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Millions of youth say Planet, not profits!

By Betsey Piette

Sept. 20 — Around the world today, it's estimated that 4 million people took to the streets in an unprecedented Global Climate Strike, led for the most part by youth under 18. Many students walked out of school in unexcused absences, while others came with teachers or parents. Many young workers left their jobs to join in.

The day of global coordinated actions took place in over 185 countries starting in the South Pacific islands, through Australia, across Asia, Africa, into Europe and finally the Americas. Demonstrations

took place on every continent and in every major city. The list is too long to enumerate here.

The Global Climate Strike was the third in a worldwide series of climate rallies organized by students in the last 12 months. September 20 may go down in history as the largest global demonstration in the fight against climate crisis — to date.

Australia reported its largest turnouts for social protests since anti-war demonstrations in 2003 preceding the U.S. war on Iraq. In the U.S. alone climate strikes were organized in over 1,000 cities — many reporting numbers from the hundreds to the tens of thousands or more.

At least a quarter of a million people filled New York's Foley Square, followed by a march to Battery Park.

Recent climate catastrophes — super hurricanes in the Bahamas and Puerto Rico, rapidly melting ice caps in Greenland and out-of-control fires in rainforests in the Amazon, Africa and Indonesia — certainly accelerated the turnout. Protests in the Solomon Islands and elsewhere in the South Pacific targeted rising sea levels which have wiped out entire communities. In South Africa, a major concern was toxic waste, in India air pollution and plastic waste, and in Australia coal expansion. (theguardian.com, Sept. 20)

The strike coincided with the start of the United Nations climate summit called in response to the urgency for government actions needed to restrict rising global temperatures.

The common factor in most of these actions was that leadership came from youth — students and workers — whose concern for their future is fueling this movement. In many cities children led the marches, in some cities even requesting that older activists take up the rear. The average age of participants in many protests was between 12 and 18 years.

Many young participants see the climate

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Battery Park in New York City, Sept. 20. More on pages 6-7.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

U.S. sends troops to Gulf region, threatens new war

By John Catalinotto

Sept. 22 — The Pentagon announced Sept. 20 that it will “deploy additional U.S. troops and missile defense equipment to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.” This deployment is allegedly in response to a missile attack the weekend before that stopped half of Saudi daily oil production and temporarily raised oil prices worldwide.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Vice President Mike Pence blamed Iran for the attack, calling it an “act of war.” While Iran denies making the attack, the Houthi organization in Yemen says its forces did it. As of Sept. 22, neither the U.S. nor Saudi Arabia has produced evidence of Iran's involvement.

Washington, most recently the Trump administration, has carried out continuous hostile acts against Iran. These acts include breaking the 2015 nuclear treaty

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WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Protesting wars and threats to climate, Herald Square, New York City, Sept. 22.

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Charlotte, N.C. PHOTO: WWP DURHAM BRANCH

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Galveston, Texas

Rally honors Donald Neely

By Mirinda Crissman
Galveston, Texas

Some 350 demonstrators gathered here Sept. 15 to support Donald Neely, drawn in part by an Aug. 3 video that garnered national attention. The video showed two police officers on horseback leading Neely by a rope. The disrespect shown this 43-year-old Black man aroused widespread outrage. Police documents showed they knew Neely as a homeless, mentally ill person who was not at all dangerous before the incident ever took place.

Demonstrators came together from across the state in the scorching September heat to call on law enforcement to release body camera footage from the incident and to drop all charges against Neely. Their signs read that poverty and mental illness should not be a crime and made demands for dignity and justice. Those who gathered in Neely’s name rallied in a local park and then marched along the same route police had forced him to take.

The community and all who understand the historical context of the area know that Neely’s blatant mistreatment is part of the legacy left by slavery. Galveston is a deep-water port on the Gulf Coast, with the oldest city police force in Texas. The city’s law enforcement origins can be traced to slave patrols.



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Much like the surrounding areas, Galveston also has a well-documented history of leasing convicts for unpaid labor in the post-emancipation era. Convict leasing was a system comparable to slavery in which vagrancy laws were weaponized against poor Black people in particular. Laws were used by officers to arrest people — often for little reason — and use them as an expendable labor source under harsh conditions for the profit of the prison system.

Everyone who showed up knew

that history and also understood and spoke to the local community’s legacies of resistance and the inhabitants’ position as collective carriers of history. Galveston is the birthplace of Juneteenth, which is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the end of U.S. slavery on June 19, 1865.

Speakers at the rally called for a moment of silence as the Sept. 15 day of action since it was also the anniversary of the day in 1963 when a bomb set in a Birmingham, Ala., church killed four young Black girls — Addie Mae Collins (14), Cynthia Wesley (14), Carole Robertson (14) and Carol Denise McNair (11) — and left a fifth young girl, Sarah Collins Rudolph, who still carries the traumatic history of that day. (For the story of the fifth girl, see tinyurl.com/y6h2jnfj).

Neely’s legal counsel, Houston-based civil rights attorney Ben Crump, reminded Neely’s hundreds of supporters: “When they drug him down the center of town, it was like they drug all of us.” Crump then led a chant of collective resistance, “Pull the rope, for Donald Neely!”

Galveston knows the ghastly legacies of colonial inhumanity and raises its vital legacies of resistance in defiance. The community supports the ongoing legal struggles of Neely and collectively carries him. And he ain’t heavy. □

WORKERS WORLD
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WORKERS WORLD

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the 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

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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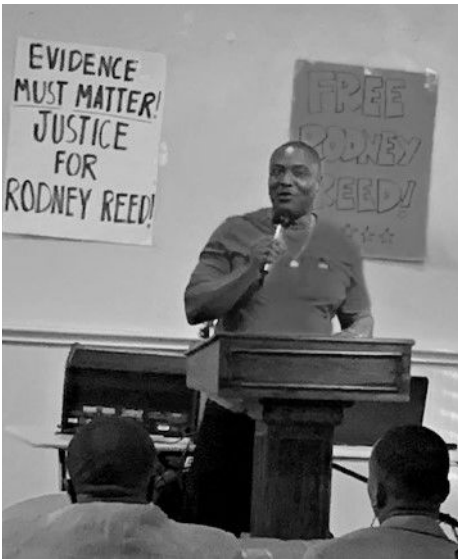
Texas

Urgent organizing to stop Rodney Reeds’ execution

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

The historic Kerr Community Center in Bastrop, Texas, was filled to the rafters on Sept. 21 as chants of “Free Rodney Reed!” echoed off the walls. Family, supporters, activists, preachers, attorneys and death row exonerees all spoke to the standing-room-only crowd about the science and the evidence that has proved Rodney Reed did not commit the murder for which he was sent to death row in 1998.

Nation of Islam Minister Robert L. Muhammad of Austin declared: “For over 20 years the Reed family has been asking for the truth to be heard. Test the DNA, find the truth and bring it out. We woke up today in a country, a state, a city where the history of injustice is written in blood. Whether it’s what happened to the Chinese when they were brought here, or the Africans when they were brought here, or the Indigenous people who were already here, or poor white people—we know and understand what injustice looks like. Now, we are demanding justice!”



Anthony Graves speaking at rally for Rodney Reed Sept. 21.

Justice being denied

Reed, who is African American, was accused of murdering a young white woman he was having a relationship with, Stacey Stites. She was also engaged to a cop, Jimmy Fennell, who had said publicly that if Stites ever cheated on him he would strangle her with a belt. That is precisely how Stites was murdered. The same year Reed was convicted of Stites’ death, Fennell pleaded guilty to raping a woman in his custody as a police officer, for which he spent ten years in prison.

Now the Bastrop County District Attorney has given Reed a Nov. 20 execution date — set just one day after the local newspaper ran a story about the Reed family protesting at the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington. This apparent retaliation angered Reed’s Innocence Project attorneys. They have filed a federal civil rights suit against the state of Texas because DNA testing has been repeatedly denied.

“We know DNA testing can secure evidence of innocence to support Reed’s claim, and the denial of such testing violates his constitutional rights,” said Bryce Benet, one of Reed’s attorneys.

At the Sept. 21 rally three death row exonerees spoke from Witness To Innocence, an organization composed of and led by death row survivors and family members. “I have no doubt in my mind that Rodney is innocent!” said Gary Drinkard, who spent almost six years on Alabama’s death row before exoneration in 2001. Also speaking were Albert Burrell, who did 13 years at the infamous Angola State Penitentiary in Louisiana, and Ron Keine who was on death row in New Mexico for three years for a crime that a cop finally admitted to having committed.

A system ‘working just as designed’

During the two-hour rally, the audience hung on every word. From the children to the elders, emotions ranged from anger to inspiration to horror to commitment to



Rally for Rodney Reed Sept. 21. PHOTO: REED JUSTICE INITIATIVE

love. Each talk educated the crowd that the criminal justice system has nothing to do with justice. The racism the system is based on affects everyone.

The highlighted guest of the evening was Texas exoneree Anthony Graves, who was freed in 2010. He reminded the audience that awaiting execution doesn’t just affect the people on the row: “Let’s talk about my mom. She was on Death Row with me for 18 ½ years and two execution dates. I watched as over 400 men went to their deaths, and some of them were innocent.

Graves said to loud applause: “People talk about fixing a broken system, but it’s not broke. It’s working just as it was designed to work. But this system has never worked for us. Let’s talk about throwing the whole system out and creating one fair system that works for all of us.”

This past summer, Reed’s family began the Reed Justice Initiative, designed to spread information about the case, pressure public officials to recognize the frame-up of Reed and stop his execution. The initiative has rallied at the Texas

Capitol, protested outside the governor’s mansion, demonstrated every day for a week at the DA’s office, and issued press statements on each of the three Texas executions in August and September. Noted activist and author of “Dead Man Walking,” Sister Helen Prejean, has taken up Reed’s case. There will be protests at the governor’s mansion daily from Sept. 30 through Oct. 4.

Reed’s mother, Sandra Reed, ended the evening by telling everyone present that she loved them and thanked them for their activism and support: “Our family has grown throughout the decades we’ve been fighting for my son because all of you are now our family.”

And Rodrick Reed, one of Reed’s five brothers, promised: “We are going to work every single day to free my brother. We only have 60 days left to stop his execution and we’re not stopping to rest.”

For more information, go to Reed Justice Initiative on Facebook and justice4rodney-reed.org. Mail letters of support to Rodney Reed #999271, Polunsky Unit, 3872 FM 350 South, Livingston, TX 77351. □

Portland demands ICE off Greyhound buses!

The Portland branch of Workers World Party organized a protest Sept. 21 against Greyhound’s collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Patrol. A crowd of several dozen people gathered on a corner in the city’s downtown, near Greyhound’s recently closed terminal and Amtrak’s Portland Union Station.

Activists and organizers from several groups, including Freedom Road Socialist Organization, the Portland Central America Solidarity Committee, the International League of People’s Struggles and Hands Off Venezuela PDX endorsed the event and

turned out in support. Speakers denounced Greyhound’s complicity in the racist war on im/migrants and called for the closure of im/migrant concentration camps.

The lively crowd chanted and marched to Greyhound’s ticket office, handing a letter to those inside. The letter reiterated that the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1700, which represents Greyhound drivers, mechanics, terminal workers and other employees, has denounced ICE’s targeting of bus riders. After the march, participants discussed ways to continue the struggle against ICE and the war on im/migrants.

— Report and photo by Joshua Hanks



Sept. 16: Day Without Immigrants SF



On Sept. 16, more than 3,000 im/migrants and their supporters gathered in San Francisco’s Mission District to demand “Close the Camps” and “Free the Children.” It was organized by a coalition, predominantly in the Latinx community, as “A Day Without Immigrants.”

The event began with a performance by Aztec dancers. Hundreds of students from local elementary and middle schools like Buena Vista/Horace Mann and Cesar Chavez joined the gathering and helped lead the chants. “Si Se Puede” resonated loudly.

The march wound through the Mission District and stopped at City Hall where community activists spoke about the need to organize against the deportations and the attacks on migrants. Later, the coalition held a rally in front of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in downtown San Francisco. The coalition has future events planned to fight against attacks on migrants at the border. For more information check out their Facebook page at tinyurl.com/yzf6x8pd/.

— Report and photo by Judy Greenspan

Class war at GM

By Martha Grevatt
Warren, Mich.

The strike of autoworkers at General Motors is just over a week old, but already the class lines are clear. At more than one location, pickets were injured by delivery drivers trying to drive through the lines and into the plants. Police have harassed pickets, and in Spring Hill, Tenn., strikers were arrested after police asked them to move.

Almost immediately GM bosses took a hard line against the striking workers, abruptly cutting off health insurance. Normally, health benefits would not be allowed to lapse until the end of the month, at which point if the strike is not settled the United Auto Workers union would pick up the costs.

GM's shock-and-awe strategy left workers, some in the middle of medical treatments, with no health insurance while they waited to sign up for union-provided benefits. One member literally woke up from surgery and was told her bill would not be covered. Others were denied chemotherapy treatment or taken off lists for organ transplants. Pregnant workers were anxious as their delivery dates drew near.

The workers can put the pressure on the bosses, too. The strike is reportedly costing GM as much as \$75 million a day.

The rank and file want a contract that protects health benefits, keeps plants open, improves wages and bonuses, and gives "temporary" workers a path to permanent, full-time positions.

The company's offer, made just hours before the Sept. 15 strike deadline, demands hourly workers pay thousands more a year for health care, offers nothing to temporary workers and actually increases the number of lower-paying jobs contracted to third parties or assigned to the GM Subsystems division.

Striking alongside GM workers at five plants are 850 janitors and maintenance workers, who are UAW members employed by Aramark. They do work that GM workers had performed before these jobs were outsourced in 2007, but for little more than half what GM janitors had been

paid. Only after five years do Aramark workers make as much as \$15.18 an hour for dangerous work using high-pressure washers.

When they walked out, 24 hours before the GM strike started, their chant was "What do you want? Respect." Aramark workers have been without a contract for a year and a half.

Over the years GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles have contracted more work out to companies like Aramark. GM also created "GM Subsystems," whose Brownsville, Mich., battery factory pays much lower wages than other GM plants.

In Lordstown, Ohio, GM wants to replace a recently closed assembly plant with a battery manufacturing facility run by an as-yet-unnamed, but lower-wage, company — perhaps a third party or GM Subsystems.

Solidarity all around

The strike has been successful in shutting down production at GM. As a result, a large percentage of GM's Canadian workers, who are not on strike, have been laid off. Yet Canadian GM workers describe their widespread solidarity with strikers in the U.S. From Brazil, too, autoworkers have sent messages of support.

Dozens of Ford and FCA workers joined pickets Sept. 19 outside the Warren, Mich., transmission plant, which is nearly closed. On Sept. 22, after a power outage caused the union meeting to be unexpectedly cancelled, a delegation of Local 869 members, who work at FCA

Warren Stamping, walked across the street to picket with Local 909 members outside the transmission plant.

Just hours into the strike, FCA workers at the Toledo, Ohio, Jeep assembly plant organized a 400-strong car caravan that drove past the picket line and honked support. The sound of solidarity honking continues nonstop, day and night at every picket line.

Ford and FCA workers know that if the strike wins a decent contract at GM, it will give them leverage to get the same. On the other hand, if GM breaks the strike, it will set the workers back at the other major auto companies. Whatever happens with the GM strike, these workers could also find themselves on picket lines fighting companies that are just as profit-driven as GM.

Other unions are supporting the strike by showing up on picket lines, delivering food to the strikers and sending solidarity messages. The Teamsters made it clear from the onset that their union drivers would not cross a UAW picket line. Even local small businesses are donating and giving discounts to strikers.

Strike reaches beyond autoworkers

In taking on GM, autoworkers are fighting for more than just the needs of UAW members. They see the growth of a temporary or part-time workforce throughout the economy. They know their strike can impact the lives of all low-wage and contingent workers.

The critical fight to protect health care will be pushed forward if the strike wins, or it will be set back if it loses. Health care for profit means costs for prescriptions, hospital stays, insurance, etc., could rise to whatever the market will bear. Instead of demanding lower prices from fellow-capitalist medical profiteers, the auto barons want workers to pay more for medical care — much more.



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Striking members of UAW Local 909 outside the GM Warren, Mich., transmission plant are joined by UAW Local 869 members from the FCA stamping plant across the street.



WW PHOTO: WWP DURHAM BRANCH

Members of the Charlotte City Workers Union chapter of UE Local 150 and participants in the Southern Workers Assembly School join the UAW picket line in Charlotte, N.C., in front of the General Motors Customer Care and After Sales warehouse.

Workers are angry that even though the company has made record profits — \$35 billion in four years — it won't give an inch when it comes to workers' righteous demand for equal pay for equal work. GM — whose CEO Mary Barra's salary was \$22 million last year — wants to maintain the system of tiered wages, with "traditional" (first tier), "in progression" (second tier) and "temporary" (third tier) all working side by side doing the same work for different wages. GM uses tiers to foster differences among the workers, with the end goal of making all the workers lower tier.

What GM just paid out in quarterly shareholder dividends — over half a billion dollars — is double what it claims to pay quarterly for health care benefits.

This first strike against an auto company since 2007 is the biggest strike in the country in 12 years; nearly 50,000 workers are out. This worker action is not happening in a vacuum. Since the militant 2018 West Virginia teachers strike, the number of strikes countrywide has risen dramatically.

The growing number of strikes shows that the working class is fed up with capitalist greed. Polls show support for unions is at a high of 60 percent, even though only 10 percent of U.S. workers have the benefit of union representation.

The stakes are high, and the battle lines are drawn. Which side are you on?

Grevatt recently retired from FCA after 31 years. She serves on the executive board of UAW Local 869.

Charlotte city workers union pushes federal Medicare for All bill Workers across the South join the call

The following was jointly issued by Charlotte City Workers Union, United Electrical Workers (UE) Local 150; the Southern Workers Assembly; and National Nurses United.

On Saturday, September 21, members of the Charlotte City Workers Union, Chapter of UE Local 150, the National Nurses United, the Southern Workers Assembly, Healthcare Justice NC and others held a picket in front of the Government Center to launch their campaign for affordable healthcare, including passage of the Congressional bill for Medicare for All. They were adding to the numbers of working people, including local and state employees, who see Medicare for All as the way to comprehensively insure themselves and families and to contain skyrocketing healthcare costs.

The action called on the Charlotte City Council to pass a resolution to endorse the federal Medicare for All Act of 2019 (HR 1384) legislation now before Congress.

Similar resolutions are being introduced by workers' committees throughout the South. The city of Durham, Carrboro and Orange County, N.C., have already passed similar resolutions. City Council Member LaWana Mayfield, who supports the Medicare for All Act of 2019 (HR1384) attended the rally, and three other council members currently support it.

Workers from several different unions from Georgia, Florida, Texas, South Carolina, West Virginia and North Carolina gathered over the weekend of September 21-22 in Charlotte, N.C., to continue training as part of the Southern Workers Assembly school to build worker cadre to organize their co-workers and build this campaign.

"We are being gouged by insurance companies collecting enormous premiums. Under a Medicare for All system, an estimated \$10 million will come back to Charlotte taxpayers and another \$4 million back into the wallets and purses of city workers. Let's join the rest of the industrial

world and support a universal healthcare program which for us is Medicare for All," stated Dominic Harris, utility technician in the Charlotte Water Department, president of the Charlotte City Workers Union.

In Charlotte, savings to the city contribution to healthcare premiums under Medicare for All would add up to more than \$10 million annually for the city. City employee premiums under Medicare for All would reduce employee costs by an estimated \$3.73 million per year. That's a win-win for the city and for its workers.

City union workers need immediate relief from high premiums they currently pay, citing the premium for basic family coverage of 434.50 per month. That amounts to about 20% of take home pay for workers starting out.

Charlotte city workers are denied the right to bargain collectively with the city and cannot negotiate even incremental improvements in their health care coverage, making the protection of health for them and families all the more difficult.

"As a hospital RN in one of the largest hospitals in Corpus Christi, Texas, we find patients arriving at our facility who are sicker and sicker. That's because the insurance system does not fully insure them and they don't get care when they need it. Enough is enough. We support the North Carolina workers' efforts and will continue our efforts in Texas, Florida and other states. Let's put in place a system that cares for all U.S. residents. That's Medicare for All," said Kathy Gossett, Registered Nurse, member of National Nurses United.

Recent Commonwealth Fund data show that in successive years one in three U.S. residents with insurance foregoes a doctor visit or filling a prescription because they cannot afford them. Forty-two percent of U.S. residents with a first time cancer diagnosis spend all their savings within two years. Premiums continue to go up well beyond inflation. That's underinsurance at expensive rates. □

The fight to free Mumia enters historic new phase

By Ted Kelly

For decades, the movement to release African-American political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has been on the front lines in the fight against white supremacy and capitalist mass incarceration. Generations of new revolutionaries have grown up in this struggle, and Mumia’s longtime supporters have in turn become their mentors as the most creative and seasoned organizers of the progressive movement. Now in 2019, thanks to these activists, a historic new phase of the struggle has begun.

Abu-Jamal’s legal team filed new briefs this month as part of recently won appellate rights, granted by the courts in late 2018. The new filings reveal concrete evidence of gross prosecutorial misconduct on the part of the Philadelphia District Attorney’s office and its clear collaboration with the city’s notorious police department to frame Mumia for the 1981 shooting death of a Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner.

A press release from attorneys Judith Ritter and Sam Spital on Sept. 9 read, “This week, Mumia Abu-Jamal filed a brief in PA Superior Court to support his claim that his 1982 trial was fundamentally unfair in violation of the Constitution. For example, he argues that the prosecution failed to disclose evidence as required and discriminated against African Americans when selecting the jury. And, his lawyer did not adequately challenge the State’s witnesses.

“Mr. Abu-Jamal also filed a motion containing new evidence of constitutional violations such as promises by the prosecutor to pay or give leniency to two witnesses. There is also new evidence of racial discrimination in jury selection.”

The brief describes how prosecutor Joseph McGill kept meticulous notes on the race and gender of possible jurors, raising serious questions about racial discrimination in jury selection. This remains a common tactic and was described in an infamous 1986 training video in which McGill’s colleague senior prosecutor Jack



Philadelphia march to free Mumia.

McMahon instructs Philadelphia prosecutors, “Blacks from low-income areas are less likely to convict. ... You don’t want those people on your jury.”

The district attorney who argued for Mumia’s guilt also withheld evidence from the defense team, a violation of the Brady doctrine which requires prosecutors to turn over all possible exculpatory evidence to a defendant’s lawyers. In this case, Mumia and his lawyers were not made aware of apparent agreements made between the DA and the state’s key witness, Robert Chobert, that in return for his testimony the city would look into reinstating Chobert’s driver’s license.

Request for hearing on new evidence

This is only one example of improper contact between the district attorney and two key witnesses who Mumia’s supporters claim were induced to give false testimony. The brief states, “Abu-Jamal’s capital trial was fundamentally unfair and tainted by serious constitutional violations. Mr. Abu-Jamal respectfully requests that this Court remand the case to the Court of Common Pleas so that Mr. Abu-Jamal may litigate the claims arising from this new evidence.”

The new evidence surfaced after Judge Leon Tucker ruled in favor of Mumia and granted him a new appeal late in December 2018. Days later, current DA Larry Krasner claims to have stumbled across boxes of evidence related to Mumia’s case, including correspondence between Chobert and McGill.

“Here’s another example of why Mumia shoulda been home,” MOVE Organization’s Minister of Confrontation Pam Africa stated. “An example of police and prosecutorial misconduct. That evidence has been there for years. It should have been in trial records but it was hidden. What else is hidden besides the few things that we have right here?”

Larry Krasner, who assumed office in 2017 after campaigning as a progressive reformer, has consistently fought to keep the evidence hidden and to keep an innocent man Abu-Jamal behind bars. Only after a massive outcry from his supporters and former campaign workers did Krasner drop his challenge to Tucker’s ruling. This demonstrates the serious limits of what establishment progressives and law-and-order Democrats are interested in working toward. But it also proves that there is no limit to what can be accomplished through coordinated mass action and that our struggle will not be won in the courts or in the chambers of city hall, but in the streets.

The movement also won a huge victory in September when Mumia, who suffers from severe health problems due to the toxic and deadly conditions of U.S. prisons, was finally allowed to have cataract surgery. His eyesight had become so bad that Mumia said he was functionally blind before surgery.

MOVE 9 members released

This new phase of the battle to release Mumia comes on the heels of the release

in recent years of five members of the MOVE 9, a group of Black radicals who like Mumia were framed for the murder of a police officer. Michael, Debbie, Janet, Janine, and Eddie Africa have all walked free after over 40 years of false imprisonment.

“If they deal with this issue honestly, they’ll have to release [Mumia] because they know what they did was wrong,” said Eddie, as quoted in the press release.

Janine Africa also commented “I just got released from prison after 41 years in May. I want to say everyone worked hard to bring Mumia home so he can be taken care of and get proper medical care, and he don’t deserve to be in jail from the beginning.”

Basym Hassan, Philadelphia political activist, said “The district attorney clearly violated Mumia’s constitutional rights by withholding clear evidence that should have been exposed from the beginning. Throughout the entire process of Mumia’s approaching the scene up until today’s current developments, the law has not been applied as it was created — to get to the truth of the matter. Hopefully, Mumia will get a retrial and the truth will finally get told. We await his release from hell.”

This historic new phase in Mumia’s legal defense must be joined by a mobilization in the streets that is equally unparalleled. At a time when Mumia’s health is under such threat, when legal proof of his innocence is so clearly outlined, renewed international pressure is needed more than ever.

The release of Mumia Abu-Jamal would be a victory heralded internationally, a symbol of what the workers of the U.S. are capable of achieving. Reverberations would not only impact Philadelphia but every U.S. city. It would be a well-deserved rebuke to every racist cop in this country, to the neo-fascist warmongers in the White House and indeed to the entire system of capitalism dominated by white supremacy.

Free Mumia, Free Delbert and Chuck Africa, Free All Prisoners! Close the camps, close the prisons! □

In response to latest Mumia appeal Philly cops lash out at district attorney

By Ted Kelly
Philadelphia

In the face of mounting legal victories and an energized movement in the streets to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police is now attacking District Attorney Larry Krasner for failing to challenge a request by Abu-Jamal’s attorneys for a new evidentiary hearing. Maureen Faulkner, widow of slain police officer Daniel Faulkner, has been enlisted by the FOP to attack Krasner, despite his initial efforts to help her perpetuate Abu-Jamal’s unjust imprisonment.

Maureen Faulkner has been featured on the regular cop-friendly local media outlets calling for Krasner to recuse himself from Abu-Jamal’s appeal. The police lawyers who speak in Faulkner’s name filed a petition with the Pennsylvania Superior Court to have Krasner removed from the case and replaced by conservative Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro. The complaint alleges that Krasner has not been vigorous enough in his attempts to keep Abu-Jamal behind bars.

The FOP is angry with Krasner for

giving in to massive pressure to withdraw his initial opposition, earlier in 2019, to Abu-Jamal’s appeal moving forward in Pennsylvania’s higher courts. His latest acquiescence to the request by Abu-Jamal’s attorneys that newly uncovered evidence is grounds for the case to be sent back to Philadelphia Common Pleas Court may be the final straw as far as the FOP is concerned. (Read accompanying article.)

Maureen Faulkner, claiming “victim’s rights” under state legislation that has yet to be passed, filed a petition Sept. 18 to have Krasner replaced by Pennsylvania AG Shapiro “in criminal actions in which there is an appeal.” She alleges that the lack of “finality” in this case has caused trauma for her.

Faulkner bases her petition largely on unfounded claims that DA Krasner and attorneys in his office had some connection with Abu-Jamal’s case in the past. It specifically mentions Krasner’s spouse, now Judge Lisa Rau, and Jody Dodd, a former paralegal in Krasner’s law practice.

In attacking lawyers whose firms had some prior connection with Abu-Jamal’s case, Faulkner is continuing a pattern of intimidation carried out by the FOP

against progressive attorneys. Faulkner also ludicrously claims that Dodd was the former “leader of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal” — move over Pam Africa!

Despite living in California, Faulkner is often flown to Philadelphia to make the rounds on television and radio to parrot FOP talking points and has only lobbied for Mumia’s execution or permanent imprisonment without appeal. If she were truly concerned about justice for her late spouse, she would join the call for a retrial and the immediate release of Abu-Jamal who was clearly framed for the crime.

During one hearing in December 2018 that resulted in a legal victory for Abu-Jamal, Common Pleas Court Judge Leon Tucker was forced to eject Faulkner from the courtroom. In a clear attempt to disrupt the proceedings, Faulkner launched into a tirade against the African-American judge until she was escorted out by sheriff’s deputies.

The likely staged disruption was just the most visible form of the state’s various schemes to sabotage Abu-Jamal’s appeals process at that time. These include blocking public and media access, posting



officers in and around the court, filling most available seats with off-duty police officers, and lying to the public about the location and time of the hearings.

In response to Faulkner’s petition, one of Abu-Jamal’s attorneys, Judith Ritter, stated: “The fact that we have now seen new pieces of evidence that should have been disclosed years and years ago is certainly not the fault of anyone on the defense side. I don’t know that there are too many people who would say ‘finality’ is more important than preventing wrongful or unconstitutionally attained convictions.” (mcall.com, Sept. 22)

It’s unclear whether the frivolous petition will pose any serious challenge to Abu-Jamal’s defense team. But the irony is not lost on his supporters that the cops are decrying “conflict of interest” when the root of the problem is a criminal conspiracy of judicial and prosecutorial misconduct to frame an innocent man for murder. □

Millions of youth say

Continued from page 1

crisis and its threat to the future of the planet as the most important issue of their generation, along with the stark reality of extinction of countless nonhuman species.



Creative handmade signs read: “There is no planet B,” “Let the youth be heard,” “We can’t save the world by playing by the rules,” “You’ll die of old age, I’ll die from climate change.” And many said, “System change, not climate change.”

Fifteen-year-old A.J. Conermann, marching in Washington, D.C., put it simply: “I want to grow up. I want to have a future.” Also 15-year-old Marie-Lou Sahai skipped school in Paris to participate because “The only way to make people listen is to protest.” (AP, Sept. 21) Isha Venturi, a 15-year-old student at the protest in New York, said, “No matter how many times they try to ignore the issue, you can see every teenager in the area is here. ... We’re not quiet anymore.” (NBCnews.com, Sept. 20)

Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old who is credited with starting the weekly climate change strikes and the hashtag #FridaysForFuture, addressed the demonstration in New York. She said, “We are united by science and we will do everything in our power to stop this crisis from getting worse, even if it means skipping school or work because this is more important. ... Why should we study for a future that is being taken away from us? That is being stolen for profit.”

Thunberg is expected to participate in a U.N. Youth Climate Summit on Sept. 21 and speak at the U.N. Climate Action Summit with

global leadership on Sept. 23. Thunberg addressed the U.S. Congress on Sept. 18.

Environmental struggle has evolved

The energy and diversity of this fledgling movement should not be underestimated. This is not your parents’ environmental movement.

Traditional leadership in the environmental movement has tried to contain it, limiting demands and making it more about “individual choices” over what food to eat and what products to buy. Yet the barrage of recent climate disasters and reports of rapid climate destruction have clearly propelled this movement way ahead of those who would seek to confine and contain it.

Speaking at a rally in Williamstown, Mass., 16-year-old Ruth Weaver addressed this. To resounding cheers she said, “Switching to a diva cup or buying a metal straw isn’t going to stop this. ... The real planet killers at work here are the corporations, toxic waste dumped into water, trees cut, and water contaminated with lead. ... This is not our fault but now it is our responsibility to take on these corporations.”

Anti-capitalist and pro-socialist slogans could be seen at many actions in cities across the U.S. Recognition that capitalism is at the root of the crisis and has no answers to solve it was evident, along with the understanding that socialist countries — Cuba, China and others — are offering up solutions.

At the Lower Manhattan rally, Workers World Party had a large, well-received banner that read: “System Change, Not Climate Change — Stop Capitalist Pollution with Socialist Revolution.” Signs seen at other protests included: “Our planet is choked by environmental racism,” “Save the planet, end capitalism,” and “It’s capitalism, not straws.” Youth were also open to the teachings of Marx,



Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Malcolm X and other revolutionary thinkers.

Thousands of Portland, Ore., students packed the streets in a march that stretched nearly a mile. Some signs they carried read: “Don’t frack with Mother Nature,” “The solution to pollution is revolution,” “If you don’t act like adults, we will,” “There will be no solution under capitalism” and “Don’t burn my future.”

Reparations for climate refugees

The wide diversity of protesters, including ethnicity and nationality, was also evident. While young people were clearly the majority, the age range of demonstrators ran from under 8 to over 80. Participants included Indigenous people whose land has been colonized and ravaged by capitalism. In several cities speakers acknowledged

Indonesian fires threaten millions

By G. Dunkel

Over the past few months, fires have destroyed millions of acres of rainforest in Brazil’s Amazon region, normally one of the wettest areas in the world, as well as in Indonesia, which has been immersed in the world capitalist economy since the U.S. covertly engineered a military coup there in 1965 that massacred up to 3 million progressives. (See “Indonesia: the Second Greatest Crime of the Century,” workers.org/books.)

Two of the coldest areas of the world, Siberia and Alaska, have also endured massive wildfires. The cloud of smoke generated by Siberian fires this summer covered an area larger than all the European Union countries combined. (BBC, Aug. 14) Siberia and Alaska suffered from an extreme

heatwave due to global warming, which has dried out the forests and made them vulnerable to lightning strikes.

The Tribal Alliance of Territorial Communities, an international coalition of Indigenous leaders, is meeting in New York during the United Nations climate summit to call attention to the destruction of their lands, to confront climate change and to demand increased protection for the environment. They also contributed a large contingent to New York’s climate strike march on Sept. 20.

Indonesian fires made in U.S.

Palm oil is an essential ingredient in all sorts of consumer products, from infant formula to potato chips to shampoo and toothpaste. Much of the menu items and frying processes in fast food restaurants

involve palm oil. Major U.S. corporate consumers, including Mars and PepsiCo, have committed to buying palm oil from “responsible” companies. But Greenpeace has debunked their claims. (“The global demand for palm oil is driving the fires in Indonesia,” qz.com, Sept. 18)

Palm oil is also used to produce biodiesel fuel for trucks. In response to pressure from environmentalists, laws have been passed in the U.S. encouraging the use of biofuels in trucks and cars in an attempt to replace gasoline and diesel. But the way most biofuels are produced doubles the greenhouse effects of conventional fuels. (New York Times Magazine, Nov. 20, 2018)

A major part of the world’s supply of palm oil, an essential ingredient in so many products, comes from Indonesia, which supplied 56 percent of the world’s demand in 2018. Another 40 percent comes from Malaysia. Many of the forests in Borneo and Sumatra, the islands that produce most of the palm nuts from which palm oil is extracted, are very old. Centuries of plant decay have created thick layers of peat.

Once the existing trees have been cut and removed — generally by burning — this peat land creates very good conditions for palm nut trees. When the trees are exhausted, they are cut down and burned. More are planted until the soil is no longer productive.

Even though setting fires to clear land is restricted in Indonesia, more than 35,000 fires have been counted this season. (BBC News, Sept. 19) Given that the weather has been unusually warm and dry, the peat land — the soil itself — has caught fire and is burning, sometimes for months, producing a very distinctive smoke and fine particles that can cause tremendous distress. This smoke has spread throughout Southeast Asia, shutting schools and clogging lungs not only in Indonesia (population 265 million) but also in Singapore (5.6 million), Malaysia (31 million) and Vietnam (96 million).

The smoke from the fires in Indonesia is what the U.S. media have focused on.

Based on previous fire seasons, the World Bank is predicting the direct costs to the Indonesian economy will add up to around \$15 billion.

The whole ecology of Indonesia has been distorted and devastated in the service of U.S. imperialist interests — from fast food to biofuels and all the other consumer products that use palm oil.

While mineral-based fuels are still Indonesia’s largest export, the category that includes palm oil is the second-largest and has much more impact. If Indonesia stopped producing palm oil, the whole world would notice.

But it can’t stop — because U.S. corporations call the shots. □



Tribal Alliance of Territorial Communities marches Sept. 20 in New York City.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

‘Planet, not profits!’



Buffalo, N.Y.

that rallies were held on Indigenous lands.

Solidarity with im/migrants and against Immigration and Customs Enforcement was also expressed. The San Francisco rally of over 40,000 people stopped outside the ICE office and at banks, institutions and corporations fueling and benefiting from the climate crisis, including Amazon. In several cities FIRE (Fight for Im/migrants & Refugees Everywhere) brought signs calling for “Big Oil: Pay climate refugees reparations” and “Open the borders, justice for climate refugees.” In Atlanta, a sign read: “The wrong I.C.E. is melting.”

Tech workers strike in solidarity

As students walked out of their schools, thousands of tech workers from Microsoft, Amazon, Google, Facebook and Twitter staged walk-outs — possibly the largest coordinated worker action in the history of the tech industry.

In Seattle, where 10,000 people marched, around 3,000 tech workers left their jobs to join the protests. Around 1,500 Amazon workers walked out and rallied along with 700 workers from Google, Facebook and Twitter; many brought their children.

In May, a climate justice resolution for an aggressive climate change plan, backed by 7,500 workers, was presented to Amazon stockholders who voted it down. This rejection, along with the call by youth for the Global Climate Strike, spurred Amazon workers to strike.

In 25 cities in 14 countries around the world, Amazon employees walked out to protest that company’s failure to do more about climate change. Twitter workers walked out in San Francisco to march with other tech workers from the payment firm Square. In San Jose, Facebook workers joined the climate strike. (theguardian.com, Sept. 20)

Climate strike actions in many cities saw contingents of union workers join in solidarity with student activists. In San Francisco teachers from the Bay Area teachers’ union accompanying their students on the climate demonstration defied a last-minute order from the superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District withdrawing support for the strike by forbidding field trips to limit

participation of younger students.

In New York City, a union contingent of 1199 Service Employees (SEIU), Communician Workers (CWA) and the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) followed the instructions of the youth to bring up the rear of the march from Foley Square to Battery Park.

Trust youth leadership

There will be liberal, pro-capitalist forces hoping to contain this movement — to steer it into the bourgeois elections, lobbying politicians, supporting reformist agendas — and those who seek to limit its message to what they consider “safe demands.” But the window of opportunity for that may be long gone.

What happened today marks the beginning stages of protracted struggles around this crisis that is certain to tie in with other issues, including environmental racism and the impact on the Global South. The energy and creativity of the young activists who participated in and led the climate demonstrations hold tremendous potential. This youth movement also holds the potential of helping long-time socialists form united fronts, despite varying political views.

While not all involved grasp that capitalism is at the center of the crisis and that its overthrow is the next step, this movement is wide open to eventually come to that realization. We should trust the youth to get there.

WW photos: Gloria Rubac (Houston), Susan Schnur (Cleveland), Joe Piette (Philadelphia), Liza Green (Boston), Ellie Dorritie (Buffalo).



Solomon Islands



Scotland



Philippines



Kenya



Germany



Australia



Colombia

The climate crisis is a working-class issue — and the working class has the power to stop it!

This statement was distributed at climate strike actions by the International Workers’ Solidarity Network.

We’re all angry. All of us at these actions worldwide know our future depends on dealing with climate change. The conversation that matters now is: Who is responsible for it — and who can fix it?

Here and abroad, the impact falls disproportionately on the most oppressed: communities of color, especially Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, women and gender-oppressed, the LGBTQ2S+ community and youth. Most of us are workers, including youth and students. The wild weather patterns and unnatural disasters leave their heaviest mark on us.

Can capitalism fix the problems it creates?

Some in the climate movement simply put the blame on “human activity” without putting it squarely on big oil, big coal, the auto industry, utility firms and the banks



they borrow from — or the world’s biggest polluter, the Pentagon.

And some would even suggest that appealing to the profit motive — convincing capitalists that weaning themselves off fossil fuels is good for business or subjecting them to “climate pricing” — can solve the crisis. That’s naive thinking.

Capitalists caused global warming and they can hardly be trusted to reverse it. They calculate short-term economic gain without regard for the huge carbon footprint their profit-taking actions are leaving. Only they have the means to escape the consequences.

Working-class solidarity to save the environment

Environmental activists, mostly youth, have called for “climate strikes” Sept. 20 and 27. This is a real step forward. Strikes have won higher wages, pensions, union recognition and the like. But there are also political strikes, such as May Day 2006 when millions of im/migrants and their supporters forced the defeat of an anti-immigrant bill in Congress.

Let’s keep the climate strike conversation alive beyond

Sept. 20-27 — not just in schools but on the job, in unions, in our communities. And we need to fight environmental racism, defend Indigenous land claims and demand self-determination for oppressed nations suffering the heaviest impacts.

The climate crisis is a working-class issue. We understand this. That’s why several New York City labor organizations are urging union members to support the climate strike. That’s why Amazon workers are walking out to protest the way the company has contributed to the climate crisis.

We have the power to protect life on the planet. Nothing moves without us! And mass actions are what bring real change. □

“Unnatural Disasters”
Workers World articles on the
climate crisis, 2001–12

Available at tinyurl.com/y5y6nhwh/

Astronomical imperialism!

Part 1

By Janet Mayes

On the 50th anniversary of the first U.S. space land grab on July 20, when the Apollo 11 mission planted a U.S. flag on the moon, there was intensified hoopla about research in astronomy and future space travel. However, buried in the romantic exhilaration are motives that are anything but benign.

The world’s richest billionaires are in on the space race and are investing untold millions of dollars to reap enormous financial gain. Private corporations are investing heavily in not just space tourism, but in plans to mine the moon and the asteroid belt to obtain materials that will yield huge profits.

The imperialists’ ultimate goal: appropriating the solar system’s moons and Mars to establish ownership for future mining, strategic U.S. military bases and settlements. The struggle against imperialist hegemony must oppose Pentagon domination and capitalist exploitation of the newest target: outer space.

‘Star Wars’ not sci-fi

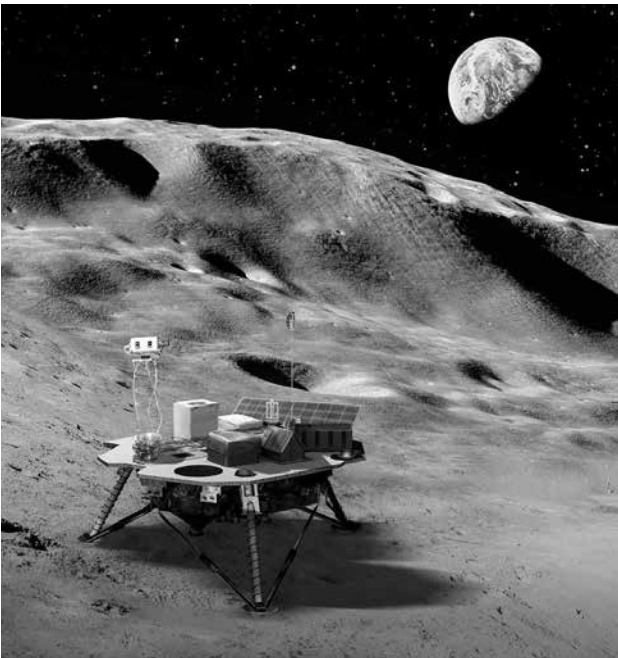
The possibility of space wars is no longer just in “Star Wars” creator George Lukas’ mind. It is real.

While corporations scheme to gain riches, the Pentagon’s militarization of space is intensifying to protect capitalist interests and uphold U.S. domination. In 2018, Commander in Chief, President Donald Trump ordered the Department of Defense to set up a sixth branch of the military, the U.S. Space Force, which is slated to be established by 2020.

In March, the DoD submitted a \$2 billion budget to Congress to be parsed out over five years. So far, the House Appropriations Committee has allocated \$15 million, while its counterpart in the Senate agreed to \$72.4 million for fiscal year 2020.

The DoD’s proposal asserted: “The establishment of the U.S. Space Force will help ensure the United States is postured to deter aggression and outpace potential adversaries in order to protect and defend our national interests.” The militarists claim this is due to “a changing space environment and growing threats.”

The Pentagon’s stated goals are to: “Fundamentally



NASA hails “the latest opportunity for industry to participate in its Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) efforts to deliver science and technology payloads to and near the Moon.” (nasa.gov)

transform our approach to space; establish the U.S. Space Force; maximize warfighting capacity and advocacy for space; outpace future threats [and] defend our vital national interests in space.” (tinyurl.com/y39tqeze)

Also, according to Reuters, “NATO aims to recognize space as a domain of warfare this year ... partly to show ... Trump that the alliance is relevant and adapting to new threats, after he signed off on the creation of a U.S. Space Force.” (June 21)

In another ominous development, the U.S. Space Command — SPACECOM — is being established as the precursor to the U.S. Space Force. Trump announced Aug. 29, “As the newest combatant command SPACECOM will defend America’s vital interests in space — the next warfighting domain. The Space Force will organize, train and equip warriors to support SPACECOM’s mission.” That would uphold U.S. dominance in space because “the best way to prevent conflict

is to prepare for victory,” quoted that day’s New York Times.

Defense News listed SPACECOM’s missions: “to deter potential adversaries in space, defend American assets in orbit [includes spy satellites], deliver war-fighting capabilities to other combatant commands and to develop joint war fighters to ... operate in the space domain.” Already, 287 military personnel have been moved from the U.S. Strategic Command into SPACECOM. (Aug. 29)

The article quotes Air Force Gen. Jay Raymond, the new head of SPACECOM, as saying, “We are at a strategic inflection point. There is nothing that we do that isn’t enabled by space.” He states “the best way ... to deter a conflict from extending into space ... is to be prepared to fight and win.”

“A sharper focus,” Raymond stresses, will be put on “dangers from other nations in space ... including competitors such as China and Russia ... and any other future competitors who might gain space capabilities.” Iran is also cited as a country “willing to invest significant national capital to put national assets into orbit.”

There is no doubt that the Pentagon and White House are sending a clear warning to Russia, China, Iran and any other countries that they view as global competitors, and informing them that the U.S. is staking its claim to supremacy over space technology — and over outer space itself.

In contrast, North Korea passed the Law on Space Development in 2013, which governs its National Aerospace Development Administration. In addition to opposing the militarization of space, it includes international cooperation and respect for international law and regulations for space.

Notably, unlike North Korea, the U.S. does not have a declaration that opposes the militarization of space.

Janet Mayes, an amateur astronomer, authored a science fiction novel about U.S. hegemony in space, “Beyond the Horse’s Eye, a Fantasy Out of Time,” under the pen name Janet Rose. A review can be found at tinyurl.com/y6fzefun/.

Kathy Durkin contributed to this article.

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

Calif. grocery workers’ strike threat wins big

Some 30,000 grocery workers who were preparing to strike major grocery chains like Krogers and Albertsons in California reached a tentative agreement Sept. 8 after months of frustrating negotiations. By threatening to strike, members of the Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 770 won a contract that “is the most significant wage and benefit increase in over 30 years,” reports a Sept. 12 statement from Local 770. In addition to winning good wages and retroactive pay back to March, the workers stopped cuts to the unused sick leave payout, secured and improved health care, protected full funding of pensions, and increased minimum hours and vacation days. A “Future of Work” committee will include worker representatives in all discussions about future grocery jobs. (ufcw770.org)

Local 770 attributed winning the contract without a strike to UCFW’s strategy of organizing support store by store to win over customers and the public who responded in the thousands. The local also thanked its members and their families as well as other unions. But memories of the contentious 2003 strike also weighed heavily on Big Grocery, which lost billions in revenue over four months. (latimes.com, Sept. 9) Just another example of what a powerful tool the strike is!

Northwest UFCW workers call boycott of Fred Meyer stores

Local 555 of the Food and Commercial Workers called a customer boycott Sept. 22 of all Fred Meyer stores in Oregon and southwestern Washington where members are working without a contract. Following months of intense negotiations, the Kroger-owned stores have refused to respond to “gross inequity” in women’s pay rates (WW, Aug. 17) and unfair labor practices to “coerce workers to settle for less during contract negotiations.”

Local 555 President Dan Clay said in a statement: “We call on our communities to make sure Kroger and Fred Meyer understand our Northwest values of decency, dignity, and respect by shopping elsewhere until our members are treated in accordance with those values.” Next round of bargaining is scheduled for Sept. 26-27. (ufcw555.org, Sept. 22) Stay tuned.

8,500 nurses strike for better patient care

Some 6,500 National Nurses United members at 12 Tenet Healthcare hospitals in California, Arizona and Florida went on a 24-hour strike Sept. 20. They were joined by more than 2,000 NNU members who walked out of the University of Chicago Medical Center that day. The NNU is demanding better patient care, based on safe and effective patient-nurse ratios, as well as higher pay and other improvements in working conditions. Nurses say current ratios are leading to burnout and inadequate staffing that makes it impossible to provide adequate care. (NY Times, Sept. 21)

80,000 Kaiser Permanente workers prep for strike

In what could be an epic national strike and the largest since 1997, more than 80,000

Kaiser Permanente workers — emergency medical and biomedical techs, nurses, respiratory therapists, billers, transcriptions clerks, receptionists and janitors — are threatening to walk off the job. The Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Workers represents the union members. (Salon, Sept. 14)

Some 98 percent of the workers voted to authorize the strike, which would allow union leaders to call it as early as Oct. 1. They allege the nonprofit health care giant — made up of 39 hospitals and nearly 700 medical offices serving more than 12 million patients in seven states across the country — has been outsourcing and automating union jobs, understaffing facilities, raising patient premiums, and is seeking to reduce wages and benefits in contract negotiations. This despite bringing in more than \$11 billion in profits since January 2017 and sitting on a \$38 billion reserve. CEO pay is \$16 million a year! Workers have been preparing since June, when 4,000 Kaiser mental health professionals and members of the National Union of Healthcare workers started protesting. (American Prospect, Sept. 4)

Fight Trump policy changes threatening migrant farmworkers

Trump’s Department of Labor is trying to force through catastrophic regulatory policies affecting the H-2A agricultural guestworker program. If implemented, they’ll force down pay for both U.S.-born and im/migrant workers and make it easier to deny jobs to U.S.-born workers so bosses can hire more temporary migrant workers — and pay them less. If passed, this will be a loss for all workers. The window of public comment on the 500 pages of complex legal regulations closes Sept. 24. Take action at tinyurl.com/noDOJchanges.

Hong Kong: Make colonialism great again

By Fred Goldstein

Posted to lowwagecapitalism.com on Sept. 11, 2019.

Sept. 10 — It is a thoroughly reactionary development when demonstrators carrying U.S. flags march through a city asking the most hated imperialist figure, Donald Trump, to come to their aid. But that is what is happening in Hong Kong.

Despite all the claims in the capitalist press about the demonstrators being advocates of “democracy” and “freedom,” they have embraced a political figure who has locked immigrant children in cages after separating them from their families.

They have called for aid from a president who has called for Muslims to be banned from the U.S. They have embraced a vile racist who has called African nations and Haiti “shithole” countries. Trump has called Mexicans rapists and criminals. What can be the political mentality of demonstrators who would ask for help from a racist bigot in the name of “democracy”?

It is the mentality of capitalist greed.

Donald Trump is trying to low-key the demonstrations because he wants to de-escalate a trade war with the People’s Republic of China. He is afraid that the trade war will trigger an economic downturn in the U.S. And an economic downturn will hurt his chances of reelection in 2020.

But Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, the China hawks in Trump’s administration and the CIA did not get the memo. And if they did, Trump is playing soft cop in this scenario.

Washington and the mainstream media outlets are going all out to foment a full-scale pro-imperialist rebellion, basically demanding independence for Hong Kong. They hope to prolong the demonstrations in order to embarrass the PRC on the 70th anniversary of the Chinese Revolution on Oct. 1. But the strategic goal of the Trump administration is to back the PRC into a corner and provoke it to intervene in Hong Kong.

Washington and the Pentagon would like to create a small-scale version of the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989.

Washington hopes that this will give the entire worldwide propaganda apparatus of the imperialists a green light to open up a major anti-Chinese campaign and set the stage for hostilities or even war. Given the divisions in the imperialist camp and the growing weight of China as an economic power, however, it remains to be seen whether these plans can materialize.

Hong Kong ‘the new Berlin’

Joshua Wong, one of the leaders of the demonstrations in the 2014 Hong Kong “umbrella” movement and one of the main leaders in the present struggle spoke in Berlin on Sept. 9 saying: “If we are in a new Cold War, Hong Kong is the new Berlin.” He continued, “We urge the free world to stand together with us in resisting the Chinese autocratic regime,” in a clear signal to the capitalist world. (Reuters, Sept. 9)

By recalling the image of Berlin and the wall that divided the East and West, Wong evoked the vision of the beginning of the destruction of the socialist camp in Eastern Europe and the ultimate demise of the USSR. Wong’s clear goal is the destruction of socialist China.

The place of Hong Kong in modern China

With the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949, the People’s Liberation Army drove the imperialist puppet Nationalist army off the mainland and onto the island of Taiwan. From a military point of view, the PLA was supreme on mainland China.

Mao Zedong could have ordered the PLA to take Hong Kong, and it would not have taken much more than a day. But he did not do that. Why? Because China was a vast and impoverished country. Before the revolution, China was known as the land of hunger. Famines took the lives of hundreds of thousands and sometimes millions of people because of warlord rule and the lack of transportation.

The revolution solved that problem with massive land redistribution.

But China was in dire need of agricultural and industrial infrastructure. Following the revolution, the U.S. imposed a blockade on technology and industrial equipment. The USSR gave assistance. But China still needed financial channels to the outside world, and Hong Kong was a crucial financial center.

‘One country, two systems’

Fast forward to 1982. Mao had died in 1976, and the leftist forces associated with the Cultural Revolution were defeated. Deng Xiaoping entered into negotiations with the British imperialists over Hong Kong. The PRC made clear that they regarded Hong Kong as part of China. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher tried to hold out for the continuation of three oppressive treaties signed under military threats from Britain in 1842, 1860 and 1898. It was those treaties, known to the Chinese as the “unequal treaty,” which formalized the British colonization of Hong Kong.

In the negotiations, the British imperialists wanted to retain administrative control of the territory. Deng told the British that the PRC regarded Hong Kong as part of China and threatened to invade to take back its territory. London was forced to abandon its attempts to retain the unequal treaties and the administration of Hong Kong.

However, with Mao gone, the “reformers” under Deng were in charge. The PRC adopted the “one country, two systems” doctrine. An agreement was signed and went into effect in 1997. The doctrine said that Hong Kong would retain its capitalist system until 2047. A legislature and a governing council were set up. The PRC would have input into the legislature, retain the right to govern Hong Kong foreign policy and the right to interpret laws. Hong Kong was designated by China as a special administrative region.

In a way, the arrangement with Hong Kong mirrored what the new Chinese leadership was trying to establish under the name “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.” A mix of socialism and capitalism. Only in China there was a mass Chinese Communist Party which could hold the capitalists in check, as well as strategic state-owned enterprises. In Hong Kong, the largest imperialist banks, accounting firms, brokerage companies and law firms were left to dominate the economics of the territory. Always in fear of the PRC and socialism, they gradually tried to dominate the politics of Hong Kong as well.

The latest counterrevolutionary, pro-colonialist demonstrations, complete with U.S. flags, singing the U.S. national anthem and appeals to Trump for assistance, represent a surge forward by the anti-PRC capitalist class to take over the political system in Hong Kong.

It is a law of capitalism that capital accumulates and gets stronger over time. Over the years, the Hong Kong capitalists, with the aid of imperialism, have never abandoned the attempt to get out from under the shadow of the PRC. In a small territory like Hong Kong, this can only be done with the aid and backing of a major power like the U.S.

Hong Kong and world finance capital

The PRC faces significant risks in Hong Kong. The territory plays a crucial role in the economic development of China. Hundreds of billions of dollars flow in and out of mainland China through Hong Kong. (“Why China Still Needs Hong Kong,” Peterson International Institute for Economics, July 15)

“No less than 64 percent of the mainland’s inward foreign direct investment and 65 percent of its outward foreign direct investment was booked in Hong Kong. Chinese banks, which are now worth US\$1.2 trillion, hold overseas assets concentrated in Hong Kong.” (“Hong Kong is irreplaceable for China,” South China Morning Post, Aug. 30)

The imperialists know this and are gambling that they can force concessions from China by economic extortion. This is the danger of the “one country, two systems” regime in Hong Kong.

Lost in all the enthusiasm of the capitalist press for the reactionaries is the plight of the working class.

In Hong Kong, houses cost 20.9 times the average yearly household income. Compare that with 9.4 times in Los Angeles and 9.1 times in San Francisco — cities infamous for their housing crises — and the extent of the problem becomes apparent.

“‘Hong Kong only builds for the rich. They need to care for real people,’ says Chan To, 30, a skinny man with flecks of gray in his hair who has been homeless since he lost his job as a chef last summer. ... Chan sought refuge in McDonald’s, sleeping in various outlets every night for the last four months, he says.” (Huffington Post, Nov. 20, 2018)

“McRefugees” is a Hong Kong term for people living in booths at fast food places. Homelessness and being rent-poor is endemic in Hong Kong. The minimum wage is US\$4 an hour in a city that has been rated as the most expensive in the world. The demonstrators who carry U.S. flags have no demands to improve the lot of the impoverished Hong Kong working class.

‘Lady Liberty’ at Tiananmen Square

Such flagrant appeals to colonialism have not been seen since the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in China in 1989. At that time, the vast assembly of counterrevolutionary student protesters, many of them schooled in the U.S., displayed a replica of the Statue of Liberty in Tiananmen Square in an open appeal for support from U.S. imperialism. Mikhail Gorbachev, who opened the door to counterrevolution in the USSR, went to the demonstrations to show his solidarity. The “reformist” capitalist-road Chinese premier at the time, Zao Zhiyang, was put under house arrest for encouraging a full-scale counterrevolution aimed at overthrowing the socialist system.

Parading through Hong Kong with U.S. flags in 2019 is the equivalent of displaying the statue of “Lady Liberty” in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Playing with capitalism is like playing with fire as far as socialists are concerned. The attacks on Chinese technology, the U.S. naval threats in the South China Sea, the brutal trade war initiated by Trump and the witch-hunt by the FBI against Chinese scientists in the U.S. are all part of the growing antagonism between Chinese socialism and U.S. imperialism.

One can hope the Chinese leadership will draw the necessary lessons from the developments in Hong Kong and the U.S. anti-China offensive. A hard assessment of U.S. imperialism and the voracious appetite of the exploiting class may be in order.

Following the great anti-colonial wave in Africa, India and the Middle East after World War II, the British Union Jack had to be pulled down. In fact, the surrender of Hong Kong was said to be the last gasp of the British world empire. The British, the U.S. and other imperialists had to resort to neocolonialism, economic penetration and the installation of puppet regimes to maintain their world domination.

Hoisting the U.S. flag in Hong Kong is a signal that these demonstrators want to return to the open colonialism of old. Trump and company want to make colonialism great again. □

Fight the power! Build Workers World!

Workers World newspaper has a point of view. Unlike the corporate press, we report events from the perspective of the workers and the oppressed. But you already know that.

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

That’s why the newspaper showed solidarity with labor marches all over the country on Labor Day, the first Monday in September. That’s the federal holiday the ruling class “gave” U.S. workers in 1894 to distract us from memorializing May Day. However, May 1, promoted by socialists and communists, is celebrated by workers all over the world, as well as in the U.S., in honor of the 1886 Haymarket strike when Chicago workers shook the bosses with their determined fightback.

Later this month the youth-initiated Global Climate Strike, Sept. 20-27, drew millions of people of all ages on all



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

continents demanding action to save all forms of life on this increasingly vulnerable planet. A special issue of WW was there, discussing strategies to help working people, young and old, wrest the reins of power away from the imperialist ruling class and implement changes

that defend the environment and save lives.

It’s essential for Workers World not to be a bystander, but to take action in defense of our Marxist-Leninist principles and beliefs. If you agree, then it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program, which since 1977 has been helping to get out the paper. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends, all for a donation of a minimum of \$75 or \$100 or \$300 (only \$25 a month) or more.

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/—it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. Know that we’re grateful for your help in building Workers World—for today and for the future! □

Being homeless is not a crime

Rather than making a futile attempt to rationalize any of Trump’s horrifying, irrational views, our time is better spent in political analysis that points to clarity and action. For, like most bourgeois politicians, Trump likes to point a finger of blame for this or that issue at other individuals, including victims, instead of at the system that puts profits before meeting human needs.

One case in point is Trump’s Sept. 17 statement on the homeless situation in California, especially Los Angeles and San Francisco. He said: “We can’t let Los Angeles, San Francisco and numerous other cities destroy themselves by allowing what’s happening.” He described the homeless situation there as “disgusting,” “disgraceful” and “a disgrace to our country” and threatened: “We’ll be doing something about it.” (USA Today, Sept. 17) Trump also stated that homeless people are making the police “sick.” (Washington Post, Sept. 17)

Trump made some of these demonizing comments en route to California to host several fundraisers where tens of millions of dollars were raised for his reelection campaign. Trump was targeting local Democratic administrations in Los Angeles and San Francisco as responsible for “the homeless crisis” in hopes of giving his reelection campaign a shot in the arm. He lost the vote in those two cities in 2016.

Diane Yentel, president and chief executive of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, vigorously responded: “The president’s remarks are abhorrent. He’s apparently more concerned with the doorways and streets than with the people who are homeless and sleeping on them.” (Washington Post, Sept. 17)

During 2018, the homeless population in Los Angeles increased overall by 16 percent. According to Karen Lincoln, an associate professor of social work at the University of Southern California, while only 9 percent of the population of Los

Angeles is African American, about 40 percent of the city’s homeless population is Black. She noted that the Latinx population is similarly disproportionately homeless. (Citylab, Sept. 11)

According to a report released July 11, the number of people without homes in San Francisco has increased over 30 percent since 2017. (tinyurl.com/y4wxq57r/) A 2018 Department of Housing and Urban Development report revealed that a household of four in the city, even with an income of over \$117,000, is considered “low income.” Only 17 percent of San Francisco’s population can afford to purchase a “median-priced” home — starting at \$1.7 million.

Why this “sudden” homeless crisis in these cities? One definite answer can be found in the unregulated boom in housing costs — fueled by gentrification. San Francisco now has more billionaires per capita than any other city in the world. (Fox News, Aug. 20) As the epicenter

of high-tech-dominated Silicon Valley, with mega-corporations like Google and Twitter, landlords and property owners are having a field day, setting high prices and reaping record profits.

Let’s be clear. There is a glut — overproduction — in the housing market overall in the U.S. Large numbers of empty condominiums and abandoned apartments and houses are proof positive that housing is available — but also that housing under capitalism is set up to make a profit, no matter how many people are forced to live on the streets. Many struggle with mental health challenges and drug and alcohol addiction. Police abuse is common.

Trump, who became a billionaire with investments in luxury hotels and other real estate, is a hypocrite because he knows this to be true.

Yes, homelessness is a disgrace — it is a disgrace of capitalism! Because housing should be affordable and available to all. Housing is a human right! □

Venezuela Pact signed with sections of opposition

By Marco Teruggi
Caracas

Excerpts from article first published in pagina12.org.ar on Sept. 19. Translation by John Catalinotto.

The Venezuelan government and a sector of its opposition signed a five-point agreement and established the National Dialogue Table on Sept. 16. The event modified the possible outcomes of the conflict. This happened while the negotiations mediated by Norway had been frozen. The general reaction to the broadcast scenes of the signing was that of surprise. This development had been unforeseen in the previously expected scenario in this conflict.

In the last few hours [of discussions], the first step forward was made within the framework of the pact. Edgar Zambrano, the deputy and vice president of the National Assembly and a member of the [opposition] Acción Democrática party, was released from prison. He had been arrested for participating in the abortive military coup on April 30. Zambrano must appear before a judge every 30 days.

The [Venezuelan] government was united in taking this action. As usual in these scenarios, Chavismo showed no internal differences in what it presented as a central achievement in the midst of an escalation [against President Nicolás Maduro] on several fronts — mainly in diplomacy and on the Colombian border.

Four political formations ratified and defended the agreement before the cameras: the [anti-Maduro groupings] MAS, Cambiemos, Soluciones para Venezuela and Avanzada Progresista. The opposition forces that are considered the majority, such as Voluntad Popular, were also joined by Javier Bertucchi, a former presidential candidate. The [opposition] groups Primero Justicia, Acción Democrática and Un Nuevo Tiempo rejected the agreement the others signed.

Juan Guaidó, president of the National Assembly, gave a statement at the same time as the televised signing of the agreement. There he ended the dialogue session initiated and mediated by Norway, first in Oslo, then in Barbados. Guaidó blamed the [Venezuelan] government for the impossibility of reaching an agreement and minimized the [role of the] opposition signatories, ruling out that this could be a possible solution.

The five points of the agreement — still

to be developed — were: reincorporation of Chavista deputies to the National Assembly [this body was declared in contempt by the Supreme Court]; and formation of a new National Electoral Council (CNE), which would work with the justice system to address the situation of imprisoned politicians in order to release some of them in permissible cases. Also, rejection of U.S. economic sanctions; defense of Guyana Esequiba (territory in international dispute); and implementation of an oil-for-food exchange program.

Agreement rejects blockade

Therefore, the installation of the National Dialogue Table gives a glimpse of the possibility of an exit from the current crisis through an election. The central question would be the renewal of the CNE [the body that organizes the elections], a demand the opposition always puts on the table. At the same time, the agreement supports the attempt to avoid the clash of the two sides vying for state power, shown by the legislature’s situation and by the joint rejection of the international blockade that impedes economic recovery and normalization.

The negotiated points show a difference with the approach taken by opposition sectors which were absent from the talks. These sectors have defended the need for continued U.S. sanctions aimed at forcing the government to negotiate from an unfavorable position. They have also opposed any resolution that omits the departure of Nicolás Maduro as its starting point — before even holding presidential elections in which, they insist, Maduro could not participate.

Those positions are not homogeneous among the opposition groupings. Political forces such as Acción Democrática have shown that they are in favor of a possible electoral scenario, even though they are not signers of the new agreement. Other opposition forces have maintained that no exit from the crisis through the ballot box is feasible and the conflict must be resolved by force.

In addition to making progress on the announced points, the signed agreement seemingly aims to attract those sectors that oppose a violent exit requiring foreign intervention. Those sectors could agree on an intermediate position.

The issue of a peaceful, national resolution of the conflict was underlined in the agreement and in subsequent statements.

This is a position within a scenario marked by three recent events that indicate the advance of groups that seek to employ violence to turn the correlation of forces in their favor.

The first event was the [Venezuelan] government’s denunciation of the threat of a false-flag action prepared from Colombia to provoke an accelerated escalation of confrontations. The second was the activation [in a meeting of the Organization of American States] of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR). This will be debated among the foreign ministers of the signatory countries during the United Nations General Assembly sessions [the last week of September]. The third was the new confirmation of Guaidó’s links with sectors of

Colombian paramilitaries through photographs and testimonies.

Within this framework, the response of the United States was twofold. First, the Treasury Department announced new sanctions against 16 companies linked to Venezuela. Second, the State Department issued a statement accusing the Venezuelan government of being responsible for the failure of the talks, affirmed that it will not remove the blockade until Maduro leaves the presidency, and underlined the invocation of TIAR to “facilitate more collective actions.”

With its new scenario, the government has initiated a step in agreement with some opposition sectors, which were immediately called traitors by the other right-wing forces. □

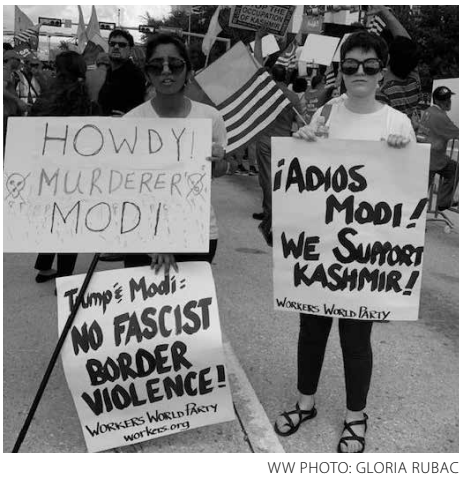
Thousands reject Modi-Trump racism in Houston

By Mirinda Crissman
Houston

Thousands of people of many nationalities and religions gathered outside the stadium here Sept. 22 to protest the fascist rally held for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump. Under the guise of signing a trade deal to strengthen economic relations between the countries, both Modi and Trump used their platform to stoke intensifying violence against oppressed peoples. The current Indian and U.S. regimes see one another as allies. Modi, with regard to the India-Pakistan border, and Trump, the Mexico-U.S. border, proclaimed they would use their borders as battlegrounds to keep their countries “safe from terror.”

Both Modi and Trump deliberately left out the terror they inflict. Both heads of state have used religious differences as well as colonial divisions like race, gender, sexual orientation and class to incite violence against minorities. Hate crimes against minorities saw significant increases after the respective elections of Modi and Trump.

The highly organized protest particularly called out Modi for his ties to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist volunteer organization whose founders trained directly under



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Houston protest targets Trump-Modi meeting.

Mussolini in Italy; his gross violations of human rights, religious persecution, extrajudicial killings, police brutality, illegal detention, blatant destruction of the environment in favor of economic gains; and his revoking of Kashmiri sovereignty. Modi found an ally in Trump, who is willing to overlook Modi’s crimes and, in many cases, is committing similar atrocities in the name of empire.

The event with Modi and Trump was titled and advertised as “Howdy Modi.” However, some 15,000 people in Houston vehemently rejected oppression and monuments to fascism when they chanted, “¡Adios Modi! Liberation for Kashmir!” □

Writers support author Kamila Shamsie, denied book prize for defending Palestine

By Kathy Durkin

Hundreds of authors have publicly denounced the revocation of a German literary prize, the Nelly Sachs Award for Literature, from esteemed writer Kamila Shamsie because of her support for the pro-Palestinian Boycott, Divest and Sanctions campaign.

An open letter entitled “The Right to Boycott,” published Sept. 23 in the London Review of Books, lists over 300 prominent writers who back Shamsie and assert that the prize’s judges are punishing “an author for her human rights advocacy.” (Text and full list of signers: tinyurl.com/y6t4tgqn) Over 100 authors signed the letter immediately after it was disseminated by Ahdaf Soueif and Omar Robert Hamilton, co-founders of the Palestine Festival of Literature.

It is “a matter of outrage,” stressed Shamsie, referring to the rescinding of the book prize awarded to her by the city of Dortmund. Judges blatantly stated their reason for withdrawing the award on Sept. 18: Shamsie’s pro-Palestinian activism,

especially her support for the BDS movement directed at the Israeli state.

The eight-member jury gave Shamsie the award “for her outstanding literary work” which “builds bridges between societies” on Sept. 6. Shamsie, who was born and grew up in Karachi, Pakistan, before moving to London, is a highly acclaimed writer and won the Women’s Prize for Fiction in 2018 and was longlisted for the Booker Prize in 2017.

The Nelly Sachs prize is named for a German-Jewish Nobel Laureate poet and is given to writers promoting “tolerance and reconciliation.” Except, apparently, when it involves supporters of the Palestinian people. In addition to stripping Shamsie of the book prize due to her principled activism, the Dortmund judges refused to publish her response when they issued the press release announcing the award’s revocation, although she requested they do so.

Support the BDS movement!

In her statement, Shamsie asserted: “It is a matter of great sadness to me that a jury should bow to pressure and withdraw

a prize from a writer who is exercising her freedom of conscience and freedom of expression; and it is a matter of outrage that the BDS movement (modeled on the South African boycott) that campaigns against the government of Israel for its acts of discrimination and brutality against Palestinians should be held up as shameful and unjust.” (@Art4PalestineUK)

The author also rebuked the Israeli state: “In the just-concluded Israeli elections, Benjamin Netanyahu announced plans to annex up to one-third of the West Bank, in contravention of international law, and his political opponent Benny Gantz’s objection to this was that Netanyahu had stolen his idea, this closely following the killing of two Palestinian teenagers by Israeli forces. ... In this political context, the jury of the Nelly Sachs prize has chosen to withdraw their award from me on the basis of my support for a nonviolent campaign to bring pressure on the Israeli government.”

In May, Germany’s Parliament condemned the BDS movement as “anti-Semitic,” a wholly false equivalence. Opposing the Israeli state’s brutality against the Palestinian people and violent occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem is a principled position supported by millions of people worldwide.

Sixty Jewish academics, including some Israeli residents, publicly criticized Germany’s decision, calling it “part of a trend ‘labeling supporters of Palestinian human rights as antisemitic.’” (Guardian, Sept. 19)

The writers’ open letter cites 40 progressive Jewish organizations which say blending anti-Jewish bigotry with opposition to Israeli policies and apartheid “undermines both the Palestinian struggle for justice, freedom and equality and the global struggle against antisemitism.” It also shields Israel “from being held accountable to universal standards of human rights and international law.”



Kamila Shamsie PHOTO: KAMILA SHAMSIE FACEBOOK

Members of the BDS movement, founded by Palestinian activists in 2005, criticized the German government’s “complicity in Israel’s crimes of military occupation, ethnic cleansing, seige and apartheid.” (middleeasteye.net, Sept. 18)

These crimes include the fatal shooting by Israeli soldiers of the two youth mentioned in Shamsie’s statement—Ali al-Ashqar, 17, and Khaled al-Ribie, 14. They were marching with 5,000 Palestinians at the Gaza-Israel border on Sept. 6. Army troops injured 76 protesters.

Another Sept. 18 Middle East Eye article reported that five Israeli armed guards killed a Palestinian woman who had “seemingly” entered the wrong end of the Qalandiya checkpoint in the Occupied West Bank, while trying to reach the bus section. Israeli troops prevented medics from providing emergency care to her.

To support BDS, Shamsie will not allow her works to be published in Israel, as “[T] here is no Israeli publisher who is completely unentangled from the state.” She won’t “cross the global picket line formed by Palestinian civil society, which has asked [supporters] to not cooperate with organizations that are complicit with the Israeli state.” (mhpbooks.com, July 18, 2018)

“If a BDS-compliant Israeli publisher existed, I would be happy to have them publish my work,” said Shamsie. (Guardian, Sept. 19) . □

U.S. sends troops to Gulf region, threatens new war

Continued from page 1

with Iran, as well as imposing economic sanctions and sending warships — and now troops — to the Gulf region. These steps raise the probability of a catastrophic war in Southwest Asia.

While such a war would greatly harm Iran and its people, the country is much stronger than Iraq was when attacked by the U.S. in 2003. Iran today has 80 million people, compared to Iraq’s 25 million at that time. The Iranian government has much greater support from its people, has a better armed and motivated military, and has allied forces in many neighboring countries. Taking this into account, another “unending” U.S. aggression in the region would cost much more in lives and wealth than the 2003-11 U.S. war against Iraq.

The inability of the Saudi military to stop the missile attack last week, wherever it came from, shows that the Saudi oil industry and the reactionary Saudi monarchy itself are vulnerable to collapse.

That same Saudi monarchy has intervened for the past four years in a civil war in Yemen, killing thousands of Yemenis with U.S.-supplied bombs and jets. This U.S.-backed Saudi war has brought millions of Yemenis to the edge of famine, creating a humanitarian disaster among Yemen’s 30 million people. Despite the high-tech Saudi arms, the opposing side in Yemen, Ansar Allah, also called the Houthis, has fought the Saudi army to a standstill.

Yemenis say they did it

The Houthis say they carried out the attack against the Saudis using drones. The Houthis also said they would end the targeting of Saudi Arabian territory “with military drones, ballistic missiles and all other forms of weapons, and we wait for a reciprocal move from them.” (Al Jazeera, Sept. 20)

In the same article, Hassan Nasrallah, leader of Hezbollah, the revolutionary group based in Lebanon, advised Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates not

to incite war against Iran “because your houses are made of glass.” Saudi Arabia “should think well, as a war with Iran will mean their destruction.” Like the Houthis, Nasrallah also demanded the Saudis end their war against Yemen.

The Iranian government rejects Washington’s charge, saying it was not responsible for the attack. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also said that any U.S. or Saudi military attack against his country would result in an all-out war. “I am making a very serious statement that we don’t want war; we don’t want to engage in a military confrontation. ... But we won’t blink to defend our territory,” Zarif told CNN on Sept. 19.

Zarif’s comments expose the double-edged nature of U.S. aggression. Wherever the Pentagon deploys troops in the Gulf region, these U.S. forces are not only a threat but also a target. Forces allied to Iran in Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, for example, are within range of U.S. bases. Any U.S. war against Iran would leave tens of thousands of U.S. troops on bases in the region vulnerable to attack, as well as Saudi oil.

The Trump administration and the Pentagon know that an attempt to carry out a limited air strike against Iranian targets could lead to a war in which they don’t control the escalation or the outcome. It should be remembered that U.S. forces invaded a nearly helpless Afghanistan in 2001 and occupied that country with as many as 100,000 troops and mercenaries. The result? The U.S. military still seems unable to leave that country 18 years later, and the people’s suffering continues.

By withdrawing from the treaty, signed by the Obama administration in 2015, which restricted Iran’s potential development of nuclear weapons, the Trump regime has created today’s extremely dangerous situation. It is important for anti-imperialist forces in the United States to continue to point out that Washington is responsible and to do everything possible to stop a new war in the region. □

‘Lift U.S. sanctions off Zimbabwe’



The Brooklyn-based December 12th Movement and Friends of Zimbabwe organized a march from 53rd Street and Lexington Avenue to the United Nations on Sept. 21 and demanded an end to the deadly economic sanctions imposed by the United States on Zimbabwe in southern Africa. The organizers repeatedly chanted “Sanctions kill.”

The sanctions, which are an act of war, have created tremendous hardships for the Zimbabwean people since the early 2000s. Hardships increased due to severe bouts of drought due to climate change.

Sanctions were implemented in an attempt to push out of office the late

President Robert Mugabe, who ushered in a radical land redistribution program to return land back to war veterans who fought a heroic guerrilla struggle against the racist, colonialist regime of Ian Smith. This struggle resulted in Britain having to compensate white farmers, who illegally occupied and profited off the land for many decades to enrich their coffers.

Once the march reached Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza at the U.N., the protesters joined forces with a rally calling for the independence of Puerto Rico, a colony super-exploited by the U.S.

— Story and photo by Monica Moorehead



Huelga climática, 20 de septiembre.

Reforestación: Cuba lidera el camino

Por Stephanie Hedgecoke

Antes de 1492, lo que hoy es Estados Unidos tenía alrededor de mil millones de acres de bosques. Desde 1600 en adelante, al menos 286 millones de acres fueron destruidos. En una carta de 1763, Benjamin Franklin escribió: “La tierra despejada absorbe más calor y derrite la nieve más rápido”.

Debido al colonialismo y al crecimiento de las corporaciones extractivas capitalistas, los bosques que anteriormente reducían el carbono fueron diezmos. Esta deforestación es parte de la crisis del calentamiento global, además del aumento masivo de carbono en la atmósfera. El mundo necesita reforestación.

¡Cuba lo está haciendo!

La reforestación cubana comenzó en la región de la Sierra del Rosario en 1968; Con el apoyo del gobierno revolucionario, los aldeanos locales decidieron un plan.

El área había sido despojada durante la colonización española, más de 400 años desde 1492 hasta 1898. Los invasores talaron el bosque original para criar ganado y establecer plantaciones. Los árboles indígenas (cedro, ébano, caoba, majagua y otros) ya no crecían allí. A mediados de 1800, el suelo estaba degradado; La deforestación continuó hasta principios de 1900 para el pastoreo de ganado y la cría de cerdos. La población rural empobrecida trabajaba para los ganaderos o quemaba árboles para hacer carbón. En el momento de la Revolución Cubana en 1959, no quedaba nada más que palmeras aisladas.

La Cuba socialista vio la necesidad de implementar proyectos sociales y económicos en las zonas rurales. El Plan Sierra del Rosario fue uno de esos proyectos. El plan de reforestación, lanzado junto con el establecimiento de servicios comunitarios, mejoraría la calidad del suelo y proporcionaría un trabajo importante para las personas en el área.

Fundada en 1971, Las Terrazas recibió el nombre del sistema de plantación de terrazas e incluyó unas 5.000 hectáreas (12.355 acres) iniciales en la parte oriental de la cordillera. Los científicos ayudaron a determinar qué árboles indígenas plantar, y los aldeanos inicialmente plantaron 3.000 árboles de caoba, hibisco y teca. En ocho años, la gente del valle había plantado 6 millones de árboles.

El gobierno cubano declaró que los árboles frutales deberían plantarse entre las otras especies para alimentar a la gente. Alrededor del 80 por ciento de los alimentos que se comen en Las Terrazas se cultivan localmente. Todo es orgánico, incluyendo plátanos, calabazas, toronjas, aguacates, naranjas, mandarinas, mamey, y todo se cultiva entre los árboles del bosque.

Las Terrazas se construyó para proporcionar electricidad y agua corriente, con guarderías, escuelas, médicos de familia, dentistas, un laboratorio clínico y una farmacia. El proyecto mejoró las condiciones para las familias locales, a las que se unieron personal científico, proveedores de servicios públicos y artistas.

La gente cría ganado para la carne, y se



Río San Juan, Las Terrazas, Cuba.

WW PHOTO: BY STEPHANIE HEDGECOKE

construyó un lago para criar peces, incluyendo truchas, tilapia y otras especies. El pueblo más tarde agregó un ecomuseo, un cine y una discoteca.

Ecosistemas indígenas restaurados

Los mamíferos, plantas, aves e insectos indígenas, muchos de los cuales se habían puesto en peligro bajo siglos de explotación ambiental durante el colonialismo, comenzaron a regresar, y los ecosistemas indígenas comenzaron a restaurarse. Hoy Cuba tiene 131 especies de aves, 26 de las cuales son indígenas de Cuba; el resto pasa por rutas migratorias a sus áreas de anidación. Hay 33 especies de reptiles, incluidas 17 serpientes y 11 lagartos. Algunas de las especies de mamíferos más pequeñas del mundo viven en Cuba, el solenodon cubano en peligro de extinción, la jutía conga y la jutía carabalí, han regresado al bosque.

En 1985, la UNESCO reconoció el proyecto de reforestación como la Reserva de la Biosfera y agregó 25.000 hectáreas (61.776 acres) de Sierra del Rosario a las 5.000 originales. Desde entonces, la UNESCO ha reconocido cinco biosferas más en Cuba.

Durante el Período Especial, después de la pérdida de comercio con la URSS y los otros antiguos socios comerciales socialistas de Cuba, combinados con el endurecimiento de su bloqueo por parte de Estados Unidos, el gobierno revolucionario apoyó el turismo ecológico y cultural y duplicó el enfoque en la sostenibilidad. Las ganancias del turismo en Las Terrazas se utilizaron para construir una biblioteca. También en el Período

Especial, el cultivo orgánico se convirtió en obligatorio.

El cafetal Buenavista fue restaurado de las ruinas de uno de los cafetales coloniales. Los lugareños plantaron cafetos y comenzaron a cosechar café Arábica Las Terrazas a la sombra. La miel también se produce localmente.

Las Terrazas fue el primer modelo de reforestación en Cuba; Ha inspirado otros 11 proyectos de reforestación. Las otras 11 comunidades se reúnen periódicamente en Las Terrazas para intercambiar semillas indígenas para promover la biodiversidad y el comercio de productos alimenticios. La UNESCO ha reconocido a los programas de reforestación de Cuba por sus principios de incorporación de conocimientos científicos y prácticas tradicionales para fortalecer la participación de la comunidad en la planificación estratégica. Hasta la fecha, se han plantado más de 7 millones de árboles indígenas y se ha recuperado una gran cantidad de biodiversidad.

Delegación de solidaridad de EE. UU. visita Las Terrazas

La 50ª Brigada Venceremos visitó Las Terrazas el 28 de julio. Conocimos a Ida, nuestra guía local, en el pueblo, y luego nos llevó al Río San Juan. La biosfera es un sitio de vacaciones popular para los trabajadores en La Habana. El río San Juan es alimentado por manantiales de azufre y es considerado como un tratamiento mineral. Nos unimos a muchos cubanos que nadan en el río y disfrutan de los bosques en sus fiestas nacionales.

Los tres jardines verdes de Las Terrazas

apoyan a las escuelas y la comunidad como la principal fuente de alimentos. Los aldeanos cultivan frutas, flores y plantas con usos medicinales en infusiones de hierbas y suplementos vitamínicos. Los niños de jardín de infantes tienen su propio jardín donde aprenden a cultivar alimentos, que comen a la hora del almuerzo y la merienda. Los niños incluso aprenden a hacer infusiones de hierbas con varias flores, como la manzanilla y la guayaba.

El Centro de Investigación Ecológica pertenece a la Academia de Ciencias de Cuba. Los especialistas buscan especies de flora y fauna en el bosque; dos veces por semana también trabajan con estudiantes locales para enseñarles a reconocer las plantas como parte del trabajo científico. Incluso los niños pequeños saben cómo reconocer seis o siete de las plantas indígenas locales.

Ida les dijo a los brigadistas: “Cuando les digo que era obligatorio cultivar todo lo que necesitábamos, no fue porque alguien vino y nos dijo que lo hiciéramos. Necesitamos hacerlo”. Y agregó: “Cultivamos productos orgánicos todo el tiempo”.

Las Terrazas usa algo de energía solar y planea adquirir más cuando sea posible. La biosfera tiene regulaciones para la conservación; El Comité local para la Defensa de la Revolución toma todas las decisiones relacionadas con la sostenibilidad, como la cantidad de viviendas sostenibles para el proyecto.

Nuestro guía habló del impacto del calentamiento global en las estaciones de crecimiento y la flora local. Algunas variedades de plantas ahora han desaparecido del bosque debido al calor; otros, como los mangos, están en temporada más temprano y más largos. Este julio fue el más cálido jamás registrado en el mundo. Ida nos dijo que la temperatura promedio anual durante todo el año en Cuba fue de 24° a 25° Celsius (75° a 77° F); este año tuvieron un nuevo máximo de 39.8° C (103.6° F).

Ida dijo que cuando era niña, las lluvias eran tan intensas que a veces los niños se veían obligados a quedarse en la escuela durante una o dos semanas. Ahora hay lluvias estacionales que pueden durar solo tres días. Destacó que desde el principio, el plan de reforestación se centró en el medio ambiente.

En los últimos años, los aldeanos comenzaron a organizar trabajos para limpiar el plástico y la basura del río donde los turistas y los cubanos han tirado basura. Se invita a los niños a unirse a la limpieza; De esta manera, su conciencia ambiental se desarrolla desde una edad temprana. La comunidad está discutiendo actualmente la necesidad de limitar el número de turistas para proteger el medio ambiente.

Detener el calentamiento global requiere una rápida transición lejos del uso de combustibles fósiles. También requiere reforestación. La Cuba socialista, la Cuba revolucionaria, es un modelo para combatir el calentamiento global.

Hedgecoke fue miembro de la 50ª Brigada Venceremos a Cuba.