

Imperiled by colonialism, U.S. imperialism

SOS Amazon



PHOTO: WECAN INTERNATIONAL
Sônia Guajajara, former vice-presidential candidate and National Coordinator of Brazil's Indigenous People Articulation, marches in mass August mobilizations to protest destruction of the Amazon.

By Sam Ordóñez

Because of the huge impact of losing a significant carbon sink in the midst of the climate crisis, fires blazing in the Amazon have captured the attention of world media. A carbon sink is a forest, body of water or other natural environment that absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, so losing one can be devastating.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has been criticized not only for refusing to protect the forest in Brazil's territory, but for encouraging the widespread burning and chopping that led to the current situation.

While the physical causes of climate change are often thought of in terms of fossil fuel emissions, the destruction of critical pieces of the global ecosystem, particularly through deforestation, is an almost equal contributor.

The Amazon and other large forests, like those also burning in Angola and the Congo, capture large quantities of carbon from the atmosphere. Combined with carbon emissions from fossil fuels, the destruction of what few large and effective carbon-capturing systems remain poses a grave threat.

As progressives—who rightly recognize the danger to humanity—rush into action to defend the Amazon, it is important to analyze the causes of the environmental devastation. It is particularly important to understand that the burning of the Amazon is the continuation of colonialism, a centuries-long process of genocide, land seizure, environmental degradation and exploitation.

Just as important, and closely tied to colonialism, is the violent and destructive birth and expansion of

the capitalist mode of production and its development into imperialism. Capitalism relentlessly exploits natural resources to the point of depletion. The configuration of the imperialist world system ensures that this destructive exploitation is concentrated in dependent countries, most of which are former colonies.

Continued imperialist interference, particularly from the U.S., crushes or besieges any movement trying to break free from its influence. This results in the rise of fascistic rulers like Jair Bolsonaro, who enable finance capital's super-exploitation and who kill progressive leaders and repress resistance — from unionists to Indigenous land defenders.

Colonialism, the motor of early capitalism

There are two key motivations behind the ongoing destruction of the Amazon: transnational capital's drive to exploit every inch of land it can find and the need to displace Indigenous communities with long histories of resistance to this process.

Many articles in the bourgeois press have mentioned, though in less explicit terms, the first cause. Fewer have mentioned the second, and hardly any have mentioned both of them together. However, land expropriation and suppressing Indigenous land defense are two inseparable parts of the colonial process.

In the five centuries since the Spaniards arrived, soon to be followed by the other colonial powers, the continents now known as America have suffered an uninterrupted cycle of genocide and ecological devastation. Indigenous communities were displaced from

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147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011

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Philadelphia

Protesting a military program of sexual slavery

By Joe Piette

Three young activists, biking across the U.S. from Los Angeles to New York City, stopped in Philadelphia on Aug. 26 to raise awareness about the issue of justice for women once held in military sexual slavery by Japan. As part of the Triple A Project to educate the public about the women, bikers Hyosin Ki, Dohoon Nah and Hayan Lee, along with several area activists and community members, handed out hundreds of brochures to students on the University of Pennsylvania campus.

Between 1932 and 1945, the Japanese military forced thousands of young women to serve as "comfort women," a Japanese euphemism for prostitutes. Most of the women came from countries occupied by Japan, including Korea, China and the Philippines.

The young women held in captivity could not protest or refuse, though individually they were sometimes assaulted as much as 80 times a day. Refusal meant immediate punishment and torture. Those who attempted to escape were publicly killed. Estimates by Japanese historians of those placed in this servitude vary widely between 20,000 to 400,000 women.

At the end of World War II, government-run brothels were set up by Japan for U.S. troops, exploiting tens of thousands of women rendered destitute by war. The Japanese government tried to destroy all documents and evidence that this military program of sexual slavery had existed.

However, the war never ended for "comfort women." Survivors lived with psychological distress, physical consequences and shame. Some committed suicide. Many lived out their days ostracized by family and community. Most hid their nightmarish experiences.

The surviving women are in their nineties today, with only 21 known to still be alive in South Korea. Time is



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Members of the Korean community in Philadelphia gathered to support the movement for 'comfort women.

running out for an official admission of guilt by the Japanese government. Though Japan has officially expressed "sympathy" for the women and issued a type of apology, the government stance is that the women were only "victims of human trafficking." There is steadfast denial that the Japanese military set up a system of sexual slavery.

Monuments and statues have been constructed in remembrance of the women, including a statute placed in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, south Korea.

The young bikers passing through Philadelphia brought awareness by placing artwork by the women on the lawn of the Penn campus. A Philadelphia artist's large paintings of the women were also exhibited, along with some photos of them.

The biker activists want the Japanese government to admit that it forced women from colonized and occupied territories to be sex slaves in World War II and to acknowledge and apologize for these serious human rights crimes against the women.

They say their trip is in solidarity with the hearts and souls of the women and ask readers to join in that at tinyurl.com/y4kuuabs. □



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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.

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Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

National Office

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

Atlanta

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

Austin

austin@workers.org

Boston

284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.522.6626
boston@workers.org

Bay Area

P.O. Box 22947
Oakland, CA 94609
510.394.2207
bayarea@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.

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

Charlotte

charlotte@workers.org

Cleveland

216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Dallas

dallas@workers.org

Durham, N.C.

804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9 970
durham@workers.org

Houston

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

Knoxville, Tenn.

knoxville@workers.org

Minneapolis

minneapolis@workers.org

Pensacola, Fla.

pensacola@workers.org

Portland, Ore.

portland@workers.org

workers.org/wwp

Philadelphia

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

Salt Lake City

801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio

sanantonio@workers.org

San Diego

sandiego@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.

tucson@workers.org

Washington, D.C.

dc@workers.org

West Virginia

WestVirginia@workers.org



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Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org



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Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt,
Monica Moorehead, Minnie Bruce Pratt
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Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Sasha
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Sue Davis, S. Hedgecoke

Contributing Editors: LeiLani Dowell, G. Dunkel,
K. Durkin, Teresa Gutierrez, Betsey Piette, Gloria
Rubac

Mundo Obero: Alberto García, Teresa Gutierrez,
Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis

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Planned Parenthood boldly resists anti-abortion attack

By Sue Davis

Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest provider of comprehensive reproductive health care for poor women, took a bold stand of resistance Aug. 19 against the Trump-Pence administration's latest volley in the war on women.

It refused to go along with the Department of Health and Human Services' new "domestic gag rule," effective Aug. 19, which now requires that all health care participants in the \$286 million Title X program not refer patients to abortion providers. And if facilities do offer abortion care, that must be physically and financially separated from other services.

This is a far-right, ideologically biased, racist, patriarchal attack on Title X and the 4 million poor women and gender-oppressed people — predominantly people of color, youth, rural residents, migrants, survivors of domestic violence and people with disabilities — who receive health care from Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood has been part of Title X since its inception in 1970. It is the largest provider, serving about 40 percent — more than 1.5 million women and gender-oppressed people — of the 4 million patients who receive birth control and pregnancy tests, as well as screenings for sexually transmitted infections and breast and cervical cancer. The Guttmacher Institute estimates that Title X prevents thousands of unplanned pregnancies each year — 822,000 in 2015 alone. Planned Parenthood receives about \$60 million annually through Title X and \$500 million from Medicaid, a joint federal and state health care program for poor people. (For more background, see WW articles posted March 5 and 15, June 30 and July 21.)

'We will not be bullied'

"[D]ue to an unethical and dangerous gag rule, the Trump administration has



PHOTO: STEPHEN MELKISETHIAN/CREATIVE COMMONS

One of many recent protests to defend the right to reproductive health care.

forced Planned Parenthood grantees out of Title X," stated Alexis McGill Johnson, acting president and CEO of the Planned Parenthood Federation, at an Aug. 19 press conference.

The DHHS responded "with sneering glee" by blaming the organization for "abandoning their obligations to serve their patients" under the eviscerated program, which now violates the doctor-patient relationship. (Guardian, Aug. 22)

McGill Johnson asserted: "Planned Parenthood is still open. ... [W]hile the Trump administration may have given up on you, we never will." However, she noted that patients may have to wait longer for appointments and pay higher fees.

But she stressed that the gag rule "would make it impossible for us to uphold that commitment. ... We will not be bullied into withholding abortion information from our patients."

And "bullied" is the name of the Trump-Pence game. The administration's

ultimate goal is to have the Supreme Court overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the decision that legalized abortion in 1973, and the new rule is a giant step toward that end. It also helps reinforce the abortion stigma.

Another aim of the administration's game is to significantly change the purpose of Title X — to provide comprehensive family planning — so that now faith-based groups that oppose abortion and contraception are eligible for funding. Obria, a network of anti-abortion "counseling centers" which does not provide contraception or medical care, received a Title X grant this year to the tune of \$1.7 million.

The DHHS rule is being challenged in court by Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union, other legal and medical organizations, and more than 20 states. But a federal appeals court ruled in July that the policy change could take effect while legal cases were pending. Although Planned Parenthood

and other providers wanted to accept Title X funding until the legal challenges were settled, DHHS demanded all or nothing by the Aug. 19 deadline.

Illinois, Maryland and Washington state have volunteered to fund clinics that drop out of Title X, and governors of New York, Hawaii and others are exploring how to do that. Meanwhile, reproductive justice groups around the country are rallying behind Planned Parenthood's decision.

'Coercion by the government'

Jessica Pinckney, vice president of In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda, nailed the Trump-Pence rule as "coercion by the government" which will "disproportionately affect the health and lives of Black women across the country." (Rewire News, Aug. 19)

What kind of government deliberately limits access to essential health care to a sizable portion of the population? The same kind of government that, while professing to be "pro-life," forces migrant children of color into squalid cages under inhumane conditions. And a government that allows 16 million kids to go to bed hungry every year.

The original Title X program, instituted in 1970, was a progressive cover for the Nixon administration while it waged war against the Vietnamese people. Now under the Trump-Pence government, obvious racism, misogyny and bigotry are ordered by an increasingly desperate, dead-end capitalist system that assures profits for the rich and hopes to scare the rest of us into submission.

But resistance is rising — against Immigration and Customs Enforcement, wage theft, sexual harassment, climate change and more. The demand for women's equality in all aspects of life is growing stronger day by day. □

Jewish activists challenge Trump's anti-im/migrant policies

By Kathy Durkin

More and more progressive Jewish activists are joining the struggle against the Trump administration's racist repression of im/migrants, including detention under horrific conditions, ruthless separation of families, abuse of children and deportation of adults, often parents. Each day brings new federal decrees for even more oppressive and cruel policies toward desperate refugees fleeing violence and poverty in their homelands, much of it exacerbated by U.S. policies.

The detention camps holding migrants have been called "concentration camps" by several progressive organizations and individuals, including Japanese-American actor George Takai, who along with his family was interned in Arkansas and then California during World War II.

This term has struck a chord with many pro-immigrant Jewish activists who agree with this characterization and have been demonstrating in increasing numbers against these fascist government policies. They see a parallel to the Nazis' horrific treatment of Jewish people inside Germany in the 1930s.

Trump's racism and xenophobia — on full display since the beginning of his election campaign — have fanned the flames of the ultra-right. His hostile attacks on Mexican people and Central American refugees, his slurs against Haiti and African countries, his Muslim



PHOTO: GILI GETZ/JEWS FOR RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Jewish activists demand corporate behemoth Amazon end ties with ICE, New York City, Aug. 11.

ban, his defense of "very fine people on both sides" after the white supremacist attacks in Charlottesville, Va., in August 2017 — all are not only outrageous, but dangerous. His words have incited hate crimes and murderous violence against Latinx immigrants, Jews, Muslims and other peoples.

Showing multinational solidarity

Trump's validation of white nationalism and use of anti-Jewish stereotypes and rhetoric have angered Jewish people, spurring many progressives, especially youth, into action. Significantly, many

Jewish activists are not only protesting anti-Semitism but showing their commitment to multinational solidarity, demonstrating against attacks on Latinx, Arab, Muslim, African and other im/migrants.

Audrey Sasson of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JREJ) emphasized that "[Trump] is using a very anti-Semitic trope and pitting Jews against everyone else. It's not an accident when Jews are mobilizing in ever greater numbers. We are not going to be scared away out of our solidarity." (apnews.com, Aug. 22)

In other manifestations of solidarity, Jewish Voice for Peace has strongly

defended Muslim congresspeople Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. Members of If Not Now have been arrested while opposing Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem and the oppression of Palestinians inside Israel.

Even as Trump spews divisive anti-Jewish statements, he is a close ally of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and an avid supporter of the Zionist state. It should be remembered that Israel is a construct, established by U.S. and British imperialism in the middle of the Arab world, to protect their interests, suppress people's movements in the Arab countries and repress the Palestinian people. The U.S. Congress allocates billions of dollars a year to Israel, mostly for the military, including to purchase weapons used against the Palestinians.

Jews against ICE

A network of Jewish organizations has increasingly fought Trump's anti-immigrant policies using the Twitter hashtags #JewsAgainstIce, #ClosetheCamps and #NeverAgainIsNow. They collaborate with immigrant groups and other progressive organizations.

Never Again Action was established in late June to oppose the horrors of Trump's anti-immigrant policies. And act they do. They started off by protesting outside a migrant detention center in Elizabeth, N.J., on June 30; 200

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Feds go after UAW

Unions, corruption and the capitalist state

By Martha Grevatt

At least a dozen FBI agents raided the Detroit area home of International President of the United Auto Workers Gary Jones on Aug. 28. The raid is the latest episode in a four-year federal investigation into alleged corrupt practices in the UAW.

The FBI also raided the homes of former President Dennis Williams in California, Williams’ former top aide Amy Loesching in Wisconsin, and Region 5 Director Vance Pearson in Missouri, along with the UAW training center in northern Michigan and the Region 5 office in Missouri. The union’s Detroit headquarters has not yet been visited by the FBI.

The scandal in the UAW’s Fiat Chrysler Automobiles department actually hit the news in Detroit two years ago. Federal investigators claimed the company and the union colluded to divert funds from the jointly run National Training Center to benefit FCA executives and UAW leaders and staff.

The biggest share of the spoils — including a sports car and very pricey gold-plated Mont Blanc pens — purportedly went to FCA executive Alfons Iacobelli, while a quarter of a million dollars paid off the mortgage on now-deceased former UAW Vice President General Holiefield’s suburban home. Iacobelli and Holiefield’s surviving spouse, Monica Morgan-Holiefield, were the first to be convicted and sentenced last year.

Company got contract concessions

Iacobelli told investigators that the company bribed UAW officials to get them to sell FCA workers on the 2015 concessionary contract. Holiefield’s successor, Norwood Jewell, who led the FCA negotiations, was also convicted of accepting bribes.

While acknowledging the culpability of “a few bad apples,” the UAW denies these corrupt dealings had any effect on negotiations.

UAW members are dubious. They know that under the current contract, FCA has been able to expand a third tier of workers categorized as Temporary Employees with lower pay and unequal benefits. They have no set schedule, working from one to seven days a week — or not at all. The TEs have no seniority and limited access to the grievance procedure, and they can be disciplined or fired at the whim of supervisors.

In addition, second-tier workers, those hired after October 2007, still do not have parity with their higher-seniority counterparts.

When FCA workers were asked to vote for the 2015 contract, after rejecting a previous contract that left two-tier intact, UAW negotiator Jewell and associates told them two-tier pay would be eliminated. In fact, there are now multiple tiers.

Shady dealings or not, the company walked away with a contract that held down labor costs and allowed FCA to make billions in profits.

New corruption charges

Now a former top aide to Joe Ashton, previously vice president of the union’s General Motors department, could face felony charges for taking kickbacks from vendors who sold watches and other trinkets given to members. Speculation is widespread that Ashton and his successor, current UAW Vice President Cindy Estrada, might be implicated.

The FBI is also investigating the union’s building a new multimillion-dollar home for retired President Williams on the training center grounds. The investigation of current President Jones centers on money allegedly spent on expensive food, liquor and housing for annual trainings held at a plush golf resort while he was Region 5 Director.

Additional charges could be filed if the UAW, under Williams, used union-company joint funds to offset union expenses, or if Williams or Jones used charities they created for personal gain.

Class collaboration: a corrupting influence

The UAW Constitution, Article 2, Section 1 names the union’s first goal: “To improve working conditions, create a uniform system of shorter hours, higher wages, health care and pensions; to maintain and protect the interests of workers under the jurisdiction of this International Union.”

How could this just aim become so twisted? What happened to this once-powerful union, with its origin in the fierce class battles of the 1930s?

To answer that, it’s important to consider the many decades of class collaboration on the part of UAW leadership. The underlying premise of their bargaining approach is that labor and capital have a common interest, a “partnership” — and that the well-being of union members

can only be maintained if the union works to keep the company profitable and “competitive.”

This approach draws the union into a cozy relationship with management. Union leaders, who may have started out idealistic and altruistic, begin to think like the capitalists they partner with, aspiring to the same lifestyle excesses and prone to ethical lapses.

Union leaders become salespeople for contract concessions — also known as takebacks — from the workers. This happens even in the absence of outright bribery. But clearly the situation can degenerate to where union leaders are literally bought off.

With the current FBI investigation and raids, rank-and-file trust in the leadership has been seriously eroded. The scandal has not helped organizing efforts, and it may have influenced the recent failed representation elections at Nissan and Volkswagen.

Does the FBI have union members’ best interests at heart?

The rank and file completed strike authorization votes on Aug. 28, the same day as the FBI raids. Negotiations are underway, with pressure from the rank and file to reverse concessions, eliminate pay tiers and undo GM’s plans to close plants in Ohio, Michigan and Maryland.

President Jones has indicated a mild willingness to strike over these issues. Strike pay was increased in March, and the union made “strikes and bargaining” training available to all union members. While not enough, this is more than had been done during earlier negotiations.

The rank and file have voted to authorize a strike on Aug. 28, the same day as the FBI raids. Votes at FCA, GM and Ford show 95 percent or more in favor.

So the timing of the raids, which, according to the Aug. 31 Washington Examiner, “could lead to the filing of a civil racketeering lawsuit and federal oversight of the UAW,” hardly seems coincidental.

Unions have not fared well under the current U.S. president. Appointees to the National Labor Relations Board have been drawn from union-busting law firms and have made a number of anti-worker rulings. Public sector workers have been attacked in executive orders. The Labor Department has made it easier for companies to evade wage and hour laws.

Could any good come from federal oversight? How can the FBI, a repressive

arm of a capitalist state with a neo-fascist at the helm, suddenly be a friend of labor?

A double standard

Both the Detroit News and the Toledo Blade have run editorials calling on the UAW leadership to resign. Many UAW members are sharing the editorials on social media.

But there is a media double standard here. Where are the calls for corporate heads to resign? Their crimes are far more damaging to people and the planet. What about the crimes of Big Oil and Big Pharma? Or, speaking of the auto industry, what about the deaths caused by GM’s faulty ignition switches?

It may be true that workers’ hard-earned dues were misspent by UAW officials for personal aggrandizement or that leaders were bought by the companies and sold out the members. Those guilty of such betrayals should not be labor leaders.

Nevertheless, it’s pure hypocrisy to editorialize about a union official’s self-serving behavior while overlooking death and destruction dealt out by the capitalist class.

Like the state, the corporate media are not trustworthy allies. Workers who want to turn their union around have to find the will and the means to do it themselves.

Fight the bosses!

Many rank-and-filers are glad to see corrupt leaders in jail, but distrust federal interference. The strong vote in favor of a strike indicates that workers are united around fighting for a contract that restores pay equity and keeps plants open.

Whatever happens to the current UAW leadership, the real contract leverage is the power of plant workers at the point of production.

Strike fever is in the air in the U.S., thanks in part to militant teachers and education workers who defied state governments and pushed their hesitant leaders.

Even workers who don’t have a union are walking out at Google, Uber, Lyft, Wayfair, Amazon, American Airlines and McDonald’s, raising workplace issues such as safety, wages, racism, sexual harassment and also labor solidarity issues such as Wayfair’s collusion with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Some union members are joining the youth-initiated Global Climate Strike later in September.

A strike at FCA, Ford or GM — or all three — over contract issues would accelerate the strike momentum in the U.S. Autoworkers also need to look beyond immediate economic demands and be ready to practice “social movement unionism” to fight on a range of issues, from the climate crisis to attacks on migrants to the super-exploitation of the global working class.

Eight years ago this paper said the UAW had two choices: “class struggle or suicide.” Militant class struggle is the antidote to corruption. That, in solidarity with workers across all borders, will build system-changing worker power.

Grevatt retired after 31 years at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. A former vice president of Pride at Work Michigan, she is a Trustee of UAW Local 869.



Detroit Labor Day, Sept. 2 – UAW members ready to strike!

WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

Led by teachers, unions respond to ICE raids

Among first responders dealing with children left behind after the record-breaking Aug. 7 Immigration and Customs Enforcement raid on seven meatpacking plants in Mississippi were local teachers. Delegations of rank-and-file teachers and nurses — members of the American Federation of Teachers — traveled to Canton to assist local educators, community members and the Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW), which represents many of the detained workers.

With millions of children affected by increased ICE raids targeting undocumented workers, many teachers are unprepared to deal with the trauma and anxiety students suffer in im/migrant communities. Over 2.5 million undocumented youth attend U.S. public schools, and 4.1 million who are U.S. citizens live in homes where one or both parents are immigrants.

That's why the AFT has developed training materials to help teachers understand the psychological impact on children and support those whose parents are deported. Pamphlets like the free, online 40-page guide for educators titled "Immigrant and Refugee Children: A Guide for Educators and Refugees and School Support Staff" and other resources, such as a model curriculum and sample lesson plans to teach children about the politics of immigration, are on the AFT website. (Payday Report, Aug. 22)

Some unions are starting to train workers how to fight raids. More than 30 national unions, including the Painters Union, UNITE HERE, the Ironworkers, the Bricklayers, UFCW, Teamsters and Laborers have launched Working Families United to help unions focus more on immigrant rights organizing. (Payday Report, Aug. 31) Stay tuned.

Bus drivers win union after 35-year struggle

The city of Alexandria, Va., outside Washington, D.C., set up DASH bus service 35 years ago to create a cheaper, nonprofit, nonunion alternative to unionized regional MetroBus service. Ever since, drivers at DASH have been reaching out to Transit Union (ATU) Local 689 to organize for decent wages and benefits. But the city used every trick to crush union drives, including firing two activists this year.

Local 689 did more than file an unfair labor practice charge; they built a winning campaign using a survey showing two-thirds of the drivers had to work overtime and one-third worked a second job to get by. The workers, many of them Ethiopian immigrants, would accept nothing less than union recognition and a contract with the same terms as those of regional bus drivers.

DASH made a fatal error when it announced it had to hire temporary drivers to increase bus service when Virginia's commuter rail system was closed for repairs over the summer — and intended to pay the temps more than the experienced workforce. No wonder the drivers voted unanimously to strike unless DASH matched regional union standards. When commuter outrage exploded, management caved and finally met all the drivers' demands. Ratification was unanimous, 111-0. (Labor Notes, July 30) The power of the strike threat wins again!

When CWA workers strike AT&T, they win

More than 22,000 AT&T Southeast workers walked out at midnight Aug. 23 after AT&T repeatedly failed to bargain seriously. The unfair labor practices strike lasted four days and received a flood of support from the community and political candidates.

Represented by Communication Workers (CWA) District 3, the mostly powerline workers, wire technicians and customer service representatives in nine Southern states won a strong agreement. The five-year contract includes a 13.25 percent wage increase, boosts to pension and 401(k) plans, better job security and more customer service positions. The company backed down on raising health care costs.

Once authorized management officials met with the union Aug. 28, it took no time to resolve outstanding issues. (Cwa-union.org, Aug. 30) This historic strike — the largest in the private sector in the South in more than a decade — was a win for the workers!

Carnegie library workers open the union book

On Aug. 14, more than 300 library workers — librarians, library assistants, clerks and information technology professionals — across 19 branches of Pittsburgh's Carnegie Library system voted 60 percent in favor of joining the United Steelworkers (USW) and won a union.

The campaign, which kicked off in June, grew through Facebook groups such as Library Workers United and Community and Students for Academic Workers. The workers received support from other librarians and library unions, including at the Free Library of Philadelphia, whose union passed a resolution and posted messages of solidarity. Isabelle Toomey, a children's librarian, wrote that she was proud of her coworkers for organizing: "I am so excited to start this next chapter and look forward to working toward a contract that we deserve." (USW.org, Aug. 14). □

Seville, Spain

Andalusian unionists face trial for liberating food



The following is an Aug. 22 news release from the Andalusian Workers Union (Sindicato Andaluz de Trabajadores — SAT — an anti-capitalist organization of rural and urban workers in the Andalusian Autonomous Community located in the south of Spain, home to 8.3 million people). At this time when another worldwide recession threatens, this story behind an upcoming trial reveals how a militant action by a workers' organization can spark a broad struggle. Original article at redroja.net. Translation by John Catalinotto.

Twenty SAT militants will face a new trial on Sept. 5. The case pertains to the expropriation of food from a Mercadona shopping center in August 2012, seven years ago. The Public Prosecutor's Office and Mercadona's private prosecution have requested a total of 30 years in prison for all defendants, 18 months per person.

It is worth recalling the circumstances of the summer of 2012 in which SAT carried out a series of actions, including the expropriation of basic foodstuffs from a Carrefour supermarket in Arcos de la Frontera (Cadiz province) and from a Mercadona supermarket in Écija (Seville province).

Andalusia was then facing the hardest blows of the 2007-08 capitalist crisis, with 1.5 million unemployed people and 300,000 families with no income whatsoever. Dozens of home evictions occurred daily, and there were long lines at soup kitchens. Some 30 percent of our children could not afford adequate and necessary food.

Food discarded, as families go hungry

Meanwhile, 400,000 tons of food were thrown away. News stories opened with reports of risk premium [the amount of extra interest needed to obtain loans], interest rates and the possibility of a bail-out for Spain. At the same time, they hid the news about families suffering during the five years of continuing economic crisis.

Within this framework, we from SAT initiated a mobilization campaign with the goal of bringing this bitter reality to the surface — so that there would be less talk about risk premiums and more about the needs of ordinary people.

It was also necessary to point out the culprits behind the crisis and explain that is why people occupied bank branches. At the same time that they protested the conditions, they planned possible solutions.

In July 2012, people occupied town halls and employment offices, demanding from both the central and autonomous regional governments a special employment plan that would create

jobs in our villages. They also occupied Las Turquillas, an estate owned by the Ministry of Defense, for over 20 days, demanding that its 1,200 hectares [about 3,000 acres] be put to work and generate [agricultural] employment in the region. Months earlier, in March, they also occupied the Somonte public estate to prevent its privatization.

Feed the people!

With this mobilization program, people agreed to expropriate basic foodstuffs in order to draw public attention to the critical situation where thousands of families were suffering and going hungry in Andalusia.

This action was followed by the "Andalusia on Foot Marches" in August and September of 2012, which toured the eight provinces, connecting the rural population with the urban population and uniting the struggles of both. The food expropriations and marches generated an expanding wave that strengthened all the struggles, not only that of the SAT.

This wave of struggle led to the "Marches of Dignity" on March 22, 2014, which brought 1.5 million individuals, representing all the different peoples of the Spanish state, to Madrid. They demanded an end to the policies that made us pay for the crisis, when we had done nothing to cause the crisis.

We are being accused of theft. Normally, when someone steals, they try to profit from that theft. The basic foodstuffs, which had a minimum monetary value, were delivered freely and openly. The media were also present then in La Corrala Utopia, a block of flats that homeless, impoverished families had occupied for months.

The two expropriation actions were carried out simultaneously in the Carrefour supermarket in Arcos de la Frontera and the Mercadona supermarket in Écija. In neither case was there any violence. The food carts left quickly through the door without the security guards reacting in time to prevent the actions. In Arcos, Carrefour opted not to press charges and to take responsibility for the "delivery" of the food. Mercadona, on the other hand, brought charges accusing us of theft by force.

Since then, the situation for the people of Andalusia has changed little. Now unemployment is simply disguised as precarious employment. That means that thousands of working Andalusian families are poor, even though they have work contracts. This is because the bosses breach labor conventions and basic labor rights.

Twisted justice

However, it can be said that those expropriation actions put a spotlight on the reality that had been hidden for years, while millions of people suffered in silence.

That is why it is more necessary than ever that on Sept. 5 all the dignity and solidarity that remain are set in motion once more to defend those of us who are again facing the bosses' justice.

It is twisted justice that imprisons day laborers and represses those who rebel, while freeing corrupt bankers and family members of the Bourbon monarchy. □

Georgia communities organize against toxic gas

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Two community meetings on Aug. 19 and 20 were packed with angry and anxious residents of the metro Atlanta towns of Smyrna and Covington. People were demanding answers about the use of the toxic gas, ethylene oxide (ETO), at area medical sterilization plants. More than 1,000 people filled the Cobb County Civic Center to express concern, while a standing-room-only crowd of hundreds attended a meeting in the Newton County Courthouse.

Until July, most residents had never heard of the gas or were aware that facilities in their neighborhoods had been employing the highly volatile, dangerous chemical for years. ETO is used to sterilize medical devices and products such as surgical kits, gowns, sutures and urinary catheters. A byproduct of oil and gas refining, ETO is also used to manufacture polyester fibers for carpet, clothes and upholstery.

ETO identified as carcinogen in 2016 ...

The Georgia communities were not alerted when, in 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency officially determined that the odorless gas posed a health danger when present below the amount that had been previously designated as safe. The EPA then labeled the gas a carcinogen.



Ethylene oxide emission towers at Georgia plants. PHOTO: WEBMD

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration established new maximum exposure guidelines for workers on the plant floor after studies showed elevated breast cancer, lymphoma and other cancers.

Then residents learned that local plants emitting the gas into the atmosphere were not being monitored, but were only “self-reporting” amounts released.

A 2018 EPA report, using 2014 self-reported data from industries, identified census tracts in Fulton and Cobb counties near a Sterigenics facility and another near the BD Bard plant in Covington as having a potentially higher risk of various cancers and other illnesses from exposure to ETO.

Business users of ethylene oxide immediately challenged the EPA’s findings and were supported by the Trump administration’s position of eliminating or reducing environmental regulations. The EPA did not take measures to inform the public

about its findings of danger.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) was alerted since specific geographical areas in the state had been identified as “at risk.” But state regulators also opted not to inform the public and conducted no independent air tests.

... Georgia counties not informed until July 2019

A July article in WebMD and Georgia Health News finally reached the people who live and work in the areas near the medical sterilization plants.

Fear, outrage and mistrust grew as the public learned that another Sterigenics plant in Willow Brook, Ill., had been closed and would not be reopened until safety concerns raised by the EPA report were answered.

Elected officials in Georgia began to get calls. People at county and city council meetings wanted to know what their local government was doing to protect their health. Research was done by countless parents concerned about the close proximity of a day care center and schools to the Sterigenics plant.

Action groups demand information, protection

Within weeks, action groups were organized. Protests were held outside the

Sterigenics plant in Smyrna. Television and newspaper stories began to appear daily. Women in particular became activists in this struggle.

The pressure was on. And so it came about that high-level federal EPA and Georgia EPD administrators were forced to address the people on two successive nights about why they had failed to inform and protect.

Many at the meetings were not mollified by the agencies’ rehearsed answers about “the need for more study” and reassurances that the danger was “slight.”

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp had just ordered state agencies, including those dealing with public health, to cut their budgets by 10 percent over the next two years. He jumped into the fray, holding a meeting with company executives from the polluting plants. But he only demanded they take action to “build trust.” Meanwhile, Kemp rebuffed calls that he use his authority to close the Sterigenics plant. (ajc.com, Aug. 21)

Nevertheless, the mobilization so far has resulted in the companies agreeing to spend millions of dollars to improve emission controls; forced the EPD to conduct air testing; and forced the cities of Atlanta and Smyrna, as well as Cobb County, to pay for independent testing. □

Providence, R.I.

By mYia X
Providence, R.I.

The people gathered for the annual Black August: Culture-Convos-CommUNITY — A Commemorative Perspective on Black August and the Struggle for Liberation here on Aug. 24.

Kumasi, the official historian of the Black August Organizing Committee, said of the meaning behind Black August: “Black August originated in the California penal system to honor fallen Freedom Fighters, Jonathan Jackson, George Jackson, William Christmas, James McClain and Khatari Gaulden.

“Jonathan Jackson was gunned down outside the Marin County, California, courthouse on Aug. 7, 1970, as he attempted to liberate three imprisoned Black Liberation fighters — James

Black August commemorated

McClain, William Christmas and Ruchell Magee — who is the sole survivor of that armed liberation attempt. He is the former co-defendant of Angela Davis and has been locked down for 38 years [now 45 years], most of it in solitary confinement.

“George Jackson was assassinated by prison guards during a Black prison rebellion at San Quentin on August 21, 1971.” (tinyurl.com/y2z0j9hc)

Comrade John Prince, co-organizer of Behind the Walls, opened the Aug. 24 forum with the Universal Drum Call and Libation/Reflections on the Pioneers, Warriors and Ancestors: Ubuntu & Uhuru! The Behind the Walls Committee was founded by prisoners at the Adult Correctional Institute in Rhode Island in 1998.

The program included a screening of “Days of the Gun,” detailing the life and

revolutionary growth of George Jackson. In the film Jackson states, “I met Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Engels and Mao when I entered prison and they redeemed me.”

An intergenerational dialogue followed on the historical and emerging intersections of solidarity across our movements today. Jim Vincent of the NAACP moderated. Attendees and speakers included Sister Raffini, City Councillor Mary Kay Harris, mYia X, Rochelle Lee, Bill Bateman, Hannah R. and Brother Everett Mohammad of the Nation of Islam.

Organizers of the event and the CommUNITY expressed gratitude and appreciation to the Amos House for their ongoing support and offering of the facility. The forum also saluted the vendors, program and resource tables, and volunteers who contributed to the gathering.

Workers World Party members,

mYia X and Phebe Eckfeldt, co-organized and presented an interactive, revolutionary mini-exhibit highlighting Workers World archives on Black August and the Attica prisoner uprising. It included historic Workers World newspapers, literature, books, a video on Shaka Sankofa, T-shirts and buttons.

The exhibit was well received by those in attendance as they took pictures, videos, inquired and shared their thoughts. A youth who participated in the dialogue was presented with a WWP “Intro to Revolutionary Studies” gift bag that held WWP literature and a T-shirt.

What’s the call? Free ‘em all! Abolish capitalism! Human needs, NOT war and greed! Long Live Revolution! Hasta la Victoria Siempre! □

Commentary

By Jerome “Hoagie” Coffey
SCI Albion, Erie, Pa.

Greetings of love, peace and humanity! On April 28, politicized prisoner Demetrius Grant went on a hunger strike here at State Correctional Institution Albion. He is presently housed in the medical infirmary, being force-fed by correctional officers through a court order.

Grant is on a hunger strike attempting to expose civil rights violations by rogue administrators known in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections as “The gang ain’t shoot straight.” Having lost 70 pounds, Grant’s health has deteriorated. Grant demands the following practices be ended:

Racist staffing: SCI Albion has over 545 correctional employees but only 51 are African-American, 10 Hispanic, two Asian, two Indigenous. There are no African Americans on the administrative or psychologist staff for over 1,000 African-American inmates.

Correctional mistreatment of the mentally ill: Ever since Central Office authorized that correctional officers could use chemical agents to suppress disturbances, they’ve been misusing them, especially on mentally ill prisoners.

In addition, there is incompetent medical service by staff. Solitary confinement is a fire hazard due to padlocks on doors. Food is unsatisfactory. Administrators allow subordinates to place false entries in prisoners’ institutional records.

On Aug. 23, prisoner Nick Horner committed suicide in solitary confinement. Solitary confinement is the Level Five housing unit. It’s the most secure housing unit in the prisons and is micromanaged. So how does a prisoner kill himself? In comparison, billionaire Jeffrey Epstein killed himself while incarcerated, and U.S. Attorney General William Barr started an investigation.

Grant has a history of exposing injustice for a quarter of a century. Before correctional officer Charles A. Graner Jr.

was exposed to the world over mistreating prisoners in Iraq, Grant exposed him at SCI Greene in the Pennsylvania case Grant v. Blaine filed in 2003. [In 2005 Army reservist Graner was found guilty of abusing prisoners at Abu Ghraib in Iraq and sentenced to 10 years in military prison. (tinyurl.com/yxr8qn7a)]

Grant’s family lives in the state of Georgia and is concerned about him. They repeatedly call local prison officials and the Central Office voicing their concerns, only to be literally disrespected despite Grant signing a DC-108 release of information form. These rogue administrators pretend they never received it.

This writer has repeatedly written SCI Albion Superintendent Michael Clark for approval to visit Grant in the infirmary to alleviate concern. The superintendent has denied the requests. SCI Albion rogue administrators have no compassion or humanity in their bone marrows and contradict criminal justice reform. The majority of these correctional officers

are there to get money, not to help rehabilitate prisoners. My experience in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections is like Grant’s. Albion is racist and the correctional officers are incompetent and disrespectful (though not all). You don’t have accountability there.

Pennsylvania Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel knows what’s going on at Albion but refuses to do something. He’s very like state legislators — Republicans and Democrats — who run a good game and know how to make money through the misery of prisoners.

I am calling upon prison opponents around the world to bring attention to Demetrius Grant’s hunger strike! These dangerous rogue administrators don’t care about Grant’s health, and will let him die.

Voice your concern! Contact Gov. Tom Wolf, 508 Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120 or at governor@pa.gov or 717-787-2500. □

SOS Amazon in peril

Continued from page 1

their ancestral homes, forced into slavery or slave-like arrangements at gunpoint, and then used to extract huge fortunes in natural resources.

In every country in Latin America, from super-exploitation in the silver mines of Potosí to the deforestation of Caribbean islands for sugar plantations, Indigenous lives and land have long been sacrificed to the capitalist god of profit.

This process, which Marx called “primitive accumulation,” formed the basis of early capitalist development. Silver and gold extracted from Latin America were shipped to Spain, then immediately sent to England to pay down the Spanish Crown’s significant debt from the Crusades. The English banks that lent money to Spain took their payment and lent it out again to textile manufacturers for even more profits — thus converting the blood and sweat of Indigenous peoples into industrial capital.

Capitalist accumulation has never stopped, except in those few countries that have thrown off the shackles of colonialism, imperialism and capitalism.

The burning of the Amazon is no different. On the one hand, the capitalist class in Brazil wants the Amazon for agribusiness; on the other, it wants to smash the organization of those Indigenous communities that have historically resisted it. Many Indigenous authorities have already denounced the deliberate nature of the fires and their genocidal intent.

In a recent meeting with governors of states in the Amazon, Bolsonaro made the connection between the destruction of Indigenous communities and the expansion of capitalist development even more explicit — as well as displaying his naked racism. He stated: “Many reservations have a strategic character. Someone planned that. The Indian does not lobby and does not speak our language, but, today, he has 14 percent of the national territory. One of the intentions is to make us unviable.” (tinyurl.com/y3orehnp)

It should be clear to anyone with political consciousness that the “viability” Bolsonaro is so concerned with is not the viability of Indigenous people, of the workers or the oppressed, or even



Indigenous women are leading massive marches in Brazil in attempts to save the Amazon land, forests and waters.

of human life, but that of the capitalist system.

Bolsonaro: an imperialist puppet

Jair Bolsonaro’s response to the current Amazon crisis is only the most recent in his long list of crimes. He has openly praised the military dictatorship that ruled from 1964-85, attacked LGBTQ2S+ people and gleefully cooperated with U.S. “regime change” efforts in Venezuela, to name a few.

How did such a repulsive individual rise to power in one of the biggest Latin American economies? A decade ago, Brazil was an integral part of the “Pink Tide,” a wave of progressive governments in the region working to break their countries’ dependency on imperialist powers and form a regional economic network that could withstand U.S. pressure.

Bolsonaro’s rise to power began with his predecessor, Michel Temer, who assumed the Brazilian presidency in the wake of a parliamentary coup against Dilma Rousseff in 2016. This coup, as soon became obvious, was orchestrated from the U.S. to reverse the progressive policies of Rousseff and her predecessor, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, known as Lula.

In addition to giving finance capital free reign again, Temer aggressively repressed worker organizations and pulled out of economic and diplomatic agreements with progressive governments like Venezuela.

However, the real historical purpose of the coup revealed itself during the 2018 presidential campaign. The Workers’ Party (PT) chose Lula as their candidate due to his massive popularity. Every poll, except those conducted by the most biased right-wing firms, showed a decisive victory for the PT.

This was unacceptable to the Brazilian capitalists and their masters in the U.S. Lula was soon brought up on a corruption charge. The now infamous “Lava Jato” case, which claimed that he was accepting bribes through a car wash operation, was pushed through the courts.

This ended with Lula in jail and therefore disqualified from the presidential race. Although his replacement candidate did well, without the name recognition of the popular ex-president and with the right-wing media running a full-scale propaganda effort against the PT, Bolsonaro was able to win the election.

Intercept Brazil has since uncovered and disclosed a series of private messages between the investigators and judges in the Lava Jato case that show a clear conspiracy to take Lula out of the running. The messages also show systematic abuses of justice and clear political motivation behind which people were investigated and charged, despite evidence to the contrary.

Bolsonaro’s presidency was only possible through the intervention of U.S. imperialism against a progressive

government, and his policies as president reflect total subservience. Activists in the U.S. who are concerned about the devastation this fascist is causing to the environment must always be conscious of where the real power lies in the Brazilian government.

People power, not phony imperialist ‘aid’

At their recent meeting, the G7 imperialist countries, spearheaded by French President Emmanuel Macron (whose repression of the Yellow Vest and Black Vest movements rivals the repression carried out by the Brazilian state), authorized a paltry sum of \$22 million to combat the raging fires.

Not only is this aid insignificant in the face of the task at hand (and pales in comparison, for example, to the money raised to restore the recently burned

Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris), but it is offered cynically—for political gain.

It was imperialist plunder that put the forest at risk in the first place, by distorting the Brazilian economy to rely on resource extraction and industrial agriculture. It was imperialist influence that installed a government with no concern for ecology and even less for the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon.

Instead, progressives should look to Bolivia as a model. Under the presidency of Evo Morales, Bolivia has freed itself from foreign debt and has now been able to curb the fires that have spread across its border without resorting to imperialist “aid.”

Bolivia’s success has been possible for two reasons. First, the country’s resources are mostly nationalized and put at the disposal of its people. Second, since becoming aware of the fires, the entire country has mobilized to combat them and preserve the forest.

As the fires in Bolivia were contained and later reduced almost to nothing, the Bolivian government declared an “ecological pause,” banning the sale of land where the forest had been burnt and reserving it for reforestation. (tinyurl.com/y2ldrd6j)

The Bolivian example shows that the only really viable response to a catastrophe of this proportion is to mobilize the strongest force on the planet: people power. □

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 will show 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, will draw millions of people of all



WW PHOTO

Workers World in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

ages on all continents demanding action to save all forms of life on this increasingly vulnerable planet.

A special issue of WW will be 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! □

Will Germany direct European imperialism?

The following are excerpts, chosen from a more extensive essay on developments in Europe, which focuses on the role of German imperialism within the European Union. The author is the secretary general of the Fronte Popolare (Popular Front) in Italy. Translation by WW managing editor John Catalinotto.

By Alessio Arena

German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen’s election as head of the European Commission has historic importance. She is the epitome of the German ruling class that has imposed itself today at the head of the new phase of so-called “European construction,” which promises to be decisive for the evolution of the world balance of power in the near future.

Von der Leyen is the first German to hold such a high position in a European organization since Walter Hallstein, who was appointed president of the European Commission in January 1958. Hallstein was very close to Washington and was a founder of the European Union, as well as the author of the “Hallstein Doctrine,” which prevented countries from recognizing the German Democratic Republic [also known as East Germany, which was allied with the Soviet Union].

Bonn, Germany, was the most faithful executor of Washington’s early post-World War II offensive against the USSR, as in all the subsequent phases of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War. Historically, this scenario allowed German imperialism, defeated in the Second World War, to rise again with the blessing and support of the U.S.

German imperialism could reestablish its economic, financial and, therefore, political power—and, also to an increasing extent, its military power over the decades. Then Germany could reemerge on the world stage as a protagonist following the 1989-91 disappearance of the socialist camp and the annexation of the GDR.

The emergence of German hegemony in Europe

Today, Europe and the world are at a new, decisive turning point. German imperialism with its solid strategic position, aided by the relative weakness of its competitors as well as its privileged partners, is preparing to be the interpreter of that change. The German state has always prepared for this role, and since the 1992 Maastricht Treaty that effectively established the EU, it has gradually taken on the very form that the German monopolies have assiduously worked to bring about.

Since 1989, German imperialism has gradually subordinated all other European imperialist states to its own apparently irresistible hegemony. Berlin has progressively shaped the European economic area—the richest market in the world—to the point of making it assume the function of the much sought after German “living space.” [German imperialism from 1890-1945 sought “Lebensraum,” territory to seize and settle, mostly to the East.]

German imperialism has had a decisive impact in making the monetary union [that established the euro as the common European currency] an exact transposition and instrument of its own ascent, during which Germany expanded its financial and military capacity. In the

most efficient way, it has taken advantage of the “free movement of persons” within the borders of the EU—a seemingly very striking and allegedly “progressive” principle—to practice a scientific policy of wage reduction within the German labor market itself.

German imperialism has drawn from this strategy an incredible vitality as an international exporter. Germany has used its profits to become one of the main international creditors of the United States and has influenced U.S. policies as much as possible. All this constitutes an extraordinary display of the capacity of politics to organize and accompany the process of centralization and concentration of capital.

But there’s more: Mirroring the economic, political and ideological rise of German imperialism, the other European imperialists have politically accepted the fate of their decline and subordination to German imperialism.

The example of Italy

The case of Italy is emblematic. Despite its weaknesses, the country continues to be the second largest European exporter. The political leadership of Italy’s national imperialism has consciously, systematically and obediently renounced all claim to leadership in order to promote a lucrative framework for the Italian monopolistic ruling class in the new continental and world order.

The advantages that the Italian bourgeoisie derives from European policies are enormous. Within the framework of the EU, the Italian monopolies are united in different forms with the European monopolies in enormous concentrations that allow them to compete on a world scale.

Benefiting from the free movement of capital, goods and people, these concentrations guarantee fiscal advantages and a large market within which to operate. They also guarantee a labor market in which the high mobility of workers is accompanied by different conditions of national origin; this makes it very easy to reduce wages. This is done within a well-defined power balance, in which the top of the pyramid is occupied by German imperialism.

It is no surprise that all the Italian pro-capitalist political parties, from the reactionary [Northern] League to the Democratic Party (PD), are totally in tune with each other. These parties also support the underlying motives for the so-called “differentiated autonomy” [that applies different rules to different regions]. They do this with different nuances to put on a show for the benefit of the public of fake opposition between “Europeanists” and “populists.”

The northern part of Italy, driven by the industry of Lombardy province, is a candidate for the role of “Pearl of the South” of the new Europe. The rest of the country, however, starting from Italy’s South and the islands [of Sicily and Sardinia], is again assigned the function of being a reservoir of migrant labor as it was during the Cold War.

This reservoir of labor provides a reserve army of unemployed workers, who are competent and competitive in all economic sectors. This fuels the spiral of wage reduction in the geographical areas destined to be the engine of European economic power. For the most part, these areas correspond to what was

West Germany during the Cold War—and its immediate neighboring territories, including Northern Italy.

The only major contradiction

The only, but broad-reaching, contradictory element is the choice of the declining European imperialisms to submit to Berlin’s hegemony. The contrast is between the emergence of Germany at the head of the EU and the interests of U.S. imperialism, to which most of the wealthy and dominant sectors of European society are still strongly linked.

The communist left was to a great extent an orphan of the Cold War in that it continued its binary approach to international politics [that remained from the confrontation of imperialist and socialist blocs]. This left wants at all costs to see the world divided between an alleged Atlantic monolith—consisting mainly of the U.S. and EU imperialists—and another bloc, generally represented by emerging economies that are all thrown into a single undifferentiated pot (the BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). In this scheme the role of Russia in the contemporary world is somewhat exaggerated.

Whether one considers the Eurasian giant led by Vladimir Putin as an imperialist power, or rightly contests such a definition, one tends to emphasize its centrality in the power balance on the planet. Certainly Russia’s geographic extension, its wealth of raw materials, military power inherited from the USSR and its flourishing arms industry, gives the country considerable importance and particular prominence on the diplomatic scene.

However, all this fails to correspond to the structural relations in which the Russian economy is inserted. These relations are the decisive factor in determining the overall international role of Russia, which Barack Obama called a “regional power.”

Once again, German imperialism has been one of the most lucid interpreters of how that role would take shape, and this has been the case since the last years of the USSR of Gorbachev.

Since the 1990s, marked by the so-called “strategic sauna friendship” inaugurated by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Russian President Boris Yeltsin, German capital has guaranteed itself a leading role in the new Russia, which is strangled by the primitive and predatory capitalism of the oligarchs.

German-Russian relations manifest the very deep complementary bond, which links one of the main imperialist actors of our time, Germany, eager for raw materials and outlets for its investments and exports—particularly in the industrial sector—to its perfect opposite: Russia’s economy. That economy is based on income from the export of gas and oil, unstable and fed by a weak currency. Yet there are huge areas of underdevelopment—and along with that exists a consequent political weakness to be exploited.

That German bosses have exploited this relationship for decades does not mean that German imperialism overlooks the dangers to its own interests should Russia reach higher levels of economic development. Here is the perfect dualism: While cultivating a strategic partnership with the Russian oligarchies, German imperialism plays an active role in reducing the

international role of Russia, sometimes alongside the United States and sometimes with its own well-defined autonomous profile.

The most striking example was definitely in Ukraine, where then Minister of Defense Ursula von der Leyen—under the pretext of monitoring compliance with the Minsk agreements—sent military personnel and drones to support the war of the coup d’état government that took office in Kiev in 2014 against the Russian-speaking populations of Donbass.

Conclusions

The strengthening of progressivism in the United States and the growth of popular participation around advanced slogans represent a new development of vital importance for anyone who sincerely wants to fight for the cause of progress at this stage.

The battle for social, racial, gender and environmental justice in the U.S. shows the first signs of defining its own autonomous political shape. If this were to come to fruition, the working classes in the U.S. would have an unprecedented opportunity to impose changes whose depth is unpredictable and whose repercussions would spread positively throughout the world.

We are not at that point. Quite the contrary. But as things stand, everything is possible, and the encouraging signs are multiplying.

Even in continental Europe, the mass movements that have developed in France over the last three years [strikes, Yellow Vests] and the unfinished move to the left of the main trade union, the CGT, tell us that the path of struggle is viable and that the battle to direct the anger of the masses toward the radical transformation of the existing society still has hope. What is necessary is that a conscious political entity—organized and capable of interpreting and shaping the deep aspirations of those who are succumbing under the weight of a system that is in every sense unsustainable—leads this struggle.

We are on the threshold of epoch-making changes. It remains to be determined whether the popular masses will be independent actors or passive objects. It is of little importance that the phenomena within the political left mentioned above have contradictory social and ideological characteristics or are immature and sometimes even tarnished by opportunism, or by the refusal to embrace a perspective of reversing the present state of things.

If we become aware of the fact that the defeat of our communist movement in 1989-91 expelled revolutionary theory from the conceptual horizon of the masses, then we know that our role is to bring it back—with all the tactical flexibility and adaptability which are necessary for such a difficult task.

Otherwise, either the von der Leyen presidency will be able to complete its mandate to make a qualitative leap forward in the construction of the “Fourth Reich,” the German-led European superpower destined to compete with the United States and China for primacy in tomorrow’s markets—or the supremacy of U.S. imperialism will be affirmed once again. Neither of these two options is preferable or desirable. In both cases, the consequence will be an environmental, social and economic disaster capable of overwhelming us all. □

Google censors China

U.S. saturates media on Hong Kong

By Sara Flounders

Google stripped away the illusion that the continuing protests in Hong Kong are about democracy when on Aug. 20 the internet monopoly suspended 936 Twitter accounts and disabled 210 YouTube channels, charging them with seeking to “discredit Hong Kong’s pro-democracy movement and sow political discord in the city.” (theguardian.com, Aug. 23)

Twitter then shut down 200,000 more accounts, possibly based in China, allegedly because they could in the future “inflict damage, undermining the legitimacy and political positions of the protest movement on the ground.”

For months every news article or interview in the corporate media and accompanying social media posts described the protests in Hong Kong as pro-democracy. These same protests regularly used firebombs, sacked and defaced the elected Hong Kong legislature and covered its symbols with British colonial flags. Meanwhile they sang “Rule Britannia! Britannia Rule the Waves!” and “God Save the Queen” and demanded Britain void the 1997 agreement to return Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty.

Freedom of information

The major imperialist corporate media are breaking the rules of a supposedly free and open democratic society by censoring thousands of sites for either having a possible connection to the Chinese government or for criticizing open U.S. National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funding of Hong Kong protest organizations.

Far from circulating “fake news,” the shut-down social media sites on YouTube and Twitter were repeating facts that were carefully documented in published articles. For example, an article by Alexander Rubenstein as early as June

13 showed how the open U.S. funding of thousands of nongovernmental organizations in Hong Kong works and how the Hong Kong organizations must be aware of it. (tinyurl.com/y6nhmapz)

A second detailed article, this one by Dan Cohen published on Aug. 17, showed how Hong Kong protests have become xenophobic with backing from U.S. government organizations that aim at regime-change outfits, as well as a right-wing local media tycoon with close ties to hardliners in Washington. (tinyurl.com/y4tpgkvs)

A network of subversion

This U.S. government funding of networks of thousands of social organizations is an essential part of U.S. soft power and has been used in U.S. coups and attempted coups, in so-called “color revolutions” and “regime change” operations for decades.

The U.S. State Department’s Victoria Nuland bragged about the impact \$5 billion and 40,000 NGOs had in the 2014 bloody, fascist Maidan coup in Ukraine that violently overturned the elected government.

The Washington Post on Sept. 30, 2014, admitted to foreign funding, especially NED funding of the 2014 Occupy Hong Kong or Umbrella Movement.

All the organizations leading the protests in Hong Kong receive U.S. government funding through NED. This is hardly a state secret. There are 37,000 registered NGOs in Hong Kong. NED funding stretches from teachers’ unions and school curriculums to trade unions and social clubs, along with political parties and hundreds of publications.

NGOs in Hong Kong have publicly been recipients of NED grants since British colonial occupation ended in 1997. This is not speculation, insider information or based on high-tech surveillance. It is certainly not “disinformation.”



WeChat, one of the platforms blocked by Google, has more than 1 billion active users.

The heads of organizations leading the current protests and the 2014 Umbrella Movement, such as Hong Kong Democratic Party lawmaker Lee Wing-tat, law professor Benny Tai, activist-turned-politician Joshua Wong and many others, have publicly received awards and grants from and held press conferences and met with members of U.S. administrations, government agencies and Congress over the past 20 years.

Youth activists have bragged of their participation and training at international schools, such as the Oslo Freedom Forum. A YouTube video shows in glowing terms the interconnection of sponsored activists from Ukraine, Serbia and Uighur Chinese dissidents being trained in scripted tactics of sabotage and color revolutions to overthrow governments.

A founder and chair of NED, Alan Weinstein, openly admitted that NED exists to do what the CIA previously did secretly. Making public “democracy” grants was seen as preferable to the exposé of secret CIA funds. (Washington Post, Sept. 22, 1991)

More than \$170 million in grants to NGOs spreading U.S. style “democracy” around the world were handed out just in 2018. NED funds and its many subsidiaries, including the International Republican Institute and the National

Democratic Institute, are congressional appropriations on the public record. What is secret is the way the organizations operate.

For Google to shut down thousands of accounts means that U.S. imperialism aims to prevent online debate about the nature of the Hong Kong protests.

China Daily on July 28 published this explanation: “Judging from the preparation, targeting strategies, riot tactics and abundance of supplies, it takes naivety ... to truly believe these activities are not being carefully orchestrated. What is happening in Hong Kong is no longer the airing of real or imagined grievances. It is of the same hue as the color revolutions that were instigated in the Middle East and North Africa — local anti-government elements colluding with external forces to topple governments utilizing modern communication technology to spread rumors, distrust and fear.”

Voice of America and BBC not affected

Of course “state-backed” news such as U.S. government-funded Voice of America or BBC News funded by the British government are not blocked. Supposedly they responsibly report information.

Google does not block social media that receive government funding if the funding is from the U.S. If this seems contradictory, it is.

Google spent a decade trying to become the social media platform in China. But suspicious of Google’s attempts to undermine Chinese sovereignty, the Chinese developed their own social media platforms. WeChat messages have more than 1 billion active users, along with Weibo, QQ, QZone, Tik Tok and TenCent Video.

Unable to sabotage China from within, Google is now blocking almost any use of its networks to counter corporate or U.S. government saturation messaging. □

Jewish activists challenge Trump’s anti-im/migrant policies

Continued from page 3

people joined and dozens were arrested. The group has initiated over 38 protests across the country since that date.

A thousand Jewish activists and allies occupied a New York Amazon store on Aug. 11 to protest the corporation’s ties to Palantir, which provides Immigration and Customs Enforcement with data for use in immigration raids. Forty-four people were arrested at the action, organized by a coalition of Jewish organizations, including JREJ and NAA.

On that day — a holy day to observant Jews — thousands joined in actions at 60

locations across the country to protest Trump’s immigration policies, reported the Aug. 11 Washington Post.

‘Shut the camps!’

NAA’s Rhode Island chapter and immigrant rights groups demonstrated on Aug. 14 outside the for-profit Wyatt Detention Facility in Central Falls, R.I. Under an agreement with ICE, 100 asylum seekers are imprisoned there. Over 500 Jewish and immigrant rights activists and their allies demanded the prison terminate its contract with ICE and release all immigrant detainees. Chants rang out saying: “Shut the camps!” “Justice now!”

and “Close Wyatt!”

Suddenly, Capt. Thomas Woodworth, a senior corrections officer, drove a pickup truck directly at protesters, including youth and seniors, who were peacefully blocking the facility’s entrance. A participant described events: “The truck was stopped and then ... the driver stepped on the gas, revved up and started plowing forward, despite the fact that there were people standing right in front of the truck and people still sitting on the ground.” (npr.org, Aug. 15)

Following that attack, other prison guards pepper-sprayed the demonstrators in the face. Five people were hospitalized, including 64-year-old Jerry Belair, who had a broken leg and internal bleeding.

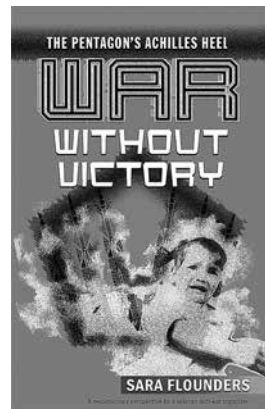
John Prince, community activist and co-organizer of Behind the Wall Providence, a group there in solidarity, commented about Woodworth’s deliberate assault, which injured peaceful protesters: “If an officer can get away with this act of attempted murder, what’s wrong with this country?”

After a video of this incident went viral, prison officials put Woodworth on administrative leave. On Aug. 16, he resigned.

NAA issued a statement the same day, saying: “If these officers felt empowered to attack a group of protesters in front of the public and media, imagine what kind of violence must be taking place inside the prison, out of sight, against vulnerable immigrants and people of color.” The group’s Facebook page vows: “We will keep protesting until all immigrants have been released from prisons and concentration camps, and until papers have been secured for the 11 million undocumented people living in this country.”

Five NAA activists appeared in court on Aug. 20 in Houston on charges of blocking a highway eight days earlier, while protesting the persecution of migrants and detention of minors separated from their parents at the for-profit Southwest Key Detention Center. All face a six-month jail sentence and \$2,000 fine. Latinx and immigrant rights organizations, Muslims, workers and anti-fascist groups participated in the Aug. 12 action.

The writer’s grandparents fled anti-Jewish pogroms in 1907 in eastern Poland, which had been annexed by imperial Russia.



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

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

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

Available in free PDF download at workers.org/books.

WORKERS WORLD editorial

Class struggle and the climate crisis

The facts are irrefutable. Rainforests burning, glaciers melting. “Once-in-a-hundred-years” floods are occurring with frightening regularity.

No one can seriously argue against the prognosis of climate catastrophe.

The conversation that matters now is: Who is responsible for it — and who can fix it. Climate is one of the pressing topics that all union leaders should have been speaking about this past Labor Day.

The climate crisis is in every way, shape and form a working-class issue. The wild weather patterns and resulting unnatural disasters leave their heaviest mark on workers, the poor and communities of color. Only the rich have the means to escape the consequences.

Young workers have a lot to face — dead-end jobs, unpayable student debt, police abuse — you name it, they are dealing with it.

But one of the gravest worries of young people is the climate crisis and what it portends for their very existence — and that of all beings on Earth. As protest

signs often read, “There is no planet B.” This earth is the only life-supporting celestial body we have.

It is the capitalist class that calculates short-term economic gain without regard for the huge carbon footprint their profit-taking actions are leaving.

Coal and oil barons want to sell the nonrenewable, carbon-burning products they extract from the ground. Auto companies want to make vehicles that draw the highest profit, not those with the lowest carbon emissions. Military contractors line up to get on the gravy train of the world’s biggest polluter: the Pentagon.

And how about the utility companies? First Energy lobbied the Ohio state legislature only two months ago for a bill that bailed out nuclear and coal-fired power plants (including its own), while eliminating incentives for renewable energy sources like solar and wind power. First Energy is a major campaign donor to the legislators who passed Ohio House Bill 6.

All of this points to what Marxists call irreconcilable class antagonisms. In

“Anti-Duhring,” Friedrich Engels referred to “the antagonism, sharpening from day to day, between capitalists, constantly decreasing in number but constantly growing richer, and propertyless wage-workers, whose number is constantly increasing and whose conditions, taken as a whole, are steadily deteriorating.”

The climate crisis has exacerbated this contradiction towards dangerous and previously unimaginable scenarios.

One would be naive to think we can halt climate change by appealing to the profit motive. Capitalists caused global warming and they can hardly be trusted to reverse it, even if one makes arguments that a clean environment is good for business.

The working class, on the other hand, does have the power to protect life on the planet. It is labor who produces everything. Nothing moves without us!

Environmental activists, mostly youth, have called for “climate strikes” later in September. Student strikes may be far more widespread than workplace strikes this time around. But the strike is still

known as the weapon of labor, wielded at the point of production to force change.

Strikes have won higher wages, pensions, union recognition and the like. But there are also political strikes, such as May Day 2006, that forced the defeat of an anti-immigrant bill in Congress.

We need to keep the climate strike tactic alive beyond the September 20-27 Global Climate Strike — not just in schools, but on the job and in unions. And the need to fight environmental racism must be part of the discussion.

The climate crisis has made these words of Engels more true than ever: “The colossal productive forces created within the capitalist mode of production, which the latter can no longer master, are only waiting to be taken possession of by a society organized for cooperative work on a planned basis — to ensure to all members of society the means of existence and of the free development of their capacities, in constantly increasing measure.” (Anti-Duhring)

Workers have the world to win. □

‘Unnatural Disasters’

A chronology of climate change

By Deirdre Griswold

The pamphlet “Unnatural Disasters: A chronicle of the struggle over climate change, from Kyoto to Hurricane Sandy” is a compilation of articles from Workers World newspaper over the period from 2001 to 2012. It shows the grave danger presented by global warming that was recognized by scientists and activists decades ago, when there was still time to prevent or mitigate today’s global climate crisis.

The pamphlet also chronicles how, step by step, it was the capitalist rulers of the United States and their political

representatives, more than any others, who not merely ignored but actually sabotaged international efforts to control the burning of fossil fuels that have warmed the earth.

The articles are very useful for today’s activists, as they contain a great deal of factual information about how the fossil fuel lobby of super-rich oil, coal and gas billionaires was able to prevail over the growing scientific consensus on climate crisis.

The pamphlet also refutes the argument that nothing can be done to reverse this devastating trajectory. Take, for example, China. It has the world’s largest population and has become the world’s biggest factory.

But because it had a socialist revolution, China has been able to plan and carry through great changes in its economy in order to reduce CO2 emissions, which are now just one-fourth per capita of those emitted in the U.S. And when its reliance on coal was being phased out, coal miners were retrained and relocated to other jobs at government expense.

“Unnatural Disasters” can be read online at workers.org or downloaded as a pdf file. To access the book, go to tinyurl.com/y5y6nhwh. □



School children marching in Brisbane, Australia, November 2018.

Solidarity on ending illegal sanctions on Zimbabwe

By Amadi Ajamu

On Aug. 18, the 39th Southern African Development Community Summit of the Heads of State and Government held in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, declared Oct. 25, A Day of Solidarity to Lift the Illegal Sanctions Imposed on Zimbabwe. The 16-member states of SADC have resolved to conduct actions in their countries to vigorously work toward that objective.

The SADC Secretariat is reaching out to the African Union chairperson, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, to push the African Union to support the anti-sanctions issue and for it to be discussed at the 74th United Nations General Assembly in September. As Executive Director Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax stated at the summit: “The embargo is militating against economic growth in both Zimbabwe and the region.”

Omowale Clay, spokesman of the December 12th International Secretariat based in New York, told this reporter, “We are clear that this powerful show of solidarity and action by SADC helps to expose the lie that sanctions on Zimbabwe only targeted individuals rather than their real purpose to crash their economy in the hopes of fostering ‘regime change.’”

“These sanctions have challenged the economic growth of Zimbabwe by cutting



PHOTO: OMOWALE CLAY

A May 25 march in Washington, D.C., on African Liberation Day, demanded an end to sanctions against Zimbabwe.

off its foreign trade, and as a result, created a shortage of foreign currency which compromises government’s ability to acquire life-sustaining necessities such as medicines, water purification equipment, heavy industrial equipment, fuel and many other necessities—sanctions kill!”

Clay went on to say, “After the fight for independence from the British (Rhodesian) colonizers in 1980, over 80 percent of the arable land was still held by settlers who were less than 5 percent of the population. In 1998, Zimbabwe enacted its land reform

program and the land was finally returned to indigenous Zimbabweans who fought and died for it.

“The ZDERA [Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act] sanctions implemented by the U.S. violate international laws protecting national sovereignty. ZDERA falsely states that the small, landlocked nation of Zimbabwe is a ‘threat to the national security of the United States.’ The U.S. sanctions must end now. It is a matter of life and death.

“This bold and united action by SADC

on Oct. 25 will help mobilize Africa and the Pan-African community against the criminal intent of sanctions—a Western weapon against the self-determination of developing countries and further expose Western efforts at recolonization,” Clay concluded.

Incoming SADC Chair, Tanzanian President Dr. John Magufuli, stated in his closing remarks to the summit, “We are all aware, this brotherly and sisterly country has been on sanctions for a long time. These sanctions have not only affected the people of Zimbabwe and their government but our entire region.” (thezimbabwedaily.com, Aug. 17)

On Sept. 21, the December 12th Movement will lead a march and rally at 12 noon to End the Sanctions in Zimbabwe at the 74th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza on 47th Street and First Avenue in New York City.

All 193 member states of the United Nations are represented in this unique forum to discuss and work together on international issues covered by the U.N. Charter, such as development, peace and security, international law, etc.

For more information on the Sept. 21 and Oct. 25 actions, call the December 12th Movement at 718-398-1766 or go to D12M.com.

Trump, racism and capitalism

By Fred Goldstein

Published on Aug. 11 at lowwagecapitalism.com.

Let there be no mistake about it. Donald Trump has the blood of all those killed and wounded in the mass shootings of the recent past on his hands, from Gilroy, Calif.; to El Paso, Texas; to Dayton, Ohio.

And let there be no mistake about it. Trump speaks the mind of the ruling class. Just days after the racist mass shootings, millionaires and billionaires traveled to the Hamptons on New York’s Long Island to give him \$12 million in one night at a gala celebration.

His racism, his misogyny, his bigotry, openly spouted from his guttermouth, are part of a deliberate strategy to mobilize the like-minded racists, bigots and male chauvinists to come out and vote for him in 2020.

There is mounting mass anger and outrage at the killings, which followed his attacks on Congressperson Elijah Cummings and the city of Baltimore, as well as his racist rants against four congresswomen of color, and his relentless references to a so-called “invasion” of immigrants seeking asylum from Washington’s right-wing regimes in Central America.

Trump’s racist language was clearly mimicked in the language of the El Paso killer, who issued a document declaring that “this attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas.” Research shows that the Trump campaign issued over 2,200 Facebook ads with the same formulation: “invasion of immigrants.”

Trump was forced to go to the teleprompter and issue a wooden, hypocritically brief statement criticizing white supremacy and hatred. This is like a mobster crying “stop thief.” But Trump is still a white supremacist to his core. No anti-racist teleprompter declarations will change him one iota from the hardened racist he is.

Not just Trump

Racism has a long and bloody history in the U.S. Some say that U.S. fascism flies on the wings of racism. Since the first Spanish settlers arrived in the Southeast in the 16th century, and then the English and Dutch came to New England at the beginning of the 17th century, racism directed against the Indigenous population has been used to justify the seizure of millions of acres of land and the murder and removal of millions of Native peoples.

At the same time, millions of people were kidnapped from Africa and imported to be enslaved on the plantation lands of the U.S., as well as in the Caribbean Islands and Central and South America. Anti-Black racism was the justification. Then one-half of Mexico was seized and colonized in the Southwest. Anti-Latinx racism was added to the racist galaxy of the corporate masters. Tens of thousands of Chinese were brought to the West Coast to build the railroads. Anti-Asian violence became commonplace.

European immigration expands ranks of working class

Meanwhile, the corporations brought tens of millions of European immigrants to the U.S. to farm the land

seized and to do the mining, lay the railroad tracks, work in the factories and expand the farm population and the working class.

The first European settlers established colonies on Native lands on the eastern seaboard in the 17th century. With the expansion of the commercial and industrial revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, the bosses and landlords brought in more and more Europeans from Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the bosses brought in millions from southern and eastern Europe, including many Jews fleeing persecution. By the beginning of the 20th century, millions of Italians, Poles, Hungarians and Czechs were also incorporated into the working class.

Before long the U.S. was populated with millions of oppressed Africans, Native people, Latinx and Asians, alongside millions of poor workers and farmers from Europe. All were toiling on the lands, in the mines and in the factories of the U.S. millionaire ruling class.

In a society based on the exploitation of labor of the vast majority by a tiny minority, every capitalist — large or small, corporate or political — constantly feels the need to divide and rule. It comes with the territory. The pressure to weaken the subject population through divisions is always present.

Trump speaks out loud the mind of the capitalists

A long-suppressed tape recording of a phone conversation between then President Richard Nixon and future President Ronald Reagan was recently released by the National Archives. The conversation took place in August 1971, when Reagan was governor of California. They spoke on the occasion of the admission of the People’s Republic of China to the U.N., after being kept out by Washington ever since the victorious Chinese Revolution of 1949.

Reagan, referring to African members of the Security Council, said to Nixon, “Did you see those monkxss? They’re not even comfortable wearing shoes.” Nixon gave a big laugh. Reagan knew enough not to say that in public. But today, Trump says it out loud, referring to African nations as “s---hole countries,” or saying, “Go back where you came from” to four congresswomen of color.

In general, few prominent members of the capitalist establishment, big bankers or corporate leaders have condemned Trump’s racist or misogynistic rants. They probably think and say similar things in private conversations.

Chapters from the history of capitalist, racist politics

It is not only Nixon, Reagan and Trump, who have been racist. They are following in the footsteps of generations of ruling class political “heroes.”

Of course there is George Washington, the first U.S. president, who was the second biggest owner of enslaved people in the 13 colonies at that time.

Trump is often seen on TV in front of a painting of Andrew Jackson. Using the Indian Removal Act of

1830, Jackson had the Cherokee tribe removed by force from east of the Mississippi River and driven as far as Oklahoma in the “trail of tears.”

Abraham Lincoln, the most progressive president of the 19th century, ordered an attack on the Indigenous Dakota people in Minnesota in 1862 and oversaw the Dakota Removal Act, even while pursuing the Civil War against the slavocracy.

Theodore Roosevelt was an arch-colonialist who oversaw the conquest of Cuba and Puerto Rico and the massacres during the seizure and annexation of the Philippines. Theodore Roosevelt considered people of color inferior.

Woodrow Wilson, another lionized hero of liberalism, showed the racist, pro-South, pro-Klan, pro-slavery movie “Birth of a Nation” in the White House in 1915. Some say it promoted the rise of the Klan that followed.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the most liberal president of the 20th century, ordered the Ponce Massacre of Puerto Rican nationalists in 1937. In pursuit of imperialist war with Japan, FDR had over 120,000 Japanese people in the U.S. rounded up and sent to concentration camps and had their property seized.

In this list, we must not forget Bill Clinton, who destroyed welfare, promoted legislation leading to mass incarceration and declared that the “era of big government” is over.

Aspects of the subjugation of oppressed people in the U.S.

Capitalists and slave masters alike have used racism since the beginning of the country. The settlers who colonized the U.S., the Pilgrims and the 20,000 Puritans who piled into New England, all carried out unspeakable atrocities to subdue the Native people, while slandering them as “savages” and subhuman.

This was to justify the slaughter of New England tribes — the Wampanoag, Narragansett and Algonquin, among others. Thousands of Native people were killed in Massachusetts alone.

The New England massacres were the beginning of a continent-wide offensive which spread from western Florida to the Midwest to Arizona to California and lasted until the 1890s. Millions of Native people were either killed or removed to reservations.

The number of African people enslaved in the U.S. grew from the 388,000 who survived the Middle Passage and were originally brought to the U.S. in chains, to 4.4 million at the outset of the Civil War. There are now over 44 million African Americans in the U.S.

The northern half of Mexico was annexed by Washington in 1848 by conquest. The southwest Latinx people became a subject population.

Asians were brought to Hawaii and the West Coast as laborers during the mid-to-late 19th century. After the great Depression of 1873, the racist Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 promoted anti-Chinese riots and lynchings on the West Coast.

Anti-working-class strategy and tactic of capitalists

Students of working-class history are familiar with the divide-and-conquer methods of the bosses. From the early 19th century, the law declared any gathering of three or more workers to be an illegal conspiracy.

When the workers defied this restriction and went on to organize, the bosses expanded their tactics. They hired Pinkerton thugs and other labor spies to frame up workers and break unions. They tried to turn the unorganized against the organized. They pitted the higher paid against the lower paid. They set the skilled against the unskilled.

They tried to turn white against Black; white against Brown; Brown against Black; white, Black and Brown against Asian; etc. They hired gun thugs to fight organizing drives or organized unions. In the modern era, they rely on the FBI and private labor spies to do their dirty work.

The racism of Trump and the ruling class must be put in the anti-working-class setting in which it has always existed. It is the answer of the tiny minority of the rich, exploiting class to their fear of rebellion by the vast majority of the masses of people.

Only class solidarity and international solidarity can overcome this poisonous racist division. □

— Report by Ryan Lockwood

Buffalo, N.Y. Embattled baristas vote for a union

The workers at SPoT Coffee, a Toronto-based coffee shop with locations in Buffalo, N.Y., voted overwhelmingly for union representation on Aug. 20. This came after nearly two months of worker-led protests against SPoT’s decision in late June to fire two union organizers and one store manager who refused to cooperate with management’s shameless union busting.

SPoT allies and workers, including the fired workers, held a series of increasingly well-attended protests at all SPoT locations throughout July. They built unbeatable community support and on July 29 organizers officially called for a boycott.

After the 43-6 vote for a union on Aug. 20, workers at four SPoT



SPoT Coffee workers and allies rally in Buffalo, N.Y., July 12.

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITTE

locations in Buffalo will be represented by Workers United and will join a short list of baristas around the country with union representation. The organizers have vowed

they will not back down from the call to boycott until the fired workers are reinstated.



FOTO: WAORANI RESISTANCE PASTAZ

Los Waorani, un pueblo indígena, luchan por su selva amazónica en Ecuador, marzo de 2019.

Juicio a 20 militantes del SAT, por la expropiación de alimentos

Publicado 22 agosto 2019 en [redroja.net](#).

El 5 de septiembre de 2019, 20 militantes del Sindicato Andaluz de Trabajadores (SAT), nos enfrentamos a un nuevo juicio donde se nos pide por parte de la Fiscalía y la acusación particular, ejercida por Mercadona, un total de 30 años de cárcel, un año y medio por persona.

La causa del juicio es la expropiación de alimentos realizada en un centro comercial Mercadona, en agosto de 2012, hace siete años.

Conviene recordar las circunstancias de aquel verano de 2012 en el que el SAT llevó a cabo un conjunto de acciones incluida la expropiación de alimentos de primera necesidad de un Mercadona, en Écija y de un Carrefour, en Arcos de la Frontera.

Andalucía afrontaba entonces los golpes más duros de la crisis capitalista: un millón y medio de personas en paro, 300.000 familias no tenían ningún tipo de ingreso, decenas de desahucios cada día, largas colas en comedores sociales, un 30% de nuestra infancia no podía tener una alimentación adecuada y necesaria...

Mientras tanto, 400.000 toneladas de alimentos se tiraban a la basura y los informativos abrían las noticias con la prima de riesgo, los tipos de interés y el

posible rescate de España, ocultando el sufrimiento de las familias durante cinco años de crisis económica continúa.

En ese marco, desde el SAT, iniciamos una campaña de movilizaciones con la finalidad de que esta amarga realidad saliera a la superficie, que se hablara menos de la prima de riesgo y más de las necesidades de la gente corriente. Era necesario también señalar a los culpables de la crisis y por eso se ocuparon sucursales bancarias. Y al mismo tiempo que se denunciaba la situación se planteaban posibles soluciones.

En julio, se ocuparon ayuntamientos y oficinas de empleo exigiendo a los gobiernos, tanto el central como el autonómico, un plan de empleo especial que creara trabajo en nuestros pueblos. Se ocupó también la finca militar de las Turquillas durante más de 20 días exigiendo que sus 1.200 hectáreas se pusieran a funcionar y generaran empleo en la comarca. Meses antes, en marzo, se había ocupado también la finca pública de Somonte para impedir su privatización.

Y dentro de esta agenda de movilizaciones, se acordó la expropiación de alimentos básicos para llamar la atención pública sobre la situación crítica que sufrían miles de familias que estaban literalmente

pasando hambre física en Andalucía.

Posteriormente, a esta acción se llevaron a cabo las Marchas Andalucía en Pie que durante agosto y septiembre recorrieron las ocho provincias conectando el medio rural con las ciudades y las luchas de ambos. Las expropiaciones de alimentos y las marchas generaron una onda expansiva que fortalecieron todas las luchas, no solo al SAT, y que desembocaron en las Marchas de la Dignidad que el 22 de marzo de 2014 llevaron a Madrid a más de un millón y medio de personas de todos los pueblos del Estado exigiendo el fin de las políticas que hacían pagar la crisis a quienes no la habíamos generado.

Se nos acusa de robo. Cuando se roba se pretende obtener un beneficio o un lucro de ese robo. Los alimentos de primera necesidad, con un valor monetario mínimo, fueron entregados con luz y taquígrafos, con los medios de comunicación delante, en La Corrala Utopía, un bloque de viviendas que fue ocupado durante meses por familias sin hogar y sin recursos.

Las dos acciones de expropiación llevadas a cabo en el Mercadona de Écija (Sevilla) y en el Carrefour, de Arcos de la Frontera (Cádiz), fueron simultáneas. En ninguno de los dos casos se empleó

violencia alguna, los carritos de comida salieron rápidamente por la puerta sin que los guardias de seguridad reaccionaran a tiempo para impedirlo. En Arcos, Carrefour decidió no denunciar y asumir la «entrega» de los alimentos. En cambio, Mercadona, denunció acusándonos de robo con fuerza.

Desde entonces, la situación no ha cambiado mucho, ahora simplemente se disfraza el paro con un empleo precario que se traduce en que miles de familias trabajadoras andaluzas son pobres aunque tengan un contrato de trabajo por el incumplimiento generalizado de los convenios y de los derechos laborales más básicos.

Sin embargo, se puede decir que aquellas acciones pusieron en el punto de mira la realidad que se estaba ocultando durante años y que padecían en silencio millones de personas. Por ello, es preciso y necesario que el 5 de septiembre toda esa dignidad y solidaridad que sigue estando ahí se ponga de nuevo en marcha para arropar a quienes nos enfrentamos de nuevo a su justicia. Esa justicia tuerta que encarcela a jornaleros y reprime a quien se rebela mientras deja libres a corruptos, banqueros y familiares de borbones.

El día 5 de septiembre a las 11:30 hen los Juzgados de Sevilla. □

Pico de tensión entre Colombia y Venezuela

Por Marco Teruggi
Caracas

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La relación entre el gobierno de Venezuela y el de Colombia ha dado nuevos pasos de enfrentamiento esta semana. La primera acusación vino por parte de Iván Duque luego del anuncio del regreso a las armas por parte de un sector de las FARC. El presidente [de Colombia] afirmó que el grupo, a quien calificó “banda de narcoterroristas”, cuenta “con el albergue y el apoyo de la dictadura de Nicolás Maduro”.

En respuesta a las acusaciones del presidente, el gobierno venezolano emitió un comunicado para rechazar de los señalamientos. “Resulta insólito que Iván Duque, con absoluta desfachatez, pretenda desplazar hacia terceros países y terceras personas, su exclusiva responsabilidad en el planificado desmontaje del proceso de paz y el cumplimiento de los compromisos asumidos y firmados por el Estado colombiano”.

No es la primera vez que el gobierno colombiano acusa al de Venezuela de dejar operar a las fuerzas insurgentes en su territorio, en particular al ELN. A esa matriz se había sumado el señalamiento de que Iván Márquez y Jesús Santrich -presentes en el centro del video difundido para anunciar el regreso a las armas- estaban en el vecino país.

El ministro de defensa de Venezuela, Vladimir Padrino López, denunció intenciones de guerra detrás de las acusaciones

de Iván Duque: “El problema político que enfrenta Colombia, no puede ni debe derivar en una confrontación militar. Exhortamos a no buscar excusas ni pretextos con falsos positivos para intentar violar nuestra soberanía territorial, bien sea por fuerzas convencionales como por grupos irregulares”.

En ese contexto, el día sábado, el ministro de comunicación venezolano, Jorge Rodríguez, denunció el funcionamiento de tres campamentos de preparación armada en Colombia, donde se preparan las acciones terroristas contra el gobierno y la sociedad venezolana.

Afirmó que uno se sitúa en la ciudad de Maicao, a 2,5 kilómetros de la frontera, otro en Río Acha, y el tercero en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Los dos primeros son, explicó, de entrenamiento para uso de explosivos, y el tercero de entrenamiento militar. Allí se “entrenan más de 200 personas para acciones paramilitares, terroristas, asesinatos selectivos, y agresión en la frontera”, denunció Jorge Rodríguez.

“¿Qué vas a hacer Iván Duque?” afirmó el ministro de comunicación al exhortar al presidente de Colombia a que desmonte los centros de entrenamiento de los cual, explicó, es cómplice.

Rodríguez explicó que los servicios venezolanos lograron confirmar la existencia de los centros luego de desarticular tres acciones con explosivo. Las dos primeras iban a ocurrir el 17 de agosto, al detonar explosivos cargados de C4 frente la sede de las Fuerzas de Acciones Especiales y un edificio del barrio 23 de Enero, bastión chavista. El tercero iba

a darse a finales de agosto, con la detonación de un explosivo en el Palacio de Justicia de Caracas, situado en una de las zonas más transitadas del centro de la ciudad.

“Todo esto forma parte de un plan que tenía su culminación en los próximos quince, pensaban perpetrar acciones de mayor magnitud en contra del pueblo de Venezuela y el presidente de la república”, detalló Jorge Rodríguez.

Las acusaciones cruzadas regresan así a su punto de mayor tensión desde el 23 de febrero, cuando el gobierno colombiano abrió dos puentes internacionales para intentar ingresar camiones y manifestantes por la fuerza en territorio venezolano. La noche siguiente había tenido lugar un ataque de un grupo de 60 paramilitares a un puesto de la Guardia Nacional Bolivariana a pocos kilómetros del puente internacional.

No es la primera vez que el gobierno venezolano acusa al de Colombia de ser parte activa en los intentos de derrocamiento de Nicolás Maduro. En agosto del 2018, Venezuela señaló que los autores del intento de asesinato del presidente se habían entrando en un campamento en Colombia, más exactamente en Chinácota. Desde allí también habrían traído los drones que cargaron los explosivos para realizar la acción.

La escalada ocurre en un momento de crisis de la oposición venezolana, que ha perdido su capacidad de movilización y de generar expectativa. Sus iniciativas se redujeron en las últimas semanas, al igual que su impacto mediático tanto nacional como internacional.

El escenario internacional tuvo en contrapartida dos noticias centrales. La primera, de orden similar al que enfrentan Cuba, Irán, Siria y Corea del Norte. La segunda, política, con el reconocimiento de la existencia de diálogos directamente entre el gobierno norteamericano y el venezolano.

Esto último se dio luego de que Maduro decidiera retirarse de la mesa de diálogo con la oposición en Barbados, debido al nuevo paso de acciones unilaterales de Estados Unidos. La confirmación de canales de diálogo entre ambos gobiernos evidenció que la resolución del conflicto pasa por un acuerdo con el gobierno norteamericano, real decisor, financista y articulador del intento de derrocamiento de Maduro.

La posibilidad de ese acuerdo todavía aparece lejana en un juego trancado. EE.UU. afirma que no está dispuesto a una negociación que no implique la salida del presidente venezolano antes mismo de unas elecciones. En cuanto al gobierno de Maduro, una de las exigencias es el retiro del bloqueo contra el país.

¿Cómo operará la nueva escalada entre Venezuela y Colombia en este contexto? El gobierno venezolano ha denunciado en varias oportunidades los laberintos de guerra que se preparan desde el país vecino. La vicepresidenta, Delcy Rodríguez, anunció que presentará pruebas en Naciones Unidas sobre “la protección y amparo de Iván Duque a grupos terroristas y armados en Colombia para, con su anuencia, atentar contra nuestro orden constitucional”. □