

100 days of Portland protests

Anti-racists defy police, fascist terror

By Joshua Hanks
Portland, Ore.

This city marked 100 consecutive days of anti-racist, anti-police protests on Sept. 5. The protests have shifted away from downtown and into North Portland — home to police “union” headquarters — and to the Portland Police Bureau’s East Precinct.

Police continue to deploy large quantities of tear gas and use other iron-fisted tactics that anger residents. They restrict access to neighborhoods, harass people and occupy their lawns without approval and under threat of retaliation. Residents report having to wear gas masks in their homes or relocate to hotels to escape the war zone conditions created by police in their campaign to “stamp out” the protests.

Fascist attacks

While tear gas and rampant police brutality continue as major problems, protesters and bystanders alike face another threat: Out-of-town fascist groups are staging violent, armed rallies in the city center and then driving around looking for fights.

Aaron J. Danielson, a member of the Vancouver, Wash.-based Patriot Prayer group that organizes many of the fascist rallies, was killed on Aug. 29 after those forces descended on that night’s anti-racist protest. The man who shot him, Michael Reinoehl, states in an interview to Vice Media on Sept. 3 that he fired in self-defense because Danielson threatened protesters with a knife. Reinoehl said: “I could have watched them kill a friend of mine of color. But I wasn’t going to do that.” Reinoehl’s social media reveals his deep involvement in the three months of Portland’s anti-racist, anti-fascist protests. (tinyurl.com/y5yauugk)

On the evening of Sept. 3 Reinoehl was killed in a rain of police bullets in Lacey, Wash., just south of Seattle, when a federal

“fugitive task force” raided his home. The task force included U.S. Marshals as well as members of the Washington State Dept. of Corrections, Lakewood Police Department and Pierce County Sheriff’s Department.

The military-style assault on Reinoehl stands in sharp contrast to the way police handle right-wing and fascist shooters and mass murderers. Kyle Rittenhouse murdered two anti-racist protesters in Kenosha, Wis., on Aug. 25. Dylann Roof murdered nine people, all Black, in 2015 at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C. Both were located, taken alive by police, and given food and water as they were arrested.

This leniency is not granted to untold numbers of Black and Brown youth who commit far less serious crimes — if any at all — and who face immediate arrest and warrants for re-arrest if they miss a court hearing.

Right-wing disinformation campaign

As Portland completed its 100th day of protest in the face of fascist attacks, corporate media from coast to coast reported the date as a “grim milestone” reflecting the “grim reality” in Portland.

This skewed description fits in with the highly sensationalized, fact-scarce and distorted reporting on anti-racist mass protests which dominates U.S. media. For instance, photographs of city-sponsored homeless camps, set up after the COVID-19 pandemic began, have been passed around in right-wing media as evidence of “antifa training camps.” There are now fears that the people living in these camps, who are mostly those most vulnerable to the virus, will face violence from conspiracy-fueled fascist vigilantes seeking to attack anti-fascists.

The disinformation flows from the White House on down, with Trump fixating on Portland as an example of

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Outside Portland Police Association, Sept. 4.

Fight the right with united worker action!

On Aug. 12, 2017, an angry white nationalist participating in a Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Va., deliberately sped his car up and drove into unsuspecting counterdemonstrators, striking and killing Heather Heyer and injuring dozens more. Donald Trump’s initial response was to condemn the “display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides.”

Fast forward to Aug. 25, 2020. Trump’s 17-year-old supporter Kyle Rittenhouse crossed the Illinois state line, carrying an AR-15-style rifle, to Kenosha, Wis., where he shot and killed two people and wounded another at a rally for Jacob Blake.

Kenosha police let Rittenhouse walk away from the shootings. Following his peaceful arrest, an Illinois judge

postponed a decision to extradite Rittenhouse to Wisconsin until Sept. 25. On Aug. 31, Trump suggested that Rittenhouse “did nothing wrong” and “exercised his god-given, constitutional, common law and statutory law right to self-defense.”

Meanwhile on Aug. 29, heavily armed Trump supporters in hundreds of trucks staged a violent rally in Portland, Ore., driving their vehicles into counterdemonstrators and attacking them with pepper spray, bats and sticks. Activist Michael Forest Reinoehl went to the aid of a friend who was surrounded by pro-Trump protesters.

Feeling he was acting in self-defense, Reinoehl confronted and shot Trump rally participant Aaron J. Danielson. A nightly presence at Black Lives Matter

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From Pensacola to Greensboro to Kenosha Fight police brutality!

Pensacola is occupied Muskoke/Creek land; Kenosha is occupied Peoria/Potawatomi/Miami/Dakota Sioux land.

Thirty people gathered Aug. 30 at Florida Square in downtown Pensacola, Fla., in solidarity with the Kenosha Uprising — the ongoing protest against police brutality and anti-Black violence that erupted after the Aug. 23 police shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, in Kenosha, Wis. The demonstration was organized by the new Central Gulf Coast branch of Workers World Party.

Several members of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative) spoke, including vice president Mallory Luana, a Haitian American, nonbinary fem and self-identified “Black punk witch,” and Strive secretary and social media coordinator Indigo Lett. Other speakers — including this writer for WWP and the North Florida Regional Organizer for Black Voters Matter Jamil Davis — addressed local, national

and international issues linked to the ongoing struggle in Kenosha. The upcoming election and the inaction of Democratic candidates Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were discussed thoroughly, with particular emphasis on police brutality and the prison-industrial complex, which both candidates have actively supported.



— Report and photo by Devin C.

Justice for Marcus Smith!



PHOTO: WORKING-CLASS HOMELESS ORGANIZING ALLIANCE

Greensboro

Two years after Greensboro, N.C., police officers killed Marcus Deon Smith, the Smith family, the Working-class Homeless Organizing Alliance, and their allies took to the streets of Greensboro to celebrate Marcus’ life and demand justice. “We will march until we get #JusticeforMarcusSmith and his family gets reparations; we will march for Black liberation and Black freedom. We will march until we abolish both the prison-industrial complex and racial capitalism,” reads a statement from WHOA. “There will be a new dawn in Greensboro ushered in by the Black masses of people fed up with demoralization and exploitation.”

— Report by calvin deutschbein



Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward! Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism. The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis. The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system. WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs. Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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Vol. 62, No. 37 • Sept. 10, 2020
 Closing date: Sept. 9, 2020
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 A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.
 Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.

As COVID spreads

Epidemic of evictions goes viral

By Mirinda Crissman
Houston

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced a federal eviction moratorium on Sept. 1 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Coming several months into the pandemic, it may help keep many in their homes — but only until Dec. 31.

This is very much a case of too little, too late. Millions of renters and mortgage payers nationwide face uncertain futures, with the potential for houselessness.

Since May 19, Houston has been the largest city in the country with no eviction protections, as the Texas Supreme Court let a statewide eviction moratorium expire on that date. Since then, the eviction machine in this city has been churning out orders damning many families deeper into poverty. Houston-area landlords have filed nearly 10,000 eviction orders since March, according to Princeton University’s Eviction Lab. (evictionlab.org)

Many folks evicted since the start of this crisis have contracted COVID. Evictions present a direct threat, not only to those removed from their housing, but to public health in general. Eviction moratoriums are better than nothing, but they just kick the housing crisis farther down the road.

Houston political leaders like Mayor Sylvester Turner explain that they are relying on the goodwill of landlords in these hard times to do the right thing. This violent lack of policy protects only landlords, and we know they are not going to hold themselves accountable.

Most city dwellers are renters

In a city of 2.6 million people, 53.6% of Houstonians are renters. They don’t own the property they live in and often have to turn over the majority of what they earn to a landlord. As owners of property who charge people to live there, landlords are a protected class.

Their eviction notices are delivered by a flunky with a gun on their hip. Law enforcement, like the constable smugly delivering eight evictions in one day in a now-viral news clip, protect and serve property — not people.

A clear example of how threatening the slogan

“Housing is a human right” is to the wealthy can be seen in what happened to the organization Moms4Housing. In their own words, “On January 14, 2020, in a pre-dawn raid of a residential home in Oakland, Calif., the Alameda County Sheriff’s [office] spent tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars to evict women and children from a vacant, speculator-acquired property.” Tanks and militarized law enforcement were deployed against them.

At a time when millions are unemployed, eviction moratoriums are the bare minimum needed to keep the public housed and safe from the virus. As soon as the moratoriums expire, those who were already living paycheck-to-paycheck before the pandemic — if they are still able to get a paycheck — will be expected to continue paying rent which many do not have, on top of being responsible for paying thousands in back rent owed as well.

The CDC moratorium supposedly protects tenants from being evicted for nonpayment of rent. But it leaves open measures for landlords to harass and sabotage renters with eviction by other means. Evictions can still be carried out for violation of lease terms.

According to the information service Texas Housers, “A tenant in the state of Texas can still be evicted for compounding late fees, and nowhere in the [CDC] protection is this remedied when the moratorium is up; conversely, it empowers states to make their own decisions. The Texas Legislature has passed a law that lets landlords define what a reasonable late fee is, which is a decision that recent history has shown to be used in cruel and exorbitant ways. We need to eliminate these punitive rules that exist only to line landlords’ pockets and exploit the confusion of tenants.”



PHOTO: GERARDO MONARCA VELAZQUEZ

Eviction defense at Harris County Southwest Courthouse, Houston, Aug. 21.

(Texashousers.org, Sept. 2)

The only thing that could ease the scale of the crisis at this moment is to cancel rents and mortgages. This should include any amount owed.

Other countries have done it in the name of public health. But to respect human life over property is not something we can expect the ruling class to suddenly start doing here in the U.S., not after hundreds of years of violently disrespecting life in the name of property. This is going to take a mass movement of people fighting for these protections.

In New Orleans, in Kansas City, in Philadelphia and even in Houston, people have banded together in front of eviction courts to block landlords from entering. Eviction defense is likely to grow in popularity, as the state protects the interests of private property over human life and violently displaces the living.

Charging people for a human necessity, such as housing, is not necessary. It serves to benefit the class of people who own and accumulate property. Abolish private property on stolen land!

Join your local tenants’ union. Housing is a human right! □

While the stock market is booming, jobs report hides hunger

By G. Dunkel

Getting enough food was hard for people working low-wage jobs before the pandemic. Now it’s harder, given the huge increase in unemployment — 29 million jobless workers now live off meager unemployment insurance. Millions without work are getting nothing, and more than 50 million people are “food insecure,” meaning they lack adequate food to live active, healthy lives.

Despite this grim news for the working class, the stock market has boomed to nearly record heights, which gives a false picture of a vibrant economy, as did the report that the U.S. economy added 1.4 million jobs in August.

Income loss means hunger spreads

Based on Census Bureau and other government data, the organization Feeding America estimates that as many as 54 million people in the U.S. are food insecure, up from 37 million in 2018. (tinyurl.com/yx8hfn7a) It estimates the number of children separately, because in a significant number of families the adults go without food so the kids will get enough to eat. At least 14 million children in the United States are “food insecure.”

A Brookings Institute study (July 9) estimates that unemployment is responsible for about 65% of food insecurity. From the pictures displayed when you search Google for images of hunger in the U.S., many of the hungry are Black or Latinx.

Before the pandemic swelled the need for food, the U.S. Department of Agriculture had 15 nutrition assistance programs in 2019: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provided food monthly to 35.7 million people; the school lunch program provided lunch every school day to 29.4 million children; and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC program) provided food assistance to 7.3 million people. (tinyurl.com/y3c2evg2)

The U.S. government’s \$92 billion in 2019 in food assistance was by no means enough. About one out of

seven U.S. families uses food banks to supply some of their food. The Houston Food Bank estimated that 1.1 million people in the 17 counties around Houston in its service area were food insecure in 2019. During the pandemic, this grew to 2.45 million people. Private food banks and pantries exist in almost every part of the United States.

Some 5,000 Meals on Wheels programs supplied 7 million seniors with hot meals. Seniors are especially vulnerable to food insecurity. Due to the threat of COVID-19, many seniors are forced to rely on food delivery services, which are expensive and offer limited selections.

Report of job gains deceptive

In the August job numbers, a big part of the job gain was hiring short-term Census workers. The reports of the official unemployment rate falling and the Federal Reserve keeping interest rates low helped to pump up the stock market.

This official unemployment rate, known as the U-3 rate, which the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports monthly, often hides real, negative developments in the economy. Nevertheless, it gets all the headlines and attention from politicians. They often use this rate to justify expanding or contracting all sorts of benefits.

For August 2020, the U-3 rate was 8.4%, which was a significant improvement from July, when it was 10.2%. The BLS publishes other rates, often ignored in the media, which reveal more about problems with unemployment.

For example, if workers have had their hours cut or have stopped looking for a job because they know none are available near where they live, this is excluded from the U-3 rate. The BLS reports an alternate figure that



PHOTO: GREATER BOSTON FOOD BANK

Greater Boston Food Bank protests outside Massachusetts State House, September 2019. A year later, the crisis of hunger is much greater.

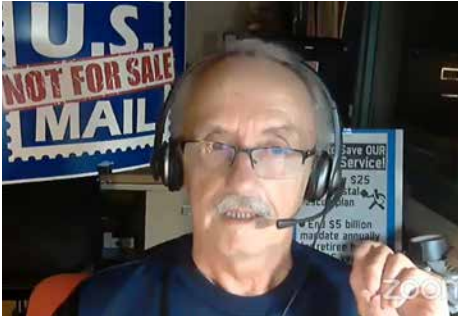
reflects these other kinds of job losses, called the U-6 rate, which currently is 14.2%.

The 7 million jobs gained since the spring lockdown ended fell far short of restoring the 22 million jobs that the U.S. economy lost in March and April. And in the last week of August, 880,000 workers filed for state unemployment insurance, and 790,000 filed for the separate federal Pandemic unemployment insurance.

Nearly one out of every five of the 160 million workers in the U.S. labor force have been collecting unemployment compensation — that is one out of every five workers! Tens of thousands exhaust benefits every week. Hit hardest are workers of color, women, migrants, and other super-exploited workers.

The number of these claims and other data on retail sales indicate that the boost to the economy from March’s CARES-1 benefits package — that ended on July 31 — is drying up. This threatens more economic decline and more hunger. □

What postal workers are demanding



By Joe Piette

Below is a lightly edited version of a talk given by Joe Piette on the Sept. 3 Workers World Party webinar: “Save the people’s post office.”

The pandemic was the trigger that began the current crisis for the post office. It caused financial harm to the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), but, more importantly, it put essential postal workers in harm’s way. Over 80 postal workers have died, and tens of thousands have been exposed to COVID-19.

On the job, the demands for masks and other personal protective equipment, deep cleaning of postal facilities and social distancing are still recurring demands six months into the pandemic. Forcing supervisors and managers to wear masks and to enforce rules requiring all workers to wear masks and use social distancing are still issues which many shop stewards and union officials are fighting for.

Congress approved half a trillion

dollars to rescue capitalist corporations from pandemic-related financial losses but has refused to give aid to the people’s postal service to get past this crisis. Remember the slogan: “Banks got bailed out; we got sold out” after the Great Recession? It’s still true today.

Postal pandemic relief needed

The USPS needs legislation passed in the House and Senate, based on H.R. 8015, to provide \$25 billion in direct emergency relief. With USPS forecasting COVID-related losses of up to \$50 billion over the next decade, Congress should not settle for the scaled-down Republican proposal of \$10 billion in aid. (inequality.org)

The second necessary demand is to rescind the 2006 bill that requires the Postal Service to put aside over \$5 billion annually to pay for retiree health benefits — 75 years into the future. No other company or federal agency has that requirement. That requirement must be ended immediately.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy — nicknamed Delay — took multiple actions that created a mail slowdown across the country. DeJoy ordered employees to leave mail and packages behind, rather than work overtime, at a time of pandemic-related staffing shortage and increased package demand. (Washington Post, Aug. 14)

DeJoy also removed 671 high-speed mail-sorting machines and [at least 700] blue mail collection boxes from

neighborhoods across the U.S. President Trump compounded public concerns by falsely claiming the USPS couldn’t handle the crisis-level demand for mail-in voting. (tinyurl.com/yxshwff5)

After a lot of protests, DeJoy announced he would put a stop to his harmful policies, but he refused to bring the sorting machines and blue collection boxes back. And postal workers say work rules are still not the same as before DeJoy took office.

DeJoy is considering further extreme cuts after Nov. 3rd, including raising package rates, particularly when delivering the last mile on behalf of big retailers (they have actually already announced holiday surcharges on commercial customers); setting higher prices for service in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico; curbing discounts for nonprofits; and requiring election ballots to use first-class postage.

After the elections, no matter who wins, we ask all postal service supporters to pay attention and come out to oppose any new rules DeJoy imposes that will harm the right of everyone to affordable, universal mail delivery.

DeJoy must go!

Thousands of phone calls and signatures on petitions have demanded DeJoy be fired. In a new poll, 56% of respondents — including 77% of Democrats, 49% of Independents and 39% of Republicans — strongly or somewhat

support DeJoy being removed from office. (tinyurl.com/y4ztq25s)

On the “Save Our Postal Service” Facebook page, you can get information on how to contact members of the Postal Board of Governors. That’s the Board who appointed DeJoy, and they have the power to fire him.

During this pandemic, it hasn’t been easy organizing postal workers. They’ve been working 12-hour days. Many have been exposed to COVID-19 and have had to self-quarantine. As with everything else, there haven’t been union meetings, because of social spacing requirements.

Nevertheless, protests have taken place, thanks to the solidarity of other workers and members of the public. On Aug 22, over 800 protests took place across the U.S. to support the people’s postal service. The majority of those protesters were not postal workers. That is real solidarity!

Solidarity is not a one-way street. On June 25, postal workers marched for Black Lives Matter in Minneapolis. That’s solidarity too.

This year, “an injury to one is an injury to all” should be our everyday slogan. In solidarity in the streets is where we need to be.

Piette is a retired letter carrier and member of the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Voting, self-determination and social change

By Monica Moorehead

Below is a slightly edited talk by Monica Moorehead at the Workers World Party webinar on Sept. 3 on “Save the people’s post office.

Voter suppression is an issue I have both personal and political knowledge of. I was born and raised under segregation in Alabama. Black and white activists were beaten, jailed, water-hosed and lynched to insure this basic democratic right, which was both won during and lost after Reconstruction post-Civil War. It is a right that most whites have had since 1920, when mainly white women won the right to vote.

When the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965, I saw firsthand as an adolescent this right guaranteed to my mom at age 39, her mother at age 65 and her grandmother at age 85. This was won through blood, sweat and tears and is still dearly cherished today by the most oppressed.

Despite the fact there is no fundamental class difference between candidates from either big business, pro-war capitalist party, Republican or Democrat, this doesn’t diminish the duty of revolutionary socialists to defend any bourgeois democratic right that whites have been privileged to have — like the right to vote — if we hope to build class unity for a socialist future.

Voting is tied to the right to self-determination. The right to vote is more than pulling a lever every four years. During Reconstruction, newly freed Black people could, for the first time, have political representation in state legislatures in the Deep South, establishing basic services like education. The counterrevolutionary defeat of this radical period ushered in a period of white supremacy in the forms of semi-slavery, repressive penal codes,

the KKK, Jim Crow and — yes — voter suppression.

The social impact of voter suppression is still felt today, in so many ways, and not just for Black people. For instance, in 2013 WW printed an article by Ben Carroll on restrictions on voting rights in North Carolina, known for its notorious “right to work” — meaning the right to nonunion labor laws for workers. Here is a brief summary from this article:

“North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory signed into law on Aug. 12 a sweeping anti-voting rights bill that attacks the basic democratic rights of people of color, youth and other members of the working class.

“As voter ID bills sponsored by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) make their way through many state legislatures, the recently signed bill in N.C. has earned the distinction as the most severe voter suppression law yet passed in the U.S.

“In a blow to young voters, it does away with preregistration of 16- and 17-year-olds and invalidates school IDs as a valid form of identification. Additionally, it empowers vigilante poll observers to challenge other voters’ eligibility.

“Many of the provisions of the bill attack measures, such as Sunday voting, same-day registration and the early voting period, which have been utilized overwhelmingly by Black, low-income and elderly voters.”

Members of the Disability Rights Caucus of Workers World Party wrote of an attempted attack on the Voter Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984, when a Georgia County Board of Elections proposed to close seven out of nine accessible polling places. While this proposal was defeated, it is important to note that rural Randolph County in 2018 was 61% African American with one of the seven precincts being 95% Black, with no

public transportation.

Millions of disenfranchised people in the U.S. have been denied the right to vote: Black people, undocumented migrants also denied the right to health care and drivers’ licenses for work, prisoners and former prisoners — many of whom have lost this right forever due to incarceration, young people and others. These are millions of people who need class solidarity, not to be lectured on the limitations of voting, especially with white-supremacist Trump trying to close down post offices in primary communities of color, to squash voting rights.

Our 2016 election campaign statement emphasized — when so many young people gravitated to the Bernie Sanders campaign — and much remains true four years later: “A capitalist election can be a barometer of progressive mass sentiment, whether voters reject a war-making president or vote in a person of color.”

However, a barometer is not an instrument by which to effect change; it only measures change. To really make change happen, you need more than a barometer. You need an instrument of struggle.

After the massive Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements defeated segregation, Black people began entering the electoral arena. Many times a majority of voters, including some whites as well as people of color, have chosen African Americans to represent them in various public offices, finally reaching as high as the president of the United States. This is certainly a step forward from the days of open segregation in the South and the refusal of the Northern establishment to allow more than a token few Black people into political office.

Yet even in cities that have had Black elected officials — like Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland, Flint and Newark — racism continues and even deepens in housing,



Monica Moorehead

jobs, wages, education, rates of police murders and incarceration, etc. These cities struggle just to provide the most basic services, while the banks and real estate interests profit off the people’s misery.

Even as political concessions have been made to mass struggles for democratic reform, the obscene gap between rich and poor has widened. That gap also intensifies national oppression, as the poorest are disproportionately people of color.

New movements are gaining strength outside the electoral arena — especially the militant movement against police murders. Workers World Party sees the pressing need for a working-class, revolutionary socialist program that will endure after the elections are over, regardless of who wins office. We need a movement to not only reform or soften capitalism, but get rid of it.

Socialism is not just capitalism with government controls; it is an entirely opposite social system. It is based on the working class taking power and liberating the means of production from the stranglehold of capitalist ownership, so economic life can be planned to meet human needs, not to profit a few. □

Workers organize to demand unions ‘Drop the Cops’

By calvin deutschbein

The Service Employees Union (SEIU) is one of the largest labor unions in the U.S., representing approximately 2 million employees in this country and Canada. But as with many large unions in the U.S., where internal colonization is the de facto way of life for the tens of millions of nationally oppressed workers, it has been fused to the carceral state by “unionizing” police, prison guards and parole and probation officers.

However, there can be no union for police — who are not workers. A rank-and-file campaign within the SEIU, called “SEIU Drop the Cops,” formed earlier this year. It has set forth demands for the union and begun a union-wide organizing campaign of its rank and file.

On Aug. 30, SEIU Drop the Cops held an online forum to present their vision of a union that reflects its promise of being of, and for, workers. (View at facebook.com/SEIUDropTheCops.) Marina Stankov-Hodge, an SEIU nurse, chaired the event.

Julia Wallace, a SEIU Drop the Cops organizer explained: “Cops are not workers, and they are certainly not members of our union. We need to expel them, and we need to be fighting for our lives. As Black people, as Black women, as immigrants, as trans people, queer people, we need to be fighting for our lives and organizing ourselves as the working class.”

Wallace is a rank-and-file member of SEIU Local 721. She passed disaffiliation resolutions in the Black and Latino

caucuses of the local, prior to building toward the union-wide campaign. She presented SEIU Drop the Cops’ demands before providing a class analysis rooted in the struggle for Black liberation. She spoke of the moral imperative, which unionists in SEIU have as workers, to expel any cop bargaining units.

Following Wallace, Ann Montague from Local 503 in Oregon, also an SEIU Drop the Cops organizer, shared the lessons from her local: “I have been a rank-and-file member of SEIU 503 for over 20 years. I knew my local had armed Portland State University (PSU) cops, but when I read in the New York Times that the cops who shot Rayshard Brooks in the back were ‘represented by SEIU,’ I realized how prevalent cop unions are in SEIU, and I joined Drop The Cops.”

‘Disarm PSU’ ousts campus cops from SEIU

As an SEIU rank-and-file worker, Montague was part of the Disarm PSU struggle to oust cops from the bargaining unit — and off the campus. She shared how after seven years of struggle, Disarm PSU recently won both demands: to disarm campus cops and to expel them from the workers SEIU bargaining unit — showing their power.

Keriann Shalvoy, a member of the Committee of Interns and Residents/ SEIU Healthcare, addressed internal organizing within the union. Hers is the largest house-staff union in the U.S., representing over 17,000 interns, residents and fellows across the country. She

has been a delegate in CIR for two years and is running for national president under the progressive slate “Housestaff for a Democratic Union.”

Shalvoy said, “We resolved, as CIR, that SEIU should disaffiliate from police and other unions representing repressive workplaces like ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), Border Patrol and corrections officers.” CIR resolved not to allow political funds to support candidates who work with police “unions” or fund policing, similar to the demand of “No cop candidates.”

Workers have raised the same demands throughout the SEIU, demonstrating their political clarity and the urgency of the demands.

The final panelist was Hamilton Nolan, a labor reporter with In These Times and a council member at the Writers Guild of America East, an AFL-CIO affiliate. He helped get the Council of the WGA to unanimously pass a resolution calling on the AFL-CIO to disaffiliate with the International Union of Police Associations. (wgaeast.org, June 8)

The International Executive Board of the SEIU passed a resolution on June 12 aligning with the movement for Black Lives Matter. It includes a call to “divest from and demilitarize the police and invest in and build Black communities,” for “dialogue to reimagine the role of police and the criminal justice system,” and further declares “corporations must



CREDIT: SEIU DROP THE COPS.

The four panelists and chairperson in the webinar.

be held accountable for investing in our communities.” (tinyurl.com/y6ra5eyh)

Nolan said SEIU President Mary Kay Henry told In these Times on June 19, “We have to consider expulsion of police unions from the labor movement.” (tinyurl.com/y2nxb14j) He noted that promised next steps never materialized.

Nolan urged SEIU workers to push the issue at all levels of the union, to pressure officers and workers to take a position on expelling the police and simply to learn where they stand.

Panelists then took questions from SEIU workers. Over 100 workers attended, and the SEIU Drop the Cops Facebook page says it has had over 2,000 views.

While much work remains for the campaign, one thing is clear. It is time that SEIU drop the cops! When workers fight, they win!

The writer is a member of Workers United Southern Region of the SEIU, Local 32, in Chapel Hill, N.C.

A message to U.S. postal workers



PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

The following message from internationally known human rights leader Julia Wright, eldest daughter of famed writer Richard Wright, was read by Sophia Williams, from the Campaign to Bring Mumia [Abu-Jamal] Home, during the Workers World Webinar: “Save the people’s post office” on Sept. 3. Richard Wright was a postal worker in the late 1920s in Chicago, before he joined the Federal Writers Project and became a novelist. The former postal worker is widely acknowledged as one of the most important writers of the 20th century.

By Julia Wright

My father, Richard Wright, was born near Natchez, Mississippi, in 1908 to a

sharecropping family of former slaves. His mother was a school teacher; but deserted by her husband, she had to look for jobs in white people’s kitchens to feed her two sons, before suffering a series of strokes.

At the core of Richard’s childhood, one bitter, visceral, scarring experience remains: **hunger — daily hunger, relentless hunger** that would mold his moods, his character, his attitude toward the world during the rest of his short life.

Down South, the only time Richard got enough to eat was when, aged 8, he was taken to live with his Uncle Hoskins in Elaine, Ark. But Silas Hoskins was lynched by whites who considered the saloon he owned had grown too profitable.

Finally, like so many before him and after him, Richard escaped to the North, to Chicago and looked for a job there.

In “Black Boy/ American Hunger,” he writes: “In June I was called for temporary duty at the post office. My confidence soared; if I obtained an appointment as a regular clerk, I could spend at least five hours a day writing.

“I reported at the post office and was sworn in as a temporary clerk. I earned seventy cents an hour, and I went to bed each night with a full stomach for the first time in my life. ... But before I could receive a permanent appointment, I would have to take a physical examination, and the weight requirement was 125 pounds, and I — with my long years of semistarvation — barely tipped the scales at 110.

“Frantically I turned all of my spare money into food and ate. But my skin and flesh would not respond to the food.

Perhaps I was not eating the right diet? Perhaps my chronic anxiety kept my weight down. I drank milk, ate steak, but it did not give me an extra pound of flesh. ... Autumn came, and I was called for my physical examination. I had not told my mother or brother or aunt that I knew I would fail. On the morning of the examination, I drank 2 quarts of buttermilk, ate 6 bananas, but it did not hoist the red arrow of the government scales. ... I went home hating myself.”

Ironically, although Richard finally is able to put on the required weight and obtains the coveted job at the post office, the 1929-1930 Depression is on the horizon, and he is put on the dole like millions of others.

I am struck by the similarity of those times to ours: lynchings in the South, but in the North as well; rampant racism; economic depression; mass unemployment; and an old disease rearing its ugly head — syphilis. Like COVID-19 today, the Tuskegee experiment scandalously targeted Blacks: Rural, illiterate southern farmers afflicted with the disease were used as guinea pigs to watch the progression of the infection, under the pretense of a newly discovered treatment. The number of lost lives are to this day unknown.

Although my father left the post office for other jobs and became a known writer, his experience sorting mail remained with him to the point that the heroes of two of his novels work at the post office — Lawd Today and The Outsider. He collected stamps with the enthusiasm of a kid for the rest of his life.

Sept. 4 is Richard Wright’s 112th birthday. This message is as a birthday present to my father who died in 1960.

From where he is, if he saw the U.S. scene today, Richard Wright would understand the strategic importance of the postal services to desperately needed systemic change in our society. Today, Richard would stand with you to protect the machines he had learned to work almost blindfolded. Today Richard Wright would stand with you, because the postal service is like justice; it cannot be stopped, hindered or delayed.

Having lived through a military coup d’etat — the one organized in 1966 at the behest of U.S. interests against the socialist Republic of Ghana — and having read at least one book on the tactics and strategy of coups d’etat (“The War of the Flea” by Robert Taber), I am witness to the fact and given to understand that the first thing the opposing force does is to paralyze the centers of communication of the targeted state: shutting down of the airport, radio HQ, and so on and so forth.

The postal services constitute a strategic network of communication staffed by us, the people, which Trump needs to paralyze in more ways than one.

If not prevented, this would be the beginning of a silent coup d’etat!

Our votes matter! Our votes matter more each day!

Our Postal Workers are the strategic foot soldiers in a battle to begin to back down fascism! The struggle will be protracted!

“It is the hour of the furnaces, we only see the light,” said Che Guevara. □



ATTICA: SPIRIT OF

Remembering ‘Big Black’ Smith

By **Ida Robinson**

Ida Robinson is a co-founder with Families with a Future. She is an ex-prisoner, ex-fugitive and a current activist working with women and LGBTQ2S+ people. This is an edited version of her talk during the Aug. 29 Black Lives Matter Webinar: Justice for Peaceful Soledad Prisoners.

My name is Ida Robinson. I can’t talk about Big Black [Frank “Big Black” Smith] or Attica without mentioning Elizabeth Fink, who was his attorney for many years, and Sister T who is with the ancestors, as well as Rita Brown. I hold them in my heart.

As a very young woman, I used to go to the Connection center, an organization founded by Kathy Kornbluth. And after Aug. 21, [1971], when Conrad was murdered, I used to be in the visiting room and seeing Bernard Garden, Gordon Wells and Conrad, who were in the visiting room. You create families in those visiting rooms. But after the murders of

the people in the courthouse, it’s just like a huge crescendo here. I can’t tell you how I feel other than that. This can’t last too long. It’s going to be revolution tomorrow.

That was Black August, and then when Attica jumped off Sept. 9 and we saw the mutilation and the burning and the killing of so many men inside there behind asking for the minimal list of humanitarian goals—it was like, okay, this can’t last too much longer. The revolution is going to be tomorrow.

This is what I and many other people thought. It accelerated our whole sense of feeling and activism that it [the revolution] was right here tomorrow. This is before we even knew about the counterintelligence program and all that. But I just wanted to say about that moment — it was just over the top.

America has a problem with big Black

men, you know, Eric Garner, George Floyd, Big Black. And in that you can go on and on about how they are treated. They are dehumanized because of their size, because size means power to them and dehumanization.

And he [Big Black] was burned and beaten. Beaten and burned and laid out where they just took him and hit his genitals and all over his body. In that picture that you saw earlier, he was still humble, intelligent, working with a colleague and investigator and how they anticipated all over that this can’t last too much longer.

And here we are today. Attica is all of us. And one of the things that Big Black had said is he called on us to do something, whatever it is that you can do, and Attica is all of us. And in that, he told me a lot of things about myself.

I just want to talk to humanize the beauty of his spirit. He was charismatic;

he was gentle; he was wise. And he was there for you. You know, he was there for me in California, and he was there for me when I went through a crisis after my imprisonment in New York, and in that he never, ever gave up.

The struggle has to continue, and it is continued. But we can’t fall for the Band-Aid programs that we did back in the ’60s because we didn’t know any better. So I am very hopeful in this movement, as people continue to do what they can in their worlds to create a structural change, because there will be no reformism when we’re talking about capitalism on steroids, it just won’t work.

And in that I’m gonna check out right now. Thank you. Continua la lucha.

Big Black died of cancer in 2004. Following his release from Attica, he moved to New York City where he worked as a paralegal on the \$2.8 billion civil liability suit filed in 1974, which alleged that 1,200 prisoners had been beaten, tortured or denied medical care. □



Ida Robinson and Frank ‘Big Black’ Smith.

Transitioning behind bars: ‘Nothing less than torture!’

By **Vanessa Lee Naisha**

Vanessa Lee Naisha is a Black transgender woman being held in an all-male prison in Pennsylvania. She is a subscriber to Workers World newspaper and is a member of Food Not Bombs Solidarity.

My name is Vanessa Lee Naisha. I am a 57-years-young transgender woman. I am an African American woman born April 25, 1963. I was born in Philadelphia; however, in the early years of my life I ended up in New York state.

Transitioning in a male prison has been nothing less than torture! I have purposely been placed in very hostile situations by the authorities. I have had prison staff as well as prisoners degrade me verbally, and prisoners refuse to sit at a table with me in the chow hall. I basically live on an island.

I am treated as if I were toxic. The common names I am called are “fag,” “homo”

or “the Punk.” Prison staff have stood next to prisoners as I pass by and get laughed at.

I am forced to wear facial hair, because the razors that the prison permits ruin my face and skin. Laser hair removal is readily available, but the prison would rather have me drag a razor across my face three times a week and have me damage my face and endure pain and suffering.

When I was finally approved for Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), the torture reached new levels. The medical provider did not prescribe the correct amounts. At first it was found that I was ingesting too little, and then it was too much. I felt like a test dummy or a lab rat. But then again, test dummies

and lab rats are treated a whole lot better. As much as I am laughed at and mocked, I sometimes feel like the circus is the place where I belong.

Although it is well known that I am transgender and my name is Vanessa, I

am still referred to as “he” and “him.” The prison staff’s clear intent is to discourage me from being transgender.

The prison staff know that if they place me in a cell with random people that it would bring about problems. Needless to say, security placed me in cells and on units with individuals who are transphobic.

Violence came about and put me in a position to defend myself, and I did so effectively. Each time that I was attacked, I turned the tables, and still I was placed in isolation (the hole), and security allowed others to steal my personal property.

Simply put, transitioning in a male prison has been a living hell.

Illegal strip searches

Now I am on HRT, which has caused me to develop visible breasts, and still male guards are allowed to strip-search me. I have been threatened that if I do not strip, then I will be placed in the hole, where I am forced to strip. How is it that I am on HRT; I have breasts; I wear bras and panties; I am on the Transgender List, and my name is Vanessa, but a male guard may strip me, viewing my breasts and undergarments?

That single action goes against everything. It is well-established throughout the federal court system that gender dysphoria is a serious psychological condition. Therefore by law I have certain rights, and I know this.

The same way that male guards are not permitted to strip-search women at female facilities, it should not be permitted with me. How is it that I am seen as a woman up until the point of strip search?

By prison staff knowing that I am transgender and still allowing male guards to strip-search me shows they are intentionally hostile to my gender dysphoria.

Civil suit to combat transphobic terror

Currently pending before the District Court of Delaware is a civil action that I filed against officers and prison officials.

The action asserts that the officers and officials were deliberately indifferent to my gender dysphoria by allowing male guards to strip-search me. I am also challenging the constitutionality of the strip-search policy.

This is not exclusively about me. My main objective is to get a policy put in place that will protect the LGBTQ2S+ prison community. □



PHOTO: CINDY LOU MILLER/FOOD NOT BOMBS SOLIDARITY

Vanessa Lee Naisha.

George Jackson

Marxist-Leninist, abolitionist, revolutionary!

By **Ted Kelly**

As we commemorate the 49th anniversary of the Attica Uprising of 1971, the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party is inspired to once again raise the name of our comrade George Jackson. A revolutionary philosopher and communist militant, Jackson’s writings have inspired workers on both sides of the prison walls for decades. His assassination in California’s Soledad State Prison on Aug. 21, 1971, set off a chain of events that led to prisoners at Attica organizing their own

historic rebellion just a few weeks later.

His words remain relevant: “Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation, understand that fascism is already here, that people are already dying who could be saved, that generations more will live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your love in revolution.”

This September 23 would have been the 79th birthday of Jackson, one of the leaders of the Black Panther Party. George Jackson, presente! □



UPRISING LIVES ON

Outrage over jail death of Black trans woman

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

Anger over the tragic death of 28-year-old Lea Rayshon Daye in Cleveland's Cuyahoga County Jail came out forcefully in a virtual press conference held Sept. 4. Daye's was the second jail death here in less than two months and the 11th in two years. Found unresponsive in her cell Aug. 30, the Black trans woman died in a city deemed "an epicenter for America's trans murder crisis" by an Aug. 17 op-ed piece in the Cleveland Scene.

Like Michael Wormick, who died in the same jail on July 8, Daye was homeless at the time of her arrest. Her death spotlighted the intersectionality of

racism, transphobia, poverty and mass incarceration.

The news conference featured speakers on all these issues, including representatives of the Coalition to Stop the Inhumanity at the Cuyahoga County Jail, Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH), Equality Ohio, Trans Ohio and the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland.

Rev. Reegie Bunch of the Jail Coalition condemned "the final indignity of misgendering" by jail authorities and then the news media. Ellie Turan, the Community Center's Director of Development and author of the above mentioned op-ed, called Daye's death "an

extension of lynching." Gwen Stembridge of Equality Ohio pointed out that half of all Black trans women spend time in prison, and Chris Knestrick of NEOCH added that 30% of transgender people experience homelessness and declared that "housing is a human right."

Devinity Jones, founder and coordinator of the Community Center's Trans Wellness Program, spoke movingly about her own experiences with the so-called "justice system." When she appeared in court to pay a fine, a transphobic judge wrongfully sentenced her to 60 days in jail after making blatantly bigoted comments. In jail, she was subjected to a range of abuses.

Jones was celled with a cisgender male prisoner. Like numerous other prisoners she slept on a mat on the floor, was fed horrible food, had inadequate medical care, was denied basic hygiene and was abused by the vicious guards known

as "the men in black." A guard sexually assaulted her while she was taking a shower. Several years ago her friend Mahogany, also a Black trans woman, died in jail when authorities denied her anti-seizure medication.

The Jail Coalition was formed in December 2018 in response to eight deaths that had occurred over the previous six months, along with conditions that a U.S. federal marshals' report called "the worst in the country." The county jail drew national media attention earlier this year, when it released hundreds of prisoners to address overcrowding and reduce COVID spread. But recently the trend has been reversed, with numbers of prisoners climbing from a low of under a thousand to around 1,500, approaching capacity.

Activists here will continue to build unity around the main demand raised at the press conference: "No more deaths in the Cuyahoga County Jail." □



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

May 29, outside Cuyahoga County Jail. Since this protest two more prisoners have died.

ATTICA REBELLION: Paris Commune of the Black Liberation struggle

By Larry Holmes

The following excerpted article first appeared online Sept. 14, 2016, to mark the 45th anniversary of this historic uprising of incarcerated workers and revolutionaries.

The story of Attica, Sept. 9, 1971, is the story of how prisons can be incubators of revolutionaries — like George Jackson, assassinated 2 ½ weeks earlier at San Quentin State Prison.

Attica has been described as the biggest deployment of state violence since the crushing of the Native uprising at Wounded Knee — 81 years before.

The significance of the Attica uprising as a prison rebellion transcends prison. Attica was a high-water mark in the Black Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It was almost the Black Liberation Movement's Paris Commune of 100 years before in France in 1871.

Attica was spontaneous, but to the extent that it was led, it was organized by revolutionaries — highly political individuals who considered themselves Marxists, Maoists, Black liberationists. They organized committees for food and for negotiations. They put together 28 demands in a few hours!

Their demands addressed every aspect of survival in prison: health, food, an end to solitary confinement, legal rights, the right to family visitation, the right to get political material in the mail. Particularly noteworthy, in relation to yesterday's national prison strike, is that almost one-third of their demands addressed prisoner labor rights.

This is from their statement: "We demand an end to prison labor exploitation. . . . Prisoners who refuse to work are punished and segregated. This is a class issue."

Their demands included: Prisoners should be considered workers. The work day should be eight hours. Prisoners should have the right to form a union. Prisons should be made to conform to New York state labor laws, including wages and workers' compensation for accidents. Prisoners should have access to vocational training, union pay scales, union membership.

Workers World Party played an important role at Attica. The Party had a tremendous reputation with prisoners, through both Youth Against War and Fascism and the Prisoners' Solidarity Committee, and was known in all state prisons. We did work, ranging from solidarity with political prisoners and legal help, to providing buses to take prisoners' families for visits to upstate prisons. We were also known for our political program: "Prisons are concentration camps for the poor! Tear them down!" Our reputation was such that the Attica negotiating

committee asked that a leading comrade, Tom Soto, be an observer during negotiations with the state.

Ultimately the repression came. Nelson Rockefeller, the oil billionaire then the governor, gave the orders to crush the uprising. He had a reputation as an Eastern liberal, but he was actually a ruling-class monster with presidential aspirations, so he ordered in more than 1,000 troops, guards and state troopers from four to five states around, to shoot indiscriminately. The state killed more than 30 prisoners and 10 hostages. The bourgeois propaganda was that the prisoners had killed the hostages, with the media giving all sorts of lying details. But it later came out that all who died, died of bullet wounds — and the prisoners had no guns. Surviving prisoners were tortured, without their wounds being treated.

The ruling class made their point: "There is a price to pay" if there is rebellion.

Organize prisoners, NOT cops and guards!

But the uprising opened up the question of prisoners' rights and liberation. From then on, the cutoff, isolated prisoners became a much bigger issue in our movement, as well as the issue of prisoners as workers.

This brings us to yesterday's strike, on Sept. 9. The prison population was perhaps under 500,000 in 1971. Now it is six to seven times that, and there is the prison-industrial complex. More than one million of those prisoners work within the prisons. They do construction and clearing land; they do clothing manufacture; or they work for McDonalds, ATT or Walmart. Many, many corporations are using prison labor.

The prisoners are a detachment of the working class, working under prison slave-like conditions for pennies a day. For yesterday's strike, unionization and minimum wages were among the many demands, as well as abolition of prisons.

It is noteworthy that foremost among the forces helping the prisoners are anarchists, members of the International Workers of the World, who are also working with low-wage workers. As revolutionary Marxists

we have many differences with anarchists, but we should give credit where credit is due.

The I.W.W. writings on why they are motivated should be read by unionists. These make clear that while they are supporting prisoners to have workers' rights, their ultimate objective is to abolish prison slave labor. This is a good reminder to labor unionists that our ultimate objective should be to end slave labor.

This is a reminder to the labor movement of the necessity to adopt revolutionary methods in the labor struggle. Revolutionaries aid in the organization of the working class so that workers can better their conditions.

However, revolutionaries never forget that our ultimate goal is not merely improving the conditions under which workers' labor is exploited, but rather the abolition of exploitation, the abolition of all wage slavery and capitalism.

The strike raises larger issues. For instance, in 1977 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a case brought by a North Carolina prisoners' union that the prisoners do not have rights as workers.

But when has the claim of "no rights" ever stopped us from organizing workers?

Fighting for legal rights is part of organizing! We fight for workers organizing in the right-to-work states in the South, for undocumented workers who don't have bourgeois rights as workers.

One problem for some unions is that they have cops and prison guards in these unions. That makes it harder for the union to take anti-racist and solidarity positions. They should get rid of the prison guards and organize the prisoners!

The working class is changing. Now a big section is temporary and unorganized. The Black Lives Matter movement is part of

the working class in motion and is demanding a stop to killing Black and Brown workers and demanding jobs and employment.

Our Party has to take the lead in acknowledging who is at the forefront of working-class organizing. If you have a Marxist view of the working class, our class is far from disappearing — it is expanding! End prison slave labor! □



Attica prison rebellion.

Kevin Zeese, ¡presente!

The anti-imperialist and anti-war movement suffered a great loss Sept. 6 with the sudden death of activist Kevin Zeese, 64, at his home in Baltimore, Md. In summer 2019 Kevin Zeese and his life-partner Margaret Flowers led resistance as part of the Embassy Protection Collective, which stayed in the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, D.C., after the Venezuelan ambassador was forced to leave. The collective was subjected to 37 days of constant right-wing attack.

Zeese was co-director with Flowers of Popular Resistance, an independent news website, which challenges U.S. imperialist propaganda, military threats and deadly sanctions against Venezuela, Nicaragua, China, Russia, Palestine, Cuba, Syria and Belarus. The

organization is in full solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and every social justice movement in the U.S. Zeese, along with Flowers, was a consistent unifying force in the United National Antiwar Coalition and its Administrative Committee, organizing the UNAC conference in February, and leading the Sanctions Kill Campaign, No Foreign Bases Coalition, Hands Off Syria Coalition and many other campaigns. Several chapters by these two leaders are included in the book, “Capitalism on a Ventilator: The Impact of COVID-19 on China and the U.S.” Margaret Flowers reflected on how “amazing, kind and selfless a person Kevin was. He never asked for anything, but was always there for others. He had such great knowledge and wisdom. He

was a gentle giant, and his death is a huge loss for me personally and for the many people who are a friend or who worked with him over the years.” All those who knew Kevin Zeese, his work and his determination to breathe confidence, resistance and solidarity into the movement, are deeply saddened by his passing. We extend our love and confidence to Margaret Flowers. We can best remember Kevin Zeese by our determination to organize and resist at the center of the U.S. empire. — By Sara Flounders for Workers World Party



Margaret Flowers and Kevin Zeese.

By Kevin Zeese

The following is the slightly edited version of a talk given at the Aug. 30 UNAC-sponsored online rally, “After the DNC and RNC: We Can’t Breathe!”

Power to the people! We have the power to change if we stay united. We have incredible opportunity now. We see the movement’s growing, especially after the Democratic National Convention and Republican National Convention. The conventions showed us that those parties do not represent the people and that our power is not in elections. Our power is in building people power — and we see that happening. We need to build power, so that in 2021 people can rule from below. So that we can call general strikes. So we can stop business as usual. That is the only way change will occur. It will not come from Joe Biden or Donald Trump. It will come from the people. We also have to understand—and it’s often very hard for people to understand—that the only path to success is failure. We fail and fail and fail until we win. But every time we try, we build the movement. And we get stronger. We can never tell how close we are to success. It’s like we’re banging on a wall, pounding and pounding, and

it’s not until that wall begins to crack and we start to see the light come through that we realize we’re getting close to that breakthrough moment when change can occur. We see the 2020s as a decade of transformation. The movements have been growing since Occupy in 2011, then the Black Lives Matter movement, Fight For 15—all during the Obama era—and now the growing of the movements during the Trump era. We see the 2020s as a decade of social transformation. In order to have that transformation, we need to be organized and educated. ... It’s normal for us to not always be on a linear path to success. It’s a jagged path. We move up and down, we get stronger. We all know that Donald Trump is terrible. The worst president of my life! His overt racism; his open support for violent white supremacists; his mishandling of the COVID-19 virus, causing more than 180,000 deaths so far and probably more than 200,000 by the time of the election; his poor response to the economic collapse. He’s leading us into another Great Depression, and he constantly puts in place laws for the wealthy — while poverty, homelessness, debt and joblessness increase. But Biden is no better. And I mean no better. For 47 years he’s been wrong on every important issue. When I was

in college going to an anti-racism demonstration in Boston in favor of school integration, at that time Biden opposed school integration. Then I worked on ending mass incarceration, ending the drug war, while Biden was passing laws to escalate the drug war, passing laws for mandatory sentencing to increase mass incarceration. He’s the architect of mass incarceration! Later in his career Biden became chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and led in not just voting for the Iraq War, but in the effort to make the Iraq War happen. As chair of Foreign Relations, he put in place massive military budgets, bloated corrupt budgets, while leading us into war after war. When it came to student bankruptcy, he led the effort to make it so students can’t get rid of student debt even in bankruptcy. Now he’s even calling for cutting Social Security when we should be doubling or even tripling Social Security payments. So I’m going to vote against Trump by voting for what I believe in. There are more alternatives than the two parties. I’ll be voting for the Green [Party] candidates Howie Hawkins and Angela Walker, because I’m going to be voting for Medicare For All. I’m going to be voting for community control of the police, for the eco-socialist Green New Deal, for

ending the wealth divide and ending the never-ending wars. We all have the power to vote for what we believe in, for candidates [who] reflect the movement. There are many more choices than a few corrupt candidates of the millionaires. And we need to use what little power we have in the elections to send a message of what we are for, to show that those who speak for movement issues get the movement’s support. After we vote, we must build people power, so that people can rule from below. We must build people power, so that no matter who’s in office, we can stop the government from operating. We can make the country ungovernable. We can put in place general strikes, so that our demands are heard and met. That is how we will win. We have a lot to build on. ... There have been over 900 wildcat strikes since March. The labor movement is growing. The climate justice movement is growing. The anti-racist movement is growing. The anti-inequality movement is growing. We have a lot to build on. The 1% cannot defeat the 99%. So let’s not underestimate ourselves. □

Portland marks 100 days of protests

Continued from page 1

“everything wrong” with the country. Wild conspiracy theories are spreading unchecked, promoted by high-ranking government officials like U.S. Attorney General William Barr. The reality on the ground in Portland bears little resemblance to the far right’s fever dreams. The city’s downtown area — the site of many large demonstrations and overwhelming police repression — continues its reopening after months of business closure due to the pandemic. Buses and trains, suspended in the wake of the initial protests and with many delays and



PHOTO: DIRECT ACTION ALLIANCE.

Night of Sept. 5 near the Ventura Park Elementary School, police in riot gear deployed large amounts of CS/tear gas in the neighborhood, affecting residents in their homes. The neighborhood is one of Portland’s poorest and most diverse, one of the few majority people of color.

re-routes in the following weeks, now run mostly on schedule, sometimes passing through billowing clouds of tear gas deployed by police just blocks away. Continuing police assault Federal forces, including the U.S. Secret Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection, have largely withdrawn from Portland after having operated without identification, snatching protesters off the streets into unmarked vans. Oregon’s Democratic Gov. Kate Brown has now deputized Oregon State Police as federal agents. They have the authority to charge people with committing federal offenses and have already begun to do so. The Portland chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America stated in an Sept. 6 Facebook post: “Last night, on the 100 day anniversary of the uprising against police violence, several Portland DSA members, including members of the steering committee, were arrested on fabricated felony charges.” Oregon State Police and the Portland Police Bureau continue to beat, brutalize and gas peaceful protesters at the behest of politicians who say they are on the protesters’ side. These forces of state repression

also continue to terrorize Portland neighborhoods with impunity. One resident tweeted during such an assault that “someone is still yelling ‘No tear gas please. We don’t have any masks’ over and over again even though there aren’t any protesters left in the area to gas.” Such huge amounts of tear gas and other unknown chemical weapons have never before been deployed in Portland’s dense neighborhoods. The effect on humans, and also on animal and plant life, is not understood. The city’s environmental bureau has requested increased testing of soil and the waters of the Willamette River, which flows just blocks from the downtown protests. There is fear that with the arrival of heavy rains in the fall, there will be a mass run-off of tear gas residue into the area’s waterways, causing untold damage to marine ecosystems still recovering from decades of rampant industrial pollution. Records obtained by The Oregonian revealed that Portland police spent more than \$117,500 between May 30 and July 14 on impact munitions, tear gas and other weapons. (oregonlive.com, Aug. 6) On day 100 of the protests, between the night of Sept. 5 and the morning of Sept. 6, police arrested 59 people, by far

the highest number of arrests since the protests began in late May. Continuing resistance As Portland and other cities continue anti-racist, anti-cop, anti-fascist protest, it is clear that the state’s desire to suppress this movement has not abated. As the November elections draw near, calls for “law and order” from both the Republican and Democratic parties will grow louder, and disinformation spread about protests will be amplified. But as past months have shown, this movement will not fold so easily. It stubbornly continues fighting for racial justice and against police brutality, even in the face of ever-more violent and inhumane state repression and vigilante violence. As more and more people directly participate in the protests or witness them from their front porches and living room windows, more see that the narrative pushed by the police and politicians is completely unmoored from reality. At this critical juncture, it is more important than ever for all anti-fascist, progressive and leftist forces to stand in solidarity with the movement initiated under the banner of Black Lives Matter, and to continue to fight back. □

Black Lives Matter holds court in sports

By Monica Moorehead

Two months before George Floyd was publicly lynched May 25 by a Minneapolis police officer pressing a knee on his neck for almost nine minutes, Breonna Taylor was lynched in late March by three Louisville, Ky., police officers.

The 26-year-old African American emergency medical technician was fatally shot multiple times in her bed, as three white police officers illegally entered her home with a search warrant for drugs. The officer who shot her was fired, but no charges or arrests have been made. The other two officers involved were put on administrative leave. A so-called investigation has been going on for almost six months.

The Floyd lynching helped to reignite the Black Lives Matter struggle all over the country in an unprecedented manner, with demands to defund and even abolish the police as protesters stayed in the streets. The BLM struggle has also given new life to the demand of justice for Breonna Taylor, starting with arresting the cop who killed her. For over three months, almost daily protests have been called in Louisville for Taylor, including one on June 1 in which David McAtee, a beloved Black barbeque cook was shot to death by police. (tinyurl.com/y9upp9ux)

The latest protest took place Sept. 5, right outside the fabled Churchill Downs Racetrack, home to the Kentucky Derby. This race is the second leg of the Triple Crown, the most prestigious of all horse race titles. The fact that the stands were empty of fans, due to the coronavirus, did



Thousands attend 'Justice for Breonna Taylor' protest outside Kentucky Derby, Sept. 5.

not stop thousands of activists from using the occasion of the scheduled race to raise their angry voices to shout Taylor's name and chant "No justice, no Derby," loud and clear.

Brittany Wiley, one of the main organizers, told the crowd: "What are we celebrating? We don't want mint juleps. We want justice. We're not partying. We're protesting. No justice? No Derby." An airplane flew over the track and unfurled a huge banner reading, "Arrest the cops who killed Breonna Taylor." (Washington Post, Sept. 6)

In a simultaneous protest held in front of Metro Hall in downtown Louisville, anti-racists faced off against armed neo-fascist militia who supported the police. Some of the anti-racist protesters carried arms to defend themselves, after threats of right-wing violence.

With sometimes blatant support from

local police, a growing number of armed neofascists have felt emboldened to violently confront peaceful BLM protests. President Donald Trump has egged on the far right, actually defending the 17-year-old white supremacist, Kyle Rittenhouse, who shot to death two anti-racist protesters in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The two had been protesting the maiming of a 29-year-old Black man, Jacob Blake, who was shot seven times in the back by police.

After the shooting of Blake, National Basketball Association (NBA) players carried out a historic three-day strike against police brutality. This heroic action prompted a strike in other sports to show solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

Athletes continue support for BLM

While anti-racist protesters remain in the streets, prominent athletes continue to call for justice in their respective sport venues. Take one of the top five tennis players in the world, Naomi Osaka, who is of Haitian and Japanese heritage.

During the U.S. Open in Queens, N.Y., through the first four rounds of four matches, Osaka wore face masks with the names of Breonna Taylor, Elijah McClain, Ahmaud Arbery and Trayvon Martin.

McClain was a 23-year-old Black

violinist and massage therapist killed by Aurora, Colo., police on Aug. 30, 2019. The murder in Brunswick, Ga., this February of Arbery, a 26-year-old unarmed Black man shot by a white supremacist father and son while jogging was captured on videotape. The murder of Trayvon Martin by a vigilante in 2012 launched the BLM movement.

Osaka had also refused to play her match at the Western and Southern Open, a late August warm-up tournament to the U.S. Open, to protest police brutality and systemic racism. Her action prompted the tournament organizers to shut down matches for all the players for one day.

She stated: "None of these deaths had to happen. For me, I just want everyone to know the names more. For me, just spreading awareness. I feel like the more people know the story, then the more interesting or interested they'll become in it." (AP, Sept. 6)

Jamal Murray, a talented guard with the NBA's Denver Nuggets, has been wearing tennis shoes depicting Breonna Taylor's image on one and George Floyd's on the other, while playing in the "bubbled" NBA playoffs — meant to protect players from the coronavirus.

During a post-game interview on TNT,

Murray explained what the shoes mean to him: "In life, you find things that hold value to you and things to fight for. And we found something worth fighting for, as an NBA, as a collective unit. And I use these shoes as a symbol to me to keep fighting. ... They give me a lot of power." (Aug. 30). □



Naomi Osaka at U.S. Open.



Jamal Murray's shoes honor George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

Chadwick Boseman: An appreciation

By Monica Moorehead

Like so many millions of other movie-going fans, I was shocked and saddened with the news of the untimely death of super-talented African American actor, Chadwick Boseman, who died at the young age of 43 on Aug. 28.

His family let it be known that he had finally succumbed to stage IV colon cancer, following a four-year battle with the disease that began in 2016. A few days after his death, Twitter owners announced that Boseman's death had been the most retweeted ever at 6 million to date.

The worldwide outpouring of respect,

affection and sadness had much to do with Boseman's powerful movie portrayal of T'Challa, the African king of the mystical land of Wakanda, that originated in the Marvel comic series, "Black Panther."

When the blockbuster movie "Black Panther" debuted in 2018, it broke all kinds of box-office records, grossing \$1.3 billion worldwide. It became the first movie in Hollywood history with a nearly all-Black cast and a Black director, Ryan Coogler, to achieve this feat. Boseman was praised for portraying T'Challa with such grace, dignity and power. No one knew while filming "Black Panther" in 2017 that Boseman had been diagnosed with cancer

the year before.

Boseman had put his indelible stamp on much smaller budget films before "Black Panther." Those films included "42" in 2013, playing Jackie Robinson, the Brooklyn Dodger who broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball in 1947; "Get On Up" in 2014, playing legendary soul singer James Brown; and in "Marshall" in 2017, playing the first Black U.S. Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall, in his early days as a lawyer.

Sports leagues and players in leagues including Major League Baseball, the National Football League and the National Basketball Association honored Boseman on social media.

A strong supporter of Black Lives Matter

Boseman had publicly admired the heroic anti-war stance taken by the late Muhammad Ali during the late 1960s.

In a recent Instagram post, Boseman expressed solidarity with Black Lives Matter stating, "From this country's founding history; its economic base, its social standard, its penal system, its protection of property ... White Supremacy and Racial Prejudice are its Pre-existing Conditions. Change is here. #BlackLivesMatter" (tinyurl.com/y3g4dn3z)

Even while terminally ill, Boseman along with 300 other prominent Black entertainers and celebrities signed a public letter demanding that the Hollywood industry divest in various ways from the



Chadwick Boseman

police. In part the letter reads:

"Historically and currently, Hollywood encourages the epidemic of police violence and culture of anti-Blackness. The way that Hollywood and mainstream media have contributed to the criminalization of Black

people, the misrepresentation of the legal system, and the glorification of police corruption and violence has had dire consequences on Black lives. We demand better. Prove that Black Lives Matter to Hollywood by taking bold moves to affirm, defend and invest in Black lives. Follow the examples of the Minneapolis School District, Denver Public Schools, the University of Minnesota and many other institutions in divesting from the policing system and investing in the Black community." (Vanity Fair, June 24)

Boseman brings to mind a comparison to the great actor, Sidney Poitier, who during his career, which began in the late 1940s, consciously took roles that were devoid of negative Hollywood stereotypes of Black people. This has been a constant characteristic from Boseman's early days as an actor, when he was fired from the soap opera, "All My Children," for complaining how his character was negatively written.

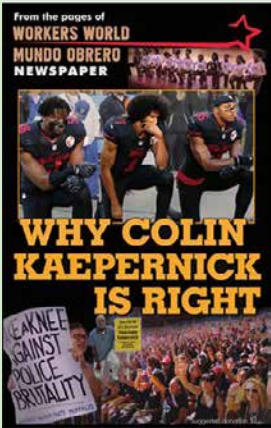
The pain of Boseman dying so soon will linger for a long time, but the political legacy he left behind, with his genuine acting of such integrity, will inspire new generations of Black filmmakers and film buffs of all nationalities. □

Why Colin Kaepernick is Right

A 2017 pamphlet of articles from Workers World newspaper. With articles from Monica Moorehead, Minnie Bruce Pratt and guest author Michael Bennett.

includes:

- Kaepernick: 'This generation's Muhammad Ali'
- Editorial Why is Colin Kaepernick unemployed?
- The political rebellion of Colin Kaepernick
- Kaepernick 'effect' grows with every police atrocity
- Sparked by Kaepernick – Sports protests pummel racism
- The intersection between sports and fighting police violence
- Athletes repudiate NFL's trip to Israel
- Desatada por Kaepernick – protestas deportivas golpean el racismo



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Housing is a right for all!

Even before the COVID pandemic hit, the U.S. was in a deep housing crisis. Not a stock market property crisis. The crisis of hundreds of thousands of people living in grossly inadequate housing — or actually houseless, with no access at all to permanent shelter.

In recent years, homelessness in New York City has reached its highest point since the 1930s Great Depression. In May, with the current health emergency, there were almost 60,000 houseless people in the city. (coalitionforthehomeless.org)

Many of those who do have housing are unable to pay their rent or home mortgages after losing jobs and wages in the economic shutdown. The federal moratorium on evictions passed by Congress in March expired July 24. On Sept. 2, President Trump finally renewed that through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Evictions are now prohibited from Sept. 4 through Dec. 31.

But this stopgap merely delays evictions until after the November presidential election. Renters are responsible

for all the rent they can't pay now. Their back rent is piling up, like snow in bitter cold, and people will end up thrown out into the streets in January or February anyway.

The COVID-19 Eviction Defense Project calculates that 19 to 23 million U.S. renters are at risk of eviction by the end of 2020 — as much as 21% of renter households. (Aspen Institute, Aug. 7) This does not include homeowners who will lose homes because they cannot make mortgage payments. A Columbia University economist, Brendan O'Flaherty, estimates that U.S. houselessness could increase as much as 45% in 2020. (tinyurl.com/yafpaaus)

This crisis has hit people of color and the poorest people hardest, along with women, seniors, immigrants, the LGBTQ2S+ community and people with disabilities.

The skimpy patchwork of eviction protection in some cities and states is grossly inadequate. For instance, when Austin, Texas, distributed \$1.2 million of

emergency rental relief funds in May, this helped only 1,600 of the 11,000 people who applied. (kvue.com, May 1)

Cuba, which has subdued the pandemic through centralized planning, already has protections in place against houselessness and evictions. In 1959, the victory of the Cuban Revolution granted peasants the land they had worked for wealthy landowners. In the cities, people collectively built and own their apartment buildings. The government keeps housing prices low, so the rate of homeownership is around 85%. (tinyurl.com/y48aarz3)

What socialist Cuba has achieved in housing is yet to be won in the U.S. But those in struggle here are showing tremendous determination, recalling the fighting example of the militant, communist-led movement in the 1930s, which blocked evictions by predatory landlords and bankers.

In Philadelphia, people who are houseless set up an encampment beside the gentrified development that displaced them — and are now resisting being

evicted from their “homeless camp.” When evictions loomed in Brooklyn, the anti-gentrification group Equality for Flatbush rushed a social media call to activists: “Illegal lock out in progress — Go and support tenants now!” In Oakland, Calif., Moms 4 Housing “repossessed” a vacant and abandoned house to give their families a home. (See Workers World, Jan. 20 and Aug. 20)

This defiant working-class solidarity can end the housing crisis caused by capitalism and give priority to the needs of the most oppressed, particularly people of color.

We demand: No evictions; abolish all pandemic rental and mortgage debt; cancel all pandemic utility charges; reduce, freeze and stabilize rent payments; convert vacant buildings and short-term rentals into available housing for those in need; and provide free housing for those in COVID quarantine, including for released prisoners.

We say, “Housing is a right for all!” □

Right-wing threats call for bold working class actions

Continued from page 1

protests in Portland, Reinoehl had been shot in the arm earlier in August trying to wrestle a gun from a right-wing protester. He explained his decision in an interview shortly before he was killed, execution style, by federal forces Sept. 3. (tinyurl.com/y2rwh6ry)

No formal charges had been issued against Reinoehl, yet federal agents, under the leadership of the Pacific Northwest Violent Offender Task Force, assassinated him at his home in Olympia, Wash. This state overkill unit included the U.S. Marshals Service fugitive task force, local police, county sheriffs and Washington State Department of Corrections guards — all without body cameras.

U.S. Attorney General William Barr called this government hit by a military force “a significant accomplishment in the ongoing effort to restore law and order in Portland and other cities.”

The coordinated state assassination prevented Reinoehl from ever having his case heard in court. It is a far cry from

how the state dealt with Rittenhouse.

Trump has frequently praised the violence of right-wing militias, while portraying antifa specifically and the left in general as the “terrorist threat.” It is absolutely clear that Trump will not hesitate to unleash state-sanctioned policing forces and, when convenient, paramilitary forces whose visibility is growing rapidly.

Trump is not alone. Police across the U.S. have a long, notorious history of support for and from extralegal white supremacist terrorist groups. A popular chant for decades, now heard at some BLM rallies, is “Cops and the Klan work hand-in-hand!”

How to answer the fascist danger

How does the progressive, anti-racist, pro-BLM movement respond to the upsurge in paramilitary, right-wing, pro-Trump violence? Just waiting to vote for Joe Biden is not enough. Biden has his own pro-police history.

It is critical to understand the historic role played by right-wing terrorists during capitalist crises.

In “The Klan & Government: Foes or

Allies?” (1983), Workers World Party's late founder and Chairperson Sam Marcy reminds us that “The growth of fascism everywhere has been securely tied to big business; that is its lifeline. ... Even in the so-called best of times the capitalist government not only tolerates terrorist organizations like the Klan, but once the class struggle of the workers and oppressed people takes on the character of a genuine mass upsurge, the capitalist government is more likely than ever to encourage and promote the likes of the Klan and other mediums of repression.

“It is impossible to conduct a consistent anti-fascist policy unless one takes into account the key and decisive factor in overwhelming and destroying the fascist menace; it is the working class, the oppressed people and their allies.” (Read “The Klan & Government: Foes or Allies?” at workers.org/books)

Shortly after Heather Heyer's murder, activists in Durham, N.C., responded by toppling a hated Confederate statue, elevating the movement to a higher level.

Activists in Portland, Ore., are calling

for a Labor for Black Lives and Against Fascism action against a planned right-wing protest there Sept. 26.

On Sept. 4, several unions representing millions of workers called for work stoppages for racial justice. “The status quo — of police killing Black people, of armed white nationalists killing demonstrators, of millions sick and increasingly desperate — is clearly unjust, and it cannot continue,” the joint statement read. (tinyurl.com/y2erez23)

Union leaders are following the lead of professional athletes who staged walkouts in late August over the shooting of Jacob Blake, which forced the postponement of several major league games: “They remind us that when we strike to withhold our labor, we have the power to bring an unjust status quo to a grinding halt.”

Now is not the time to go underground or run to the border. The threat from the right calls for bold, anti-racist, unifying and class-conscious actions. The struggle must still be in the streets. □

Workers and oppressed people of the world, write to us!

Workers World received the two letters below from friends in Bangladesh and Europe.

Dear Comrades,

Let me deliver revolutionary greetings to you and your party. I'm from Bangladesh. You're passing a transitional period of struggle and mass uprising. I would like to proclaim solidarity from the heart of the people of Bangladesh to the heroic movement of U.S. people against oppression, exploitation and injustice.

By this time you have to face your national election too. The ruling class will try to avail of the election to get rid of this people's power. Like the whole world, Bangladeshis are also very curious about your national election. As expected, the media is busy telecasting the speeches of the two leading capitalist parties. Some of them even announced the Democratic Party as a pro-left organization. Though we know

how fake this propaganda is by our past experiences.

In the meantime I've noticed your editorial headed “Not being Trump is not enough” published in the current issue (Aug 27) as your [Democratic National Convention] evaluation. I've translated it into Bengali, our mother-tongue, and sent you a copy here.

I would like to publish it in a Bengali news portal so our people know the working-class voice of the U.S, if you allow. I expect it will be helpful to strengthen the working-class solidarity of different regions.

I'm waiting for your kind reply. Red salute.

Sincerely yours,
Rashib Rahman
Former Organizing Secretary, Socialist Students' Front
Bangladesh

RED LETTERS

Dear Editors,

I welcome this article by Greg Dunkel on the situation to date in Martinique about environmental poisoning. The article is going straight to Martinique via Paris, where it will do so much to buoy up the spirits of our brothers and sisters there. Ninety-two percent of the population — men, women and children — are already contaminated.

With no known antidote except activism, they need to know they have our unmitigated support.

Thanks again for giving their voices a platform!

Ona Move,
Julia Wright
Europe

The Klan & Government Foes or Allies?

By Sam Marcy

This 1983 book examines the special relationship with the state that has allowed the Ku Klux Klan to exist for over a century despite its criminal history of lynchings, murders, and intimidation. This classic book remains as relevant as ever.



Available online without cost.
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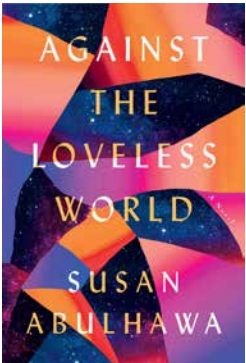
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Book review: ‘Against the Loveless World’

By Shelley Ettinger

“Against the Loveless World,” Susan Abulhawa’s third novel, is that rarest of treasures, a bona fide masterpiece. The kind of novel that you don’t just read, but inhale. The kind that fills your heart and mind for long after you’ve turned the last page.

Why? Not only because this is great art, although that it surely is. The writing is gorgeous. The characterizations are deep and complex. The story is engaging, with a page-turning plot, an un-put-down-able momentum.



Susan Abulhawa is a Palestinian-American poet, novelist and activist. In her hands, as in the hands of the great masters like Toni Morrison and James Baldwin, the novel transcends its own form. It becomes more than mere story. It is a lesson, and it is a weapon. It will open the eyes of readers with little knowledge or understanding about Palestine. For those who are already partisans of the great Palestinian struggle for liberation and self-determination, it will strengthen and inspire.

From Nakba to settler terror

The protagonist, Nahr, is a Palestinian woman whose life unfolds in unexpected directions. Imperialism, invasion, occupation, colonialism, racism, sexism, class are the context of her life. From the Nakba, the great catastrophe of the establishment

of the Zionist settler state, to every subsequent attack and land grab, to the U.S. wars against Iraq, to the West Bank settlers’ murderous terror campaigns against the people, their lands and livelihoods — all this intersects with Nahr’s daily life and its trajectory through the years.

But Nahr is no mere symbol. She is a fully drawn character, with all the quirks and contradictions that every human being has. Abulhawa deploys exquisite skill in depicting Nahr, drawing the reader in to care about her deeply. The novel also explores issues around sex work, LGBTQ+ oppression, friendship and more, all woven together through Nahr’s story.

She suffers much. She survives. This too is part of the book’s political art, to show through Nahr how Palestine survives no matter what.

For in a sense, Palestine itself is the book’s other key character. Depictions of the Palestinian landscape, culture, traditions and struggle are integral to Nahr’s

story, as it interweaves with stories of her family, friends and neighbors. The result is a novel that powerfully conveys both the everyday lived experience of struggling to survive under Israeli occupation and how that experience gives rise to resistance.

How Nahr and her comrades resist — and the price they pay for their actions — can’t be described without spoilers. Suffice it to say that, as the novel reaches its climax, it becomes clear that these freedom fighters have the right to fight in any way they can and by any means they choose.

For those who know little about Palestine, that might be an eye opener. They will finish the book with a fuller understanding of the struggle. For those who already stand in solidarity with Palestine, “Against the Loveless World” will deepen their unconditional support.

This is a beautiful, wrenching, soaring, searing novel. It will move you to tears. Let it also move you to action. Long live Palestine! □

WW Commentary

French Imperialism: a scourge then, a scourge now!

By Comrade Tano

There are some who say history is written by the victors. I, however, say that history is written not by the victors, but by the rich and powerful. This is particularly true in the case of imperialism, and it is one reason why it has been able to survive into the modern era.

Currently in Martinique, there is unrest and anger over the use of a pesticide linked to cancer, called chlordecone. For nearly two decades, this chemical was sprayed over the banana crops of the islands, and now nearly every one of the local residents have traces of it in their blood. (tinyurl.com/y3cxsyqa)

French President Emmanuel Macron has appeared to be outspoken in calling this an “environmental scandal,” and he claims that the French state will take responsibility immediately. However, one must ask: If this were a

known carcinogenic chemical, why was it allowed to be used in the first place on crops tended to by the working peoples of Martinique? After all, it was the French Minister of Agriculture, Jacques Chirac, who allowed the use of the chemical in 1972, despite it being recognized as hazardous.

The answer is simple: The cruel and cold hand of imperialism decided the health of the citizens of Martinique was worth risking, if using this pesticide would save costs and increase profits. Were this not the case, Macron would not have to claim “responsibility” for such a “scandal,” for there would be no scandal at all.

For all their progressive talk, France is still a country steeply involved in the exploitation of less developed countries. As a Vietnamese socialist, I cannot help but feel much empathy for those affected by this chemical used on the banana plantations.

Cruelty from French imperialism is



Protesters in Martinique ask, ‘When is the trial of the poisoners?’

something my people can understand on a deep level. Similar to the choices made today in Martinique by French neocolonialism, French rule in Vietnam was motivated by profit, with no care for the health or safety of the colonized. Vietnamese peasant workers were called a derogatory term for Asian laborers and were forced to work on rice plantations in terrible conditions that led to sickness and death on a daily basis.

Corporal punishment, outlawed by

French colonial rule, was still used by the overseers on my people. It is easy to see a similarity between this and the use of chlordecone on the plantations and peoples of Martinique, despite the pesticide being recognized internationally as a carcinogenic chemical.

What then are we as Marxists supposed to take away from this? Imperialism is alive and well in the 21st century, and we must continue to oppose it just like our predecessors did in the past. Whether it be on the battlefield of Dien Bien Phu or on the banana plantations of Martinique, the message is clear: Freedom for the colonized, and down with French imperialism!

Comrade Tano is a nonbinary, genderfluid 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.

Solidarity with frontline workers

By Betsey Piette

When Philadelphia city officials banned all large parades due to COVID-19, AFL-CIO officials cancelled their annual Labor Day parade, opting for a virtual event and telling workers to “stay home and watch it on TV.” Rank-and-file workers, however, made other plans. As a result, Labor Day 2020 will go down as one of Philadelphia’s most politically significant and progressive celebrations of Labor Day in recent memory.

Outside City Hall, the militant Solidarity Rally with Frontline Workers brought out nearly 200 workers from a broad range of public service jobs. Key demands included personal protective equipment (PPE) for all



Workers participate in Labor Day rally for frontline workers in Philadelphia on Sept. 7.

workers, hazard pay and no cuts or layoffs. Participants were urged to call Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and other city officials to lift up these workers’ demands and to sign their petition. (tinyurl.com/yy9t8nwa)

One speaker from Teamsters Local 623, representing UPS workers, challenged the bosses’ use of the word “essential” to describe the jobs he and other workers do, day-in-and-day-out, facing the risk of COVID-19. “For seven months, we have been called ‘essential,’ but how can we feel essential when we don’t get PPE, we don’t get hazard pay and when the bosses threaten us with layoffs? We need to organize and take back our worth!”

While there was no traditional block-long Labor Day march, the diversity and militancy of the speakers more than made up the difference. In addition to the traditional wearing of T-shirts identifying union affiliations, many wore Black Lives Matter shirts or face masks.

Noticeably absent were the plethora of politicians who often use the Labor Day parades to promote their individual campaigns.

Instead, most speakers were rank-and-file members of unions representing sanitation workers, firefighters, library workers, railroad workers, nurses, postal workers, public school teachers and university staff from Temple University and

Community College of Philadelphia.

One dominant theme was the importance of rank-and-file workers in pushing their unions to take a more active role in promoting workers’ demands. Three organized rank-and-file union caucuses present included WE (Working Educators of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers), RAFT (Rank-and-File Temple Caucus) and the newly formed group UNITY, a progressive caucus organized within AFSCME locals.

Endorsers included AFSCME DC 33 Local 427 (Sanitation), AFSCME DC 33 Local 403 (Highways), AFSCME DC 33 Local 394 (Water), AFSCME DC 33 Local

1637 (911/Fire Operators & Philadelphia Parking Division), AFSCME DC 47, AFSCME Local 2187 (Library), BMWED-IBT Local 3012 (Railroad Workers), Teamsters Local 623 (UPS workers), AFT Local 2026 (CCP staff), TAUP (Temple Association of University Professionals), TAUP-RAFT (Temple University rank and file caucus) and AFSCME rank and file city workers.

The rally ended with a moment of silence for all the essential workers who have lost lives to COVID-19, followed by a rousing promise that the struggle for the rights of frontline workers will continue. When we fight, we win! □

¡Mantenla en las calles!

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israelí, cuando el Nuevo Ejército Popular en Filipinas recluta nuevos miembros, cuando el sistema de salud pública de Vietnam continúa protegiendo a su gente del COVID-19, cuando un soldado en la Corea Popular se entrena para defender a su nación contra el imperialismo estadounidense, y cuando la República Popular de China una vez más levanta a miles de la pobreza.

Las personas trabajadoras y oprimidas

solo podemos confiar en nosotros mismos, armados con nuestras armas duales de solidaridad y organización para contrarrestar el movimiento hacia la derecha y derrotar a este sistema horrible, podrido, racista, misógino, homofóbico y transfóbico. Ese seguirá siendo el caso ya sea que un burro capitalista o un elefante capitalista entren en la Casa Blanca en enero.

Todos los días, los trabajadores y los oprimidos se organizarán y resistirán hasta que hayamos arrojado el capitalismo al basurero de la historia. □



FOTO: SINTRACARBÓN

Sintracarbón inicia huelga 1 de septiembre en la mina el Cerrejón, la Guajira, Colombia.

Biden no nos salvará

¡Mantenla en las calles!

Por Nathaniel Chase

A medida que se acercan las elecciones de noviembre, aumentará la presión sobre las organizaciones revolucionarias dentro de los Estados Unidos para que se alinien con el Partido Demócrata y respalden a Joe Biden.

El argumento que se hace a menudo es que se necesita un presidente demócrata para contrarrestar las políticas reaccionarias implementadas por una administración republicana.

¿Esta afirmación resiste el escrutinio? Si Joe Biden es elegido, ¿podemos esperar que revierta las políticas reaccionarias y supremacistas blancas de Trump? Examinemos el historial de Biden, así como el historial de las dos últimas administraciones demócratas, para ver si esta es una expectativa razonable.

Deportaciones

La gente en todo Estados Unidos está indignada por los crímenes diarios contra la humanidad cometidos por ICE y la Patrulla Fronteriza bajo Trump. ¿Podemos esperar que Biden detenga la maquinaria de detención y deportación, o incluso la ralentice? Su historial, así como sus comentarios recientes, dicen lo contrario.

De 2009 a 2017, mientras Biden era el vicepresidente de Barack Obama, Estados Unidos deportó a más de 2,5 millones de inmigrantes indocumentados, más de los que habían sido deportados durante todo el siglo XX. (abc-news.com, 29 de agosto de 2016)

En noviembre pasado, en un evento del ayuntamiento en Greenwood, Carolina del Sur, un exmigrante indocumentado desafió a Biden sobre su historial de deportaciones. ¿La respuesta de Biden? “Vote por Trump”. Biden no dismantelará la misma máquina que ayudó a construir.

Black Lives Matter, brutalidad policial y encarcelamiento masivo

Este verano ha sido testigo de protestas y rebeliones de Black Lives Matter sin precedentes en todo el país a raíz del asesinato de George Floyd por parte de la policía de Minneapolis. Si bien muchas fuerzas revolucionarias, incluido el Workers World Party, abogan por la abolición de la policía, la demanda más leve de desfinanciar a la policía ha ganado una amplia circulación, incluso entre las fuerzas moderadas. ¿Biden ha prometido asumir este mandato y rechazar la brutalidad policial racista? Dejó clara su posición en un artículo de opinión del 10 de junio en USA Today: “No apoyo la eliminación de fondos para la policía”.

Trump ha desplegado agentes federales en varias ciudades en respuesta a las protestas, una medida ampliamente criticada como un paso hacia un estado policial. Biden se ha involucrado en un poco de doble discurso, oponiéndose al despliegue y también diciendo que “los anarquistas deben ser procesados”.

Esta declaración criminaliza a las personas por tener una perspectiva política particular y ofrece una forma para que la clase dominante considere a sus oponentes como “anarquistas” y los arreste. Si bien condena a Trump, Biden en realidad respalda los principios de la política de Trump.

Bill Clinton fue elegido presidente en 1992 después de 12 años de los republicanos Ronald Reagan y George H.W. Bush. Reagan había expandido enormemente la “guerra contra las drogas” racista, lo que llevó a que el encarcelamiento masivo creciera en casi medio millón, la mayoría negros, morenos y/o indígenas. Esta tendencia continuó con George H.W. Bush.

Cuando el demócrata Bill Clinton asumió el cargo, ¿cambió de rumbo? Todo lo contrario. La población encarcelada creció en un increíble 650.200, el mayor aumento en la historia de los Estados Unidos. Una fuerza importante detrás del encarcelamiento continuo fue la Ley de Control del Crimen Violento y Aplicación de la Ley de 1994, el intento de los demócratas de cumplir y superar la imagen de “fuerte contra el crimen” del Partido Republicano.

¿Qué senador tomó la iniciativa de redactar el proyecto de ley? Nada menos que Joe Biden. Mientras que los trabajadores y los oprimidos están en las calles como nunca antes, el Partido Demócrata ha optado por presentar a

un senador que supervisó el mayor encarcelamiento de personas negras desde la Guerra Civil, con una fiscal, Kamala Harris, como su compañera de fórmula. ¿Se puede esperar que tal boleto escuche a los que están en las calles o los reprima?

Bienestar público

La decisión de Trump y del Partido Republicano de no extender los beneficios federales de desempleo de \$600 por semana, a pesar de un desempleo récord como resultado de su respuesta fallida a la pandemia de COVID-19, es un acto de crueldad atroz.



Filadelfia, 12 de julio.

WW/MO FOTO: JOE PIETTE

Biden no ha exigido la reanudación del beneficio de \$600 por semana, sino que ofrece un programa vago de “seguro de empleo”. Tampoco ha presionado para que los inmigrantes indocumentados reciban beneficios.

Esta negativa a respaldar firmemente los pagos directos en efectivo para abordar la pobreza no es nueva para los presidentes demócratas. Mientras que el republicano Ronald Reagan llevó el mito racista de la “reina dela beneficencia pública” a la presidencia, le tocó al presidente demócrata Bill Clinton dismantelar la Ayuda a las familias con hijos dependientes en 1996.

En su lugar estaba la escasa Asistencia Temporal para Familias Necesitadas (énfasis en el “temporal”). Biden, un senador de Delaware en ese momento, votó a favor de esta reaccionaria “reforma del bienestar” y desde entonces ha evitado respaldar o repudiar ese voto. (nbcnews.com, 10 de febrero)

Guerra

Los ejemplos del militarismo de Trump son demasiado numerosos para contarlos, pero una selección debería incluir: el ruido de sables contra Irán, incluido el asesinato con drones del general iraní Qasem Soleimani; una guerra comercial y una creciente tensión con China; un intento de golpe de estado y sanciones debilitantes a Venezuela; rechazo a la demanda de Irak de que se retiren las tropas estadounidenses; importantes aumentos del presupuesto militar; apoyo al genocida bloqueo saudita de Yemen y al genocidio israelí de palestinos; y sanciones y amenazas de la fuerza militar contra la Corea Popular.

¿Tomará Biden un rumbo diferente? De hecho, ha criticado a Trump por ser blando con China y Corea Popular. Apoyó la invasión de Irak en 2003, las sanciones a Irán, los intentos de golpe de Estado de Estados Unidos y las sanciones contra Venezuela, y es un promotor de Israel desde hace mucho tiempo.

Esta similitud entre los dos principales partidos capitalistas cuando se trata de la guerra no es nueva. George H.W. Bush presidió la invasión estadounidense de Irak en 1990, pero Clinton, con el apoyo de Biden, continuó con un régimen brutal de sanciones que fueron responsables de la muerte de más de 500.000 niños iraquíes. La Secretaria de Estado demócrata Madeleine Albright dijo que estas muertes “valieron la pena”.

De manera similar, la administración Obama / Biden continuó las guerras en Irak y Afganistán, dio marcha atrás en una promesa de campaña para cerrar la Bahía de Guantánamo, comenzó una modernización de \$ 1 billón del arsenal de armas nucleares de Estados Unidos y llevó a cabo golpes en Honduras y Libia, creando crisis migratorias que Continuar hasta el día de hoy. Libia pasó de

ser el país más próspero de África a un lugar donde las personas esclavizadas eran subastadas públicamente.

Asistencia sanitaria

Apoyar a Medicare para Todos parece una obviedad durante una crisis de salud pública sin precedentes que ya ha matado a más de 160.000 personas en los EE.UU., con millones de trabajadores despedidos porque ya no reciben un seguro médico irracional basado en el empleador. Una encuesta de abril mostró que el 69 por ciento de los votantes registrados lo apoyan. (Newsweek, 24 de abril)

Pero Biden apoya a Trump y a la industria de seguros al rechazar este paso básico para mejorar el acceso a la atención médica. Frente a esa posición, cualquier cosa que sugiera Biden en respuesta al COVID-19 suena hueco.

Misoginia

El profundo disgusto por la descarada misoginia de Trump y el admitido abuso sexual a una serie de mujeres encendió uno de los días más grandes de manifestaciones en la historia de Estados Unidos: la Marcha de las Mujeres de 2017. Pero, ¿y Biden? Numerosas mujeres lo han acusado de agresión sexual y comportamiento inapropiado. Cuando se le preguntó sobre las acusaciones de Tara Reade, miembro del personal de Biden a principios de la década de 1990, las negó y respondió: “Si creen a Tara Reade, probablemente no deberían votar por mí”.

Seguridad Social

Si es reelegido, Trump ha prometido poner fin al impuesto sobre la nómina responsable de una parte importante de los fondos del Seguro Social. (american-progress.org, 12 de agosto) ¿Protegerá Biden este programa crucial? En repetidas ocasiones ha abogado por recortar el Seguro Social desde la década de 1980, como se detalla en un artículo del 13 de enero en The Intercept.

Biden se auto revela

En un elegante evento para recaudar fondos en Manhattan en junio, Biden resumió qué esperar de su presidencia: “Nada cambiaría fundamentalmente”. Si eso no fuera suficiente, tuvo palabras amables para el senador James Eastland del Mississippi de la era Jim-Crow, quien una vez dijo: “Lo que la gente de este país debe darse cuenta es que la raza blanca es una raza superior, y Negra es una raza inferior”. Cuando Biden elogia a los supremacistas blancos del pasado, ¿por qué esperar que luche hoy contra la supremacía blanca?

A medida que la crisis del colapso del imperialismo estadounidense empuja al país cada vez más hacia la derecha, el registro deja en claro que no debemos contar con Biden, o el Partido Demócrata en general, para salvarnos. Lo sabemos directamente de su boca cuando Biden dice: “Nada cambiará fundamentalmente”.

Si bien la lealtad del Partido Demócrata es hacia la clase dominante, la pura grotesca de la retórica y las políticas supremacistas blancas de Trump hará que muchos sientan que deben votar por Biden, independientemente de su historial. En cualquier caso, la crisis cada vez peor del imperialismo estadounidense no se abordará en la cabina de votación el 3 de noviembre.

En cambio, las personas trabajadoras y oprimidas abordarán la dominación imperialista de Estados Unidos el 4 de noviembre cuando una vez más salgamos a las calles. Y al día siguiente, cuando los residentes de un barrio abandonado organizan una asociación de inquilinos, cuando un maestro exige un entorno de aprendizaje seguro para sus estudiantes, los trabajadores de un hospital luchan por equipos de protección privada y la mejor atención posible para sus pacientes, cuando una comunidad se moviliza para detener un desalojo, la gente luchará dentro y fuera de los EE.UU.

Cuando una manifestación dice “No a la guerra contra Irán”, cuando un Comité de Defensa de la Revolución se reúne en Cuba, cuando una comuna en Venezuela distribuye alimentos frente a las sanciones de Estados Unidos, cuando un palestino se resiste a la ocupación

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