



## Texas activists demand

# 'Ban the abortion bans!'

By Kathy Durkin

On the morning of Sept. 1, Texas residents woke up to the news that legal abortion had been declared illegal past six weeks of pregnancy by the state's legislature. On top of this shock, another stunning blow was delivered: There would be no exceptions for victims of rape or incest!

The full meaning of Senate Bill 8 and how it would impact anyone who can become pregnant shocked people across the state. The legislature had, in effect, declared dead in Texas the 1973 Supreme Court ruling known as the Roe decision, which legalized abortion in the U.S.

When the full impact of SB8 was known around the state, desperate cries for help reached clinics, both in person and on the phone. Pro-choice hotlines were clogged with calls by people asking what they should do.

Along with shock and sadness came activist organizing and offers of assistance from across the country. Demonstrations were held at the Capitol in Austin, Texas, and in Washington, D.C., outside the Supreme Court. Protesters' T-shirts were emblazoned with "Bans off our bodies." Donations from around the country have poured into the coffers of pro-choice organizations and funding groups that assist people with expenses for abortions, travel and housing. Local and national protests are in the works.

When the misnamed "Right to Life" organization set



Demonstrators protest abortion ban in Austin, Texas, Sept. 1.

up an anonymous tip hotline for anti-abortion forces to report anyone who allegedly violated the law, it was immediately sabotaged by pro-choice tech experts, and thousands of sympathizers called in fake reports.

### \$10,000 prize for bounty hunters

Another aspect of this outrageous law incentivizes anti-abortion groups and individuals to sue anyone who "aids or abets" a pregnant person, even a 13-year-old rape victim, in obtaining an abortion after the imposed time limit.

Such reactionary "bounty hunters" could win \$10,000 for each successful lawsuit against clinic operators,

doctors, nurses, midwives, receptionists, counselors, pro-choice donor organizations or individuals — even Uber and Lyft drivers who transported a pregnant person to a clinic. Executives at those companies have pledged to pay any penalties incurred by their drivers.

This bonanza would not only encourage neighbors to spy on neighbors, but it encourages anti-abortion extremists to file endless lawsuits in their quest to bankrupt reproductive health centers, their operators and staff. These vigilantes aim to close all clinics, punish pro-choice organizations, clinic operators and medical professionals, and end legal abortions altogether.

By deliberately constructing the law in this way, state politicians and officials have exempted themselves from responsibility for violating people's constitutional rights and can't be sued. With SB8, Texas politicians are "deputizing" individuals to enforce the law. They are encouraging vigilante action by anyone angry about progressive "social" or "cultural" issues.

Planned Parenthood immediately went to court to get a temporary injunction to protect its staff members from legal liability and punitive monetary fines that could result from this SB8 vigilantism.

### Roe v. Wade

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court issued the landmark ruling in Roe v. Wade which legalized abortion, defining

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## Hurricane Ida survivor:

# Storm fuels anti-capitalist anger

By Quell

On Sept. 1, New York City was besieged by Hurricane Ida. Flash floods from torrential rains led to serious infrastructural damages, stranding numerous cars on roads and highways and flooding subway tunnels. With flood waters rising, many people were trapped in basements or in submerged areas.

Around 9 p.m. that night, I was watching TV with my loved ones in my Bronx home and eating a home-cooked meal, when it began to rain.

At first, I was honestly grateful that I wouldn't have to water the garden. Then the winds picked up and made the big neighborhood oak tree

### Editorial The storm before the storm 10

sway. My partners and I held hands and watched from our living room. Then, our ceiling started leaking. We put a bucket underneath

and worried how much it would cost to fix. A dripping noise from upstairs let us know this wasn't isolated; before long, the leaks were in every room, our walls looking like bubble wrap from the water gathering behind the paint. We emptied bucket after bucket, water pooling around our ankles, until we finally admitted defeat.

We couldn't stay there any longer — even if we mopped up all the water and fixed the leaks magically, the water damage to

*Continued on page 6*



Flood waters from Ida pour through NYC subways. Here, Harlem.

## 50 Years of Resistance: Black August & Attica

Excerpts from Sept. 2 webinar



Happy birthday, Juan Balderas!

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### A partisan pro-worker newspaper

# Support Workers World

The real International Workers Day is May 1, not the first Monday in September. Nevertheless, we solidarize with all workers who take this occasion to celebrate union pride — and those who express a readiness to fight for their rights.

Since Workers World's first issue in 1959, the newspaper has covered class struggles with a slant. WW is unapologetically biased on the side of the workers and oppressed. This is true of our strike coverage. When workers withhold their labor to extract a measure of justice from the bosses, WW pays attention.

Since former President Ronald Reagan broke the 1981 Professional Air Traffic Controllers strike, covered by WW, bosses have pushed for concessions in union contracts.

Since then, workers have fought fiercely against concessions and job cuts, from the Hormel and Pittston Coal strikes in the 1980s, to the Caterpillar, UPS, and the San Francisco and Detroit newspaper strikes in the 1990s, to the Alabama coal strike and Nabisco strike happening right now. This paper roots for our class — the multinational working class.

We devote ink to the resistance of unorganized workers too, including the hundreds of work stoppages demanding COVID protection and sick pay, walkouts at McDonald's and Google opposing sexual harassment, and work and hunger strikes by incarcerated workers. Many articles have supported the Fight for \$15/hour (at least) and a union.

This year's front pages have focused on the Amazon union drive, led by Black workers, in Bessemer, Ala., the importance of passing the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and more pro-labor stories.

WW issues include at least one page devoted to workers' struggles. Our biweekly On the Picket Line column contains timely news of organized and unorganized workers in motion.

#### Your donations matter!

Workers World depends on your help. The WW Supporter Program was founded 44 years ago to help build this revolutionary socialist paper. Since the early 1990s, the fund has supported the workers.org website, where WW articles are put up daily and the PDF file of the weekly issue is posted. The newspaper is now being printed and mailed out once a month.

For donations of \$60 a year or \$120 or \$300 or more if you can, members receive a year's subscription, letters about timely issues and one, two or three free subscriptions, respectively, to give to friends. Supporters can receive the book, "What road to socialism?" (Notify us.) Or read it for free at [workers.org/books](http://workers.org/books).

Write checks, either monthly or once a year, to Workers World. Mail them with your name and address to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at [workers.org](http://workers.org).



Demonstration against right wing in Philadelphia, Jan. 9.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



## Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ 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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# Nabisco strike turns up the heat

By Lyn Neeley

Portland striking Nabisco workers are sustaining a bold picket line, taking shifts 24/7 in front of the dormant plant since Aug. 10. For nearly a month, local support has escalated for the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Union. And every Nabisco facility in the U.S. has since gone out on strike: Chicago; Richmond, Va.; Aurora, Colo.; Addison, Ill.; and Norcross, Ga.

The workers' message to Nabisco's owner, Mondelez International, is clear: We deserve a decent contract; stop exporting our jobs to Mexico, and scabs go home.

Strikers are fighting to keep their contract and stop Mondelez from stealing their pensions, increasing their health care deductible to \$4,000 and forcing workers to pull extra hours without overtime pay. Strikers say these cutbacks would cost workers thousands of dollars.

## Scabs offered higher pay

Mondelez hired Huffmaster, a strike-breaking company, to bring in scabs and intimidate strikers. On their website, Huffmaster advertised the need for workers at major national food producing facilities. They listed all the jobs that belong to the striking union members, offering many a higher pay rate than the workers got.

Community groups, members of dozens of other unions and seasoned racial justice protesters are leading the fight to stop scabs from stealing jobs. Huffmaster shuttles scabs to the Nabisco plant in buses and vans with tinted windows from hotels near the airport. Protesters have parked their cars at the Marriott to blast their horns and car alarms at scabs as they leave the hotel for the Huffmaster vans.

According to the Willamette Week, "On

Friday, Aug. 20, protesters blocked vans and personal vehicles from entering an external parking lot eight minutes away from a building on Northeast Killingsworth Street," a lot Huffmaster uses to load scabs onto buses and vans headed for the bakery. "Starting around 5 a.m., protesters blocked the driveway into the parking lot with their bodies for an hour. Eventually, cars and vans started turning around. Once those vehicles left, protesters rushed to the Nabisco facility and started slowly walking across the main vehicle entrance on Columbia Boulevard to impede swift entry." ([tinyurl.com/33ufu6a9](https://tinyurl.com/33ufu6a9))

On Aug. 24 as scabs left the plant, seven exits were blocked by protesters. One of the cars blocking a driveway was "changing a tire," moving very slowly for over an hour. Mondelez has tried to deliver flour and sugar using the rail lines behind Nabisco so baking can resume. But supporter protesters camping next to the rail lines stopped the trains in their tracks.

## Railroad workers, others extend solidarity

Union railroad workers driving those trains backed up when they saw picketers on the lines. The Railroad Workers Union tweeted: "No contract. No snacks. Flour and sugar stays on tracks." The union has refused to deliver at the Nabisco plant. ([tinyurl.com/ewnajrec](https://tinyurl.com/ewnajrec))

A striker told Workers World that for three weeks, when the shipment of flour and sugar to the Nabisco plant was stopped: "We hit them where it hurts. The flour became stale. We want to tell people they can help us by not buying stale Nabisco cookies and crackers.

Strikers said they are thankful for the constant stream of honking horns and power fists of support along their picket



On the picket line with Nabisco workers in Portland.

WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

line. And they are "thankful for the growing outpouring of outside support from other unions, workers' groups and community members."

Hundreds of activists are attending support rallies every Saturday organized by Portland Jobs with Justice and Democratic Socialists of America. Tina Kotek, Oregon House Speaker and Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal have attended the rallies.

William and Joel, members of United Steelworkers Local 112M who work at the Owens-Brockway glass plant in NE Portland, were on the picket line to support Nabisco workers. They told WW: "It's eerie how similar conditions at Nabisco are to those where we work. It's the same playbook.

"The horrible changes in human resources, the same pressure tactics from management in their attacks on labor. Their greed is out of control." Like Nabisco, their company has opened a new facility in Mexico and laid off 93 union

members. "When we asked for our contract, they gave us no concessions even after laying off half our members."

William said, "When I first started in the union, I didn't understand how important the union was. Now our local has black-and-white photos on our wall of past strikes, to remind us of the gains the union has made for us."

Another picketer who has worked at Nabisco for over a decade said, "I thought I had a good job here. I just want to be able to support my family."

"Their greed is out of control," said Doug, who has worked at Nabisco for 32 years. He was with Darrin, a retired worker at the plant, who chimed in: "By supporting the Nabisco workers, we are fighting for all workers' jobs across the country. You can help us fight for our jobs by spreading the word — 'Don't buy Nabisco snacks.'"

You can help the Portland strikers by going to the GoFundMe page at [tinyurl.com/4bparw9j](https://tinyurl.com/4bparw9j).

# Solidarity with water protectors

By AEzra El and Steve Gillis  
Boston

Aug. 25 — Indigenous activists, climate activists and Workers World Party members gathered today in Boston's early evening glow to challenge Gina McCarthy, a petroleum profiteer ally living in the Jamaica Plains area. McCarthy is currently White House National Climate Advisor under President Joe Biden, serving as his "environmental health and air quality expert."

The large crowd, including some of McCarthy's neighbors, marched in solidarity with Indigenous peoples to her luxury condo on Jamaica Pond to demand she end her deadly silence about Enbridge corporation's destruction of the environment. Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline

carries tar sands oil from Alberta to Wisconsin, traversing stolen land and passing through Indigenous-held territory in violation of treaty rights.

After hearing from several speakers, shouting "Gina, do your job! stop Line 3!" and carrying a mock-up of a pipeline, the protesters delivered their collective grievance to McCarthy's door. A climate justice activist recently arrested in Minnesota at Enbridge protests led the crowd in chanting, "We stand with Indigenous nations! F — the Enbridge corporation!"

McCarthy, a former head of the Environmental Protection Agency, has not spoken one word about the police terror and mass arrests being conducted daily against peaceful water protectors at Line 3. In fact, wealthy neighbors of McCarthy called the cops when



WW PHOTO: MAUREEN SKEHAN

A rally against the tar sands pipeline Enbridge 3 took place in Jamaica Plains, Boston, Aug. 25.

representatives of the North American Indian Council of Boston delivered letters and a petition to her door.

#StopLine3 #LandBack □

# Workers rally for union and housing rights

By New York City Workers World Bureau

Worker leader and whistleblower Chris Smalls and a dozen Amazon workers led a Labor Day weekend workers assembly Sept. 4, demanding union recognition at Amazon's Staten Island JFK8 facility and passage of the federal union rights PRO Act. They gathered in Union Square across from Amazon-owned Whole Foods in Manhattan.

They also called attention to the housing crisis — dramatized by a rising mass struggle against evictions and the city's basement apartment deaths caused by last week's rapid flooding from Hurricane Ida. With the U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down the eviction moratorium mandated by the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention — and with the New York state moratorium ending Aug. 31 — the Sept. 4 rally included the

all-important demand for a permanent eviction moratorium.

Since Labor Day is dedicated to workers

rights, the rally called for an extension of the Federal Pandemic Unemployment benefits. The payments are set to expire Sept. 4, the Saturday before the federal holiday recognizing 'Labor Day.'

Called by the Workers Assembly Against Racism — who organized a series of winter demonstrations supporting the Alabama Amazon union campaign — the action featured a march to slumlord/union-buster Phipps Housing, a firm with an annual spot on the Worst Landlords of New York List. Rally participants plastered the front of the landlord's building with signs saying "Phipps = Union-Busting Slumlords," then headed for an ending rally at the luxury penthouse of head Amazon boss and planet's richest person Jeff Bezos. □



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Chris Smalls addresses Union Square rally Sept. 4.



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Left to right: Charles Jenkins, TWU (speaking); Brenda Stokely; Chris Silvera, Teamsters 808; Sara Flounders, IAC; Larry Holmes, WWP, at WAAR action in NYC, Sept. 4.

# Attica – A turning point in American corrections

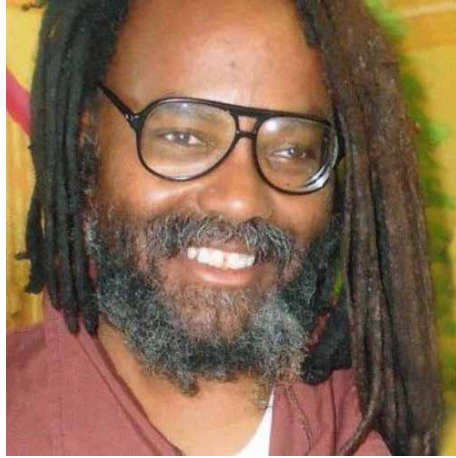
By Mumia Abu-Jamal

*The following lightly edited commentary by Mumia Abu-Jamal aired as part of the “50 Years of Resistance: Black August & Attica” live broadcast, hosted by the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party Sept. 2.*

In my mind, Attica was a turning point in American — and I use the term loosely — corrections. It was like, what road will be taken? And the state, through Rockefeller, the governor of New York, chose the road of mass repression.

The media largely supported his efforts. They maligned and lied against these men using really classic racism and fear. They charged that these men killed the men that the state killed. I think it was 39 people including 10 prison employees.

It took generations to have courts say, in a civil action, that it was not so. But it wasn't true that day, that night, that month, that week. Attica became a hallmark of American corrections and really



the American way of repression, instead of a tribune hour of liberation. What those men asked for was no retaliation, no charges and then specific changes to the prison. And they knew that the state, through prison officials, would kill them.

They said, send us to another country. We would rather go to another country than endure this kind of repression. They had press conferences; they wrote letters;

they told this to the esteemed public officials and journalists who they met with. I don't think people took them seriously, until it was too late. So what could have been a liberation moment, became one of the most repressive moments in American history. This was the naked face of the repressive state, punishing people who wanted to be free.

Think about it from this context. A decade after Attica, a U.S. president demanded that the president of a neighboring socialist state [Cuba] kick out his prisoners and free them, and let them come to the United States. What's the difference in principle here? Thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of people fled Cuba. They called it the Mariel boatlift.

Many of those people ended up in the U.S. prison system. And some remain there today. They are mostly in Terre Haute, Ind. Because even though they've served their sentences, America was like, you can stay in America. But you ain't going out. That's the reality.

My point is that why was what an

American president did applicable, but what African American and Puerto Rican prisoners said absurd? It's the same thing. Now they might not have found a great life in the countries they wanted to go to. But you know, hopefully they would have found freedom, something they did not have in the United States. They may have lived to an old old age, instead of being slaughtered by state troopers. And they wouldn't have found the kind of class and race denial that meant their executions in Attica.

Those are the things I think about when I think about Attica. It really was a turning point. There was a live option that could have gone another way, but for the political forces in New York state and in the United States. This just didn't come from the governor, so much as through the governor. Rockefeller had political ambitions as a Republican official. And the United States didn't want the embarrassment of people demanding to be freed from the United States prisons. So they kind of killed two birds with one stone. □



## The legacy of Black August & Attica lives on

By Monica Moorehead

*The following edited remarks were made on a Sept. 2 live broadcast, “50 Years of Resistance: Black August & Attica,” sponsored by the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party. Moorehead is a WW managing editor and a member of the PSC.*

For many revolutionaries and activists of my generation, Black August especially in the early 1970s and the Attica prison rebellion played a significant role in our political development and activism. I had just graduated from high school in Hampton, Virginia, when Jonathan Jackson attempted to free his brother, George Jackson, an imprisoned leader of the Black Panther Party, Ruchell Magee, another political prisoner who has been incarcerated for over 58 years, and others, when he took a judge and others hostage in a Marin County courtroom in San Rafael, California, on Aug. 7, 1970.

It was a prelude of what was to come at Attica in 1971. And even though Jonathan, at the tender age of 17, and others were brutally slaughtered by the police, this daring escape attempt had a profound impact on the movement over 50 years ago and even now.

Our Party declared Jonathan and his companions as heroes, while others in the movement were critical of their actions. This daring raid reflected the desire for oppressed peoples here and worldwide — Black, Asian, Arab and Latinx — to free themselves from centuries-old racism, colonialism and imperialism by any means necessary, including armed resistance.

This daring raid also exposed that the only response from the state to any kind of rebellion, big or small, by the most oppressed, is legalized terror on behalf of the oppressor with no compromise. And that the bestiality of this state-sanctioned violence is a sign of fear and trepidation that those in power always have for the masses whenever their class rule is challenged.

George Jackson was assassinated at San Quentin Prison on Aug. 21, 1971. George's

book, “Soledad Brother,” had resonated throughout the movement inside and outside the prison. His second book, “Blood In My Eye,” was released days after his murder. Thousands attended his funeral.

Huey P. Newton, a founder of the Black Panther Party, gave the eulogy at George's funeral. Part of that eulogy states: “George was a legendary figure all through the prison system, where he spent most of his life. You know a legendary figure is known to most people through the idea or through the concept or essentially through the spirit. So I met George through the spirit.

“He set a standard for prisoners, political prisoners, for people. He showed the love, the strength, the revolutionary fervor that's characteristic of any soldier for the people.”

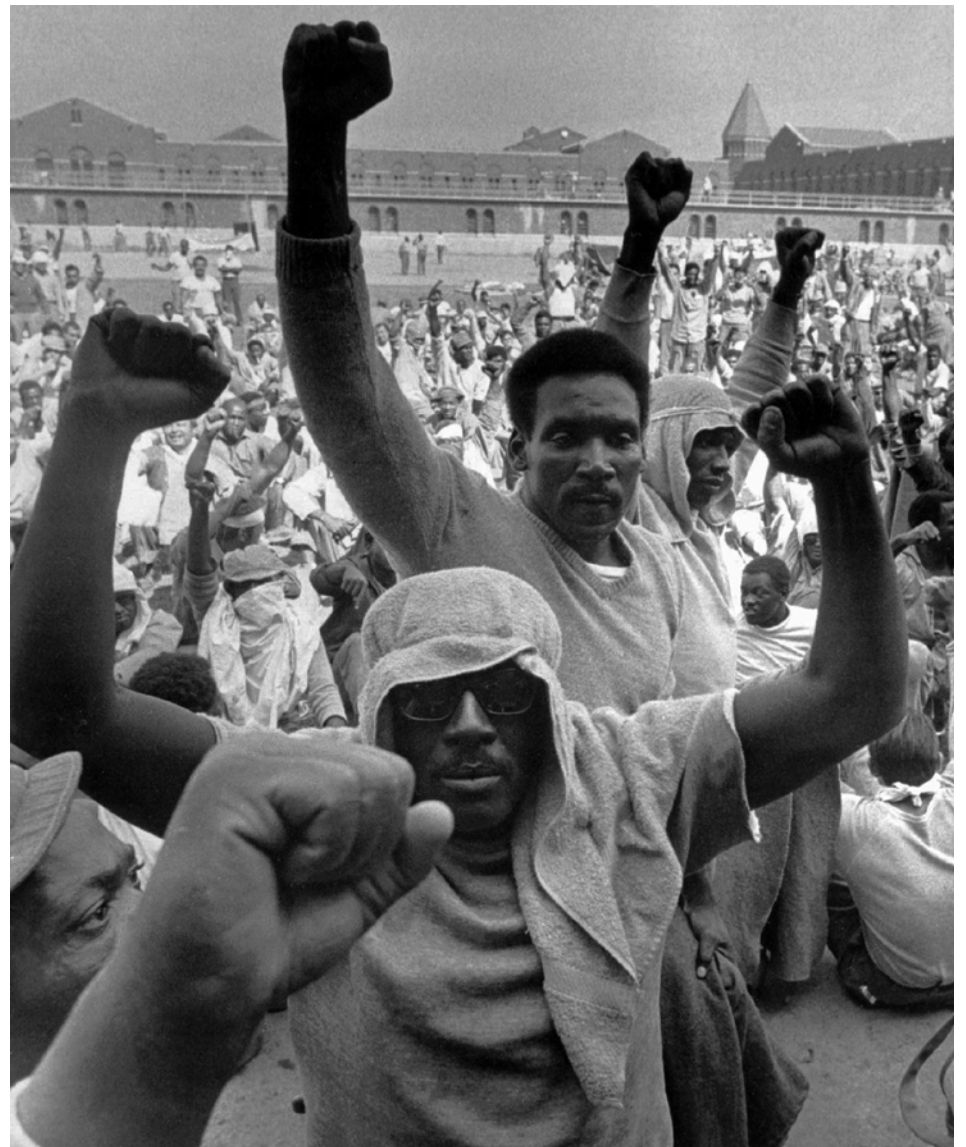
### Attica: ‘The sound before the fury’

Huey's words reflected how much George was loved and respected by incarcerated revolutionaries everywhere including Attica. In less than a month after George's death, Attica prisoners went on a hunger strike, wearing black armbands in honor of their fallen hero in protest of horrid conditions and treatment.

On Sept. 9, 1971, they had taken guards hostage before taking over the prison. And the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Youth Against War and Fascism was so honored to have the late Tom Soto be invited by leaders of the uprising to help give voice to the prisoners' profound demands to the outside world.

I want to quote from a commentary written by WWP's First Secretary, Larry Holmes, back in 2016: “The significance of the Attica uprising as a prison rebellion transcends prison. 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, for negotiations.



Attica uprising September 1971.

“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.”

The prisoners also demanded that they be granted asylum to an anti-imperialist country.

The lessons of Black August and Attica are not just about the past but the present and the future. Their legacies today are

about resistance and fight back against capitalism that apply to so many fronts, be they Black Lives Matter, the climate crisis, evictions and more. Their legacies are about freeing all political prisoners and shutting down all aspects of mass incarceration.

When Attica martyr, L.D. Barkley stated that Attica is the sound before the fury of all the oppressed, he was referring to the multinational voices of workers using rebellion to be visible and heard then, but also now with the global working class that will one day take its rightful place as being the gravediggers of capitalism. □

# From chattel slavery to modern prisons

By Mirinda Crissman

The following remarks were given during the “50 Years of Resistance: Black August & Attica” live broadcast hosted by the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party Sept. 2. Crissman is a co-editor of *Tear Down the Walls*.

I am always very struck when imprisoned people compare their situations to that of an enslaved person. That is an accurate portrayal of how prisons, jails and detention centers have historically functioned and continue to function in our capitalist-run society.

I live and organize in Texas and am a perpetual student of how cages have been institutionalized in this part of the world. Prior to the introduction of chattel slavery in what is now called Texas, Spanish colonizers implemented *encomiendas*. An *encomienda* was a grant by the Spanish crown to colonists in the Americas conferring the right to demand tribute and forced labor from the Indigenous inhabitants of that land.

Around the beginning of the reign of Spanish colonizers in the Western hemisphere, African peoples were violently ripped from their continent and subsequently branded as property, in order for a few people to accumulate vast fortunes from the spoils of their stolen labor. The beyond-brutal system of chattel enslavement reigned unchecked in this part of the world for well over a century up until over two years after the end of the Civil War.

While enslavement was declared “over,” via Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, it took until June 19, 1865, for its message and Union troops to reach the hundreds of thousands of enslaved people in Texas; and even then, not all enslaved people were freed instantly. In fact the material conditions of Black people remained largely the same in many ways via sharecropping and the system of convict leasing.

## Texas history as safe haven for enslavers

Leading up to the Union General Gordon Granger’s message of emancipation to the people of Galveston, Texas, it was known that this particular state was a safe haven for enslavers. Galveston, with its deepwater port, has the oldest known police force in the state. The police protect the property and wealth of the richest people. Like many early police forces on this continent, they served as patrols for enslaved people.

Henry Louis Gates explained: “Since the capture of New Orleans in 1862, slave

owners in Mississippi, Louisiana and other points east had been migrating to Texas to escape the Union Army’s reach. In a hurried reenactment of the original middle passage, more than 150,000 enslaved people were moved west to Texas.” (What is Juneteenth?, PBS.org)

After news of emancipation reached Texas, the rich still relied on the labor of those who were once legally considered their property. They did what they could to maintain that dominance and superexploitation.

This evolved into sharecropping, where the formerly enslaved still worked in the same Texas fields under similar conditions. The ruling class developed the system of convict leasing, which was designed to keep freed Black people “legally” enslaved. This was sanctioned through a clause still found in the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Under this system, the Texas Department of Corrections was formed and immediately hired out incarcerated workers to plantation owners as laborers. The workers were often Black and arrested by law enforcement for little or no reason. Convict leasing could be even worse in some ways than slavery, because those exploiting the labor of the leased people had no economic stake in their well-being or even in keeping them alive.

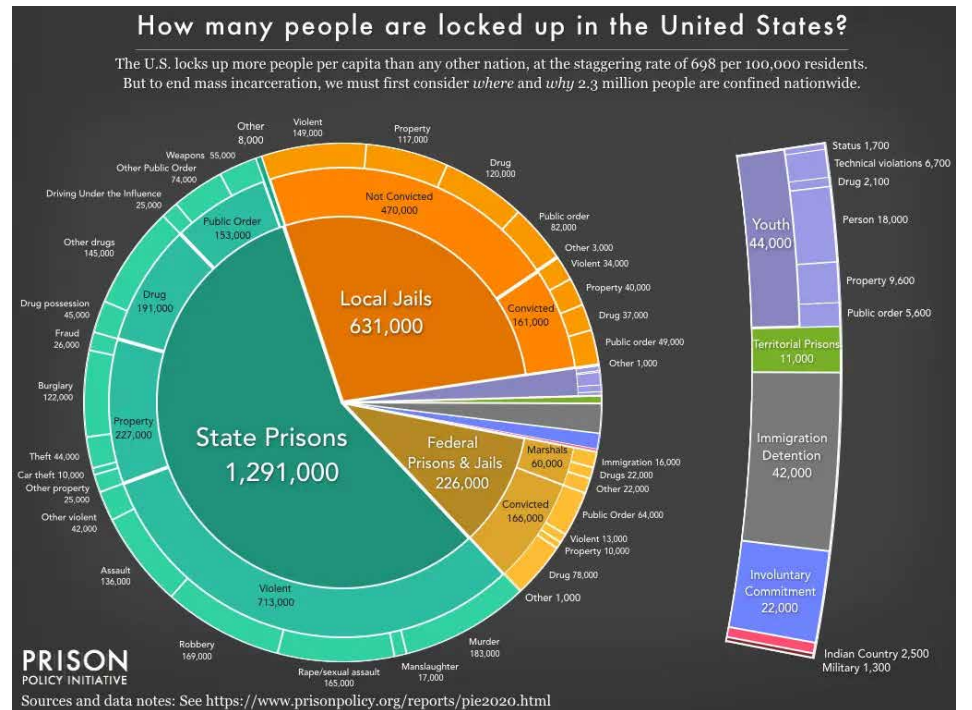
According to historian Robert Perkinson in “Texas Tough: The Rise of America’s Prison Empire,” more than 3,500 leased incarcerated workers died in Texas between 1866 and 1912 — more people than the number lynched in that period.

## More people under carceral control today than during chattel enslavement

The material buildup of prisons in New York State is not identical to the origin of the prison system in Texas, but the process remains similar and certainly influenced the uprising at Attica. Also similar to conditions at Attica in 1971 is the state of prisons, jails and detention centers today.

Today, more people are under carceral control than were under chattel enslavement. According to the Prison Policy Initiative, the U.S. criminal injustice system holds almost 2.3 million people in 1,833 state prisons; 110 federal prisons; 1,772 juvenile correctional facilities; 3,134 local jails; and 218 immigration detention facilities. This vast interlocking system of oppression also contains military prisons, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals and prisons in the U.S. territories.

Almost 2.3 million people are confined in the U.S. on a daily basis in these various



facilities, but incarceration is just one piece of the much larger system of the criminal injustice system. The so-called U.S. justice system controls almost 7 million people, more than half of whom are on probation.

Mass incarceration affects more than those who are locked up themselves. Over 19 million people have been convicted of a felony in their lifetimes and face discrimination — totally legal in the U.S. — that routinely denies them the ability to vote, find housing, education, employment, among other things crucial to basic human survival. In the U.S., 77 million people have some sort of criminal record following them around. And around 113 million U.S. adults have an immediate family member who has been incarcerated.

## Concentration camps for the poor

To understand why there are so many prisons, jails and detention centers, why so many people are affected by them and what purpose they serve, we need not look any further than the people most affected by these cages and those for whom this system was built.

By and large, capitalist cages are filled with people oppressed on the basis of race, gender, ability and other class-based oppressions. Black and Brown people are disproportionately locked up. LGBTQ+ people and disabled people are also disproportionately locked up compared to their make-up of the total population. And many people find themselves under multiple axes of interlocking oppressions all at once. Prisons, jails and detention centers are concentration camps for the poor and oppressed.

Law enforcement rounds up members of our class with strained historical relationships to property and locks them in prisons, jails and detention centers. Women and gender-nonconforming people’s oppression is rooted in the rise of private property. The enforcement of imaginary borders drawn by imperialists often criminalizes migrants, despite the fact that living beings have migrated across the continents for thousands of years. Under new Texas law, people with accumulated wealth who own property are deputized to oppress those without.

Confinement, imprisonment, incarceration, enslavement, whatever we call it, serve to keep the oppressed from rising up against their oppressors — those who have accumulated wealth and property off the backs of working and oppressed peoples. To abolish our current conditions living in the afterlife of enslavement, we must abolish capitalism and the rule of one class over another.

When we examine the historical origins of the prison-industrial complex, who end up in these institutions and the dire conditions people inside face during a global pandemic — we clearly see the only benefit of these institutions is for the ruling class to maintain their exploitation.

And if Attica has taught us anything, it is that oppressed peoples do not have to remain quiet as they are targeted for execution by state violence and neglect. Attica also teaches us that the solidarity from people on the outside is critical to ensuring members of our class — the working class — are not slaughtered in silence and forgotten. Attica means fight back! □

# Happy Birthday, Juan Balderas!

By Gloria Rubac

A few days in advance of his 35th birthday, family, friends and supporters of Texas death row prisoner Juan Balderas gathered by the dozens to celebrate, sing Happy Birthday, speak to the media and eat some delicious cake his mother brought to share.

Balderas has been on death row for 8 years, fighting to prove his innocence. Fortunately for Balderas, his spouse and family have not only stood by him but visibly and legally fought for him. They have marched, rallied, held press conferences and lobbied the state legislature to bring his case to the public’s attention.

There have been television specials on his case and extensive news coverage in English- and Spanish-language media. Balderas was born in Mexico and has dual

citizenship. His spouse, Yancy Balderas, is from El Salvador. Since both are bilingual, media coverage is easily accomplished in both languages.

On the day of his birthday party outside of the Harris County Criminal Courthouse, Estrella TV covered Balderas’ case and the party. A crew of reporters from Colombia were also there. They are doing an in-depth “60 Minutes” type program in Spanish to be shown throughout Latin America.

Being locked up in a prison, a jail or a detention center can be a harrowing, cruel and brutal experience. What can help ease the pain and problems of any kind of detention? Good lawyers and a supportive, outspoken network of family and friends. And money.

An incompetent court-appointed attorney or a lack of family support can not

only keep a person incarcerated, but can cause many mental and physical health issues. Fortunately for Balderas, he has competent attorneys and strong support from his family and friends.

On any given day, there are over 2 million people locked up in the U.S. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, “One in seven state and federal prisoners (14%) and 1 in 4 jail inmates (26%) reported experiences that met the threshold for serious psychological distress (SPD) in the 30 days prior to being surveyed. Similarly, 37% of prisoners and 44% of jail inmates had been told in the past by a mental health professional that they had a mental disorder.” ([tinyurl.com/8bwesemw](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html))

“Each year in prison reduces an individual’s life expectancy by about 2 years,” according to the Prison Policy Initiative.

But the family is also affected, reducing immediate family members’ life expectancy by from 2.6 years to 4.6 years. ([tinyurl.com/s6mdayb](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html))

Until the prison-industrial complex can be dismantled and abolished, working-class people must visibly, financially and emotionally support any friends, family or fellow activists who are incarcerated.

As Yancy Balderas told the crowd at Juan’s birthday celebration, “We will not stop fighting until Juan is exonerated. We will not stop until the DA turns over the evidence they should have given us at trial 8 years ago. We are not stopping. We will continue fighting. We are not going away until Juan gets justice — either his freedom or a fair new trial!” □

## Report from New Orleans

# Government does nothing for the poor

By John Catalinotto

Sept. 1 — Gavrielle Gemma, union and political organizer since the 1970s and now working with the New Orleans-based Workers Voice Socialist Movement, called Workers World to report on the situation there, post-Hurricane Ida. Gemma is now living in a modest single-family home in the Florida neighborhood of New Orleans, part of the Upper Ninth Ward.

“It’s bad,” she said. “Only poor folk stayed once the mayor and governor advised that people evacuate. That means the people left had no choice, no place to go, no money to pay for hotels or motels — assuming they could find a room. If they had made the evacuation mandatory, then the government would be responsible for the welfare of the people who left. But they’re doing nothing.

“The biggest immediate problem is that there is no electricity. The company that provides it — Entergy — says it may be a month before they restore full service. And it is hot, hot, hot, in the ‘90s with high humidity. To stay alive in this weather, you need water and a way to get cool. The cooling centers — for people in danger of heat exhaustion — had no food or water.

“Look, we don’t expect miracles. They can’t stop a hurricane. But even if we’re not dying in the flood, they’re letting us starve in the streets. From Day One, someone should have been out,” said Gemma, “telling people what to expect and what to do. Tankers with water and with food could have been going street to street, bringing ready-to-eat food and water to drink, tarps to cover leaks.

“Here it is three days after landfall, and the government only set up three places in the city where you can go for water. Then when you get there, you have to wait in line for hours.

“Not only do we have no power and no food, but there is no gasoline available. There are already long lines of people waiting for gas and for ice. The only people getting by are those few with generators.

“The money to buy one lousy F35 bomber would be enough to get a home generator to every household in the city.

### Compound crises: COVID, cutbacks, Ida

“This will give your readers an idea of what the state government is like here,” Gemma added. “The state government rejected the extra COVID-19 federal unemployment insurance of \$300 a week for the last two months. This was like robbing \$2,400 from people who needed money badly. And you know, no one gets paid sick days here.

“The state is even abandoning New Orleans residents with enough resources to evacuate or relatives to house them. The governor’s message to them is: ‘Don’t come back. We can’t take care of you.’ So even when stores reopen, many people will have no money to buy food.



Hurricane Ida damage in Louisiana.

And for every purchase you need cash, no food stamps, no SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

“Already people are being evicted from their homes. It will only get worse after Ida.

“Biden took responsibility for leaving Afghanistan — good that the U.S. got out. He could order federal efforts to deliver

aid to New Orleans. In California, giant planes are used in firefighting. He could use cargo planes to deliver aid here.

“Biden’s coming here to see Louisiana post-Ida. The people in my neighborhood are angry as hell that nothing is being done to help. They’re ready to protest.

“On top of the other problems in Louisiana is the surge in COVID-19 cases. Jamming people into a shelter to solve one

problem will cause another. It’s criminal how the state authorities have handled the pandemic here.

“We’ll turn these words into action. The Workers Voice Socialist Movement will mobilize to fight for demands to help the working class of New Orleans. I’ll be part of that.” □

## Ida: ‘Capitalism accelerates misery’

*The Central Gulf Coast branch of Workers World Party issued the following statement Aug. 29.*

As Hurricane Ida slams into Louisiana and assaults the entire Central Gulf Coast, we must remember that when disasters occur, capitalism does not respond with aid but instead accelerates misery.

Today, along with Ida’s landfall in southern Louisiana, is the 16th anniversary of the devastating Hurricane Katrina, which similarly hit southern Louisiana and killed 1,800 people, with damages totaling over \$1 billion. The city of New Orleans is still not fully rebuilt from that catastrophe. FEMA and the Red Cross heavily mismanaged all “aid” that they provided, and many were left to die, with even more left to fend for themselves. Additionally, police and the National Guard, arms of the capitalist state, were

sent into the city to terrorize the residents who were trying to survive during and after the hurricane.

In a similar fashion, the city of New Orleans neglected to issue a mandatory evacuation, citing that “they didn’t have enough time.” Now with floods, tornadoes and nonstop lightning battering the Gulf Coast, it is obvious that working-class people, especially Black and Brown working-class people, are once again left to fend for themselves.

In socialist Cuba, there is an entire rapid response program for hurricanes, regardless of category, that ensures a minimal amount of damage for the 11 million people on the island.

In the U.S., the government and billionaires have no issue sacrificing thousands



of working and oppressed persons and would sooner do that than invest in our survival against climate change, another major, critical result of capitalism-imperialism’s plundering of the planet.

It is critical that we educate the masses of the dangers of climate change and why climate change is occurring; we must organize and mobilize the masses, the workers and oppressed persons, against the destruction of our planet, which is treated as being disposable by billionaires all over the world. We must mobilize and organize to demand a rapid response program for the Gulf Coast, as hurricanes continue to happen and intensify year by year, with the lives of millions of workers and oppressed persons being impacted more and more. □

## Storm fuels anti-capitalist anger

Continued from page 1

the building structure would lead to hazardous levels of mold.

In tears, wracked with anxiety, my partners and I gathered our most treasured possessions and everything we’d need to keep on our person. We loaded into the car, panicked, and drove to a motel. Before I left, I saw the ceiling in my bedroom burst, drywall and water



WW PHOTO: QUELL

Buckets could not keep up with leaking water.

contaminating everything.

Since then, I’ve bounced from hotel to hotel, to friends’ places, and home again to assess the damage. As I write this, I’m lucky that a friend has offered his spare room for a few days. But it could be weeks, maybe months, before repairs make my home livable again. What’s more, it’s doubtful that insurance will cover all the damages, leaving me with thousands of dollars of out-of-pocket costs.

I know I’m relatively lucky — I have job security and a large network of friends and comrades to help me. I know there are people who have suffered even worse, who have lost literally everything; some will be left without anywhere to return to.

At least 18 have been confirmed dead in NYC alone. This is not an experience that exists in isolation — Hurricane Ida, and the even deadlier storms that will no doubt follow, will affect all working and oppressed peoples.

It is clear that no one was prepared for this catastrophe; from emergency alert systems to city infrastructure, there were no mechanisms or systems in place to truly handle this event. Despite claims from government officials, however, this is not because Ida was unpredictably dangerous;

rather, it highlights the abject failure of the capitalist system to preserve human life.

As difficult as this has been for me personally, as painful and traumatic, I find myself filled with another emotion — anger. I’m angry at the corporations and bourgeois scum who have ravaged our planet for profit. I’m angry at the systems that push marginalized people, especially Black people, into living in locations prone to flooding and natural disasters.

I am angry that profit is valued over human life, that individuals are left to fend for themselves, forced to pay untold dollars they may not even have. I’m angry that the government, regardless of party affiliation or the person in the White House, doesn’t truly care about working people. In short, I’m angry at capitalism.

The brunt of the ongoing climate disaster will be borne by working and oppressed people. The capitalists sit in their yachts and towers, retreating to their compounds and bunkers when the crisis begins to affect them as well.

If we want to avoid death by burning heat, by floods, by tornadoes, crop failures and all the other horrors that the climate crisis brings, we’ve got to organize. We’ve got to take back our power as workers. It’s

workers who grow the food, run the factories, build every building and dig every ditch. It’s workers who make the world run, and it’s high time that workers ran the world!

I want to live in a world where I don’t have nightmares about whether I’ll become homeless, because I know I’ll be guaranteed housing even in the face of disaster. I want to live in a world where my labor doesn’t make some CEO rich, but instead enriches the whole of humanity. I want to live in a socialist world, a workers’ world, and I will fight for that world until my dying breath.

Whatever happens to me, whatever tragedy befalls me, I will never shirk my responsibility to fight for the liberation of all the relations of life on this planet. Chairman Fred Hampton of the Black Panther Party said, “Peace to you — if you’re willing to fight for it.”

Now more than ever, it’s time to fight. If you feel sorrow when you read my story, organize. If you feel despair about the future of the world, organize. If you want to live without fear, organize and fight. You have nothing to lose but your chains.

*The writer is a member of Workers World Party.*

Cuba

# 'We must mount a hurricane ourselves, of effort and determination'

The following article first appeared in *Granma* on Sept. 1, 2021.

By Yaima Puig Meneses

The response to damages caused by Hurricane Ida is evidence that there is coherence, capacity and organization here, stated Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee First Secretary and President of the Republic, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, upon concluding a working tour the afternoon of Aug. 29, in the province of Pinar del Río, where he arrived early in the day, to later continue on to the Isle of Youth special municipality.

Accompanied by Party Political Bureau member and Prime Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz, as well as a portion of the country's national government team, the President was able to evaluate, at different points in both territories, the progress being made in clean-up efforts, the recovery of affected crops, restitution of public services that were interrupted and the initial response to repair identified damage to home.

The work that has been carried out, he noted, shows that there is a spirit within our people to overcome adverse situations caused by events of this type. This, he emphasized, gives us the confidence and optimism needed to move forward in the midst of so many difficulties we have been obliged to face recently. Plus, it is an expression of our unity and understanding of the problems we have and must continue to confront.

## Challenges of Ida plus the pandemic

"Now, let's make sure none of the produce that has been recovered is lost," was one of the principal ideas reiterated by the President in Pinar del Río, when he met with producers whose crops were affected by the hurricane.

It is precisely in agriculture where the greatest impact of the extreme weather event in the province has been observed. Preliminary data, presented by Governor Rubén Ramos Moreno, indicates that 687 tons of cassava and 551 tons of plantain were damaged, along with losses of boniato and squash. Everything that could be recovered, he assured, was sold to the population.

While touring areas of the Hermanos Barcón productive pole, one of the principal centers of this type in the province of Pinar del Río, the President conversed with producers and managers, insisting that work to launch a short-cycle planting strategy be prioritized, which will allow for availability of more produce, the immediate recovery of plantain fields, and increased harvests and replanting.

"No time can be lost in beginning planting," he stressed. "This is a good time to take advantage of the moisture left by the rains." One of the big challenges, he emphasized, is to achieve greater diversification of crops, which will allow us to meet the population's demand for food today.

During a meeting with the province's main authorities, information was provided on damage caused to homes by Hurricane Ida. Preliminary figures indicate that 148 properties were affected, two of which were identified as total losses and 109 with only partial damage to roofs. It was reported that when the Recovery Phase was declared, the movement of resources to different sites began immediately, in order to respond as soon as possible to repair these properties.

Regarding the reestablishment of electric service, it was reported that the arduous work being carried out had allowed for the recovery of almost 70% of the damages, within less than 24 hours after the storm struck. Minister of Energy and Mines Liván Arronte Cruz explained that five brigades of electrical workers from the provinces of Havana and Matanzas would arrive in the next few hours to reinforce recovery efforts in this arena.

Regarding the rainfall, local authorities commented that the precipitation was mostly beneficial, especially in the municipalities of San Juan y Martínez and Isabel Rubio.

In the midst of the additional complexities in Pinar del Río created by Hurricane Ida, the President insisted that no neglect of the battle against COVID-19 in the territory can be allowed, since high levels of transmission of the disease had been noted during the last few days.

Ariel Godoy del Llano, provincial director of Public Health, commented that a decrease in the number of patients with symptoms being treated in health institutions had been observed recently, although more than 4,000 remained isolated at home on the 29th, which is a great challenge. He also referred to the vaccination program underway for those over 19 years of age in the provincial capital and at-risk groups in the other municipalities, critical to advancing protection of the people and reducing infection rates.

## Rapid, well-organized work

"Work has been conducted here in an organized and rapid fashion," the President noted during an exchange with inhabitants of La Fe, one of the main towns in the Isle of Youth special municipality, where the government team arrived shortly after noon, the day following the storm.

After touring several areas affected by Ida, the President insisted that we cannot

let ourselves be defeated by the weather. This is why we request your cooperation in repairing damage within the shortest possible time, he stressed. "Now, we must mount a hurricane ourselves, of effort and determination. This is what we are calling for," he said.

As the coronavirus continues to be a challenge, even on the Isle of Youth, where the epidemic has been successfully contained, the First Secretary asked residents to "continue to take care of yourselves, because, although you are the best in the country in confronting COVID-19 and have maintained rigorous control, you cannot lower your guard."

In a conversation with producers, the government team found that the principal damages in this sector were to plantain, squash and papaya. There were no live-stock losses at the local farms, where only the roofs of buildings were damaged. Thus far, Mayor Adiel Morera Macías reported, 136 tons of recovered produce has been sold to the population, including two tons of beans.

At midday Aug. 29, some 9,700 customers remained without electricity, especially in the areas of La Fe and La Demajagua, where 46 poles were toppled. According to estimates, by the end of the day between 90% and 95% of services would be restored in the municipality.

At the Electric Company's headquarters, the President was informed of the reestablishment of more than 70% of services in the special municipality. In the town of Gerona, 99% of the damage had been repaired, and in La Fe, 79%. The Minister of Energy and Mines noted that, during the first hours of work, priority was given to homes and facilities that guarantee the water supply.

According to the local Intendant, the greatest residential damage was to roofing, with partial damage to 141 properties. The work of community activists in People's Councils will ensure that all damage is identified and included in estimates.

## Much remains to be done

Shortly before concluding the day on the Isle of Youth, the President commented on the characteristics that distinguished Hurricane Ida. First, he said, is that this was a storm which moved across the country in a very short period of time, meaning that the evolution to different phases of the response was rapid, demanding additional effort from leadership bodies directing the work. On the other hand, particularly in Pinar del Río, action was taken in accordance with disaster mitigation plans recently updated



PHOTO: ESTUDIOS REVOLUCIÓN

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez evaluates Hurricane Ida damage in the province of Pinar del Río, Aug. 29.

as a result of the pandemic.

These singularities demanded more precision, coherence and effort, he noted. And both Pinar del Río and the Isle of Youth, as well as Artemisa, which was also affected, responded quickly, he noted. "The main accomplishment was that there was no loss of human life."

In view of the fundamental damages that occurred, especially that related to the distribution of electric energy, which were widespread in both territories, the President highlighted the speed with which repair work was undertaken.

He acknowledged the effort made to maintain health services amidst the extreme weather conditions, especially emphasizing the operation conducted to continue supplying oxygen to medical facilities during the hurricane, which required a demanding joint effort with the National Coordinating Center.

Regarding what was observed in the two territories, the President described as very important actions taken to collect solid waste on roads and in communities. We have seen an atmosphere of willingness to participate among the population, he stated.

These days also provided valuable experience, and many lessons were learned, the President said, citing the example of how damage to homes was addressed. The rapid response, he noted, contrasts with the situation prevailing in recent years, with people waiting 12 years or more for a solution, living in temporary facilities, something very stressful for the life of a family. This is an issue that we must prioritize in housing plans, even if new buildings are delayed a bit. These are things that we must take care of, and to which we must give a different vision, he said.

With satisfaction, he highlighted the preventative work done prior to the storm in the two territories, which prevented more severe consequences. There remains a great deal of work to be done, he said, adding that overcoming the hurricane's impact requires putting our hearts into the task. □

# U.S. workers being pushed into an abyss

By G. Dunkel

For many U.S. workers — especially low-wage workers — it has suddenly become much more difficult to put food on the table and to keep a roof over these tables.

The Department of Labor estimates 9.2 million workers are enrolled in programs providing unemployment aid to workers affected by the pandemic. They include those not covered by traditional unemployment insurance — gig workers and the self-employed for instance — and

workers who have exhausted their regular benefits. Federal Unemployment Pandemic Compensation added \$300 a week to existing claims.

FPUC is scheduled, ironically, to end the Saturday before Labor Day. President Joe Biden apparently believes it is "appropriate" for the programs to end, because the economy is "so strong." But whatever rosy feelings he has about the economy, this is one of the largest cuts in unemployment benefits since they were instituted during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

A Census survey estimates 3.4 people

on average live in each household receiving pandemic benefits.

Do the arithmetic. Some 35 million U.S. workers and family members are either going to lose all their aid or collect \$300 less a week beginning Labor Day.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics jobs report of Sept. 3 had 235,000 jobs created in August, with a slight decline in the official jobless rate from 5.4% to 5.2%. While any drop in the number of officially unemployed workers is good news, the U.S. economy still has over 5 million fewer jobs than it had at the start of the pandemic.

The number of new hires for August was a sharp reduction from July's figure of 1.05 million. With the spread of the COVID Delta variant, "5.6 million people reported they were unable to work because of the pandemic," according to the Department of Labor.

The unemployment rate for Black workers rose from 8.2% to 8.8% (nearly double the rate for white workers). While more Black workers found work in August, about twice as many looked for work and didn't find it.

Continued on page 11

## BOOK REVIEW

# Envisioning a world without policing

By Christian Noakes

George (Geo) Ciccariello-Maher's "A World Without Police: How Strong Communities Make Police Obsolete" is both one of the most compelling arguments for police abolition and a complete depiction of the nationwide George Floyd uprisings (and events around this historic time of rebellion) to date. Using extensive historical and contemporary evidence, Maher shows that violence meted out by police on people of color and the working class is inherent in the institution and therefore not something to be adequately addressed short of outright abolition.

This ongoing struggle is not simply a matter of doing away with the police. It implies the creation of alternative structures, which truly protect and empower working-class communities of color. As Maher states, "Today, as a century ago, the positive, creative face of abolition, the building of a world we want to see — of security, equality and freedom — is inseparable from the process of destroying those relics of that past that continue to stain our present. Abolition is a tight spiral, a double helix, of both processes."

The abolitionist cause is a struggle not only against the police but the entire white-supremacist superstructure (e.g. political, legal and cultural institutions) of capitalism. It is not the cops alone that perpetuate the systemic violence upon which U.S. capitalism relies, but the entire pig majority.

As Maher states, "The pig majority includes the police, but it exceeds them as well. It comprises all those volunteer deputies eagerly doing their violent work alongside them. It is the judges, the courts, the

juries and the grand juries. It is the mayors and the district attorneys who demand 'law and order' and denounce those who protest police brutality as 'mindless rioters and looters.' It is the racist media apparatus that bends over backward to turn victims into aggressors and — above all when the former are Black and the latter white — killers into saints."

The pig majority includes vigilantes — who are often given near impunity from the state — and members of the public more generally that perpetuate the white-supremacist order in their thoughts and deeds. With capitalism's dominant white-supremacist ideology, the pig majority extends beyond the boundaries of whiteness to enlist neocolonial elements in the upkeep of the fundamentally white-supremacist capitalist order at home and abroad.

## System can't be reformed

Maher thoroughly debunks the idea that our carceral institutions can simply be reformed. While acknowledging the benefits of reforms which legitimately weaken the power and impunity of police, Maher argues that the more "reformist reforms" act as a backstop to systemic change — a "perennial containment strategy of an imperiled system." Reforms, such as increased training, are an "alibi" those in power fall back on when public pressure grows.

Maher characterizes this cycle as: "Another instance of brutality, another rebellion, another series of commissions, another set of useless proposals that



PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Demonstrators call for police abolition in Philadelphia, June 6, 2020.

don't grapple with the reality of police power." He demonstrates this recurring process at work throughout the history of the white-supremacist institution of policing.

He also argues that police reform not only misdiagnoses but actively contributes to the problem. This is apparent in the aftermath of the George Floyd uprisings, when politicians created the George Floyd Act, which included an additional \$750 million earmarked for police. In the hands of the white-supremacist and capitalist state, police reform is about managing public perception rather than addressing police violence — an act that would undermine the power of the capitalist state by diminishing its primary means of enforcement and coercion.

## Considering an abolitionist future

The book invites readers to consider what an abolitionist future would look like and provides several practical steps already taken toward this end in

the strategies of communities to ensure their own collective safety and well-being. These include the self-managed security collectives, such as those that sprang up in Minneapolis communities in 2020; transformation of occupied hotels into shelter for the homeless; and the long-standing traditions of self-defense and grassroots social services in working-class Black communities.

Maher points out that examples abound outside the U.S., such as in the autonomous Zapatista-controlled area of Chiapas, Mexico, and the grassroots militias that

protected Venezuelan neighborhoods from the intertwined violence of the drug trade and police prior to the country's Bolivarian revolution.

Born out of the struggle against capitalist state violence, communities in the U.S. and abroad are constantly taking their destinies into their own hands and building from the bottom up structures outside of and at odds with the international capitalist order. All these examples provide a glimpse of a more just and equitable world which is already being built little by little, day by day, by the world's exploited and oppressed masses.

For years to come, this book is sure to be a key abolitionist text for activists and organizers. Supported by extensive historical documentation and journalistic rigour, it is an invaluable testimony to both the role of police as "a violence machine that produces brutality, impunity and corruption with every turn of its gears" and an undying commitment to building a world without police. □

# Texas activists demand: 'Ban the abortion bans!'

Continued from page 1

it a private matter for pregnant people to decide. The decision recognized the legal rights to privacy and personal autonomy in making medical decisions related to abortion.

But the decision defending this essential human right didn't appear out of thin air. This victory was the result of a years-long, hard-fought movement led by women and their allies all across the U.S.

Legalization of abortions meant that women could obtain the procedures in safe, sterile facilities, performed by medical professionals. The intent by pro-choice groups and supporters, as well as health care providers, was to end injuries and even deaths of women from botched abortions, including by their own hands.

But as soon as the high court — in a 7-2 decision by a majority of Republican-appointed justices — declared the procedure legal, the right wing was sharpening its cudgels, planning how to overturn this basic right through the courts and legislatures. Some of the most extreme misogynistic anti-abortion vigilantes have resorted to stalking, wounding, assassination, bombing and other violence against medical and nonmedical staff and clients and clinic buildings.

The right wing has intensified its fight through courts and state legislatures to weaken Roe and eventually criminalize abortion once again. This campaign has already imposed obstacles to and restrictions on abortions in many states, making the procedure inaccessible for many people. This attack on the right to abortion has continued, despite the fact that the majority

of U.S. residents support the Roe ruling.

With Senate Bill 8 the harshest legal attack on abortion rights since Roe was decided, the right wingers are stepping up their efforts to smash reproductive rights countrywide. Since January 1, a record 600 bills have been introduced in 47 state legislatures to further restrict abortions. Ninety laws have been enacted this year.

Republican politicians in Arkansas, Florida, South Dakota and other states have said they would propose laws similar to SB8 in upcoming legislative sessions.

## SCOTUS 'shadow docket'

Conservatives have schemed for years to pack state legislatures and courts and get a majority of anti-abortion justices on the Supreme Court. Now they have the majority on the high court, and five of their justices — three of them Trump appointees — just delivered a victory to reactionaries who seek to overturn the right to legal abortions.

SCOTUS justices issued a short ruling before midnight on Sept. 1, which by a vote of 5-4 allowed Texas SB8 to stand. Of the dissenting opinions, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote the most scathing attack not only on Texas legislators and politicians, but on the five justices who sided with Texas reactionaries and who seek to overturn Roe.

In what is called a "shadow docket," the Court's decision was handed down



WW PHOTO

In 1977 in New York City, people marched for the right to abortion with government funding. Workers World Party's banner to the left in the back.

without signatures, prior notification, written legal briefs or oral arguments. The ruling was done in secrecy, as part of a plan to quietly gut abortion rights.

Since 85% to 90% of abortions occur after six weeks' gestation, this law is a nearly complete ban on access to abortion. Medically safe, legal abortions will be denied to most Texas residents who request the procedure. The restrictions will fall the hardest on people who already face obstacles in seeking safe abortions — low-income, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, im/migrants, disabled, transgender, rural residents and victims of domestic violence.

The truth is that abortions have always occurred — legally or illegally, safely or unsafely. The procedures will continue, even if pregnant people have to travel far, borrow money, or in the worst-case scenario, desperately resort to back-alley or self-induced abortions.

Racism, bigotry, misogyny and further

oppression of poor people are at the heart of this law and the many other state laws that create barriers to obtaining abortions. People who have economic means can obtain legal abortions by flying out of state, paying for the procedure, hotel rentals, food and childcare.

On Sept. 1 SCOTUS ruled that 85% of abortions performed under the Roe ruling would be illegal in Texas, which would have been guaranteed previously under Roe v. Wade. The only way the right to access to abortion was won in 1973 in Roe was through the united mass struggle of many sectors. It is time to push back all reactionary actions by the judicial arm of the capitalist state, including those which impinge on reproductive rights. It is time to build class unity to save these rights.

These attacks call for a renewed mass movement to fight for safe, legal abortions, with government funding for all who need it. A movement that is multinational, multigendered and multigenerational. A movement that reaches out to workers, organized and unorganized, labor unions, im/migrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ organizations, civil rights groups, environmentalists, left groups, including socialist parties and all progressive forces.

*Kathy Durkin participated in the movement that won legal abortion in the U.S.*

*She dedicates this article to late WW comrade and author, Sue Davis, who wrote about and struggled for reproductive justice for five decades.*



## WW COMMENTARY

# Will reopening schools help students?

By Jim McMahan

Schools are reopening in September for tens of millions of students; more had already opened in August. Many students are entering the building for the first time in a year and more, after having little or no provisions for distance learning from home. Their educational needs conflicted with parents' nervousness about the COVID pandemic. The risk of infection remains high.

The students want to go back for their education. But they are being ordered back because the Biden administration demanded a reopening of the capitalist economy at the beginning of July — despite a raging pandemic. Arbitrary decisions to reopen the schools were made even earlier.

A big contradiction here is that none of the masked or unmasked 5 to 12 year olds entering the schools are vaccinated. But COVID is spreading across the country



In 2020, Tampa teachers protest over lack of COVID protection.

worse than before. It does not make sense to put young students including teenagers into crowded classrooms. But many school districts are intent on reopening with plans that are not adequate for the dangers posed to youth and children by the Delta variant.

On Sept. 1, the 7-day average of new U.S. COVID deaths was 1,588

per day with 163,344 infected, the highest since Jan. 25. The 28,605 deaths in August is 3 times the number reported in July. (Washington Post)

Infection rates among children are greatly increasing. Hospitalization rates among children have increased fourfold recently due to low vaccination rates. (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report of the CDC) Some schools in Texas have already been forced to close because of spreading infections.

Indeed, the U.S. health care system is faltering. Hundreds of nurses have died of COVID. Around 1,500 national guard

troops with teams of health care staff are being sent into Oregon hospitals, and Idaho has called in troops and 220 medical workers to assist overwhelmed hospital staff. (The Guardian)

The highest rates of COVID infection and deaths are across the South, where Black and Latinx people are disproportionately affected. Oxygen supplies are running short in the South.

The lack of FDA approval for vaccines for children 12 and under is risking COVID exposure for this age group as they return to the classroom. Youth and children do not seem to have priority, nine months after the first vaccine was made available.

Protests by school teachers along with students and communities helped stop the opening of public schools in 2020 during the pandemic. Unfortunately, the Trump administration abandoned the teachers, parents and students while he abandoned the overall fight against the pandemic.

President Joe Biden, having won a capitalist election, wants to be seen as the big leader of the fight against COVID. He's trying to shore up and save the capitalist system at the same time. But he ordered the reopening of the economy in July

with little or no protections for workers. Since then the coronavirus pandemic has surged to new levels.

The hoped-for economic recovery has slowed due to the pandemic. Federal pandemic unemployment benefits for 9.2 million workers were terminated. The eviction moratorium affecting millions of workers ended in August. The Biden administration hasn't done anything to stop the anti-worker attacks.

Joe Biden and Democratic governors can't stop COVID, because they are tied closely to the capitalist system. The people are being abandoned just as they were under Trump. Students, along with their teachers, bus drivers and other school workers, should not be made to basically walk a tightrope to go back to school!

But Peoples' China has shown the way to stop COVID and have economic prosperity at the same time. Only 5,000 people in China, which is four times bigger in population than the U.S., have died of COVID. In the U.S. the deaths are around 650,000. In China a great social mobilization of the working class stopped COVID. That's not authoritarianism, that's mass participation with workers' solidarity. □

## A Marxist history of HIV/AIDS

Part 4

### 'Fighting for our lives' against AIDS in San Francisco, 1981–1986

By Devin Cole

HIV refers to human immunodeficiency virus. If left untreated, HIV can lead to the disease AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). HIV is transmitted by four fluids: semen, vaginal fluid, blood and breastmilk, and through mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy/birth.

In December, 1981, Bobbi Campbell, a nurse and a gay man from Tacoma, Wash., then living in San Francisco, became the first person with Kaposi's sarcoma to go public with his diagnosis. People infected with HIV who develop AIDS frequently contract KS.

By this point, the "rare cancer seen in 41 homosexuals," barely mentioned in the New York Times in July 1981, had become widely known as the "gay cancer." Even health officials called HIV/AIDS this unofficially, as if there were some scientific merit to that naming.

At the time, KS was being discussed widely only in New York City. In San Francisco, coverage remained largely elusive. In October, two months before Campbell publicly announced he had KS, he went to the Walgreen's pharmacy in the gay Castro District armed with photos of his KS lesions and taped those on its windows. His messages encouraged other gay men who had the lesions to immediately be seen by a doctor.

With Campbell's public announcement came his realization that not nearly enough was being done in San Francisco to bring about awareness of the illness and combat it. He took it upon himself to swing into action. (bit.ly/2TMKzBj)

In February 1982, Dr. Marc Conant, whose first KS patient had been Bobbi Campbell, invited him to a meeting with other doctors and activists. This became the nucleus of the Kaposi's Sarcoma Research and Education Foundation established by Cleve Jones — a former intern of Harvey Milk, the gay activist and San Francisco's first out gay city supervisor who had been assassinated in 1978. The group later changed its name to the San Francisco

AIDS Foundation. Campbell, who quickly joined the Board of Directors, told Jones, "Nobody's doing anything. We've got to get people organized." And they started to do just that.

Other San Francisco organizations began springing up in opposition to the U.S. government's lack of response to the ongoing epidemic. People With AIDS was founded there by Bobbi Campbell in 1982 and became the first local group run by and for people with AIDS.

By 1983, Campbell was part of a larger national grouping that drafted The Denver Principles, the first manifesto of the AIDS Self-Empowerment Movement that sought to establish equal rights for people with AIDS, as well as demanding that PWA not be scapegoated or blamed for the epidemic. The principles called for greater transparency in the medical field in dealing with PWA and for solidarity between PWA and people not living with AIDS.

On May 2, 1983, PWA and other organizations held the first-ever candlelight vigil in San Francisco for those who had died of AIDS. Some of those present carried a banner, "Fighting for Our Lives," which became a popular slogan in the HIV/AIDS struggle. More than 10,000 people attended.

All the while, the Reagan administration continued to ignore and even mock the tens of thousands who were organizing and mobilizing against a plague that was killing them.

#### Anti-war, anti-imperialist, anti-racist organizers to the frontlines

In July this writer interviewed Workers World Party Bay Area member Joanie Marquardt, who lived in both Los Angeles and San Francisco during the early years of the epidemic. She emphasized that early organizers in the HIV/AIDS epidemic were veterans of the anti-war, anti-imperialist and anti-racist movements of the 1960s and '70s. They were queer people who had protested against the Vietnam War and the U.S.-backed coup that overthrew democratically elected President

Salvador Allende of Chile.

They were queer people who had participated in the 1979 White Night Riots, after the acquittal of former cop and Supervisor Dan White, who shot and killed Harvey Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone in November 1978.

As the U.S. capitalist class let hundreds and eventually thousands of working-class and oppressed persons suffer and die of HIV/AIDS, gay and bisexual men were those who were primarily affected at the beginning of the epidemic.

Organizing shifted to militant queer mobilization against the mass murder of queer people. The lessons organizers had learned from the anti-racist, anti-imperialist movements of preceding decades came into play. As more deaths surged, more militant mobilizations did as well. For instance, AIDS Action Pledge was founded in San Francisco to conduct actions to raise awareness and demand treatment for AIDS. AAP became ACT UP San Francisco in 1987.

In July 2021 this writer spoke with Stephanie Hedgecock, a Workers World Party member who lived in San Francisco during this period. Hedgecock recounted how the AIDS-Related Conditions (ARC) Vigil began in 1985. This protest started when two men with HIV/AIDS, Steven Russell and Frank Bert, chained themselves to the door of the Federal Building in U.N. Plaza in San Francisco to demand the U.S. government stop its policy of inaction and apathy towards the epidemic.

The ARC protest lasted over 10 years, until 1995, becoming a full people's encampment in the U.N. Plaza, complete with counseling, food, health services and information on risk prevention. The participants consisted largely of homeless gay men who were constantly subjected to anti-gay harassment and ridicule by passersby. Fortunately, the solidarity of the people of San Francisco was stronger than the attacks of the few, and the encampment was kept stocked with food, blankets and other supplies.

Demands of the AIDS/ARC Vigil



WW PHOTO

HIV/AIDS activist Bobbi Campbell (right) and Workers World Party comrade Leslie Feinberg embrace in the All Peoples Congress office, San Francisco, 1983.

included \$500 million for AIDS research, benefits for people with AIDS-related conditions, Food and Drug Administration approval for U.S. physicians to prescribe treatments available in other countries — and for Reagan and his administration to condemn discrimination against those with AIDS, AIDS-related conditions and all affected groups.

The year the AIDS/ARC Vigil began, Reagan backed spending \$286 billion on the military alone. (bit.ly/3xB9DZI) That the ARC protest lasted long after the Reagan presidency tells one whether the vigil's demands were met or not.

Despite the radical origins of many of the San Francisco organizations, the early formations were hesitant to embrace a socialist perspective. Many participants believed that entry into the Democratic Party was the key. But over time, as militant resistance grew, a movement was born, with thousands and eventually millions of people demanding free housing, free treatment and free health care for people with HIV/AIDS.

Ellen Catalinotto, who contributed to this article, worked for nearly 30 years as a nurse-midwife in New York City hospitals, where she participated in research that led to the first breakthrough in preventing mother-to-child transmission of the AIDS virus. Devin Cole is a transgender Marxist organizer and writer. They are the president of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative), a transgender advocacy organization in northwest Florida and a member of the Workers World Party—Central Gulf Coast (Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi) branch.

# The storm before the storm

There is no doubt that the climate catastrophe threatens the future of life on the planet. A massive mobilization of the working class will be needed to combat this threat.

But, as Hurricane Ida and the associated flooding revealed, this is not just a threat to future generations — climate change is already a killer. Not only have dozens of people drowned in the hurricane's wake, but hundreds are dead from the heat wave in the Northwest.

Structural failures under capitalism are compounding the climate catastrophe for the working class. As the Sept. 3 New York Times admitted, "Disasters cascading across the country this summer have exposed a harsh reality: The United States is not ready for the extreme weather that is now becoming frequent as a result of a warming planet."

We see a clear lack of preparedness in the richest country in the world. There is no regard for poor, oppressed and working-class people, who get no evacuation assistance in a life-threatening situation and are basically left to their own devices.

The trillion-dollar infrastructure bill passed by Congress "includes \$150 billion for clean energy and climate change protections. Tens of billions would also be utilized to fight extreme weather like drought, wildfire, flooding and erosion." (PBS, Aug. 5)

Tens of billions is woefully inadequate.

Consider, on the 16th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, how Louisiana and Mississippi were devastated, their governments still not fully prepared for another major weather event. One million people remain without

power and with little gas and water during the worst heat of the summer.

Throughout New York's five boroughs and parts of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, people were trapped, some dying in flooded basement apartments, others unable to commute to work or do essential tasks due to collapsed roadways and bridges, totaled vehicles and flooded subways and expressways.

Lack of money isn't the problem. There is incredible wealth concentrated in New York City and the surrounding areas, yet workers who produce that wealth were helpless in the rush of floodwaters. If the financial fortunes in Wall Street alone were taxed at the same rate as an average worker, funds could be used to prevent many of these tragic deaths.

Manhattan is an island of asphalt, with too little exposed soil to absorb floodwaters. The land was stolen from Indigenous people and then built up to serve the interests of finance capital — people and the environment be damned. As with every major urban center, money in the city budget — needed for infrastructure repairs and improvements — instead goes to city bondholders. Big Wall Street banks extort bloated interest payments from New York and other cash-strapped cities.

## Time for 'system change, not climate change'

"The pattern of damage reflects the relationship between climate exposure and racial inequality; impacts were more apparent in low-income communities of color, which, because of historic inequalities, are more

prone to flooding, receive less maintenance from city services and frequently experience lax housing code enforcement," the New York Times acknowledges.

Environmental terrorism and environmental racism in the U.S. are part of the legacy of capitalist development. And the situation is far worse in the colonized Global South.

But socialist Cuba, with far fewer resources than the U.S., has created a model for hurricane evacuation that looks out for every human being — and even pets and livestock. The whole population is mobilized, and no one is left to fend for themselves.

A program of working-class demands is necessary to meet the twin crises of global warming and faulty or woefully inadequate infrastructure: Money for flood protection and relief, not for war! Money for cooling centers in a heat wave, not for tax breaks to the rich! Money for green jobs, not interest to the banks! People and the planet before profits; make the fossil fuel industry pay to clean up the messes it made!

This is just a start. It will take a monumental struggle to win climate justice.

But rebellion is inevitable. Hurricane Ida is the storm of wind and rain before the coming storm of protest. The challenge is to carry future waves of resistance through to their essential conclusion: a workers' revolution for the abolition of capitalist wage-slavery.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, writing in 1848, said the workers "have a world to win."

That world's very fate is in our hands. □

## WW demands 'Hands off Roe v. Wade!'

Workers World condemns in the strongest terms the Supreme Court of the United States 5-4 ruling Sept. 2 that refused to restrict a Texas law banning abortion procedures as early as six weeks into a person's pregnancy.

The Texas statute also codifies the right for anyone, including a complete stranger, to sue a person seeking an abortion or someone assisting them for \$10,000. This is reminiscent of bounties used by slave patrols for the return of runaway enslaved Black people back to the plantation.

This is the same Texas with the highest rate of medically uninsured people in the country. Texas denied the expansion of the Affordable Care Act, which would have increased federal monies for Medicaid programs for low-income people, including those living with disabilities as well as single mothers and children. A disproportionate number impacted are people of color including

migrants. Most working poor aren't even eligible for Medicaid.

This is the same Texas that has executed far more incarcerated people than any other state since reinstating the death penalty in 1976. And Texas was the last state to grant freedom to once-enslaved people in 1865, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was passed in 1863.

So it should come as no surprise that, at this moment, Texas has taken the lead in instituting the most draconian anti-abortion law to date, with Mississippi, the poorest U.S. state, threatening to pass a similar law later on this fall.

Nancy Northup, president and chief executive of the Center for Reproductive Rights, one of the groups suing Texas, stated: "We are devastated that the Supreme Court has refused to block a law that blatantly violates Roe v. Wade. Right now, people seeking abortion across Texas are panicking. They have no idea

where or when they will be able to get an abortion, if ever. Texas politicians have succeeded for the moment in making a mockery of the rule of law." (Washington Post, Sept. 2)

### A threat to Roe v. Wade

This Texas law championed by the majority of SCOTUS puts into serious jeopardy Roe v. Wade, the groundbreaking law that won the right to abortion for all women, including the poorest. The landmark legal decision was issued in 1973 by one of the most conservative Supreme Courts, during the Richard M. Nixon administration. A mass movement led by women was decisive in forcing this ruling that declared women had the right to control their own reproductive system, not the church and not the state, including all levels of government.

Today, due to technological advancements, the right to abortion is also extended to gender-nonconforming

people. The Texas law doesn't even extend the right to abortion for survivors of rape and incest.

Now a majority of states are attempting to pass laws similar to Texas that could completely overturn Roe v. Wade.

Since the beginning of class society thousands of years ago, women were viewed as property by men, no different from a horse or cow. Women were used as incubators to produce sons as heirs. This recent law reinforces this second-class status for keeping women enslaved at home and disempowered, which has become increasingly more difficult economically with the raging pandemic.

It has just been announced that on Oct. 2, nationally coordinated marches will take place in every state capital to defend the right to abortion, initiated by at least 90 feminist organizations. The Democratic Party will no doubt play a leading role in calling for these demonstrations, which nevertheless will be of a progressive character. However, those on the left, including our Party, must take an independent, anti-capitalist position to distinguish from this bourgeois, racist and pro-war party, similar to the Republican Party.

We cannot rely on either of the bourgeois parties, SCOTUS or any arm of the repressive state to defend or save our class from right-wing slander and anti-abortion bigots. The best way to defeat these anti-woman and anti-oppressed gender forces, legal and extralegal, is to build a powerful multinational, multigendered and multigenerational movement, similar to Black Lives Matter, with sustained protests with mass and militant tactics to both defend and strengthen Roe v. Wade.

The right to abortion must be made part of a whole program of fightback to promote the right to raise healthy children in a society free from racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia; where health care including prenatal and neonatal care, affordable housing, nutritional foods, a clean environment and the right to a union job and livable wage are rights for all working and oppressed peoples. Defend Roe v. Wade! Down with SCOTUS! □

## Ed Asner, actor and activist

By Martha Grevatt

On Aug. 29, Ed Asner passed away. To television watchers he is best known for his Emmy-winning performances as Lou Grant on The Mary Tyler Moore Show and the spinoff, Lou Grant.

To the progressive movement, however, Asner was a staunch ally. The United Farm Workers, after learning of Asner's death, tweeted: "We mourn the passing of actor and activist Ed Asner, who championed Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers since the 1970s."

Serving as president of the Screen Actors Guild from 1981-1985, the legendary actor took a number of progressive positions. The Guild donated money to support families of striking air traffic controllers and withheld an award to former SAG president, U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

Asner was red-baited throughout his career because of his activism; he suspected this was the reason the popular, award-winning Lou Grant series was canceled in 1982.



Ed Asner, center, at a rally in support of striking air traffic controllers.

these acts, such as a unilateral invasion of Iraq, and to the abrogation of civil liberties in this country to pursue these warlike acts by this administration." (democracynow.org)

As current SAG-AFTRA President Gabrielle Carteris posted on the union's website, Asner "fought passionately for his fellow actors, both before, during and after his SAG presidency. But his concern did not stop with performers. He fought for victims of poverty, violence, war, and legal and social injustice, both in the United States and around the globe." (sagaftra.org). □

## Argentine Marxist on Afghanistan

# An imperialist defeat, but no analogy to Saigon 1975

This Aug. 25 interview with Claudio Katz, Argentine member of Left Economists and political analyst, was published in *lahaine.org* and translated by Michael Otto.

**Mario Hernández:** The images of Saigon come to my mind, regarding the situation in Afghanistan. Only the images, because I do not have the same ideological identification with the Taliban. But undoubtedly this withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan reminds us of the defeat of imperialism in Vietnam. What do you think about it?

**Claudio Katz:** First the obvious: It is another defeat, a fiasco and a total humiliation of U.S. imperialism. The army they had trained with Special Forces deserted; their puppet government disintegrated, and there was an abrupt flight of everyone who worked for the Pentagon. The images you mention are pathetic, of helicopters, airports overwhelmed by a mass of people desperate to escape. A striking image.

I would say that we have to remember that the negotiations with the Taliban that [President] Joe Biden was carrying out, and that Donald Trump had started, collapsed, because these presidents had already concluded a long time ago that the U.S. had lost the war. They expected to keep some contingents of U.S. troops in place, but everything was left up in the air. It was a crushing defeat.

The U.S. was unable to win a war during two decades in which it had deployed 200,000 troops and spent \$35 billion per year.

First, what is relevant is that this lightning withdrawal demolishes all the lies spread by the U.S. for so many years. We now know that they did not invade in retaliation for the attack on the Twin Towers — because that crime was committed by a Saudi network — not by an Afghan network. Osama Bin Laden [head of al-Qaida] was not an Afghan. And Biden admitted that the U.S. never intended to create a democracy. It's what we always knew.



Pakistani protesters rally against the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in Karachi, September 2001.

### Imperialist goals

The U.S. occupied Afghanistan because of the strategic location of that country, which is very close to China and Russia, crisscrossed by all the routes across Central Asia. The U.S. did not go there to modernize the country. They installed military bases that were financed on the ground with the production of opium and heroin, which expanded significantly during all these years of NATO presence.

Nor was the goal to fight terrorism. We recall that the mujahideen who preceded the Taliban were fabricated by the CIA in 1978 to destroy an Afghan government that was secular, progressive and allied with the USSR.

And, of course, the U.S. never defended women, even to the extent that in recent years they have been dealing with the Taliban, who operate a network of buying and selling of women with unimaginable degradation.

What Washington really wanted to do with the Taliban was to arrive at a coexistence similar to the one it has with the theocratic regime of Saudi Arabia, which

oppresses women in a very similar way that the Taliban does.

The abrupt retreat created a crisis scenario with everyone blaming each other. Boris Johnson disagrees with Biden. Trump has resurfaced, and the Yankee generals don't know what to say. The U.S. confronts a dilemma: Either maintain a tough stance to see if they can regain lost international space — or seek to negotiate with the Taliban, which could help the U.S. save face by manufacturing the image that they have changed and become more reasonable.

Let's see what the Taliban do, because there is a new generation of leaders. Let's see if they disguise their fanaticism or plunge the country back into the Middle Ages, dominated by the most reactionary religious law.

### Taliban less isolated

I think these Taliban now are not as isolated as the Taliban of the past generation. They have many agreements with Russia. Putin is very pragmatic, and he made arrangements with the Taliban, as he wants to distance them from the

terrorist groups that are closer to Saudi Arabia. Above all, the Taliban have signed many agreements in recent years with China. The country has already been incorporated as a de facto member of the Silk Road.

**MH:** Because it is a strategic location.

**CK:** To let the gas pipeline pass through there, as it were. So, I would say that the fall of Kabul is a geopolitical fact, with consequences that we will see later. In the immediate term, it severely affected Biden's domestic program, which was for a Keynesian revival and the coordination of an international bloc against China. But in order to carry out his program, he needed political oxygen, and that oxygen has been sucked out with this defeat in Afghanistan.

I would like to make a final point. We must be very careful with the analogy that is being made all the time with Saigon in 1975.

**MH:** I am referring only to the images.

**CK:** Precisely because of that. Because there are many images that are similar. The abrupt departure from the two places is so similar, even the very role-playing that Biden did, promising that the escape from Saigon would not be repeated. But as you well warned, be careful with the comparison because the only thing they have in common is the imperialist failure. Everything else is totally different.

In Vietnam the revolutionary forces triumphed, and in Afghanistan it was the reactionary militias. The Taliban are the absolute inverse of the Vietcong. It is a band of troglodyte clerics, who are the opposite of a liberating army. The medieval oppression that they promote is the antithesis of an emancipatory project of communism. What we have is a defeat of imperialism, not a triumph of anti-imperialism in this case.

Likewise for Latin America this is good news, because any defeat of imperialism on a global scale widens the margin of autonomous action within our region, because it restricts the aggressive capacity of the U.S. □

## U.S. workers being pushed into an abyss

Continued from page 7

Dr. William Spriggs, chief economist for the AFL-CIO and an economics professor at Howard University, commented to Business Insider on the frequent refrain in the business press that companies can't find workers. Dr. Spriggs called this "the self-evident discrimination in the labor market revealing itself."

"This is discouraging," Spriggs said. "And the constant reports: 'There's a labor shortage. We can't find anybody!' These numbers say no, it's not that you can't find anybody — you can't find the people you want. This is two different things." ([tinyurl.com/bmusvhzh](https://tinyurl.com/bmusvhzh))

In addition, in April the BLS reported women's unemployment has increased by 2.9% more than men's. Women and gender-oppressed workers have been especially hard hit by the pandemic.

### Economy still turbulent

One of the features of the current world economy is globalization, which means production of a given product is spread over a number of countries. "Just-in-time" manufacturing is a practice by which companies rely on timely deliveries in place of large inventories, which tie up

capital and are subject to taxation.

This means major companies manufacturing autos and trucks rely on a few factories in Taiwan and mainland China for computer chips that are essential components of their products. These factories were shut down in anticipation of a drop in demand due to COVID. Then chip manufacturers started back up to supply

the increased demand for chips in personal electronics. When auto companies needed chips, they were last in line. They have had to limit production, resulting in major layoffs.

Beyond these hitches in chip supply, which are extremely significant, there is a major transportation problem.

At least half the trade between

countries in this era of globalization is conducted using containers, essentially truck trailers stacked on container ships by the thousands. While moving 10,000 or more containers on a ship only requires the labor of 20 or 30 seafarers, the facilities to unload them and send them to their final destinations are specialized and have been disrupted by COVID-induced shutdowns.

At the end of August, 44 container ships were waiting to dock and unload at the port of Los Angeles/Long Beach in California, which handles most of the trade between China and the United States. The normal backlog at LA/LB is zero to one ship. There are similar backlogs — although none as large — at other U.S. ports.

The waiting for essential goods like sheetrock, small motors, toilet paper and so on is very disruptive and a good part of why so many workers are unemployed.

The lack of planning under capitalism, driven by competition, has combined with the COVID pandemic to create mass suffering for workers. Now benefits that helped mitigate suffering have been eliminated by the heartless capitalist state. □



The pandemic continues to disrupt trade and shipping. Here: containers stockpiled at Long Beach Port in California on Aug. 20.



Cuomo huye de la casa del estado.

## Cuomo afuera, #TimesUp para todos los misóginos de la clase dominante

Finalmente, después de meses de negaciones, despidos y excusas débiles por múltiples incidentes de acoso sexual, el gobernador de Nueva York Andrew Cuomo ha renunciado a su cargo. Esta acción se produjo sólo después de que la fiscal general del estado, Letitia James, una mujer africana-americana, publicara el 3 de agosto un mordaz informe de 168 páginas sobre su investigación de cuatro meses.

La abogada de derechos civiles e investigadora Anne Clark informó de que 11 mujeres que prestaron testimonio -muchas de las cuales se han identificado públicamente- consideraron el comportamiento del gobernador "profundamente humillante y ofensivo". Cada una de ellas relató de forma gráfica y detallada los manoseos, las caricias, los besos y los comentarios insinuantes sin invitación. La mayoría experimentó el abuso en un entorno de trabajo, pero la hija de Sherry Vill fotografió al gobernador Cuomo cuando parecía forzar un beso a Vill en su casa durante una visita a los daños causados por las inundaciones en la casa en 2017. (ABC News, 10 de agosto)

### Creemos a los supervivientes.

Rechazamos inequívocamente las patéticas explicaciones de Cuomo de que sus acciones fueron "errores" o que no había "faltado al respeto a las mujeres intencionadamente." Más aún, rechazamos sus negaciones de toques no deseados, que intentan convertir en

mentirosas a las valientes mujeres que se presentaron, muchas de ellas con riesgo de perder sus carreras e ingresos.

### MUNDO OBRERO editorial

Los acontecimientos que han conducido a la dimisión no son inusuales. Millones de mujeres y trabajadores con problemas de género sufren abusos sexuales por parte de sus jefes, así como de sus compañeros de trabajo.

Los trabajadores de color son especialmente vulnerables, debido a las múltiples formas de discriminación a las que se enfrentan. Tanto como los hechos de este caso, los conflictos políticos dentro de la clase dirigente contribuyeron a la caída del vengativo, abrasivo y abusivo gobernador.

### Cuomo, uno entre millones

La exposición pública sólo suele ocurrir con los abusadores de alto perfil, y entre ellos no sólo se encuentra el gobernador Cuomo, sino el presidente Joe Biden y el ex presidente Donald Trump, por no mencionar al esclavizador racista Thomas Jefferson y los notorios mujeriegos John F. Kennedy y Bill Clinton. Entre los abusadores sexuales se encuentran los jueces del Tribunal Supremo Brett Kavanaugh y Clarence Thomas, este último denunciado por Anita Hill hace 30 años.

Otros entre los más famosos incluyen al productor de cine Harvey Weinstein, cuyo comportamiento de acoso y agresiones llevó a 300 mujeres de la industria del entretenimiento a lanzar #TimesUp en 2018.

El movimiento 'Me Too', iniciado por Tarana Burke en 2006, se convirtió en un nombre familiar después de que un hashtag publicado por Alyssa Milano atrajera millones de respuestas. Trabajadores de todos los ámbitos señalaron con el dedo a sus empleadores misóginos, incluidos los altos cargos de los deportes, la televisión, el cine, las finanzas, la industria manufacturera, la agricultura, los restaurantes y los hoteles, por no hablar de los "servidores públicos" elegidos, como los mencionados anteriormente. McDonald's y Google fueron golpeados con huelgas por acoso sexual.

Digámoslo de nuevo: ¡Creemos a las supervivientes!

No sólo han sobrevivido al abuso del agresor, sino a todo el sistema capitalista, que perpetúa la misoginia, el racismo, el capacitismo, la opresión anti-LGBTQ2S+ y la explotación de clase, todo lo cual crea desequilibrios de poder en el lugar de trabajo que los agresores utilizan en su beneficio.

Gracias Letitia James, por perseguir tenazmente la verdad que llevó al gobernador Cuomo a dimitir. Pero nosotros decimos que "se acabó el tiempo" para todos los opresores sexistas en posiciones de poder: ¡cada uno de ellos debe irse!

De hecho, es hora de deshacerse de la estructura que fomenta y protege su tipo de comportamiento: el podrido modo de producción capitalista, basado en la explotación de los muchos por una pequeña clase propietaria asquerosamente rica.

¡Se acabó el tiempo! ¡Hablamos de una revolución! □

## Ya se ha oído todo antes

Ya lo hemos oído todo antes. El gobierno de Estados Unidos reclama un complot, una agresión o una crisis humanitaria en otro país. Luego, Washington utiliza el reclamo para justificar la invasión militar, la ocupación con "botas en el terreno" y/o la guerra por sanciones -guerras que se prolongan durante décadas.

Y siempre -¡sorpresa! - contra países que se atreven a hacer valer su derecho a la independencia nacional, económica o política, de los "intereses" de Estados Unidos.

Volvamos a 1898: El imperialismo estadounidense en expansión necesitaba un pretexto para invadir Cuba, Puerto Rico y Filipinas, todos ellos bajo control colonial española en aquella época. Cuando el acorazado estadounidense Maine estalló en el puerto de La Habana -sin pruebas de que España hubiera tocado el barco- los titulares de los periódicos estadounidenses gritaron: "¡Recuerden el Maine! Al diablo con España".

Y entonces la caballería Rough Rider de Teddy Roosevelt comenzó a tronar y matar por toda Cuba.

Avancemos hasta 2003: El general estadounidense Colin Powell, ante el Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU, juró que Irak tenía armas de destrucción masiva para justificar la destrucción casi total del país por parte de Estados Unidos, mediante bombardeos, invasiones y sanciones. Levantó algunos puntales -unos tubos de aluminio- y dijo: "Colegas, todas las declaraciones que hago hoy están respaldadas por fuentes, fuentes sólidas. No son afirmaciones. Lo que les estamos dando son hechos y conclusiones basados en inteligencia sólida". ("Lo que Colin Powell sabía", The Intercept, 6 de febrero de 2018)

La declaración "objetiva" de Powell quedó expuesta como la Gran Mentira en 2004 gracias a la información recopilada por miles de inspectores de la ONU y de Estados Unidos sobre el terreno en Irak. No encontraron "armas de destrucción masiva" en Irak, ni planes concretos para crear armas de destrucción masiva, ni capacidad para construir las, ni estímulos verbales de funcionarios iraquíes para construir las.

En 2001, el gobierno de Estados Unidos enarboló la bandera de los "derechos humanos" -la opresión de las mujeres en Afganistán por los talibanes- para justificar una guerra para controlar la tierra, el trabajo, la riqueza, los recursos minerales y el camino hacia el petróleo y el gas de ese país.

En 2021, Estados Unidos se retirará de Afganistán. Las mujeres y las niñas de ese país estarán bajo el dominio reaccionario de los talibanes. Hay una preocupación legítima al respecto.

No se está produciendo ninguna revolución progresista. Eso ocurrió en 1978, cuando los socialistas y comunistas afganos tomaron el poder y empezaron a derrocar siglos de dominio patriarcal en el país. Pero la intervención de Estados Unidos y las conspiraciones de la CIA acabaron con esa evolución positiva, y pusieron en marcha los acontecimientos que pusieron a los talibanes en el poder. ("Cuidado con el canto de la sirena: las mujeres y Afganistán", workers.org)

No podemos dejarnos engañar por las lágrimas de cocodrilo capitalistas que ahora se derraman sobre el destino de las mujeres en Afganistán. ¿Cómo respondieron las mujeres de Madison Avenue a la difícil situación de las mujeres y niñas afganas cuando Estados Unidos empezó a bombardearlas en 2001? Anna Wintour, editora de la revista Vogue, organizó un envío gratuito de pinta labios a ese país, supuestamente para elevar la "moral" de las mujeres, pero en realidad para probar un nuevo mercado para la industria de los cosméticos. (London Telegraph, 17 de noviembre de 2002)

Estamos a favor de la liberación de la mujer y, al mismo tiempo, en contra del imperialismo. Sabemos que las mujeres y las personas oprimidas por su género



FOTO: VIC REINHART/OHIOAKTREE

Manifestantes en Washington, D.C., protestan contra la guerra de Irak el 21 de marzo de 2009, con la pancarta "Lucha contra los ricos, no apoya sus guerras".

nunca encontrarán un camino de liberación a través del pantano del capitalismo y el imperialismo.

Hay una lista interminable de guerras en las que los imperialistas hicieron sus juegos de manos para cubrir el hecho de que ellos son los opresores y el capitalismo el sistema opresor.

El gobierno de Estados Unidos, ya sea encabezado por demócratas o republicanos, fabrica pruebas, engaña por omisión, socava los movimientos progresistas y nos enfrenta unos a otros, para tratar de engañar a los trabajadores y a los oprimidos y obligarnos a trabajar y matar para el capitalismo que nos explota.

Para trabajar por la liberación de las mujeres y de los oprimidos de género - por la liberación de los trabajadores y de todos los oprimidos - debemos mantenernos firmes en el camino hacia el socialismo, organizándonos de todas las formas creativas posibles contra el capitalismo. □