activists took on July 26, 1970, when over 1,000 Chicanos marched through east Houston to rally against the U.S. war in Vietnam. Led by Aztec dancers, the march drew approval as people came out of neighborhood houses to welcome the marchers.

Activists came from around the country to Houston for the Brown Beret Unity Gathering, which included a formal meeting as well as the march and rally. They were from Sonoma County, Fresno and Inland Empire, all in California; from Colorado and Arizona; from Oklahoma City; Kansas City; Chicago; and from around Texas — Dallas, Houston, San Marcos, San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley.

The Unity Gathering discussed plans for the 50th anniversary of the Chicano Moratorium scheduled for next year. One month after the Houston march in 1970, another even bigger Chicano Moratorium was organized in East Los Angeles, where the crowd grew to well over 30,000 people.

The rally at Hidalgo Park began after the 100-plus people present ate lunch from a food truck serving well-seasoned tacos, beans and rice, hamburgers and hot dogs, shish kabobs, grilled jalapeños stuffed with cheese and barbeque sandwiches.

Each city attending had a Brown Beret speaker. Other speakers included Jesus Medel, the director of Museo Guadalupe Aztlan in Houston; Janie Torres, the sister of Joe Campos Torres, who was murdered by Houston cops in 1977; Bunchy Crear, chair of the Houston chapter of the Black Panther Party Alumni Association; and a Houston representative of Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE).

Torres spoke of her brother, a Vietnam veteran, who was beaten beyond recognition and thrown into a downtown bayou “as racist Houston cops laughed and said, ‘Let’s see if the w-tb-k can swim.’” Torres called for unity among all activists, saying this was the key to organizing to end oppression.

A speaker from FIRE extended solidarity with the Berets and invited all to protest the next day at the Greyhound Bus Station to call for a boycott of Greyhound until the company agrees to no longer allow the Border Patrol on their buses.

The rally ended with the Berets gathering for a group photo. Dallas Brown Beret



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Brown Berets came from around the U.S. to march in anti-war commemoration in Houston, July 26.

Leroy Peña asked all to form a heart with their hands in solidarity with the Kānaka Maoli people protecting their Mauna Kea mountain from investors and the University of Hawai’i Board of Regents who want to construct a sprawling \$1.4 billion telescope complex on this sacred land in Hawai’i. □

# Pensacola demands justice for Tymar Crawford

By Devin Cole  
Pensacola, Fla.

Tymar Crawford, a 28-year-old Black man, was shot dead in his driveway by the Pensacola Police Department on July 5. Police claimed that Crawford attempted to attack them and they shot in “self-defense.” However, Crawford’s fiancée Kimberly Henderson, and children, who were inside the house and witnessed the entire incident, say Crawford had his hands up when he was killed.

The local media are, of course, promoting the narrative of the police. Arms of the capitalist state will do anything they can to maintain a grip on the people. People aren’t fooled: Tymar Crawford was murdered!

There have been nonstop demonstrations, social media campaigns and rallies to win justice for Crawford. With the Pensacola Dream Defenders in the

lead, other groups involved in organizing these actions have been the Answer Coalition, Social Trans Initiative (Strive) and Workers World Party.

Over 600 people, mainly Black Pensacola residents, marched July 15 from Crawford’s front yard to the doors of the Pensacola Police Department. Chanting and waving signs, they shut down a lane of traffic on Cervantes Street, one of the busiest roads in downtown Pensacola. Behind those marching on foot was a steady procession of cars and trucks driven by Crawford’s family and friends.

The police did not attempt to interfere with this powerful action, even when it was brought to their front door. At the station Henderson spoke about the outpouring of love and support she has received and the desire for justice for Crawford. Dozens of cars driving by honked and waved support.

A list of demands made by Crawford’s

family was read: release the names of all cops involved in Crawford’s murder, terminate them immediately, decrease the criminalization of marijuana possession and loitering, halt random police stops in low-income neighborhoods, create an all-civilian oversight committee with a police commission and civilian complaint office, hold quarterly police training by local organizations, and financial restitution to the family of Tymar Crawford to cover funeral costs.

Pensacola Mayor Grover Robinson already agreed to some of these demands, such as decreasing the criminalization of marijuana possession and loitering, but the police department has refused to



Justice walk for Tymar Crawford, July 15. WW PHOTO: DEVIN COLE

release the names of officers involved in Crawford’s murder.

Until all demands are met, protests and disruptions will continue. Tymar Crawford will have justice, or the city of Pensacola will have no peace! □

## Sanctions kill



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Sara Flounders speaking July 23 in Philadelphia.

Over 30 countries are targeted with sanctions by the U.S., including China, Cuba, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Russia, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Sanctions are collective punishment against civilian populations. Sanctions kill. They result in chronic shortages, economic dislocation and chaotic hyperinflation. Those who impose sanctions aim to induce artificial famines, disease, poverty and despair among the most vulnerable.

In every country, the poorest and the weakest — infants, children, the chronically ill and the elderly — suffer the worst impact of sanctions.

These were just some of the points that Sara Flounders, co-coordinator of the International Action Center, spoke about in Philadelphia on July 23 at a meeting titled, "Sanctions Kill — Economic Warfare and the Migration Crisis." A seven-minute video featuring part of her talk can be seen at [tinyurl.com/y3um92sr/](https://tinyurl.com/y3um92sr/).

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

## Black, Muslim, freedom fighter Free Imam Jamil Al-Amin!

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

July 26 — The CNN Center was the site of a rally for the imprisoned freedom fighter, Imam Jamil Al-Amin, formerly known as H. Rap Brown.

A national annual gathering of Muslims initiated by Al-Amin, the Riyaadah, was taking place here and brought supporters of the political prisoner from cities across the country, including Mobile, Ala., Washington, D.C., New York City and St. Louis.

A fearless leader of SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) in the dangerously violent Jim Crow South, Brown built powerful campaigns for voting rights and local empowerment in rural Alabama in particular. He was targeted by the FBI’s infamous COINTELPRO, under constant surveillance and harassment, was forced underground and sentenced to prison in New York state, where he converted to Islam.

Following his release, he moved to Atlanta’s West End where he successfully organized the community to challenge drug dealers, corrupt cops and absentee landlords who were abusing and destroying this historic Black neighborhood.

At the rally, pedestrians were handed leaflets detailing the elements of the frame-up of the well-known activist and religious leader in the March 2000 shooting death of a Fulton County Sheriff’s deputy and the wounding of a second. Al-Amin has consistently declared his innocence of the charges. Another man, Otis Jackson, has confessed to being the shooter.

There were numerous inconsistencies in the “evidence” presented by the state, including the surviving deputy’s description of the shooter as being 5’10” with “cold grey eyes.” The deputy insisted the perpetrator had been wounded in the exchange of gunfire. The 6’5” brown-eyed Al-Amin had no injuries when he was captured, but was convicted in 2002 and sentenced to life without parole.

Fearing Al-Amin’s influence among prisoners at the state institution where he was held, Georgia turned him over to the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 2007. For the next seven years, Al-Amin was incarcerated in solitary confinement in Colorado’s supermax Florence ADX.

While his spirit has stayed strong, the years of medical neglect and harsh prison conditions have impacted Al-Amin’s health and spurred the movement to win his freedom.

The rally heard from a variety of national and local speakers, including Al-Amin’s son, Kairi, who called for a maximum effort to bring his father home because “we need his leadership now.”

There are plans for numerous educational outreach events to the public during the month of August and a national conference in Atlanta in October to mobilize a grassroots movement on his behalf.

For more information, go to [imamjamilactionnetwork.weebly.com](http://imamjamilactionnetwork.weebly.com) or write Jamil Al-Amin #99974-555, USP Tucson US Penitentiary, PO Box 24550, Tucson, AZ 85734.

*Mathiowetz was an invited speaker at the rally, representing Workers World Party.*

# West Virginia tells Trump ‘No hate in my holler!’

By Otis Grotewohl  
Wheeling, W.Va.

The bigot-in-chief, Donald Trump, attended a “fundraiser” here the evening of July 24 and was met with protests throughout the day. The event was a \$150-a-plate dinner, hosted by coal industry boss Robert Murray.

The first rally was organized by members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 1112 from nearby Lordstown, Ohio, who had just lost their jobs after the recent closing of the General Motors plant there. Speakers angrily commented that Trump had come to West Virginia to brag about how great jobs are now, but the autoworkers know: “That’s a lie. Things aren’t great.”

Braylin Rushton, a militant African-American activist within Local 1112, said to the crowd: “Trump came to Lordstown in 2016 and promised more jobs. Since that time, his policies have made it easier for corporations to flourish at the expense of working families. When GM closed,

43,000 people lost their jobs and Trump said, ‘That’s OK.’”

Later in the day, another protest of about 100 people was arranged by Marchers Ohio Valley Empowered. MOVE’s major focus was the racist mistreatment of migrant families. MOVE supplied signs and imagery calling out the current U.S. administration for incarcerating im/migrants in concentration camps.

The protest was joined by other community activists, clergy, trade unionists and members of the Industrial Workers of the World. Also present were education workers who have been fighting against privatization for the last two years. Their historic West Virginia actions ignited a national teacher fightback in 2018. Women represented the majority of those at the rally.

An Ohio Valley Pride contingent marched in to join the protest, waving rainbow flags and other flags representing the LGBTQ2S+ community. Some people had signs calling Trump out for his

misogyny, as well as his saber-rattling against Bolivarian Venezuela and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As attendees walked into the ice hockey arena where the fundraiser was being held, the angry crowd chanted: “Little kids need liberation, not your racist deportation” and “Donald Trump, you racist swine, being Muslim is not a crime.”

Dan Persina, a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, told Workers World, “Capitalism-imperialism is destroying the world through colonial plunder. As oppressed people starve, Trump is coming here today to accept an obscene amount of cash from one of the richest coal magnates.”

IWW member Michael Mochaidean stated, “While many people here have



Autoworkers from Ohio protest Trump’s corporate-friendly economic policies that cost them their jobs.

ideological differences, we are all in solidarity against Trump.”

The multinational crowd was energetic in expressing unity with their homemade signs. One read: “Trump made America hate again,” while a woman in sunglasses brandished the slogan: “Don’t be a fossil fool — Let W.Va. shine!” A nearby protester flourished a down-home sign: “No hate in my holler.” □

# North Carolina workers rally against anti-immigrant law

By Dante Strobino  
Raleigh, N.C.

Immigrant groups and union workers rallied in front of North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper’s mansion in downtown Raleigh on July 12, urging him to veto House Bill 370, the so-called “Show Me Your Papers” law.

HB 370 is an anti-immigrant bill that circumvents the local authority of sheriffs by requiring them to cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement and assist in the federal government’s deportation pipeline or face financial penalties. Passage of the bill would lead to Black and Brown people having their detention extended in jail, even after they posted bail.

The bill is blatant political retaliation against the growing number of sheriffs



WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

Workers rally in union solidarity with im/migrants, Raleigh, N.C., July 12.

across North Carolina who have pledged they will not assist ICE in targeting or detaining community members for so-called immigration offenses.

Black sheriffs were elected last fall in Wake, Durham and Mecklenburg counties after promising to end their cooperation with the federal 287(g) program, which has led to family separations, deportation of thousands, and great mistrust and fear in local communities.

Comite De Acción Popular, a group led by undocumented immigrants, organized rallies at the governor’s mansion every day during the week preceding the July 12 rally, inviting different groups to come in solidarity. On Friday, members of United Electrical Workers (UE) Local 150, N.C. Public Service Workers Union, showed up to add their voices to the struggle. □

# Twelve days rattle the empire

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manufacturing sector pulled out of the island in pursuit of lower wages. Banks swept in and bought Puerto Rican government bonds which were sold to cover budget shortfalls and provide essential services to the people.

But the economy never recovered and the debt continued to pile up. This was no concern of Wall Street. U.S. law mandates that its colonial property cannot declare bankruptcy the way mainland municipalities can. Instead, federal law forces Puerto Rico to service its debt obligations before paying for essential services. A horrible policy for the people, but excellent for bond traders.

On Aug. 31, 2016, the capitalist class launched a conference at the Condado Plaza Hilton hotel to celebrate their fiscal coup d’état. The people of Puerto Rico used the occasion to express their discontent. As WW reported at the time:

“After learning, on the eve of the protest, that police planned to prevent the demonstrators from arriving, protesters began reaching the site before dawn that day and surrounded all entrances to the hotel.

“The protesters were determined to prevent the conference at any cost ... demonstrators blocked the avenue leading to the hotel. Although it was not a massive demonstration, the demonstrators did have enough presence to successfully block the way for those trying to get to the conference.

“Protesters sat in the middle of the avenue and built barricades with stones. They surrounded those who tried to attend the conference and tried to discourage them. Many people turned around. Demonstrators also threw water at some people to discourage them from participating.

“Only a massive police presence — some demonstrators said it was triple their own number — allowed a few people to enter. ... [T]he tactics were so successful that fewer than 200 people attended the business meeting, according to media reports.” (tinyurl.com/yy56jgse)

This was a dress rehearsal for last week’s insurrection.

## Repression breeds resistance

Physical devastation soon followed financial ruin. In the fall of 2017, Hurricanes Irma and Maria struck Puerto

Rico. Although the casualty figures were initially downplayed, the rising numbers of dead and missing became too great to hide. A 2018 study in the New England Journal of Medicine calculated the total death toll at an overwhelming 4,645 people.

The hurricane response from the U.S. was callous. While states like Texas and Florida received over \$100 million in the first two weeks following severe hurricanes in those states, the U.S. forced Puerto Rico to make do with just \$9 million in the same time frame.

At every stage, the destruction of Puerto Rican life and economic stability has been planned and exacerbated by the U.S. government.

So what did Rosselló’s text messages really show? Beyond his bigotry and callousness, it was revealed to the world that money — intended to assist the recovery after Hurricane Maria — was diverted to corporate lawyers and consultants. Confidential information about government contracts was shared with Rosselló’s friends in the private sector. And just three days before the leaks, Rosselló’s former secretary of education was arrested for money laundering.

Secretary Julia Keleher, a Republican from Philadelphia, was a key figure in executing PROMESA’s brutal education cuts. Even schools for the disabled were not safe from her policy of unforgiving austerity.

The people of Puerto Rico were not just beset by sexism and homophobia, but with predatory debt and brutal austerity, climate disaster and disaster capitalism, unfeeling imperialism and humiliating colonialism. The flames of discontent had been smoldering for years before they burst forth to engulf the colonial administration of the island.

The struggle in Puerto Rico is a struggle against imperialism, and it is not likely to end now that Rosselló has resigned. In waging this struggle, the Puerto Rican people have set an example for all who struggle against oppression.

The power of the people is extraordinary, and when concentrated, no empire can resist its force.

*This article, by an Afro-Puerto Rican activist, is based on a talk at the July 25 Workers World Party meeting in New York City that addressed the theme “Fighting against Racism and for National Sovereignty.”*



## The strength of women

# Venezuelan commune members confront the blockade

By Marco Teruggi  
Caracas

*Published July 19 in Sputnik News. Translation Resumen Latinoamericano, North America bureau. Lightly edited by WW staff.*

Women in Caracas slums have a plan. They are setting up an economic system that allows them to ensure that food arrives directly from producers to their tables. Organization is key; it is what they are calling people's power.

"It looks like a star-spangled horizon at night. If you could see it when the lights are switched on," says a commune member on the roof of an unfinished house in the La Libertad neighborhood in southern Caracas. It's in the area where the hills of the poor meet green mountains, at the border at the end of the city. As usual, there is a class and political geographic division. The heights belong to the poorest—most of them Chavistas [named for late president Hugo Chavez]. The lower areas are for the lower-middle classes who are, in general, opponents of the government.

The commercial epicenter is in the lower part; a street roundabout in a neighborhood district is the most important area. Everything you need can be found there. There, the problem is about prices, as in the rest of the country. There you find retail stores, supermarkets and grocery stores. And there is a corridor in a small shopping mall where the seat of the System of Communal Socialist Economic Initiative ["the System"] was set up a month ago.

This store has packages of cornmeal, coffee, sugar, salt, laundry soap bars and shelves stocked with butter and butter-milk. There is little left. Almost all of it has been distributed, and [the commune members] are waiting for a new shipment. The previous shipment had around 14 tons of goods. This one will be bigger and will include two new products: bars of soap and wheat flour.

"One of the plans is to prove that when people are organized, mobilizing, aware, they can face the war and help to preserve

the revolution and build it with concrete actions," says commune member Yaritza Navarro, while surrounded by several women.

The System began three months ago. The need for it appeared earlier when it was evident that major problems with pricing were due to the monopoly of several products, the chain of intermediaries and speculation on behalf of many traders. The question was always how to transform the diagnosis into action.

The starting point was the conviction to move on with self-organization and the certainty of doing it while having the support of the state—or not. How do you start when you do not have capital in a scenario like Venezuela's current economy?

The diagnosis went like this: There are rural communes producing foods, and there are urban communes willing to buy them. It is necessary to build a system of a communal economy where food goes directly from the first one to the second, while at the same time staying in charge of the final distribution and pushing intermediaries and traders aside.

### Communal economy begins with coffee

The commune members started with 1,000 kilograms of coffee obtained on credit. The hardest part was to convince the commune, located in the state of Lara in the country's western area, to send that amount without prepayment, while taking care of the transportation as well. Both confidence and the legitimacy of the communes meeting in Caracas were decisive. Taking its first step, the System brought together 13 communes in one district of Caracas.

The second step was to receive the coffee without yet having a storage center. It is now open in the small shopping center. Each commune was in charge of distribution and sales, gathering the money and paying the coffee-growing commune. This primed the mechanism that allowed them to get their first capital and coffee surplus.

"With that surplus we took the risk of more links with producers and other food staples," Yaritza explained. In a scenario

of currency devaluation, the women decided to reinvest in more products, as it's better to have food than money. They used the surplus on an essential tool: a communal truck, as theirs was broken and they did not have money to repair it.

### People's power in action

The System of Communal Socialist Economic Initiative started. It was designed to deal with three elements at the same time: economics, organization and politics. The goal was never to open a store to trade products from rural communes, but to strengthen every territorial organizational means through concrete actions. This is called people's power.

Commune member Luisa Gragirena showed me a copy of the Organic Law on Communal Economy and explained: "This is our foundation. Our beloved president Hugo Chávez left us the legal platform so that we, as people's power, develop and break the schemes of the capitalist system. It is not easy, of course, but it's not impossible."

Luisa read: "The present law aims at developing and strengthening people's power, establishing the norms, principles and procedures for the creation, operation and development of the communal economic system ... to satisfy the collective needs and reinvest the surplus socially by means of strategic, democratic and participatory planning."

There is no communal economy without people's organization, without building democratic bodies to participate and make decisions. In the System, the members decided that this main body meets every Wednesday at 3 p.m. Commune representatives meet, evaluate, plan and decide.

For instance, last Wednesday, they presented new products that will be included in the next operation. These products are manufactured by the Family Production Unit represented by Rosa Melendez, a commune member from Caricuao in southwestern Caracas: It has soap, shampoo and hair conditioner. So far, they



Yaritza Navarro, La Libertad, Venezuela. PHOTO: MARCO TERUGGI

have manufactured 4,000 bars of soap a month. They expect to reach 20,000 per month through the funding and shops provided by the System.

The target is to move toward production: "We are going to fund certified seeds, and according to the land, we are going to boost productive units. By December, we will be able to eat our green onions, bell peppers and the vegetables used for our traditional food at Christmas," Yaritza explains.

### Next steps in fighting the blockade

Every step has been achieved by means of organization. The commune members expect to set up storage centers in every commune section of the System, add two new items in every new dispatch and add more communes. They aim to achieve communal chains that may be sustained in this context, so that it ensures a fair income for producers and reinvestment of the surplus.

[The organizers] have achieved a strategic gain in three months: guaranteeing products to provide the breakfasts eaten in poor neighborhoods — coffee, arepa, butter and now buttermilk, which had disappeared from the market. They still lack cheese and animal protein sources; obtaining them is one of their goals.

The commune members have many goals. They—most of them women—have a strong will to face their difficult moments collectively. Chavism here has one of its clearest meanings—in each of these women, in communal councils, communes and the System. There are thousands like Yaritza and Luisa across the country.

As we said goodbye, they said, "It's good that people know how Venezuelans are fighting against the economic blockade." □

## WW Commentary

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

*This column by political prisoner and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal was written on June 14.*

Several days ago, after discussion with sister Suzanne, I began thinking about a piece on the women of MOVE. This seemed especially timely after the recent release of several MOVE sisters: Debbie, Janet and Janine Africa.

These women spent over 40 years in Pennsylvania's prisons, some spent in the notorious Holes, for protest against what they called unjust treatment.

These women weren't strangers to me, for I interviewed some of them in the '70s, when they lived in the "old" MOVE House on Powelton Avenue, not far from Drexel University. Some of them I interviewed when they were held in the old House of Corrections in the Northeast.

Forty-plus years had passed—and



From left to right: Janine Africa, Ramona Africa and Janet Africa, Philadelphia, May 30.

PHOTO: WHY

## Women of the Revolution: MOVE

behold!—these were the same women. Older? Yes, but not by much.

But I'm wrong. An honest look reveals they are more committed, more dedicated than the young women who entered these cells over 40 years ago! And, seeing pictures of them, I'm forced to make another observation: They are more beautiful than they were 40 years ago.

This may seem hard to believe, but see for yourself; it is what it is.

And speaking of MOVE women, I don't think it's widely known, the simple but telling fact that the administrators of MOVE are women. They, essentially, lead the Organization.

We don't see this example in the broader movement, unless it's a women's organization.

For discipline, commitment, steadfastness—and will—the women of the MOVE Organization have set a high bar, for they are women of John Africa's Revolution! □



## WW Commentary

# Immigration time bomb is ticking

By Teresa Gutierrez

The foremost motivation of Donald Trump's immigration policy is racist terror, blatant cruelty and the promotion of social divisions so ominous they can only be characterized as white supremacist.

Im/migrant workers have historically been victims of super exploitation. They have been used by the capitalists as cheap, exploitable and vulnerable labor. That is nothing new in the U.S.

But today, as capitalism is in its death throes, they are also used as pawns in the rush for power by Trump and the extreme right wing.

Fortunately, more and more people are rising up to resist these divisions and are defending migrants as never before.

These opposing stands are a ticking time bomb. What is reality today can disappear tomorrow. How much further Trump will go will depend on the people of this country.

In fact, this is a good time to reflect on the massive demonstrations against the war in Vietnam and the phenomenal mobilizations for the Civil Rights and Black and Brown liberation movements of the 1960s. That period speaks to the long history in this country of everyday folks organizing to end wars abroad and demanding social change at home.

These movements had an impact. They made history. Indeed, they changed the political climate. They are a great example of the old adage that it does not matter who is in the White House or in the courts — what really matters is who and how many are in the streets.

It is also a good time to recall that it was in this country that May Day and International Working Women's Day were born, out of the struggles of the mighty U.S.



working class.

It is time to make this kind of history again, because the time bomb of the struggle between capitalism and a solution to this voracious system is also ticking away.

### Trump digs in

On July 22, white, Black and Brown neighbors in Hermitage, Tenn., near Nashville, formed a human chain around their neighbor's van to prevent Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents from taking a Latino father into custody. This is a wonderful sign of growing resistance and true solidarity.

This kind of action will need to be multiplied a million-fold as President Donald Trump digs in.

Facing reelection, Trump continues to appeal to his reactionary nativist base to whip up xenophobia and racism. Indeed, Trump has resorted to fascist-like tactics, including strong-arming Central American politicians to do what he demands — or else.

Not only has he attempted to sidestep international laws — such as the right to asylum — but he has demanded that ICE enforce tactics that ignore laws on migrant workers already on the books.

After three years in office, Trump's immigration policies have resulted in conditions that the Guardian described on July 26 as: "Fear, confusion, despair: the everyday cruelty of a border immigration court."

Even though fewer than 50 workers were picked up after Trump's big announcement in June that massive raids would take place, the announcement itself served its purpose.

"Some clients will no longer leave their homes to attend counseling sessions or doctor's appointments, or even to go to the grocery store," wrote Leslie Peña-Sullivan, a New York-based therapist who works primarily with immigrants and refugees who've experienced trauma. (Vice, July 24)

The therapist concluded, "There is not a difference in the psychological effect of the threat of the raid and experiencing a raid in real life."

The upside of the announcement, however, is that not only immigrant rights groups but also everyday people began to think of ways to stop this terror. "Know your rights" forums exploded across the country, especially in the 10 cities targeted by ICE in June.

In fact, after the solidarity chain in Hermitage, the Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition held a forum in Nashville that attracted an unexpectedly large turnout.

TIRRC organizer Lisa Sherman-Nickolaus told the Nashville Tennessean July 27: "This really is a turning point for our community. It's clear that Nashvillians want to learn more about what they can do and what our city can do to protect our neighbors, our family and our friends."

We should keep in mind that this is not New York City or San Francisco where the movement for migrant rights tends to be stronger. This is in the South where racism and repression have the longest history. This is a big thumbs down to Trump and his instigation of fascist racism.

But that extreme racist view is not just in the South.

The Texas Tribune reported July 26 that Donald Trump Jr. attended an event organized by the extreme right in Sunland Park, N.M. Also attending was ultra-reactionary Stephen Bannon.

The event, called the "Symposium at the Wall," was organized by We Build the Wall, a grouping of white supremacists who raised millions through GoFundMe and built part of the wall on the same private land where the symposium took place.

Imagine if it was not white supremacists but white, Black and Brown people together raising a Tear Down the Wall campaign on GoFundMe. How quick the FBI would shut down that account!

Trump Jr. used the occasion to defend his father's actions as well as "warn against the spread of socialism."

Little does Trump Jr. realize that Trump Sr.'s actions are creating the very conditions that grow the fight for socialism.

But these emboldened fascist elements will not crawl back under the rock they came from if Trump loses the 2020 election.

### 'An opportunity to rock this system!'

The horrendous conditions for migrants being brought to light have exposed the core of the foundations of this country. On one side are the elite few who have built or benefited from capitalism, racism and colonialism, from anti-im/migrant exploitation since day one of this country.

On the other side are the millions of people who either go to work each day or go look for work each day.

This contradiction is irreconcilable. Trump's immigration horrors are exposing the capitalist system like never before. What an opportunity to rock this system to its core!

The Washington Post published an article July 24 headlined: "Migrants risk it all seeking asylum. The answer in court is almost always 'no.'"

It is one of thousands of articles you read that you can end up crying about. But wipe those tears away.

The same article reported that on a mural in Ciudad Juarez, across from El Paso, Texas, a worker had spray-painted in huge letters "Neither delinquents or illegals — we are international workers."

We must get that message out far and wide. From Texas to Tennessee, from New Mexico to New York, from California to the Carolinas, everyone must realize we are part of the same international working class.

We are the only ones who can stop Trump and his ilk dead in their tracks. □

# ICE OFF OUR BUSES

## End Greyhound collaboration with ICE!



**Friday, August 23rd  
6 p.m.**

**Port Authority  
(8th Ave and 42nd)  
New York City**



**FightForMigrants.org**  
**Facebook.com/Fightformigrants**

**PeoplesPowerAssemblies.org**  
**Twitter: @PPAssemblies**  
**IG: PeoplesPowerAssemblyNYC**  
**Facebook.com/PeoplesPowerAssemblies**



**LaundryWorkersCenter.org**

# Houston FIRE protests Greyhound–ICE connection

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

After quickly and quietly giving out “Know Your Rights” leaflets to every passenger in the Greyhound waiting room here on July 27, and before security could figure out what was happening, activists walked out of the station and set up a picket line outside the terminal where they held a street meeting, urging people to boycott Greyhound.

Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE) called the action.

Greyhound security immediately ordered activists to leave or threatened that they would call Houston police. The FIRE spokesperson responded, saying that security could call the police, but no one was leaving because they were on public property, had a right to be there and riders needed to hear their message.

Activists continued to hand out the bilingual flyers and speak on a bullhorn.

Passengers going into and coming out of the terminal eagerly took flyers and listened to the speakers. Many asked questions. The Greyhound terminal is on Main Street, just outside of downtown Houston, and the passengers were a very multinational group of working-class people.

Demonstrators gave out hundreds of flyers and held discussions on the issues with both passengers and employees. Most riders were surprised that Border Patrol agents would even get on a bus, and all were glad to learn that they didn’t have to show any documentation, whatever their status.

When two carloads of cops arrived, Greyhound security told them to tell protesters to leave. As the cops explained that protesters could be outside as long as



WW PHOTO: MIRINDA CRISSMAN

Picket line set up by activists from F.I.R.E. (Fighting for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere) at Houston Greyhound station, July 27.

they weren’t blocking people from entering or exiting, the deflated security guards backed off.

Several Greyhound employees came out to ask questions. Activists asked one bus driver if his union had taken a position on Border Patrol agents getting on buses. He said he didn’t know, but he was going to take photos of the demonstrators and give the flyers to the union to find out. He said he didn’t feel Border Patrol should be allowed on his bus.

FIRE heard no negative comments about immigrants. Activist Mirinda Crissman said, “We were pleased that we didn’t encounter any Trump supporters or people who had bought into his racism about migrants and refugees. People were receptive to our information.”

After a while, the head security guard

came out and apologized for his loud, confrontational attitude. He had never encountered demonstrators before and just assumed a loud group couldn’t be outside Greyhound’s door.

“Now our task is to find out if there are any buses people can take as an alternative to Greyhound. That way we can refer passengers to other carriers,” said FIRE organizer Tania Siddiqi. “This is a good bus station to be at. People are receptive and responded with many questions.” She suggested we get the “Know Your Rights” information translated into several other languages. Another activist suggested holding an action at Greyhound’s corporate office in Dallas.

Houston FIRE organizers say this new campaign will continue. □

# Fourth immigrant dies in Georgia detention center

By Arielle Robinson  
Atlanta

Pedro Arriago-Santoya died July 24 while detained in a South Georgia Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility. Arriago-Santoya was 44 years old and from Mexico. His cause of death was listed as heart infection and multiple organ failure.

Arriago-Santoya is the fourth migrant since 2017 to die while detained at Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Ga.

About two hours south of Atlanta, Stewart Detention Center is recognized among Georgia organizers for its mistreatment and medical neglect of immigrant detainees.

In 2017, a Panamanian migrant named Jean Jiménez-Joseph hanged himself there after being placed in solitary confinement. Last year, a Mexican detainee named Efrain De La Rosa also hanged himself there after being placed in solitary confinement.

In the cases of Jiménez-Joseph and De La Rosa, both of whom struggled with schizophrenia and were on “suicide watch” in the facility, employees at Stewart failed to monitor both men as

often as they were mandated to.

Federal guidelines say that immigrants in solitary confinement are supposed to be observed every 30 minutes. Inmates who are suicidal should be watched every 15 minutes. Stewart employees did not look into De La Rosa’s cell until two hours had passed before finding his body.

Cuban detainee Yulio Castro Garrido died of pneumonia in 2018 inside Stewart. After his death, ICE claimed that Garrido refused medical treatment. Weeks later, ICE changed its original statement, claiming that Garrido did not respond well to medical treatments.

In addition to inadequate health care, detainees in the center also report maggots in the food, sweltering hot temperatures and difficulty obtaining translators.

Phones used to communicate with lawyers often break, so detainees are left with little to no legal assistance at times. Lawyers, who are forced to travel hours from Atlanta to the isolated facility, are sometimes denied access to their clients.

Immigrants rights groups are calling for the closure of Stewart Detention Center, a facility they consider complicit in the active oppression and deaths of im/migrants. □

# Central New York ‘stands against racism’



Coming out against racism in Syracuse, N.Y., July 23.

WW PHOTO: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

Under the slogan “CNY Stands Against Racism,” about 50 people gathered in downtown Syracuse to protest the virulent U.S. racism that enforces life-threatening im/migrant camps, the deadly prison-industrial complex and the unjust criminal “justice system.” One speaker pointed out that all these structures break up families and attack the most vulnerable.

The protest specifically targeted local U.S. Rep. John Katko, a Republican who refused to vote for the recent House amendment denouncing President Trump as a racist for his white supremacist remarks about four congresswomen of color. The rally emcee, Kayla Kelechian, from the Workers’ Center of Central New York, said: “We see these four women whom he attacked, all from different backgrounds. Some natives here, some who came here when they were younger. He’s attacking everybody. Racism is not

just an immigrant issue. It’s here at the local level as well.”

A speaker who identified himself as being from the local Jewish community emphatically said that they had seen this path before, the condemnation and punishment of an entire people, and he was there to emphasize: “Never Again Is Now.” To drown out passing hecklers, the crowd repeatedly chanted: “Close the camps, close the camps!” and “The people united shall never be defeated/¡el pueblo unido jamás será vencido!”

The rally was sponsored by the WCCNY, Syracuse Immigrant and Refugee Defense Network, CNY Solidarity Coalition, New York Immigration Coalition, Public Citizen and Syracuse Cultural Workers.

— Report and photo by  
Minnie Bruce Pratt

# Northeast Ohio says ‘Never again’



Over 100 members of the Jewish community and allies demonstrated July 23 in northeast Ohio outside the Geauga County Safety Center, used by Immigration and Customs Enforcement to detain immigrants. Among them were Holocaust survivors and their children, doctors, educators and many

youth, including organizer Lexi Stovsky. Protesters chanted “Never Again” and carried many homemade signs with slogans, including “Abolish ICE” and “No human being is illegal on stolen land.”

— Report and photo by Martha Grevatt



WW Commentary

# Mauna Kea Protectors vs. corporate profiteers

By Stephanie Hedgecock

*This article is based on a talk given at the July 25 Workers World Party meeting.*

The long-smoldering fight of the Kānaka Maoli people to save sacred Mauna Kea in Hawai‘i blew up like a volcano on July 17 when work crews arrived to begin construction on the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT). Elders, some using wheelchairs, strollers or canes, demanded to be taken to the front line to be arrested.

The blockade forced work stoppage of dozens of astronomers and researchers. Since the arrests of 35 people on July 17, thousands of Hawaiians have blocked all access to the mountain. They oppose further damage and desecration of the mountain, on which 13 smaller telescopes have been constructed since 1960. Each one was called “the last telescope.”

Hawai‘i Gov. David Ige signed an emergency proclamation threatening Mauna Kea Protectors with police and National Guard. Over 2,000 Kānaka Maoli turned out in response to the arrests and threats to pack the base of the mountain.

Gov. Ige attacked the Protectors again on July 19, alleging illegal activity, but local media reported that the opposite was the case. KHON2 TV news stated: “There are absolutely no signs of drugs or alcohol. No one is even allowed to smoke here.” (July 20) The media reported that a great number of volunteers, seasoned organizers, were feeding thousands daily meals and snacks from free kitchens, running medical tents, recycling, cleaning porta potties and hauling trash.

Volunteers told KHON2 that anyone who comes into the Pu‘uhonua is welcome. Pu‘uhonua means “place of refuge of Honaunau”; it is the ancestral home of the Kamehameha dynasty. The Honaunau regards itself as sovereign under international law, as the successor government to the independent Kingdom of Hawai‘i, not subject to U.S. law. The base camp is now a community of learning. Activist professors have set up Pu‘uhuluhulu University with 20 classes a day on Hawaiian culture and language.

KHON2 reported that the resolve of the Ku Kia‘i Mauna, guardians of the mountain, grows stronger every day. The Star Advertiser has called the struggle a “boiling point.”

The TMT Corporation and the University of Hawai‘i planned this \$1.4 billion telescope and related facilities to be 18 stories high and to cover the size of six football fields — far larger than previously opposed projects. Community resistance has blocked the massive project for years. Earlier projects left toxic waste and seepage onsite.

## Sacred site on stolen land

Mauna Kea is part of stolen crown lands. Queen Lili‘uokalani of Hawai‘i was overthrown in 1893 by a cabal of sugar planters and settler businessmen. Two years later the U.S. annexed Hawai‘i as a territory; it was made the 50th state in 1959.

Mauna Kea was targeted for development because it’s the tallest mountain in the Hawaiian chain, with a summit 13,803 feet above sea level, the highest point in Hawai‘i. That makes the dry, mostly cloud-free skies there less affected by city light pollution. Most of the dormant volcano is

underwater. When measured from its oceanic base, it’s the tallest mountain in the world, some 32,808 feet high. It is about a million years old and is the second largest in subaerial surface area of the five shield volcanoes on the Big Island. Meanwhile, the TMT corporation has an alternate site selected in the Canary Islands on La Palma. Spain wants the project.

Mauna Kea is unique for its rare indigenous plants and animals. It has deep significance to Hawaiians and all Pacific Islanders. National Geographic honored it in a special edition in January 2011, titled, “The Earth’s Holiest Places: Sacred Journeys.” It’s a sacred place for Kānaka Maoli and all Polynesian Nations. It represents creation, the embodiment of ancestors, a burial ground. It is home to 100 archeological sites, hundreds of cultural sites, and historic and still-used shrines, three of which are directly endangered.

On the blockade’s first day, July 15, Protectors spent over 11 hours at the cattle guard on the access road. Kānaka Maoli Protector and professor at the University of Hawai‘i, Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, stood arm-in-arm with other wahine (women) to protect the kūpuna (elders) from heavily armed officers. She said, “The kūpuna there had made a line and wanted to be a first line of defense.” (High Country News, July 25)

Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua raised three grounds for opposition to TMT: Mauna Kea is sacred, it is the watershed for Hawai‘i Island’s fresh water supply, and it is a burial ground. It is unceded, unrelinquished, stolen Hawaiian land. Further, it is zoned for conservation to protect and preserve natural resources necessary for the survival of the people. The plan for the 30-meter telescope meets the definition of a “genocidal occupation.”

## Protect the Earth, not profits!

There are online discussions of Native Hawaiians about the root of the problem being the construct of the U.S. judicial system in dealing with Indigenous issues — that it is rooted in colonizers’ views on spirituality which are restricted

to organized, class-society-based religion. Indigenous peoples have deep connections with the land and relations with all forms of life. Such kinship doesn’t translate well in class society, which is intolerant of colonized peoples and regards them as “lesser than” or “uncivilized.”

Capitalist culture places no intrinsic value on Mother Earth, the biosphere and life on Earth, clean water and air, indigenous animals, plants and natural habitats. Capitalists only value life for the profits they can make. Their values are therefore diametrically opposed to those of Indigenous peoples worldwide.

Significantly, nearly 1,000 astronomers have signed a letter, as of July 28, opposing the imposition of this project on the Hawaiian people. They raised concerns about sovereignty and intrusions on Indigenous lands. The letter cites past environmental racism and “white colonizers’ obsessions with conquest.” (tinyurl.com/yxulf4lu)

Chanda Prescod-Weinstein, an astrophysicist at the University of New Hampshire, who signed the letter, stated, “What’s facilitated [scientific] access [to Mauna Kea] is American colonialism on kānaka ‘ōiwi land in what we call the state of Hawai‘i. It is the American state apparatus that continues to play a role in enforcing astronomer access to the Mauna, for example, with the police forces this week arresting the kūpuna, the elders, who took great physical risk to protect their family.” (earther.gizmodo.com, July 18)

## Resistance is growing

On July 19, students at the University of California, Berkeley demonstrated with visiting Pacific Islander students, Indigenous rights groups and elders to demand that the UC system divest from TMT, as well as other local investors. Principal investors in TMT are Gordon Moore, Silicon Valley venture capitalist, along with the California Institute of Technology.

TMT is a for-profit project. The state of Hawai‘i and the University of Hawai‘i have made millions of dollars from such

projects. It’s racist to allege that the Kānaka Maoli oppose astronomy when Pacific Islanders have practiced astronomy for ages. They navigated the Pacific Ocean by the stars.

Kānaka Maoli Bria Tennyson, a Berkeley student, answered the false claim that Native Hawaiians oppose science: “Our very identity as a people is based on studying the stars. That’s how we got to Hawaii (in the first place).” Thousands marched in Waikiki, Hawai‘i, on July 20. And on July 21, an organization of Asian-Pacific Islander gay and trans people demonstrated in New York’s Union Square.

Protests spread to the tourism industry: Organizers called for a one-day tourism boycott Monday, July 22, and several businesses cooperated and closed, canceling tours and more. A majority of tourists understood.

Hawai‘i Lt. Gov. Josh Green met with Kānaka Maoli on July 22, attempting a compromise. But he left speaking about the Hawaiian peoples’ visions of their own future. Some state representatives and city council members have asked Gov. Ige to rescind his emergency proclamation, stating it violates the spirit of the law.

## 60-day moratorium won

Hilo County Council passed a resolution on July 24 in support of state Sen. Kai Kahele’s call for a 60-day moratorium on building TMT, despite Gov. Ige’s push for it to begin.

The following testimony and more was given to the council about decades of mistreatment of the Hawaiian people and their lands. Kamanawa Kinimaka, descended from the royal guard for King Kalakaua, said, “Our land is dying, and it’s not just in Hawai‘i. What the Hawaiian represents is a symbol of the Indigenous Native people of our world. The Hawaiian people have been refined into a fine diamond of symbolism.” (West Hawaii Today, July 28)

In addition, Ikaika Marzo stated, “TMT is just a match after so many years of gasoline being poured on our ground.” Millicent Cummings called TMT “an act of war to the mauna and the kanaka.” And Robert Yamada stressed, “TMT is the catalyst. It’s the line in the sand. Do not cross that line.”

Actor Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, who grew up on Oahu and is of Samoan heritage, met with kūpuna and organizers at the Mauna Kea Access Road on July 24. He said, “It’s beautiful, it’s inspiring. ... It’s bigger than a telescope. It’s humanity. It’s a culture. It is a people, our people, our Polynesian people, who are willing to die here to protect our land.” (Hawaii News Now, July 24)

Marxists and Marcyists understand that this battle, along with the struggle in Puerto Rico, is part of the struggle against the legacy of settler-colonialism. It shows what we mean by support for self-determination. The Kānaka Maoli should decide about any development on their islands.

The Hawai‘i Community Bail Fund for Protectors of the Mauna Kea is linked to iacenter.org. Support the Kia‘i!

*Hedgecock is of Huron/French Canadian, English, Irish, Scottish, Portuguese and mixed Southeastern Native heritage.*



Mauna Kea Protectors graphic.



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

The New York branch of Workers World Party held a July 25 forum on the theme “Fighting against racism and for national sovereignty.” The panel of speakers were, left to right, Monica Moorehead, editor of “Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle,” discussing “The struggle against national oppression vs. Trump’s white supremacy”; Stephanie Hedgecock, WWP organizer, discussing “Kānaka Maoli block construction on sacred land in Hawai‘i”; and Makasi Motema, People’s Power Assemblies NYC organizer, discussing “Issues tied to the uprising in Puerto Rico.”



# Prison officials turn away thousands of petitions for Mumia

By Joe Piette

Dozens of community activists traveled hundreds of miles from four states to Mechanicsburg, Pa., on July 24 to deliver petitions signed by 3,000 people from around the world, simply requesting the right to proper vision care for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. They expected at the very least that someone with authority in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections would step out to accept the petitions.

The PA DOC instead placed several burly Capitol District cops and a couple of DOC staff members outside the front doors to “greet” the community representatives.

The activists fighting for Abu-Jamal’s freedom — representing a global movement for the freedom of all political prisoners — insisted on their right to speak to John Wetzel, head of the state prison authority or one of his near-equals, before handing over the signatures from thousands of Mumia supporters.

## Agreement to meet

Outside the main doors of the state facility, the first of two non-uniformed men to speak to the activists was a Mr. Barnacle. When Pam Africa, representing the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, asked who he was, he pulled out a badge marked “staff,” dated 2018. When told someone with real authority and current identification was needed, Barnacle eventually agreed to allow three participants to enter the building to deliver the petitions to a DOC official.

While the assembled activists waited to be joined by people in two additional vehicles from New York City, Megan Malachi, from REAL Justice, read the petition to the press titled “Act Now to Save Mumia’s Eyesight and to Demand His Release.” ([tinyurl.com/y4s3ekpr](https://tinyurl.com/y4s3ekpr))

Aminata Sandra Calhoun, from Mobilization4Mumia, followed with a statement from Mumia’s medical proxy, Rev. Mark Taylor, a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, serving presently as Mumia’s “spiritual advisor.” The statement read in part:

“So far, the prison officials are discouraging and making complicated the eye-doctor’s ability to share with me the medical information that Mumia wants me to have. They have not scheduled his surgery. Every cooperative effort on these matters is being made by Mumia’s family and friends; still there is too much stalling by prison officials.

“We insist that SCI-Mahanoy and the PA DOC honor every legal step that Mumia needs to be taken, so that he receives quality eye-care immediately. He must no longer be subject to medical neglect or to any withholding of full information about his medical condition.

“The abuse Mumia suffered in the past nearly killed him, and even when finally addressed left him with cirrhosis of the liver. There is time for PA officials to turn a new corner.” ([tinyurl.com/yxvmabkr](https://tinyurl.com/yxvmabkr))

Abu Jamal has a lot of trouble reading and doing other tasks that require good eyesight. His eyesight is seriously threatened by glaucoma, a vitreous detachment and cataracts in both eyes. These jeopardize his quality of life and wellbeing, as well as his journalistic profession.

The ophthalmologist whom Abu-Jamal was taken to



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

**Activists about to leave for prison headquarters in Mechanicsburg, Pa., on July 24, say, “Accept our petitions! Free Mumia!”**

see outside Mahanoy Prison recommends surgical procedures to remove the cataracts on both eyes.

But months of delays echo the years of delays Abu-Jamal experienced before the DOC was finally forced by a federal court to treat him with the cure for hepatitis C in 2018.

## DOC reneges on agreement

When three designated activists — Dr. Suzanne Ross, Rev. Keith Collins and a videographer — later tried to enter the DOC state headquarters, they were met by another DOC staff member, Ken Smith, who claimed he was a Major in “Special Operations,” but would not show any valid identification to that effect.

Smith then reneged on the earlier agreement and said he would take the petitions, but would not allow the representatives to enter the building and meet with a DOC official.

The activists were unbending in their demand that a valid DOC person of authority formally accept, “on the record,” the inch-thick bundle at a location inside the building.

Dr. Ross, designated as one of the petition delivery trio, told Smith: “The DOC has already failed from 2015 to 2017 to make available to Mumia the cure that was available for hep C at that time. The two-year delay left Mumia with cirrhosis of the liver [and other hep C-related damage]. Mumia supporters are determined to prevent the damage that could be caused by a comparable delay in treating his visual problems ... . We’ve been here before and met with people. One time it was with the head of the press office. Send us the press officer.”

Rev. Keith Collins, who visited Mumia on July 4 and was also appointed to deliver the petitions, said: “I’m a pastor, a decorated veteran, a paratrooper, also an ex-cop ... . We just want to deliver these petitions ... . Mumia told me he can see to get around but not to read and that’s very important — for a journalist to read and to study ... . So we’re here ... to get him access to the doctor ... and to let him come home. He’s served forty years for a crime he did not commit.”

Despite arguing for over an hour, the activists could not get the DOC to relent. Because of the commotion and locked doors, when a FedEx worker tried to deliver a package, no one on the outside would sign for it, and he was told to come back another time.

Yet the DOC wanted petitions from 3,000 people to be handed over to undesignated staff, off the record, with no way of tracking the petitions, which could immediately be trashed.

Finally, Abu-Jamal’s supporters marched away, but not before Pam Africa said: “We’re leaving now, but it’s not over. Wetzel, we’re going to find out wherever you be at, cause there ain’t no power like the power of the people.” The group left chanting, with the petitions in Rev. Collins’ hands, undelivered.

## Legal struggle continues

The DOC’s refusal to meet with community representatives comes less than a week after the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower-court decision that Corrections Department employees could be sued for their decisions regarding the 65-year-old Mumia. Abu-Jamal asserts his initial denial of treatment with two antiviral drugs for hepatitis C violated his constitutional right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. In an unprecedented January 2017 decision, Federal District Court Judge Robert Mariani used that argument to order the DOC to treat Abu-Jamal with direct-acting antiviral medications for his hep C infection.

Abu-Jamal’s supporters argue that because deliberate delay resulted in Mumia’s cirrhosis of the liver and because the current delay in cataract surgery may cause further deterioration in his overall health, he should immediately be released to seek treatment that the DOC refuses to make readily available to him.

Abu-Jamal is not alone in enduring these cruel and unusual assaults on his health. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the number of state prisoners age 55 or older increased 400 percent between 1993 and 2013. Across the nation elderly prisoners experience a torturous journey toward the end of their lives, suffering from life-threatening illnesses without adequate treatment or any “compassionate release.” Abu-Jamal’s appeals for his right to treatment and for his release could result in increased rights for the freedom of all prisoners experiencing cruel and unusual conditions.

Abu-Jamal is serving a life sentence in the Pennsylvania prison system. The sentence, for the alleged 1981 murder of a Philadelphia policeman, came down in the context of a corruption-ridden and racist police department. That sentence has been declared unfair by human rights organizations and prison activists the world over.

Although Abu-Jamal has suffered a travesty of justice in the denial of his many appeals over the years, now both the Philadelphia District Attorney and the courts have recognized his right to have his appeals re-argued. This was determined by a momentous decision by Common Pleas Court Judge Leon Tucker in December 2018. Abu-Jamal is currently waiting for his Post Conviction Relief Act appeals to be reheard before a new panel of Pennsylvania Superior Court judges.

While the PA DOC remains resistant to giving Abu-Jamal his full rights to timely health care, and while the political powers in Pennsylvania continue to vilify him, Abu-Jamal and his supporters remain strong and energized by his recent court victories. □

# A Filipino rallying cry in New York: ‘Oust Duterte!’

On July 22, in pouring rain, several dozen people occupied the sidewalk in front of the Philippine

Consulate in midtown Manhattan to protest the corrupt, brutal and genocidal rule of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte. The People’s State of the Nation Address was part of a globally coordinated day of protests, from the Philippines to Europe and the Americas, in condemnation of Duterte’s “State of the Nation” address the night before.



PHOTO: MALAYA MOVEMENT

**Puppet Duterte is ousted by People’s Power during a July 22 performance in Washington, D.C., part of a global day of protest called by Filipino organizations.**

Representatives of local chapters of Filipino organizations such as Anakbayan, Gabriela and Malaya Movement, as well as local allies such as Harlem Solidarity and Defense, spoke out against Duterte’s policies. They highlighted his deadly “drug war,” the military and economic alliance with U.S. imperialism, and the

targeted killings of revolutionaries and such oppressed minorities as the Lumad people in the southern island of Mindanao. Demands were raised to end the killings, end U.S. military occupation, and provide proper education and health care to all people in the Philippines.

Duterte and his administration were recognized as continuing the neocolonial domination of the Philippines, a supposedly independent democratic state, by exploitative corporate interests and the U.S. government. Connections were also drawn to the ongoing uprisings demanding independence from the U.S for the peoples of Puerto Rico and Hawai’i.

Cultural performers danced, sang, chanted and symbolically destroyed a paper-maché bust of Duterte before raising a banner reading “Oust Duterte!” — their rallying cry — at the entrance of the consulate.

— Report by Cosmia Bohannan-Blumke



# Mueller and wishful thinking

Anyone who clung to the illusion that Robert Mueller’s July 22 testimony before the House Judiciary and Intelligence committees would put POTUS in a pickle had to be disappointed.

Now it should be clear: There will be no shortcut to pushing the president back, let alone smashing his reactionary racist policies. And Mueller, as we have written before, is about the last person — and from the last place — you would expect help in this regard.

He was the director of the FBI, one of the most regressive and repressive state institutions. The FBI hounded Black Liberation organizations, Civil Rights leaders and communists in various stages of its history. The FBI in the 21st century hasn’t changed its stripes — or its politics.

Mueller focused his investigation solely on alleged collusion between #45 and Russia. That in itself shows the weakness and limitations of a nearly two-year pursuit. If Mueller’s investigation had produced evidence of serious collusion, U.S.

imperialism would just have another pretext to target the Russian state. Mueller has managed to do this without weakening the Trump gang.

Fahrad Manjoo wrote an op-ed for the New York Times on July 25 that homed in on what #45 really deserves to be impeached for, should he ever be impeached: racism.

And Manjoo wasn’t the only analyst to focus on the president’s overt racism and white supremacy that, along with xenophobia, misogyny and anti-LGBTQ2S+ bigotry, is the bedrock of his 2020 election campaign. This view was widely expressed shortly before and immediately following Mueller’s testimony.

Mainstream Democratic Party leaders are reluctant to impeach POTUS, whether for collusion, obstruction, emoluments or racism. They say the Republican majority in the Senate will shoot it down. Nancy Pelosi and company look to run the 2020 election with a centrist program. There is no evidence, however, that a politician of

the Hillary Clinton variety can win, nor that electing a moderate Democrat will put the brakes on war, layoffs, wage cuts or police violence.

**A real pushback against the Trump agenda**

The news for the week might have been all grim if there had not been movement from the grassroots — and that’s where the greatest challenge to POTUS and his policies can arise. First Trump threatened that Immigration and Customs Enforcement would round up 2 million migrants, then cut the target to 2,000.

But what happened? Migrants and those in solidarity with them mobilized to educate everyone about their rights — especially the right not to open your home or a car to ICE officials who come without warrants. ICE announced, in the end, they had arrested 35 people. Trump had boasted 2 million would be sent home.

The solidarity movement had its high moment in Nashville, Tenn., when a

family in a car was threatened by ICE agents. People in the neighborhood formed a human chain encircling the car, putting their bodies between the agents and their victims — who this time were not victims but resisters. Previously, a similar action by churchgoers in North Carolina held off an arrest and deportation of an undocumented person.

If we in the working-class and progressive movements aim to get rid of Trump because we hate his policies, we can’t just look for a seemingly more reasonable version of those same policies.

If we aim for the sky, we have to start at the grassroots. We can’t expect a Mueller or a Pelosi to do it for us. We must develop the best instincts and sentiments of millions of working people and mobilize them.

Is this wishful thinking? Or just hard work?

It’s certainly more realistic than relying on Mueller or any high-ranking cop in the capitalist state to take down #45 with a shallow investigation. □

# Food security vs. ‘border security’

As the whole world knows by now, Trump has launched major racist attacks on four congress members known as the “Squad” over the past couple of weeks. He ordered the women to “go back where they came from.”

Trump targeted the four because of their courageous and outspoken public criticism of U.S. government policy, mainly the inhumane and xenophobic targeting of migrants, including children. Trump also focused on the four because all are people of color, with three of them coming from migrant families.

Now joining Reps. Ilhan Omar (Minn.), Rashida Tlaib (Mich.), Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (N.Y.) and Ayanna Pressley (Mass.) on Trump’s target list is Rep. Elijah Cummings (Md.). The Black congressperson, who represents the city of Baltimore, was criticized in Trump’s July 27 tweet that also defamed the city — which is over 50 percent African American — as a “rat and rodent infested mess” where “no human” would want to live.

By attacking Cummings, Trump was in reality attacking the entire Baltimore African-American community with his nauseating, recurring white supremacist remarks.

Cummings doesn’t have a radical political history, but like the “Squad” he has been critical of Trump’s treatment of migrants in detention centers rightly characterized as concentration camps.

Trump was not just mouthing off with these attacks. His words are a justification and a means to vicious ends.

One of his goals was approved on July 26 when a majority vote of the U.S. Supreme Court gave the green light for the Pentagon to spend \$2.5 billion of its military budget to build a border wall in an attempt to keep migrants from crossing into the southern U.S. Trump hailed this a “Big WIN for Border Security and the Rule of Law!”

The SCOTUS decision overturned a lower court ruling that had stopped the funds. The American Civil Liberties Union, which represented a group of organizations that initiated the litigation, announced the legal effort to stop the wall will continue.

In a lesser publicized, but equally important development, the Trump administration announced plans to kick at least 3.1 million indigent people off the rolls of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP.

This vital food stamp program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides access to free food for an estimated 42 million people, based on income. Some people also receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, another federal program that helps with basic needs. The new procedures would require a family receiving TANF to pass a review of income and assets to determine whether the family is eligible for SNAP benefits.

This latest attack on the poor actually began when President Bill Clinton signed “The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.” That law forced welfare recipients to work in exchange for

general assistance benefits—tantamount to working at below an already inadequate minimum wage.

If approved, the new guidelines will deeply impact a city like Baltimore which in 2015 had an official poverty rate of 24 percent. In 2018 the official national poverty line was around \$20,780 for a family of three. (familiesusa.org)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture states that cutting SNAP would reduce the federal budget by \$2.5 billion — the same amount allocated for building part of the border wall.

While Trump pushes his racist wall under the guise of “national security,” what about the food security of millions of the working poor, with a disproportionate number being Black, Latinx and Indigenous?

Will the Democratic Party members in Congress challenge these cuts in a direct way or will they continue to lay low, even knowing that the cuts will deepen and expand hunger and malnutrition in their political base?

During the 1980s, mass campaigns were launched in the streets to meet the challenge of austerity, including widespread hunger, ushered in by the Ronald Reagan presidency. Outrage demanded: “Feed the People, Not the Pentagon” and “Food Is a Right.”

With Trump and the Republican Party having declared war on migrants and other people of color, a new demand must be added: “Food security, yes! Border security, no! Food is a Right!” □

# Moncada: Spark of the Cuban revolution commemorated in New York



Ana Silvia Rodríguez, Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations.

A standing-room-only crowd attended the annual July 26 commemoration organized by the New York-New Jersey Cuba Si Coalition and hosted by the New York State Nurses Association in Manhattan on July 27.

July 26 marked the 66th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks led by Fidel Castro Ruz and dozens more revolutionary forces in an attempt

to overthrow the government of the brutal pro-U.S. Cuban dictator, Fulgencio Batista. Though the attack failed militarily, it helped to lay the political basis for the triumph of the Cuban Revolution less than six years later on Jan. 1, 1959.

Speakers included the Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations, Ana Silvia Rodríguez; Ed Ortiz, from Call to Action on Puerto Rico; Gail Walker, director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace; William Camacaro, from the Venezuela Bolivarian Circle; and others. The program was co-chaired by Frank Velgara, from Socialist Front of Puerto Rico, New York Committee, and Ana Marie Cardenas, law student at the City University of New York. Many of the speakers linked the impact of the Cuban Revolution to other important struggles against U.S. imperialism, especially in Puerto Rico and Venezuela.

BombaYo, a cultural group of percussionists and dancers, performed the ancestral rhythms of Bomba, an African-derived music and dance tradition developed in Puerto Rico.



CUNY law student Ana Marie Cardenas and Frank Velgara of the Socialist Front of Puerto Rico.

— Report and photos by Monica Moorehead



# Climate change, oil profits and the new youth movement

By Deidre Griswold

Despite the know-nothing stance of the gang in the White House, climate change is a subject that hundreds of millions of people cannot ignore.

Massive spring floods in the U.S. Midwest continued into June, causing billions of dollars in damage as levees were breached and fields turned into vast lakes.

At the same time, California suffered numerous devastating wildfires fueled by drier than normal conditions, while prolonged drought has spurred emigration from Central America.

Record temperatures have taken lives in many countries, from heat waves in Europe to even more deadly conditions in southern Asia and parts of Africa.

The destruction caused by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico two years ago has now engulfed that nation in a political crisis, as the governing colonial authorities imposed by the U.S. have been exposed for ripping off funds intended for hurricane relief.

## Fossil fuel super-profits and war

At the same time, the super-rich class of U.S. billionaires, who own the political process euphemistically known as “democracy,” continue their pursuit of super-profits from fossil fuels, especially oil and gas—major contributors to global warming and increasingly destructive storms.

Is it merely a coincidence that the major “trouble spots” in the world, where the threat of U.S. military intervention is ever present, are also oil producers? Think Venezuela and Iran. Venezuela has the largest reserve of untapped oil in the world and was once a major source of profit for U.S. oil companies. So was



PHOTO: FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE FACEBOOK

Students and teachers rally against climate change at a school in Islamabad, Pakistan, as part of a global day of youth action, May 24.

Iran, before a revolution there took back control of its natural resources.

And where has the Pentagon been engaged in actual shooting wars in recent years? Iraq, Libya, Syria—all oil producers—as well as Afghanistan, where the U.S. company Unocal planned to build pipelines to transport oil and gas from Turkmenistan, part of the former Soviet Union.

Somehow, in the vast ocean of Western reporting on these wars and “trouble spots,” the connection to oil is rarely mentioned. Nor is the contribution of these wars to the huge problem of global warming. If only half of the current Pentagon budget were allocated instead to fighting climate change, the world would be a much safer, healthier place.

## Youth Climate Strike planned

Young people around the world, however, are deeply conscious of this problem, which threatens their very future.

The groups Fridays for Future and Youth Climate Strike have started a movement calling for a global general strike in September.

Their call includes the following: “To date, young people have led the climate strikes around the world. Now we need adults to join us too. On September 20, 2019, Fridays for Future, the Youth Climate Strike movements, and all of our international friends and allies call for a global general strike. Mark and add it to your calendar. Workers everywhere, please: we are asking you to join us and walk away from a system that is destroying our planet and will threaten the survival of millions of people, plants, and animals within the next 10, 20, 30 years.

“We don’t feel like we have a choice: it’s been years of talking, countless negotiations, empty deals on climate change and fossil fuel companies being given free rides to drill beneath our soils and burn away our futures for their profit.

Politicians and fossil fuel companies have known about climate change for decades. They have willingly handed over their responsibility for our future to profiteers whose search for quick cash threatens our very existence. This crisis is very real, and it cannot be ignored any longer.

“We have learned that if we don’t start acting for our future, nobody else will make the first move. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.”

## An antidote to pessimism

This youth movement is a welcome answer to the growing pessimism over climate change. The prevailing attitude being inculcated in the U.S. is that either there is no problem (Trump’s position) or that it’s already too late to do much about it. Both are wrong.

A lot is already being done, but you won’t view it in prime time or in newspaper headlines.

According to the World Resources Institute: “China accounted for 45 percent of global investment in renewables in 2017 and leads the world in installed capacity (334 GW), followed by the United States (161 GW) and Germany (106 GW).” [GW stands for gigawatts.]

So the country responsible for nearly half the world’s investment in renewable energy is the People’s Republic of China! A nation that in just a couple of generations has pulled itself up from abject poverty to become the world’s leading manufacturer.

The world is changing. The stranglehold by a few imperialist countries on the world economy is breaking down. China is showing that there can be sustainable development. Of course, it took a revolution for China to get where it is.

Youth around the world get it, and they are organizing. □

# In Puerto Rico ‘The People United Will Win!’

*The slightly edited message below was presented by Ed Ortiz, on behalf of Call to Action on Puerto Rico, at the July 26 Moncada Day commemorative program held in New York City on July 27.*

Call to Action on Puerto Rico is here tonight to join all of you in this important celebration of the 66th anniversary of the assault on Moncada, the spark that gave impetus to the Cuban Revolution, a revolution that inspired and supported freedom fighters around the world.

The Call to Action Collective was formed in July 2015. It is an integral part of a rebellious, militant and determined diaspora that understands that the precarious political, social and economic conditions that confront Puerto Rico are a direct result of its colonial relationship of subordination to the United States.

This past June, CTA held its fourth Annual Day of Solidarity with the Independence of Puerto Rico. Each year, during the time of the United Nations Decolonization Hearings on the colonial case of Puerto Rico, we carry out and support a series of activities in support of independence and decolonization. They have been the largest gatherings in NYC of Puerto Rican Independence activists from the diaspora and Puerto Rico. We also contribute to the Independence contingent at the Puerto Rican Day Parade.

## Now, massive protests

The people of Puerto Rico have drastically changed their political dynamic. Everything is in flux right now. The massive protests of hundreds of thousands demanding the resignation of Governor [Ricardo] Rosello, have made it clear that folks are ready for some fundamental changes.

Right now, the Governor is slated to resign on August 2, and the interim Governor, Wanda Vasquez, the current Secretary of Justice, is under investigation due to accusations that she ignored evidence of corruption in the provision of hurricane relief.

The folks are already preparing signs saying “WANDA RESIGN.” And when Wanda is gone, it will be the next one. Today’s [July 27] N.Y. Post headline put it correctly: “Puerto Ricans are not remotely done getting rid of corrupt politicians.”

Prior to the hurricanes, people were already suffering from oppression and the contraction of the economy, an illegal debt that finally brought us to a U.S. Bankruptcy Court and the imposition of a Financial Control Board — La Junta. La Junta is moving forward with closure of over 300 more public schools, plans to reduce the minimum wage to \$4.25 per hour for people under 21, 10 percent reduction in pensions, and other draconian measures.

La Junta, led by some of the very people who colluded with corrupt insular and U.S. officials to create the illegal debt, have made it clear that its job is to sell off Puerto Rican resources to satisfy Wall Street debt bondholders who were already making money off the debt. People were already changing things by staying away from colonial elections and status plebiscites.

Hurricane Maria forced people to openly acknowledge that insular colonial administrations over time had been incapable and unwilling to deal with the island’s needs, while demonstrating that they have been at the service of U.S. corporate interests. They would not stand up to the racist Trump. The imperial power refuses to respond to the real needs of the Puerto Rican people and controls its colony with impunity.

Frankly speaking, the people have long known that the insular governments have always been corrupt. The scandal, generated by the leaked emails and chats and their casual depiction of that corruption, was just too much to bear. The chats exposed the willful corruption, homophobia, misogyny and disrespect for the people.

Within two days, the demonstrations began and would not stop. They would only increase in size and intensity every day. Not party people. Everybody. Sectors who



have not been seen in the streets before, but led by the young people; very peaceful, except for the violence perpetrated by the police. People did not take the bait.

All of this will eventually lead to the general agreement that we need to take our fate into our own hands; statehood is a fallacy.

The general strike on Monday [July 22] was successful, and organizers showed the populace that it could be done.

We are still waiting to see if the governor actually leaves. He needs a pardon, and the statehood party needs to decide what faction will prevail. The Commonwealth Party is simply irrelevant.

We expect a lot more government dysfunction. La Junta is saying it intends to take a more direct and controlling posture. We hope that the momentum of the people’s protests and demonstrations will continue. The People United Will Win! Long live a free Puerto Rico! ¡Que viva Puerto Rico Libre! □





MO FOTO: DANTE STROBINO

El primero de mayo, Durham, Carolina del Norte, 2019.

# Nuevo apagón en la capital venezolana

Por Marco Teruggi  
Caracas, Venezuela

Original en [pagina12.com.ar](http://pagina12.com.ar) el 24 de julio.

Caracas amaneció el 23 de julio con la incertidumbre que traen los apagones. La mayoría de las zonas de la capital ya había recuperado el sistema eléctrico, y la mañana estuvo marcada por cortes de algunas horas en diferentes sectores. El día fue declarado no laborable por parte del gobierno, el servicio de metro inhabilitado debido a la inestabilidad eléctrica, y los movimientos fueron los que suceden a los apagones: compras de comida y carga de gasolina.

A las 14, el ministro de la Energía Eléctrica, Freddy Brito, información acerca de la recuperación al “ciento por ciento de la carga en la mayoría de los estados del país”. Menos de 24 horas para Caracas y el país: el apagón había sucedido a las 16,45 del día anterior. Aunque la realidad de la capital contrasta con la de muchos estados: en la primera los apagones han sido contados desde principio de año, mientras que, en estados como Zulia, Lara o Táchira, los cortes de luz son diarios.

El ministro para la Comunicación, Jorge Rodríguez, denunció que el evento ocurrido se debió a un ataque: “Los primeros indicios recibidos de la investigación orientan a la existencia de un ataque de carácter electromagnético que buscó afectar el sistema de generación hidroeléctrica de Guayana, principal proveedor de este servicio en el país”.

Según el ministro, se trataría así de un nuevo ataque al sistema eléctrico nacional, como ya lo había denunciado el gobierno nacional las veces anteriores, en particular en el apagón más grande que comenzó el pasado 7 de marzo y se prolongó durante varios días. Rodríguez anunció que la recuperación sería rápida

debido a que, luego de los supuestos ataques, habían sido instrumentados “protocolos de protección y seguridad”.

La oposición acusó, por su parte, al gobierno de ser responsable de lo sucedido. El mismo mensaje partió desde Estados Unidos, donde, por ejemplo, el senador republicano Marco Rubio, operador en la estrategia contra el gobierno de Nicolás Maduro, afirmó que la causa del apagón era “el régimen”.

### Junto con tensión se vio calma

En las calles existió cierta tensión por el corte generalizado, debido en particular a la hora del apagón -coincidente con los regresos a las casas y la progresiva llegada de la noche- el impacto en los transportes y las incertidumbres propias y de familiares. Junto con eso se vio calma, resignación, conversaciones en esquinas de barrios populares. Caracas mostró cierta costumbre ante la dificultad: el gobierno activó los servicios de emergencia de transporte y se generaron filas de carros en los puntos de la ciudad donde se sabe que existe señal de telefonía cuando ocurren apagones.

En ese contexto Juan Guaidó cumplió este 23 de julio seis meses de su autoproclamación. Convocó a una sesión pública de la Asamblea Nacional en uno de los puntos habituales de concentración del antichavismo en Caracas. La concurrencia a la actividad fue pequeña, representativa de los sectores tradicionales de la derecha venezolana con su ausencia de sectores populares.

Allí Guaidó anunció que la aprobación del ingreso de Venezuela al Tratado Interamericano de Asistencia Recíproca (TIAR), el acto de defensa mutua interamericana del cual Venezuela se retiró en el 2012 junto a Bolivia, Nicaragua y Ecuador. El TIAR, abre entre sus posibilidades el pedido de la conformación de una coalición de fuerzas interamericanas para llevar adelante una intervención militar.

Esa aprobación ha sido un pedido constante desde varias semanas atrás por parte de los sectores de la oposición que solo ven una salida a través de una acción de fuerza militar extranjera. Guaidó mantuvo un discurso oscilante respecto a las implicaciones del TIAR, planteándolo como posible herramienta para una acción de fuerza a la vez que como un instrumento para fines únicamente diplomáticos y económicos.

La aprobación del TIAR por parte de un poder público en una arquitectura de intento de golpe de Estado se dio en el marco de los diálogos de Barbados que se mantienen. El gobierno y la oposición ya han realizado cuatro encuentros públicos desde mayo, dos en Oslo, y dos en la isla del Caribe, con la mediación central del gobierno de Noruega, que ha insistido en reiteradas oportunidades en la necesidad de la discreción acerca de los contenidos.

### El discurso de Elliott Abrams

Aún no se sabe cuáles serían los puntos posibles del acuerdo en caso de lograrse. Uno de los nudos centrales de diferencia reside en la permanencia de Nicolás Maduro al frente de la presidencia. Elliott Abrams, enviado especial de EEUU para el caso Venezuela, declaró en una entrevista el domingo pasado que: “No es posible que haya elecciones libres y justas con Maduro en la presidencia (...) aceptar elecciones y permitir que Maduro se mantenga hasta ellas equivale a renunciar al cambio”.

El discurso de Abrams ratifica no solamente la necesidad de que Maduro no se presente a unas eventuales elecciones



Un residente de Caracas regresa a su vivienda con una bolsa de compras en medio del apagón.

presidenciales, sino que se retire antes de las mismas. El presidente instó por su parte a la maquinaria del Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela a prepararse para unas elecciones que, desde hace varios meses, anunció que serían para elegir un nuevo poder legislativo. Ningún dirigente del chavismo ha asomado la posibilidad de elecciones presidenciales hasta el momento, y Diosdado Cabello, presidente de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, afirmó su desacuerdo respecto a esa posibilidad.

Los elementos se desarrollan en simultáneo con Barbados: el apagón producto de un nuevo ataque como denunció el gobierno, la carta del TIAR, el avión norteamericano de reconocimiento que incursionó el viernes en área internacional de dominio venezolano sin autorización y fue interceptado por dos Sukhoi, la reciente reunión del Movimiento de Países No Alineados donde 120 gobiernos reconocieron a Maduro y se opusieron al bloqueo norteamericano. Los diálogos no detienen las demás variables que a su vez sirven para construir la correlación de fuerzas para un posible acuerdo. □

# LA SOLIDARIDAD NO ES DELITO

## PLATAFORMA DE APOYO A NINES Y PALESTINA



Una lucha importante en el estado español. Firma el manifiesto contra la criminalización de la solidaridad con el pueblo palestino. Por más información y para firmar: [conninesporpalestina.org](http://conninesporpalestina.org)

Ante la decisión de la Audiencia Nacional de encausar primero, y después de denegar el sobreseimiento de la causa seguida contra Ángeles Maestro y otras dos compañeras por el envío de fondos al pueblo palestino, al tiempo que ha dispuesto la apertura de Sumario Ordinario por colaboración con organización terrorista, las personas abajo firmantes manifestamos que:

- La imputación de las tres compañeras por colaboración con organización terrorista, basada en la recogida de fondos con

destino a la reconstrucción de instalaciones sanitarias destruidas por el ejército israelí, que ocasionó así mismo miles de muertes y de personas heridas en 2014 y 2015, carece de toda legitimidad. Las penas previstas en el Código Penal contemplan entre dos y diez años de cárcel y multas por el triple de las cantidades enviadas.

- El pretexto esgrimido de la entrega de dichos fondos a la dirigente palestina Leila Khaled, miembro del Frente Popular para la Liberación de Palestina considerado por la UE como organización terrorista, es inaceptable. Leila Khaled es un símbolo de la resistencia de su pueblo y es invitada con cierta frecuencia – como en la ocasión citada – por ayuntamientos como los de Barcelona y Madrid y otras

instituciones académicas y sociales. En estas visitas ha realizado declaraciones públicas en defensa de la lucha del pueblo palestino contra la ocupación israelí, sin que su actividad haya sido de ninguna forma obstaculizada.

- La decisión de la Audiencia Nacional, al igual que la persecución realizada contra miembros e instituciones del movimiento Boicot, Desinversiones Sanciones (BDS) es una atentado contra los legítimos sentimientos de solidaridad con el pueblo palestino, ampliamente extendidos en nuestra sociedad.

Por todo ello exigimos:

- Que se retire toda acusación contra las citadas compañeras, así como el cese de toda represión contra la actividad solidaria con el pueblo palestino.

- Que el Estado español deje de amparar iniciativas jurídicas promovidas en última instancia por el Estado de Israel que pretende conseguir, no sólo la impunidad en las masacres que perpetra contra el pueblo palestino, sino acallar las voces y las actividades de solidaridad que las denuncian.

Finalmente, llamamos a todo tipo de organizaciones sociales, sindicales y políticas a no amedrentarse y a intensificar las tareas de su legítima solidaridad con el pueblo palestino. Así mismo solicitamos a los medios de comunicación que se autodefinen como independientes a romper el silencio que rodea, tanto a los ataques israelíes contra Palestina, como a la represión contra la solidaridad. □