Portlanders push back cops, fascists

By Joshua Hanks
Portland, Ore.

Aug. 24 — For nearly three months, thousands of people in this city have joined nightly protests, marches and demonstrations denouncing racist police brutality. Meanwhile with heavy police repression, the crowds have continued to gather undeterred, even in the face of federal officers sent by President Trump to “quell” protests in the city.

While Trump claimed an early victory, the reality on the ground showed that the federal police presence only inflamed the situation and drove even more residents to come out into the streets. After repeated use of clouds of tear gas and other violent weapons failed to stop the protesters, federal officers withdrew from attempts to repress the crowds. Oregon state police came in to replace federal officers sent by President Trump to “quell” protests in the city.

Residents have been rattled by the presence of police in their neighborhoods. The PPB East Precinct and the police “union” headquarters in North Portland have become epicenters of protests, with large crowds facing off against cops who are now using tear gas in residential neighborhoods.

The locations of the protests have also shifted over time. Originally concentrated downtown across from a federal courthouse and the headquarters of PPB — which also houses the county jail — protests have since fanned out across the city into residential neighborhoods. The PPB East Precinct and the police “union” headquarters in North Portland have become epicenters of protests, with large crowds facing off against cops who are now using tear gas in residential neighborhoods.

By repeatedly using tear gas and other violent weapons, federal officers have driven more residents to come out into the streets. After repeated use of clouds of tear gas and other violent weapons failed to stop the protests, federal officers withdrew from attempts to repress the crowds. Oregon state police came in to replace federal officers sent by President Trump to “quell” protests in the city.

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Houseless resist second eviction effort

By Marie Kelly
Philadelphia

Aug. 18 — An encampment of over 100 houseless people sits on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway here, steps away from the iconic art museum of “Rocky” movie fame and under the noses of the Philadelphia bourgeoisie. JTD camp is a self-declared autonomous and cop-free zone providing a safe environment at a time when the COVID pandemic is ravaging the city. A large “Black Lives Matter” banner hangs at the entrance.

The James Talib Dean camp, named to honor an organizer who died shortly after it was established in June, is the latest in a series of camps set up by local activist groups. The JTD camp and a smaller Camp Teddy — on the site of the new multimillion-dollar Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) headquarters in North Philadelphia — show that the Kenney administration has repeatedly failed the poor. The PHA suffers from mismanagement at best. OccupYPHA, the Workers Revolutionary Group and the Black and Brown Workers Cooperative, among others, are stepping in to fill the void created by the city’s failure to solve Philadelphia’s growing housing crisis.

An eviction notice posted by the city on Aug. 17 gave residents less than 24 hours to leave or be forcibly removed. This second attempt to sweep away the camp was halted by an injunction filed Aug. 20. The eviction threats are the result of the city stepping in to fill the void created by the PHA’s failure to solve Philadelphia’s growing housing crisis.

The camp’s message is clear. They will not disperse until the demands by camp organizers call for the city to transform ownership of vacant housing properties away from the PHA, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (RDA) and Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC). The properties would be placed into a permanent low-income housing fund, administered by local community controlled committees.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

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

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

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on.im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

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

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should be owned by the working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

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By Joe Piette

Richard Wright was a postal worker in the early 1940s, before he joined the Federal Writers Project and became a renowned novelist. Two of his novels feature Black postal workers as the main character. Some of these depictions indicate the special oppression of Black workers as they performed the repetitive tasks involved in mail processing, working under close supervision by white managers to ensure maximum exploitation of the workers.

Wright wrote about repressive conditions in the Postal Service during a time of severe racial and union discrimination. Jim Crow and lynchings. Postal workers had to put up with the prone system, where the great (PRA) under which Congress passed the Postal Reorganization Act (PRA). It created a government/business hybrid run by a board of governors and confirmed by the Senate, with a postmaster general chosen by that board.

Threats to the strengthened postal union, the mass movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Black and Brown and women workers got hired by the U.S. Postal Service more easily than by private industry, where racial and sexist attitudes were harder to combat, especially in non-union businesses. Today, 41% of postal workers are women. Nearly 40% are people of color, including immigrants.

Board of rich white men

However, recent changes in top postal positions should be seen as serious threats to these living wage jobs. Privatization is seen as the way to go to reduce the Postal Service's head of maintenance, Kevin Couch, who this spring resigned from the Postal Board of Governors.

In response to current mail delays, after weeks of signing petitions and making phone calls to Congressional members, thousands of people took part in more than 500 rallies at post offices around the U.S. on Aug. 22. Demands included a $25 billion rescue fund for the Postal Service, repeal of an onerous 7.5% pre-funding requirement and the firing of DeJoy for delaying the mail.

The American Postal Workers Union is organizing another day of post office rallies on Aug. 23. Their demands are: “Provide at least $25 billion in immediate support for the Postal Service; Stop the mail slowdown policies introduced by Postmaster General DeJoy; Ensure public confidence in voting-by-mail by providing all necessary resources for the most timely delivery of election mail possible.”

Although a national order not to reinstate letter-sorting machines that had been dismantled over the past month, Postal Service plants in the Northeast and Washington, D.C., have done just that, according to workers. The two plants’ managers were seen reactivating enough of the Service’s head of maintenance, Kevin Couch, who has been ordered plants nationwide.

And at one of Milwaukee’s postal stations, letter carriers, as a united work force, have refused to leave for the street until all mail has been cased (sorted), forced to agree to back down and approve overtime.

What would Richard Wright think?

Richard Wright died in 1960 when he was only 52 years old. The former postal worker is widely acknowledged as one of the most important writers of the 20th century. His eldest daughter, Julia Wright, herself an internationally known human rights leader, still pays attention to the postal service where her dad worked and the struggles of people who work there today.

After reading about growing postal resistance this week, Wright emailed this writer with a message of solidarity: “Richard is grinning: May the defiance spread!”

Over 800 U.S. protests say ‘Defend the Postal Service!’

More than 100 people rallied outside a Philadelphia post office Aug. 22, as part of over 800 other similar rallies to save the postal service.

Residents before downtown Berkeley Post Office join national day of protest to “Save the Postal Office.” Dave Welch, a retired letter carrier and veteran of the fight to save the Berkeley Post Office, addresses the crowd.

Philadelphia houseless resist second eviction effort

Philadelphia one of two demonstrations in Houston on Aug. 21 in solidarity with USPS workers.
This slightly edited talk was given at an Aug. 13 Workers World Party webinar, “From Black August to Black Lives Matter,” hosted by the WWP Prisoners Solidarity Committee.

Revolutionary greetings from Houston, Texas, a city that contains the country’s third largest jail. The Harris County Jails sit right on Buffalo Bayou, just yards away from where the city was founded on stolen land, and in an area that has flooded reliably through several major hurricanes in the last century. The Harris County Jail Complex cages over 8,000 prisoners, most of whom are awaiting trial.

I am speaking to you from the state of Texas where 75% of the state’s 104 prisons do not have air conditioning and where temperatures often rise above 100 degrees in the summer. These prisoners have a hard time retaining guards on staff. Guards who, to this day, wear Confederate uniforms.

According to the Marshall Project, “Several state prison units are located on plantations where mostly Black and Brown people are still forced to work in the fields. Many still harvest cotton. These prisoners still don’t get paid in Texas. And they still face police brutality and wrok stoppages only to be met with brutality by guards in riot gear. These revolutionary actions are an affront to the ruling class — and an inspiration to us all.”

“Self-determination by any means!”

From an always-present and ever-growing movement of abolitionists in Texas, to each and every one of the 38 countries where the repressive U.S. model of prisons and policing has been exported, we are fighting for abolition like our lives depend on it. Because they do.

The U.S. empire has a violently extreme history of institutionalizing and codifying white supremacy. Prisons in form and function are monuments to white supremacy. They are concentration camps for the poor, oppressed nationalities and dispossessed.

This is exemplified in this moment of global pandemic, where the rapidly accelerating and completely preventable deaths of people inside and outside prisons are an act of genocide. This does not come as a revelation, but as a call to action.

We are building toward reform of any of these institutions. Prisons, jails and detention centers are themselves a reform of enslavement and encomiendas. Reform gives us more of what we’ve already got — structures of useless violence that continue to maintain wealth accumulation for human traffickers and perpetrators of genocide.

We are building toward abolition, toward revolution. We support diversity in and the right of the oppressed to self-defense and self-determination by any means.

We are fighting to redirect stolen resources toward human needs like health care, housing, safe water and food and to transform the root causes of suffering and violence.

From Black August to today’s movement for Black Lives, we honor every revolutionary who came before us, making it ever possible to win better futures. We honor them by practicing abolition and practicing revolution everyday.

We are not alone. The Prisoners Solidarity Committee, as abolitionists, we fight the isolation of pris- ons, jails and detention centers and the divisions that those violently maintain. And we fight it with the most powerful weapon we have, and that’s solidarity. From Auburn to Attica in the 1970s, the Prisoners Solidarity Committee built structures of resistance centered on incarcerated people and their families and communities they’ve built.

As a member of the original Prisoners Solidarity Committee, Leslie Feinberg has said, “The only way we can build solidar- ity in our movements is to be the best fighters of each other’s oppression. It’s the kind of solidarity that’s forged in the heat of struggle that can’t be broken.”

We’re not building toward reform of the incarcerated population, the only solution is to release them all!

California is burning as the result of countless dangerous wildfires. People are being forced to evacuate their homes. But one population is not being allowed to seek sanctuary from the path of the fires and the dangerous ash-filled smoke.

Prisoners are facing the double pandemic of the wildfires and spiking levels of COVID-19 in the prisons.

Prison labor has been used to fight wildfires in California since at least 1933. Disproportionately, these prisoners are made to clear the path for those who replace workers drafted into World War II. Prisoners are usually paid $1 a day for their work on the fires.

Now, with the fires raging, inmates in four out of California’s 12 state prison complexes that train prison firefighters have forced authorities to hold inmates in quarantine, according to a recent New York Times article. (Aug. 22)

Incarcerated people are facing mounting health hazards inside the prisons. Prisoners told a San Jose Mercury News reporter that they are not being given N95 masks to protect against the spread of COVID-19. They expressed concern because guards are entering prisons with ash on their hats and shoulders, adding to air-quality problems. (Aug. 21)

The California Medical Facility at Vacaville, which contains a licensed hospice, holds a large group of aging prisoners as well as those with serious and life-threat- ening medical conditions. CMF-Vacaville and a nearby prison, California State Prison-Solano, are both in the pandemic’s path.

Family members and prisoners’ rights groups are vehemently demand- ing that the prisoners be safely rather than forced to stay inside airless prisons. The LNU Lightning Complex Fire spreading rapidly near Vacaville has already forced the evacuation of all citizens in the area. (Aug. 22) Inmates have been severely impacted by COVID-19. They have no air conditioning or central ventilation system, and COVID levels have spiked at the prison since a July 20 internal raid by authorities on 200 Black prisoners.

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We’re not building toward reform of the incarcerated population, the only solution is to release them all!
The psychological impact of solitary confinement

By Bryant Arroyo

The following is a slightly edited content from my recording for “Voices From the Inside” by PrisonRadio.org.

Bryant Arroyo.

The brain and nervous system need sensory input to “make sense of” the environment, and in an absence of sensory input normal environments the brain and nervous system may not function normally without stimulation. Neither can it function normally when given too much stimulus. The brain and nervous system must maintain a balance in such a way that the “new-norm” because our emotional and sensory input in normal environments is little tolerance for the myriad of sensory input in prison. As prisoners are subjected to the newly imposed restrictions of confinement under COVID-19, it has become more difficult for us to engage in educational programs effectively. Moreover, prisoners are packing up their property to be on parole the next day. But the effects of sensory and perception are not just limited to what the prisoner experiences. Prisoners are entitled — as a constitutional right — to fresh air, outdoor exercise, recreation and educational programs while incarcerated. Today, the experience of isolation constitutes a form of cruel and unusual punishment for any crimes committed on tribal land unless tribal authorities specifically request it. The flagrant violation of tribal sovereignty by the U.S. government plays is nothing new. It has been an ongoing issue for a century, beginning with the policy of relocation and genocide. Along with reported intellectual impairments, perceptual deprivation [in prison] pays no respect to the dignity of an individual. The detrimental effects of isolation and idleness are just as apparent in tribal communities. Isolation as a treatment is punitive, dehumanizing, and has the potential to exacerbate conditions within the center have been made worse by lockdown conditions imposed in late 2019 and intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following is a new chapter of Indigenous resistance.

Stop the execution of Lezmond Mitchell!

By Ted Kelly

The U.S. government has scheduled the execution of the youngest and oldest incarcerated Native American and Indigenous prisoners June 24, 2020. As Native American presidential candidate Charles Albert Abraham, a member of the Ahtna Alaskan Native Tribe of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, pointed out in a tweet, the government’s decision to go forward with the execution has drawn criticism. The Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer have called on the U.S. government to halt the execution: “The Navajo Nation and the family of the victims have not changed their position. We strongly hold to our cultural, traditional and religious beliefs that life is sacred.”

Since the 1904 amendment of the Major Crimes Act, the death penalty has been applied only to those committing on tribal land. While the Navajo Nation has formally protested the death penalty for any crimes committed on tribal land unless tribal authorities specifically request it. The flagrant violation of tribal sovereignty by the U.S. government plays is nothing new. It has been an ongoing issue for a century, beginning with the policy of relocation and genocide. Along with reported intellectual impairments, perceptual deprivation [in prison] pays no respect to the dignity of an individual. The detrimental effects of isolation and idleness are just as apparent in tribal communities. Isolation as a treatment is punitive, dehumanizing, and has the potential to exacerbate conditions within the center have been made worse by lockdown conditions imposed in late 2019 and intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following is a new chapter of Indigenous resistance.

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Since the 1904 amendment of the Major Crimes Act, the death penalty has been applied only to those committing on tribal land. While the Navajo Nation has formally protested the death penalty for any crimes committed on tribal land unless tribal authorities specifically request it. The flagrant violation of tribal sovereignty by the U.S. government plays is nothing new. It has been an ongoing issue for a century, beginning with the policy of relocation and genocide. Along with reported intellectual impairments, perceptual deprivation [in prison] pays no respect to the dignity of an individual. The detrimental effects of isolation and idleness are just as apparent in tribal communities. Isolation as a treatment is punitive, dehumanizing, and has the potential to exacerbate conditions within the center have been made worse by lockdown conditions imposed in late 2019 and intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following is a new chapter of Indigenous resistance.
The Toronto Raptors won their first National Basketball Association championship in Oakland, Calif., in June 2019, when the Golden State Warriors in a best of seven-game series, four games to two. When the Raptors’ president, Masai Ujiri, attempted to make his way onto the winners’ platform to join in the awards ceremony with his victorious team, he was viciously pushed back by an Alameda County Sheriff’s Department police officer—not once but twice.

What makes this unfortunate incident so significant is that Ujiri is black and the officer who assaulted him, Al Strickland, is white. The fact that the government of a multi-billion-dollar team and was dressed impeccably did not matter to the police—in his eyes, they was still a black person to be treated as such.

Strickland pushed him the first time when Ujiri tried to display his credential, a display of righteous indignation, pushed the officer back and was eventually allowed to join his team to celebrate. This February, the officer brought lawsuit against Ujiri claiming that he “suffered,” and will continue to suffer, physical, psychological, mental, emotional, and economic consequences of the alleged assault.

The complaint filed a counter lawsuit Aug. 18 accusing Strickland of perpetrating a fraud, as the recently released police body cam shows Strickland initially physically confronting Ujiri for the incident, stating how “embarrassed” and “heartbroken” he was. (San Jose Mercury News, Aug. 23)

The Raptors’ organization issued a statement saying, “We believe this video evidence shows exactly that—Masai was not an aggressor, but instead was the recipient of two very violent, unwarranted actions.” (CNN)

The Alameda County Sheriff’s Department is defending Strickland’s actions, despite the damning evidence against him.

Ujiri issued a statement Aug. 20 linking what happened to him to the Black Lives Matter struggle. He remarked: “The video sadly demonstrates how horribly I was treated by a law enforcement officer last year after the middle of my team, the Toronto Raptors, winning its first world championship. It was an exhilarating moment of achievement for us, our players, for our city, for our country, and for me personally, given my long-tenured professional journey in the NBA.

Yet, unfortunately, I was reminded in that moment that despite all of my hard work and success, there are some people, including those who are supposed to protect us, who will always and only see me as something that is unworthy of respectful engagement. And, there’s only one possible reason why that is the case—are because I am Black.

“What saddens me most about this ordeal is that the only reason why I am getting this justice I deserve in this moment is because of my success. Because I’m the President of an NBA team, I had access to resources that I could demand and fight for my justice. So many of my brothers and sisters haven’t had, don’t have, and won’t have the same access to resources that I have, and that’s why Black Lives Matter.

“And that’s why it’s important for all of us to keep demanding justice. Justice for George [Floyd], Justice for Breonna [Taylor]. Justice for [Elijah McCain]. Justice for far too many Black lives that matter. And justice—justice for all black people around the world, who need our voice and our compassion to save their lives. Those are the ties that bind us.”

A number of Raptors players, like Serge Ibaka, Fred VanVleet and Norman Powell, along with NBA coaches Doc Rivers and Rick Carlisle have come to Ujiri’s defense.
Opening North Carolina universities threatens COVID-19 explosion

By calvin deutschbein
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Aug. 22 — The UNC System of state colleges and universities is the largest employer in the only state in the South where Walmart is one of the designated minority-serving institutions (MSIs) — five Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and UNC Pembroke, which serves the Indigenous Lumbee people.

The UNC System directly employs around 45,000 staff and many more contractors, teaching 240,000 students. Its total economic impact is many times greater. Workers in the system are organized by the radical UE150 North Carolina Public Service Workers, and the system schools have strong traditions of organizing, frequently grounded in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

Despite guidance from the health depart-
ment not to do so, and despite worker and student resistance, on Aug. 10 three of the largest schools in the system opened for in-person instruction. These schools — UNC at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State in Raleigh and Eastern Carolina University (ECU) in Greenville—each have about 30,000 students.

In-person gatherings are inadvisable in any event during the pandemic. Here the near-total failure to address the risks of COVID-19 beyond “hygiene theatre” and empty words set campuses up for failure from the start.

By the end of the first work week, each of these three campuses had counted more than 100 positive cases. This overwhelmed UNC and NCSU’s quarantine capacity, which they had claimed would last a semester. Multiple clusters were reported daily.

UNC and NCSU shut down in-person instruction effective Aug. 21. In the meantime, the #ShutDownECU campaign by students and the #SaveJobsSaveLives campaign by UE150 are collaborating to shut down ECU as well as seem before it is too late.

When N.C. General Assembly passed the in-person instruction Aug. 24, all schools in the system will have opened for in-person instruction except UNC Charlotte, Fayetteville State (an HBCU) and UNC Pembroke opened Aug. 5, and thus far have not experienced outbreak conditions, although they all have active cases. These campuses have smaller enrollments, some 6,000 to 8,000 students.

These failures must be by the design of administrators. Reopening plans from the beginning denied campus workers hazard pay and adequate personal protective equipment, made no provision for sufficient testing for workers and students, and were based on unclear and inconsistent guidance on in-person versus remote instruction. In the UNC System, education, if considered at all, is as distant an afterthought as safety in the efforts by wealthy white political appointees to reopen campuses. At UNC classes were suspended only after national media attention was brought to the University, after administrators tried but failed to suppress news reports of clusters forming on cam-
pus, which indicated a total failure of their supposed program for control of COVID-19. But even as their failures made national news, the UNC System doubled down. System President Peter Hans stated on Aug. 17: “The decision to adapt opera-
tions applies to UNC-Chapel Hill only, because no other UNC System institution has reported information, at this time, that would lead to similar modifications.”

Reporting is the critical factor there — within 24 hours, student reporters at NCSU confirmed the existence of previously unreported clusters on their cam-
pus. Students organized a sick-out, and the campus moved to shut down at the week’s end. Three days after his previous statement, Hans lied again: “[Reopening] is being undermined by a very small num-
ber of students behaving irresponsibly off campus, which unfairly punishes the vast majority of their classmates who are fol-
lowing the rules.”

His dishonesty was insufficient to hide a COVID-19 explosion. The public finally learned that in Chapel Hill, 25 UNC stu-
dents had positive COVID tests on Aug. 14. That was before the first clusters on campus had been reported.

Different conditions at UNC, and to a lesser degree NCSU, may have made out-
breaks both more obvious and quicker to emerge. These outbreaks, however, con-
firm the assessments of workers, students and public health efforts that reopening is unsafe.

As the UNC System attempts to main-
tain in-person instruction in the face of the impossibility of doing so, consequences will grow. In wealthy, mostly white regions like Chapel Hill, even an overburdened ER may be equipped to respond. Other UNC system schools, especially HBCUs and UNC Pembroke, respectively, serve primarily Black and Indigenous stu-
dents in their communities. City-based schools, such as UNC Greensboro and UNC Charlotte are valuable resources for their cities and their state but lack the colocated UNC Health facilities, which sit within large population centers and include a medical school. Large public universities like Appalachian State and ECU dominate their comparatively small metropolitan areas. An outbreak there, which in per-
son opening threatens, could quickly overwhelm local resources. And a short glance at racial disparities in health out-
comes reveals exactly that oppressed communities of color will be primarily affected.

While it will take some time to gain a clear view of the conditions on other cam-
puses, workers and students are continu-
ing to organize to fight for themselves and their communities. And the closure of two major universities is just a glimpse of the struggle to come.

Portlanders push back cops and fascists

Continued from page 1

alt-right, fascist street brawlers. A regu-
lar fixture in downtown Portland during the summer months over the past sev-
eral years, these fascist goons — many of whom come from out of state — make it a point to hold violent rallies in what they view as a leftist-dominated city. On Aug. 22, fascist groups held a “No to Marxism in America Rally” in the same area of downtown where the largest Black Lives Matter rallies have occurred.

The PPB has been shown to have a cozy relationship with fascists. Media reported last year on leaked text messages showing that Jeff Niyia, PPB’s commanding officer for the rapid response team that patrols protests, had a warm relationship with Joey Gibson, leader of the Vancouver, Wash., far-right group Patriot Prayer that regularly organizes protests in Portland.

The Willamette Week revealed: “The texts also show that Niyia at times told Gibson where leftist protests were taking place, including unrelated protests as well as anti-fascist marches with people in black bloc intent on protesting Patriot Prayer. At least once, Niyia told Gibson that Portland police were not monitoring a protest hosted by the Queer Liberation Front.” (tinyurl.com/y462yhv4)

The Aug. 22 fascist rally, occurring during a tense summer when BLM pro-
tests have grabbed headlines around the world, showed yet again that PPB has a clear bias towards fascist protesters and their sympathetic support.

PPB refused to declare a riot — though they often do so with BLM protesters — despite far-right protesters brandish-
ging guns, spraying chemical irritants on anti-fascist counterprotesters and physi-
cally assaulting them. Witnesses reported that immediately after fascist protesters left, PPB declared the scene an unlawful assembly and began making arrests of counterprotesters.

Over the past three months, protest in Portland has faced rapid changes. From the deployment of federal officers to the presence of fascist street brawlers, there is much concern in the city from those who oppose fascism and racist police brutality. Yet crowds have continued to come night after night, responding to new situ-
atations and adjusting their tactics accord-
ingly. Whatever comes next in the city, it’s a given that there will be people confronting injustice and resistance in myriad ways.

The struggle started in this long sum-
ner has only just begun. ❍

Philly demands unemployment pay

Dozens of unemployed workers and their supporters held a rally in Philadelphia Aug. 20 to demand extension of the federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, which expired July 31. The protest was called by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project and was orga-
nized by members of UNITE HERE, Philadelphia Musicians Union Local 77, International Alliance of Theatre Stage Employees and members of Workers World Party. Marchers led a mock funeral procession for the expired benefits down Broad Street and around City Hall, accom-
panied by a union bagpiper and chants of “Money for health and education, not for billionaire corporations!”

— Report by Ted Kelly

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE
A 75th anniversary salute to Vietnam’s August Revolution

By Comrade Tano

We live in tumultuous times, and it is during times like this that we as socialists must look to the struggles and successes of our predecessors to give us inspiration to continue our struggle. As a Vietnamese-American, who is commemorating the struggles of my people in their fight for independence from colonial and imperialist powers, August 19 is a special day, for it marks the 75th anniversary of the Vietnamese August Revolution!

On this day in 1945, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh (aka League for the Independence of Vietnam), my people organized uprisings and demonstrations throughout Vietnam, with the Viet Minh eventually seizing the city of Hanoi.

Comrade Ho then declared independence for the newly formed Democratic Republic of Vietnam on Sept. 2. However, the French colonizers were not going to just allow their imperial holdings to remain free. In the early months of 1946, they arrived back in the country with full military force to re-establish control, causing the Vietnamese people to launch the French Resistance War. For almost ten long, bloody years, my people fought against the invaders, until eventually the Viet Minh struck the final blow against the French at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, ending the war.

However, the test for the newly independent socialist nation had only just begun, because as soon as the French left, U.S. imperialists took their place. Thus began what is often called the Vietnam War, a conflict we Vietnamese call “the War of American Aggression.”

(A much more fitting name, if I do say so myself.) For nearly 20 more years the brave Vietnamese leadership, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, fought against the most powerful military force in the world, and by 1975, declared victory as the last of the U.S. imperialists were driven out.

And just like my people, we will win!

Comrade Tano is a non-binary, gender-fluid person of Vietnamese descent. They choose to write under this name to protect themselves, while still supporting and celebrating their history as a Vietnamese socialist.

Long live the memory of Ka Randy!

By Communist Party of the Philippines

Workers World is reprinting the following statement from the Communist Party of the Philippines that condemns the murder of Randall Echanis on Aug. 30. Since the 2016 presidential elections in the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte has carried out numerous assassinations of peace activists and progressive organizers. Duterte’s “War on Drugs” is responsible for at least 27,000 extrajudicial killings since 2016.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) condemns in the strongest terms the cold-blooded murder of Randall Echanis, Chairperson of the Anakpawis party-list and peace consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), Ka Randy, 72, was killed early this morning (Aug. 10) by armed men in his rented home in Novaliches, Quezon City.

Echanis’ murder is undoubtedly the handiwork of the Duterte fascist regime, ordered by its cabal of criminal terrorists in the National Task Force and carried out by Duterte’s death squads in the military and police. The NDFP duly ordered his military and police forces to hunt down consultants of the NDFP after he terminated peace negotiations in 2017.

The extrajudicial killing of Echanis is a vicious attack against the democratic forces who continue to stand firm even in the face of the all-out attacks of the tyrannical regime against the people and their civil and political rights. It was carried out by state forces in the most treacherous of manners in the vain hope of terrorizing the people and cowing them into submission. It forms part of the continuing scheme of the Duterte regime to consolate the dictatorial reins through murder and other acts of state terrorism.

The regime has stepped up its attacks in its desperation to quell the seething masses and the deepening socioeconomic and public health crisis and rising discontent in both the cities and countryside.

All democratic forces must unite and condemn the murder of Ka Randy. They must demand that Duterte himself be made to pay for the Echanis murder as well as for the murders of fellow peace consultants Julius Giron and Randy Malayao. They must not relent in their demand for justice for the thousands of others who have been killed, imprisoned, tortured and terrorized in the course of the fascist regime’s false drug war, bloody counterinsurgency war, against the Moros and all-out drive of political repression and state terrorism.

A hero of the Filipino people

On behalf of all revolutionary forces, the Communist Party of the Philippines extends its deepest sympathies to Echanis’ children and family, friends and comrades in the national democratic movement. Having devoted most of his life to the cause of national and social liberation, Ka Randy is, indeed, a hero of the Filipino people. He was a stalwart of the cause of the workers and peasants and was a unifying force among the different classes and sectors.

The CPP pays tribute to Ka Randy as an ageless revolutionary fighter. He was among the thousands of young activists who joined the revolutionary mass movement in the late 1960s and fought courageously against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship. When martial law was declared in 1972, he joined the armed struggle and was among the pioneers of the New People’s Army (NPA) during its period of expansion and growth in the northern Luzon regions.

He was captured, tortured and incarcerated under the Marcos dictatorship. He was again arrested and detained under the Aquino and Arroyo regimes. He later continued to work for the national democratic cause by advancing the cause of land reform in all possible fields of democratic struggle. He became known as one of the pillars of the Kilusang Magbutub ng Pilipinas, as well as the Anakpawis party-list.

Because of his advocacy for the cause of the peasantry and the toiling people, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines asked him to serve as one of its consultants in peace negotiations, specifically on the matter of land reform. He gave his expertise in the NDFP efforts to prepare its draft Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER) which outlines the measures necessary to address the key issues at the core of the civil war in the Philippines, with land reform and national industrialization at the center.

Among the Red fighters during his younger years, Ka Randy was known by his nom de guerre Ka Makar, which he said was not only a tribute to Macario Sakay, erstwhile Filipino revolutionary who continually fought with arms against the American colonial forces in the early part of the 20th century, but was also an acronym for “Masco” [sledge hammer] and “Karit” [sickle]. Indeed, as a revolutionary fighter, Ka Randy always firmly held the hammer on the one hand, and the sickle on the other, worked to build the worker-peasant alliance, and uphold the cause of the proletariat to his last breath.

The Party and the entire revolutionary movement will forever uphold the memory of Ka Randy Echanis. End the tyranny and terrorism of the Duterte fascist regime! (☞)

Abolish the police

Continued from page 1

Department of Corrections building was set on fire. People spray-painted a telling slogan on the building of Manufacturers and Contractors, which lobbies for big business: “You have stolen more than we ever could ‘look.’” It was the voice of the people’s righteous rage at unending racial murder and incarceration, cop brutality, economic and “legal” injustice.

This voice will only grow stronger as people confront the pandemic health crisis, exploding evictions, a jobless abyss and hunger. It can’t be stilled by the political programs of either existing capitalist parties in this so-called “democracy.”

A few months ago, massive and historic Black Lives Matter protests erupted in every corner of the U.S. sparked by a cop’s deliberate 8-minute, 46-second execution of an African American man, George Floyd. This inexorable mass pressure, that is now 6 months old:

The call to “Disarm, defund and abolish the police!” is now penetrating the DNA of the mass movement. It’s a demand they absorb wisely, as part of the need for the larger structural changes that are becoming ever more necessary for the very survival of working and oppressed people.

As part of an evolving path toward socialist revolution, Workers World Party continues to add our voice and energy to the demand: “Defend the people! Arrest the cops! Disarm, defund and abolish the police!” (☞)
As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage uncontrollably in the U.S., it must be understood that it doesn’t have to be this way. Many countries around the world, especially those building socialism, have been able to effectively combat the pandemic, using the tools of a planned economy and robust national health care systems to prioritize the health of their populations.

On Aug. 20, Workers World Party held a webinar titled “COVID can be defeated: Cuba, China, Vietnam and Venezuela lead the way.” This event brought together organizer and solidarity activist perspectives from these countries, which are leading the way globally in combating the virus.

In the countries, governmental policies have involved and empowered the workers to prevent the novel coronavirus from reaching the pandemic conditions which are occurring in the U.S., and throughout much of the rest of the capitalist world.

In every community there is a family doctor who lives over the polyclinic and among staff in the community. So, you have a tertiary health system which was created and sustained throughout its revolutionary history.

Cuba has a relatively high number of medical workers per capita. Officials say there are currently about 90,000 in the country of almost 11.5 million people. Decades, years, months and weeks before COVID-19 ever arrived on the island — and how the health system was structured — the government and the entire health care system, including scientists, knew where every person who was at risk, what vaccines and medications they had, by going door to door in every neighborhood, making home visits with a nurse and sometimes Promotoras de Salud (community health workers).

Having six decades of experience like no other country or health system, they had the skills, the technology, scientific advances and human capital to deal with outbreaks and pandemics. Cuba had the experience of first developing and using interferons to arrest a deadly outbreak of the dengue virus in 1981. That experience catalyzed the development of the island’s now world-leading biotech industry. The protocol Interferon only one tool of many that Cuba has played a crucial role in some of those previous outbreaks and epidemics, often saving seriously ill patients’ lives.

Since the appearance of the first cases of COVID-19 on March 11, Cuba has reported 3,408 cases. As of today, Aug. 20, 2,794 people have recovered out of a population of 11.5 million, 526 people remain ill and there have been 88 deaths. There have been no fatalities since Aug. 4. Compare this to the state of Georgia, which has a population of 10.5 million people. Some 22,664 people have been hospitalized since February, and there have been 4,840 deaths. The current active number of cases is 239,133, compared to Cuba’s 526 patients who are still ill. Recovery rate in Georgia is 28%. The recovery rate in Cuba is 98%. Georgia has 455 times more people who still have the virus.

Cuba was one of the most prepared countries in the world for COVID-19. In many countries fighting the pandemic Cuba is also making major international contributions with the Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade. If I may close by saying this internationalism has been exemplified right here at home through the ICO. (Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization) partnership with the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) scholarship program since 1999. ELAM has trained over 35,000 doctors from 138 countries, including graduating 105 U.S.-trained doctors.

In a post-embargo world, U.S. hospitals and research institutions would have direct access to Cuba’s drugs, therapies and doctors to potentially improve the standard of care for millions of citizens of the USA in the defeat of COVID-19.

What you can do!

Contact elected officials to demand that they focus on the Cuban drug known as Interferon Alfa 2b, which has been produced in China since 2003 by the Cuban-Chinese joint venture ChangHeber. Demand that the drug be allowed in the U.S. as a protocol to treat COVID-19.

Endorse the Save Our Lives Campaign which, among other demands, is calling for incorporating Cuba’s Interferon Alfa 2b Recombinant in clinical trials in the U.S., Canada and the World Health Organization (WHO), and the granting by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration of approval for Cuba’s Interferon Alfa 2b Recombinant.

Call on elected officials to demand the repeal of Helms-Burton or to temporarily suspend the Cuban embargo, which would enable Cuba to purchase the necessary aid and medical supplies that it needs to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

Contact and organize local city councils to pass resolutions that support these initiatives while calling for an end to the blockade.

Consider joining the next IFCO Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba.

Dr. Rosemari Mealy is with the New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition and on the Board of IFCO/Pastors for Peace.
Not being Trump is not enough

By Deirdre Griswold

Once every four years, the two major capitalist parties race to get unlimited prime-time media, with much hoopla, to promote their candidates— for U.S. president and vice president— of their respective media who become even before the coronavirus pandemic. The overwhelming message was “Vote for Joe Biden because he is not Donald Trump.”

Even their primary slogan, “Build Back Better,” sounds eerily similar to Trump’s 2016 slogan “Make America Great Again.” With a lot of promises but few specifics, the platform totally ignores the crisis of a global capitalist system which was unraveling even before the coronavirus pandemic struck. Biden calls for more testing and mandatory mask wearing to address the COVID-19 crisis. But the prospect of “Medicare for All” was dropped from the DNC program. During the pandemic, more than 40 million people in the U.S. have lost their jobs and health insurance at the same time. Yet Biden failed to offer a plan to address the health care crisis. He has even said that as president he would veto a Medicare for All bill, should one reach his desk.

Thousands of people die each year in the U.S. because they cannot afford health care. The disproportionate death toll in communities of color during the pandemic is a direct result. While polls show overwhelming voter support for Biden, there is a need to be more concerned about protecting the profits of Big Pharma and the health insurance companies. The DNC platform supports raising the federal minimum wage to $15 per hour— or $20 per hour. One specific item on Biden’s website calls for another federal bailout of the auto industry. The Obama/Biden administration’s $860 billion bailout of that industry in 2009 resulted in massive lay-offs and significant concessions from auto workers’ unions, including their right to strike. And the DNC leadership dropped a call to end fossil fuel subsidies and tax breaks from the party’s program.

Biden’s website makes no mention of his foreign policy views. The DNC’s international policy platform comes at the end of its 91-page document— perhaps because both capitalist parties differ little when it comes to defending U.S. imperialism’s global domination.

After Palestinian-American activist Linda Sarsour, a supporter of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, offered advice at the convention on how the DNC could engage Muslim voters, the Biden campaign publicly disavowed her. The DNC platform does not criticize Israel’s occupation of Palestine. It supports Israel’s claim to Jerusalem as its capital. Following months of massive protests against police brutality in U.S. cities, large and small, supporting Black Lives Matter and calls for defunding the police can no longer be considered “far left.” Numerous state and local governments have cut police department funds; some are even looking to shrink their police departments. But the DNC leadership—not support defunding the police— he calls for more money for police reforms also.

During an Aug. 23 interview with ABC’s David Muir, Biden even criticized Trump for suggesting “a bill to cut one-half billion dollars out of local police support.” This should come as no surprise, considering that in 1994 then-Senator Joe Biden (in cooperation with the president of the National Association of Police Officers) drafted the controversial legislation for Clinton’s crime bill, seen by many as the trigger for mass incarceration. Trump is horrible. But at this historical time, when workers and oppressed are challenging the economic chaos, systemic racial and police violence, and liberal capitalist parties are the pillars of the capitalist system, not being Trump is simply not enough. Keep it in the streets! 🇺🇸

Mass protests force out leaders in Mali

By G. Dunkel

After months of agitation and protests— some going on for days, involving thousands of people and substantial injuries— the Malian Army arrested President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta (IBK), Prime Minister Boubou Cissé and the entire cabinet Aug. 18. The Junta Movement — Rally of Patriotic Forces, known as MPSRP, which had been a main force leading the protests, welcomed the army’s move. Thousands of people cheered as the army moved the arrested politicians through Bamako, as shown on video by France 24.

The international community as a whole condemned the army and demanded Keïta’s reinstatement. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) suspended Mali’s membership, prohibited financial transactions between its members and Mali, and closed all its borders with the country. France condemned the army’s arrests and demanded Keïta’s reinstatement. The former colonial overlord in Mali currently has a force of 13,000 troops, mainly in its central and southern regions. They are fighting against several jihadist militias. The U.N., which has a “peacekeeping” force MINUSMA of 14,000 soldiers in northern and eastern Mali, also condemned the army’s arrests.

U.S. drones in the Sahel

Not to be left out, J. Peter Pham, U.S. State Department special envoy for the Sahel region tweeted, “The US is opposed to all unconstitutional changes of government whether in the streets or by security forces.” The U.S. has a major drone base in Niger, which borders Mali to the east and supplies operational intelligence to the French and U.S. forces.

In neighboring countries— such as Senegal, Guinea, Niger and Burkina Faso — there is a palpable sense that the erosion in Mali could be contagious. This is visible in comments on Internet sites of residents of those countries. For example, El Hizb, a group with a Islamic leader in Senegal, warned President Macky Sall against excusing the “coup makers in Mali.” (tinyurl.com/yghlw6lq)

The countries in or near the western Sahel region— including Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad— face the same problems that exist in Mali. Skilled workers like teachers and nurses have not been paid for months. Youth can’t get jobs or an education. People lack medical care, especially necessary in this time of plague. Armed jihadist groups are confronting government armies’ armed forces, while there are imperialist interventions. Tensions exist between ethnic groups. To a greater or lesser degree, all of Mali’s neighbors are afflicted by these issues.

The population of Mali is very young. Half of its inhabitants are under 16 years old. This situation makes the need for political and jobs critical. It also means those who are employed have many dependents.

The Junta Movement is a broad coalition composed of both politically oriented Muslim groups, headed by Imam Mahmoud Dicko, and the anti-capitalist Party for African Solidarity and Independence, headed by Oumar Mariko. One banner in the big Aug. 11 protest read “IBK and his party work for the French.” Sign slogans read, “France is a terrorist state” and “IBK and ‘This regime is Mali’s coronavirus.’

In a press release, Mariko points out that IBK has to get permission from France or rebel groups to go to certain areas of Mali. This relationship says the government does not have control of the country and is not secure, as was reported by the Belgian bimonthly magazine Solidaire on July 30. When the Malian army deployed in the northern town of Kidira, it had to be accompanied by U.N. forces. (Associated Press, Feb. 13)

French troops intervene

After the defeat of Libyan leader, Moammar Gaddafi, and his murder by U.S.-backed forces in 2011, soldiers in his army, with their heavy weapons, moved south the following year into the Sahel, mainly into Mali and its neighbor Niger. In 2013 when the separatist movement made significant progress in northern Mali and the central government was on the verge of collapse, the French army intervened rapidly and decisively.

This 2013 intervention is well described in “The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu,” written by Joshua Hammer. Hammer also well describes the essential role that U.S. special forces played.

Mali is a strategically important country for world imperialism. It is in the center of West Africa, bordering seven other countries, and is rich in resources. Uranium mined and produced in Niger and Senegal is sold to Europe’s electricity. Mali also has oil and major gold deposits and other minerals.

Thousands of African migrants seeking a job or a decent economic future in Europe now come through the Sahel. European Union officials fear that if the governments in southern Europe all fall, it would cause a steady flow of refugees which could become a flood EU leaders would find destabilizing. This is a crisis created by years of imperialist underdevelopment and exploitation of Africa. ☐
How China won the COVID-19 fight and what this means for the world

By Lee Siu Hin

This Aug. 15, the city of Wuhan in China—the first city to report a COVID-19 outbreak early this year—after 76 days of lockdown finally contained the virus that had started in early April, kicked off something unimaginable for the rest of the world: the lockdown of the city, and sending tens of thousands of visitors, beer drinking, music performance and yea—a pool party!

Many ordinary Chinese citizens saw this with disbelief and jealous rage, but some argued that the U.S. and Europe needed to reflect on how they would rather believe some completely unfounded conspiracy theory than admit China did something right,” net citizen Luigi concluded.

How did China succeed in fighting COVID-19 in such a short time? What reasons: efficiency, science, coordination, community spirit, war, cooperation and effective leadership. When the coronavirus struck China, the whole country went into battle mode and united with one thing in mind.

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¡Detengan el ataque de Trump a la oficina de correos!

Por Joe Piette

Si 150 millones de personas votan por correo en las elecciones, el nuevo Director General de Correos, Louis DeJoy, les está arrebatando sus derechos de voto. DeJoy, que se oponen a la financiación propuesta por el Congreso, terminó con la gran huelga postal de 1970, que los cambios eran "desmovilizadores" para sus miembros: "Están ordenando a los trabajadores que dejen el correo para otro día. Eso va en contra de nuestro ADN". En cuanto a la supuesta "justificación de la reducción de costos de DeJoy, Dimondstein enfatizó: "No se le llama la Empresa Postal de los Estados Unidos, ¡se llama Servicio Postal de los Estados Unidos!" (4 de agosto).

La administración Trump también inculpó a esta administración abiertamente racista, misógina, anti-laboral que ilegítimamente a esta administración - de Trump a la oficina de correos! ¡Detengan el ataque a la Administración Postal de los Estados Unidos. ¡Se llama Servicio Postal de los Estados Unidos!

La red del servicio de más de 31,000 oficinas de correos emplea a más de 600,000 trabajadores postales. El cuarenta por ciento son mujeres y casi el 40% son personas de color. Entregan correo a todas las direcciones del país seis días a la semana.

El nuevo Director General de Correos, Louis DeJoy, un aliado de Trump, ha impuesto reglas de trabajo que eliminan las horas extras y evitan que los trabajadores se aseguren de que todo el correo sea procesado y llevado a los buzones por los carteros, evitando que el correo se entregue a tiempo. A medida que la pandemia ha reducido el volumen de correo, más de 600,000 clasificadoras de correo están siendo suspendidas o lúso destructo, lo que provoca más retrasos. Esto ignora la probabilidad de que más unidades envíen el volumen de correo aumente si mejora la economía.

La posibilidad de que las boletas por correo se retrasen ha ganado titulares de los medios, ya que el presidente Trump ha retocado en varias ocasiones el correo para USPS para entregar boletas en blanco a los votantes, lo que no es legal. Los postores que devolverlas a las autoridades electorales de manera segura y rápida.

DeJoy, o "De Lay" como lo llaman muchos trabajadores postales, ha donado millones de dólares a las causas de Trump y del Partido Republicano. Posee más de $30 millones, a través de XPO Logística, una empresa contra-

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