Eviction resistance

By Workers World Bureau
Philadelphia

A long anticipated confrontation between residents fighting for housing justice and the Philadelphia Sheriff's Department, protecting gentrifiers' interests, broke out Aug. 8 — 30 days after the start of a protest "tent city.

Around 70 low-income Black and Brown residents of the University City Townhomes, on the corner of Market and 40th Streets, had protested their pending eviction, scheduled for Sept. 8. To draw public and media attention to their struggle to retain affordable housing and remain in their community, the residents and supporters set up 15 to 20 tents on the site July 9. Large banners around the area proclaimed it "the People's Townhomes."

A barrier fence made from wooden pallets secured together and painted with colorful slogans surrounded the complex. Some of the signs attached called out the owner Brett Altman: "Shame on Altman; Don't treat us like trash!"

The protests drew broad support from community members, particularly other housing activists. Information tables at the site were maintained throughout the month-long protest.

On July 22 a Common Pleas Court of Philadelphia judge granted a request by property owner Altman Group to dismantle and remove all tents, tables, chairs and canopies used by the protesters. After residents and their supporters continued to defy the court order, on Aug. 5 the same judge issued a final order for the Sheriff's Department to remove the protest encampment Aug. 8.

Cops do gentrifiers' work

Expecting the Sheriff's Department to show up to remove the tents, residents and their supporters put out the alert to gather early in the morning of Aug. 8. Around 100 people responded, prepared to defend the camp.

They started with a rally at 40th and Market streets at 8 a.m. before the sheriffs came. Residents Darlene Foreman and Melvin Hairston led chants and thanked everyone for coming. They noted that the fight for housing is a national struggle, one that will break out beyond Philadelphia, and that this is just the beginning.

Pam Africa spoke, reminding people that this was the anniversary of the police eviction of MOVE members from

Palestine will be free!

By Richie Merino
New York City

Thousands of supporters of the Palestinian struggle for liberation from Zionist settler-colonialism marched through the streets of midtown Manhattan occupying the steps of the Israeli Defense Forces office, Grand Central Station, the Egyptian Consulate, Mayor Eric Adams' International Affairs Office and the United Nations headquarters for nearly three hours.

Workers World Party members marched alongside Palestinian-led organizations, including Within Our Lifetime, Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, the Palestinian Youth Movement and Existence is Resistance, who organized the demonstration in response to the three-day bombing campaign waged by Israel against occupied Gaza, in which 43 civilians were killed, including 15 children.

As supporters marched through the streets waving Palestinian flags and chanting "resistance is justified, when people are occupied!" they were met with applause by pedestrians and enthusiastic honks by passing cars.

There was a group of pro-Israeli Zionists who tried to disrupt the rally, but they were far outnumbered by the thousands of supporters of Palestine chanting "Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea, within our lifetime!" (*)

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Palestine supporters outside the U.N. in New York City, Aug. 8.

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Rep. Rashida Tlaib wins, Zionists lose

By Martha Grevatt

Rashida Tlaib of Detroit made history Jan. 3, 2019, when she became the first Palestinian-American Representative in the U.S. Congress. Tlaib and Rep. Ilhan Omar were also the first two Muslim women elected to the House. Using her position to denounce Israeli apartheid, Rep. Tlaib has drawn the ire of Zionist organizations. But she was reelected in 2020 and will most likely be reelected to the House Nov. 8, hav- ing won the Michigan Democratic primary election Aug. 2.


In typical racist fashion, Rep. Tlaib’s Zionist oppo- nents played the game of pitting the African-American and Arab communities against one another. In an attempt to draw Black voters away from Tlaib — whose redrawn 13th District now includes Dearborn and Dearborn Heights, the heart of Michigan’s Arab com- munity — a group calling itself Urban Empowerment Action PAC promoted the candidacy of Detroit’s African-American City Clerk Janice Winfrey.

The group, claiming to be a collaboration between Black and Jewish businesspeople, ran full-page ads in the Detroit newspapers, attacking Rep. Tlaib for, among other things, advocating defunding the police. The PAC claimed this would hurt the Black community. One of Winfrey’s campaign priorities was “supporting Israel as a free state.” (ballotpedia.org)

The tactic failed miserably. Rep. Tlaib, whose cam- paign calls for “racial and immigration justice, econ- omic and housing justice, health care for all, human rights around the world, environmental justice and LGBTQ+ and gender justice,” received 68% of the vote in her multiracial district. (rashidarforcongress.com)

Racism and voting rights

Historically the electoral process in the U.S. has been set up to block or limit the representation of Black and other communities of color. Rich white men have dom- inated the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government.

Detroit is disenfranchised under the new congressional district map that reduced the number of Black-majority House districts in Michigan. When Rep. Brenda Lawrence retires next year, there will be no Black representatives in Congress from south- east Michigan — for the first time since 1913. The new Michigan state legislature, whose districts were also remapped, will have fewer Black representatives.

The election and reelection of members of the Squad represent a win against the historic, systemic disenfran- chisement of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian and Arab voters.

But to bury systemic racism once and for all, the multinational working class must put an end to the capitalist system that profits from all forms of oppres- sion — including Israeli apartheid.

If you’re interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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

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

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on immigrants, misogyny, LGBTQ+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means homelessness, 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 of anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, even if they make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are ginned 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 strug- gles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multilingual working class. It is time to point the blame at — and chal- lenge — 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 cap- italist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1930, 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.

Join us in the fight for socialism!

workers.org
**Victory brings smiles to Uvalde families**

By Gloria Rubac

“What joy! Finally! To see Uvalde families smiling,” exclaimed Angela Villegas, a founder of Fierce Madres in Uvalde, Texas. Villegas explained to Workers World that a planned fundraiser by the Medina County Friends of the National Rifle Association had just been canceled, and this victory was joyous.

As July marked its last Saturday, the small Chamber in Uvalde, Texas, the birthplace of the high school massacre, was filled with young people and their families. Garza, one of the few Spanish-speaking families in the area, were still reeling from excruciating pain and sorrow, which evolved into anger following the May 24 murders of 19 young school children and two teachers at Robb Elementary in Uvalde. At the fund-raiser they had planned to raffle an AR-15 weapon, the same gun that the killer had used in Uvalde.

Uvalde families, led by Fierce Madres, along with Houston residents protested at a special Hondo City Council meeting Aug. 1. After a raucous meeting with tempers flaring and cops standing at the ready, the council decided to cancel use of city facilities for the planned Aug. 6 NRA event.

Longtime Chicano activist in Hondo, Chavel Lopez told Workers World: “They must have looked at the whole picture and realized it would have been hard to control things if they had allowed this fundraiser to happen. I didn’t really expect the vote to be good, since many on the City Council are conservative. So, I was surprised. But it was just not right to host a pro-NRA organization.”

“It’s a victory,” Garza, a founder of victim Amerie Jo Garza, a 10-year-old girl killed May 24, was escorted out of the contentious council meeting after confronting a speaker supporting the NRA.

“Young children’s voices never have been so heard in Uvalde,” Garza said. “I would like to see this not be a one-time thing. This is just the beginning of our fight. We expect the vote to be good, since many on the Council are conservative. So, I was surprised. But it was just not right to host a pro-NRA organization.”

Her stunning beauty and dancer’s carriage, she was discovered by the legendary jazz communications officer for the Starship. She played the role of Lieutenant Nyota Uhura, the first African-American woman to grace the stage of reruns, new generations saw and reserved for staging one of the longest walkouts of the Chicano civil rights movement.

*Washington Post, June 23*

Fierce Madres Villegas said that after the victory in Hondo, the NRA folks will be coming to smaller towns to raffle their AR-15s.

**Bill Russell was a revolutionary**

By Dave Zirin

Dave Zirin is the sports editor of The Nation and the author of “The Kaepernick Effect: Taking a Knee, Changing the World.” The following article first appeared at thenation.com/article/society/bill-russell-obituary/.

William Felton Russell revolutionized basketball with a simple innovation: jumping. In an era when players were told to stay fastened to the ground when playing defense, he jumped. And when Bill Russell jumped, he blocked shots. He blocked so many shots — while averaging an astounding 22.5 rebounds a game — that even though the blocked shot was not a stat that was kept during his day, it is widely assumed that he is the all-time leader.

Russell turned the blocked shot into an art form and played unselfish basketball en route to 11 championships and five MVPs in 13 years with the Boston Celtics. He also played a role in revolutionizing politics, and at this moment when the GOP is trying to roll back time — to in effect kill the reforms and memory of the Black Brilliance of MLK and empower his legacy is especially vital.

Russell flourished in a climate, both in Boston and around the country, that was relentlessly hostile toward him and his family because he was a famous Black man willing to speak his mind. Russell held a mirror up to this country. He once said, “We have got to make the white population uncomfortable, because that is the only way to get their attention.”

He believed that the discomfort he caused among white Bostonians in particular counted as progress, because they were far too comfortable with their own racism. Russell, of whom there is now a statue in front of the Celtics arena, was treated terribly during a career that spanned the core years of the Black freedom struggle.

People broke into his home, scrawled racist epithets on the walls and even defecated in his bed. He once told a story about his car breaking down in Boston in a thunderstorm and his being unable to flag down a ride but hearing people curse at him as they drove by.

During the Russell dynasty, most Celtics games didn’t even sell out. That is why when his career was over, he said “I am a Celt, not a Boston Celt.” That is why he called Boston “a flea market of racism.” That is why he did not show up in 1972 when the team retired his number.

The NBA support group had planned a fundraiser in Medina County, next to Uvalde, at a time when families in that area are still reeling from excruciating pain and sorrow, which evolved into anger following the May 24 murders of 19 young school children and two teachers at Robb Elementary in Uvalde. At the fundraising event, they had planned to raffle an AR-15 weapon, the same gun that the killer had used in Uvalde.

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“I am a Celtic, not a Boston Celt.” That is why he did not show up in 1972 when the team retired his number.

But that is also why, when he reconciled with the team in 1999, and the fans stood and cheered, it was more than just a basketball honor.

“This was a special person, the kind of human being who would walk alongside Dr. Martin Luther King at the March on Washington but then declined to be on stage, because he had no patience for celebrity culture and he taught us that if he stood at the front, he would be disrespecting those risking their lives to end American apartheid.

This is a man that fights for his country by making the white majority uncomfortable was also seen in 1967 when Russell stood with Muhammad Ali, who was vilified for refusing to join the draft and refusing to fight in Vietnam. His soli- darity led to one of my all-time favorite Russell quotes. A reporter asked him, “Are you concerned about Muhammad Ali?” Russell paused and responded, “I’m not worried about Muhammad Ali. He is better equipped than anyone I know to withstand the trials in store for him. What I’m worried about is the rest of us.”

He also famously would make auto- graphs uncomfortable, refusing — even when criticized for it — to be treated like a commodity or anything less than a full human being. I can say from experience that approaching Russell for an autograph was a mistake, but approach- ing him and sharing that you agreed with his political commitment? That would earn you a smile and maybe a friendly, infectious laugh.

Russell never stopped defending what was right. He took a knee in solidarity with Colin Kaepernick while wearing his Olympic gold medal, in a viral photo.

In 2020, he spoke out in support of the NBA players who went on strike after the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin, backing them with moral authority and helping force the NBA and then most of the professional sports to almost entirely shut down in protest of racialized police violence. He would intro- duce himself as a civil rights activist.

Russell was a giant in the truest sense: fearless in the face of injustice — and never cared that he made bigots uncom- fortable. (*)

**Nichelle Nichols: aiming for the stars**

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

Almost nine decades ago, a few years shy of a century, in fact, a Black girl was born in Robbin’s, Illinois. The year: 1932.

That girl was actor Nichelle Nichols, who blazed to television fame in the series, “Star Trek,” which debuted in 1966. She played the role of Lieutenant Nyota Uhura, the communications officer for the Starship Enterprise. An actor, singer and dancer, she was discovered by the legendary jazz master and big-band composer Duke Ellington. Her stunning beauty and dancer’s carriage struck young boys and also inspired many young girls who aspired to a life on the stage. Although the original TV series only lasted until 1969, it sparked a franchise that continues to this day.

As July marked its last Saturday, Nichelle Nichols left this life. Her son, Kyle Johnson, wrote the following message on her Facebook page. He wrote, “Last night, my mother, Nichelle Nichols, succumbed to natural causes and passed away. Her light however, like the ancient galaxies now being seen for the first time, will remain for us and future genera- tions to enjoy, learn from and draw inspiration.”

Nichelle Nichols played several other roles in her long career, one that played on her science fiction role in “Star Trek.” She called for applications from women and people of color to join NASA, and thou- sand of applications poured in. Because of reruns, new generations saw and enjoyed her “Star Trek” performances. She lived to see 89 summers. As Lieutenant Uhura who would’ve said, “hailing frequencies are now closed.”

For love, not fear, this is Mumia Abu- Jamal.

(*)

Bill Russell takes a knee in solidarity with Colin Kaepernick

Bill Russell was a revolutionary

Nichelle Nichols: aiming for the stars
By Mumia Abu-Jamal

Workers World was saddened to learn of the death of Albert Woodfox, Aug. 4 from COVID-19-related complications. Woodfox, the last of the three Angola Three, died in February 2022, after spending nearly 45 years of incarceration, most in solitary confinement. This exchange between Woodfox, of the Angola Three, and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal was recorded by Prison Radio. It aired April 23, 2021, as part of an evening of solidarity with Abu-Jamal.

Mumia Abu-Jamal: You and the other Angola Three did an ungodly bid in the hole. How did the state justify locking you guys up for so long?

Albert Woodfox: Given the unchecked and unchallenged power of the prison system in Louisiana, their justification was the fact that myself, Hayford and Robert were fighting for humanity—the fact that we were fighting to maintain our big identity, pride, self-respect and a sense of self-worth. That was it. It was a threat to what they considered to be the only function of a prison. That was the “justification” here. The warden made a statement in a deposition that I was the most dangerous man in America. And since I’ve been out, I would like to think that my attitude has proven him to be right.

Maj: How did y’all endure 40 years in isolation?

AW: I had a wonderful family, wonderful comrades who made up the International Coalition to Free the Angola Three, a wonderful legal team. But more than anything, what gave me hope was the guys I lived around. The social structure that was being worked on, sacrifices that were being made, the indomitable spirit that refused to be broken. Now those are some of the things that inspired me. One thing in particular was the development of Black Lives Matter, which I think is a tremendous movement. And I was so proud to see all the young men and women involved in that movement come forth. As a matter of fact, the pandemic has really brought Robert and I, when we were traveling together and speaking, we always asked the host to arrange it so that we could meet with some of the young leaders in the movement. Those are the things that gave me hope, you know, a love of humanity, the indomitable spirit of the people and the continual struggle that was going on in society.

Maj: Brother Albert, and in the spirit of all the Angola Three, what’s your salute to those who still fight? You know, I think of early days, even before the trial began. There was a retrial hearing. I had read a law book showing cases from the U.S. Supreme Court. So it was based on the Constitution, right? I went to the library, read those actual cases, and Johnnie Cochran draped around the wall. I made a statement in court. Judge [Albert] Sabo promptly denied the motions. I couldn’t believe it. But it made me understand that the legal system most people meet, when they first go into court, wasn’t bound by a Constitution or Supreme Court rulings. They do whatever they want to do, because it really ain’t about the law. It’s about power.

Maj: Brotha, Sabo, would later say in open court, 15 years later in my appeal case, “Justice is just an emotional feeling.”

To quote Malcolm X, “Don’t be shocked when I say I was in prison. Long as you’re south of the Canadian border, you’re still in prison.” So, all power to the people.

AW: My brother, what is your most painful personal loss?

Maj: My mother and daughter, Edith and Samaia. I had dreams of walking with both of them in freedom. And, of course, other family members, brothers, sisters, cousins, brothers-in-law. They live in our memory and in our hearts.

AW: Again, my brother, what is your number one priority when freedom finally comes?

Maj: The same, as it has always been, to save the people of this country. To work for a world where true Black liberation is a reality, not just words. As for us to say freedom is a must. Thank you, Brother Woodfox.

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Boston Starbucks Workers United brings strike line to NLRB

By Steve Gillis

Boston, Aug. 7

Disgusted by the National Labor Relations Board’s one-size-fits-all enforcement apparatus seeming to stand by while billionaire Howard Schultz publicly and flagrantly wages illegal attacks against them, at 8 a.m. Aug. 1, Boston Starbucks Workers United (SBWU) took its strike line to the regional NLRB’s front door. At the Tip O’Neill Federal Building, strikers and their supporters alternated chants of: “Marty Walsh, we say no! Union busting’s got to go!” with “Howard Schultz, you can’t hide. We can see your heart.”

In addition to wagging an escalating war of firings of over 100 union leaders nationwide and a slash-and-burn scheduling campaign leaving thousands of baristas without food, rent money and health insurance, on Aug. 1 Starbucks announced to the world’s media that it was raising wages, installing tip apps on registers, enhancing gender-affirming health insurance and other benefits for NONUNION SHOPS ONLY!

Boston SBWU responded to this illegal provocation by initiating five-day strikes at all Boston and greater Boston and Worcester. All of them rallied in solidarity with the workers at 874 Commonwealth Ave. and on an unprecedented Unfair Labor Practice strike for three weeks as of this report. (workers.org/2022/07/05404/)

For decades, profit-driven strikes and flying squadrions coincided with a wave of dozens of strikes and job actions coast-to-coast Aug. 1. The rank and file-led SBWU burst onto the U.S. labor scene only eight months ago, with its first union vote in Buffalo, New York. The pirate flair of nearly 300+ unionized Starbucks shops has swept through Schultz’s empire of over 9,000 U.S. stores (34,000+ stores worldwide), posing a “Which Side Are You On?” crisis for leaders of the Democratic Party, like Labor Secretary Marty Walsh, once Boston’s “labor” mayor, and Schultz himself, who ran for President in 2020.

Photo ops for do-nothing politicians

Indeed, the week’s Boston strike lines saw a parade of local Democratic Party politicians—mayors, state representatives, attorneys general, city councilors and district attorneys—show up and post great pictures. All of them have the governmental authority and power to legally shut down any wage-cutting, anti-union style smashing. They could rule all fired workers eligible for unemployment benefits, based on the blatantly retaliatory mass terminations, including the Memphis 7.

In response to Starbucks’ threatening to run shops with scabs—like at the struck and closed-tilt 874 Commonwealth Avenue, where a 24/7 encampment has stepped all Transter driver deliveries—any one of these politicians could declare Starbucks’ violent plan a public safety threat and officially prohibit it.

Speaking at the NLRB’s front door, Tyler Daguerre, a barista at the struck Coolidge Corner store and a Boston SBWU leader, declared: “This is our power right here on the strike line! We can’t rely on government agencies like the NLRB and politicians like Marty Walsh, the mayor of the city that I want to come down here and show us some support, while we’re fighting for our lives out here with this union busting, here and around the country. They’ve been dead silent. No more performative White House ops. No more sweet tweets. We need substantive action to enforce workers’ rights law, now!”

’Mega’picket’

On Aug. 7, the union massed its forces and supporters at a “Mega-picket,” at the strike line entering its fourth week. Strikers blasted worker-power songs at the sound rings of simultaneous passing by in the Boston University neighborhood and played water balloon games in the 100 F degrees, the afternoon the store’s locked doors—decorated with “Howard Schultz WANTED” signs and a giant rainbow flag.

The moving picked altercation with robots of militant labor, with young workers representing a rainbow of nationalities and genders, jumping on benches and taking turns belting out their favorite songs of celebration and defiance with the crowd dancing and chanting in response. Despite weeks of picket duty in intense heat and extreme sacrifice, most of the performers revealed in a message of making history by taking action.

Anthony McWhorter, Young Black Panther Party Boston, leading chants at Aug. 7 Mega Strike Picket at Starbucks’ 874 Commonwealth Ave. shop.

To donate to Greater Boston Workers United’s emergency strike fund, set up by Boston’s Coalition of the Greater Boston Labor Council, readers are encouraged to go to tinyurl.com/yge3w7uw4. Check for updates and solidarity opportunities on Twitter @BostonSBWU.

Steve Gillis is a 37-year elected leader of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, USW Local 797, not retired from driving, and is working for the union’s members.
Grieving family wants killer-cop fired

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Jalen Randle was only 29 years old when he was murdered on a Houston street on April 27. His parents, Tiffany Rachal and Warren Randle, want answers. They want the Houston police, the cop who killed their son, fired and prosecuted. They want an independent investigation.

And they are using every method they can come up with to get to the truth.

There was a press conference at the courthouse.

There was a town hall meeting with the HPD chief and an independent representative from the DA’s office.

And the parents want it known who their son was. He was a son of Pleasantvale, a working-class Black neighborhood not far from a thriving Black community. Pleasantvale was the first Black deeded residential neighborhood in the U.S., a place where homes are passed down through families. The Randle family was a part of it. Randle was a high school football player by Houston in 1949 and built during the 1950s. Randle and his friends were raising their children where they grew up.

The Houston Chronicle reported June 3: “When Houston police officer Shane Privette shot Randle in the neck, Pleasantville lost a son. It lost a father and a youth sports coach. It lost an amateur veterinarian, a man who loved dogs and would help his friends give them shots when their own pets got sick.”

Jalen Randle spent his last weekend in Pleasantville, doing what he so often did — volunteering at the Judson Robinson Sr. Community Center. He spent several days a week coaching a youth football team with friends.

When asked about the town hall meeting, Tiffany Rachal told Workers World: “I felt like Chief Troy Finner told us what he thought we wanted to hear. But I need action. You can talk all day long, but we need action. My question to Finner is how many bad police in your time have you released? So, we are still searching for answers.”

The next event will be Friday, Aug. 19, at 9:30 a.m. at Houston City Hall. The demands: Get Shane Privette off the streets and stop recycling bad cops. 

Twenty years ago
Nigerian women took over ChevronTexaco, won concession

By Monica Moorehead


The quest for reparations by nation-ally oppressed peoples worldwide takes many forms. But the basis for this fundamental right is universal: just compensation to help bring about long overdue economic and political rights. Bold, heroic actions initiated by a group of African women in recent weeks must be viewed within this context and will cer-tainly inspire the most oppressed every-where to take similar actions, as capitalist greed allows the rich to get richer as the poor get poorer.

Hundreds of Nigerian women staged two separate dramatic takeovers of a U.S.-owned ChevronTexaco oil subsidiary called Escravos, south-east of Lagos, Nigeria’s capital. Escravos is a former slave pickup site, and the name itself means slave in Portuguese.

This takeover included taking a couple of thousand employees and manag-ers of the oil company hostage. In two separate takeovers, these indigent women brought oil production virtually to a halt. This subsidiary normally produces half a million barrels daily as a whole and produces 1.8 million barrels of oil a day, creating bil-lions in profits for Big Oil.

Why have these women risked their lives to “take over” these actions? They simply wanted to force a written agreement from ChevronTexaco, a multibillion-dol-lar multinational, that it would provide their communities with electricity, schools, water systems, health clinics and other infrastructure to raise the level of their living standards. The women are also demanding that jobs be provided, including to their unemployed sons, and that the oil be provided for people over the age of 60.

The women protesters also decided to take these actions, because when their male counterparts attempted similar actions, they faced a greater risk of being arrested or physically harmed by police.

This protest took place in the heart of the Niger Delta. Like so much of the African continent, this region is super-abundant in natural resources — in this case oil — but superunderdeveloped because of the legacy of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism and neocolonial-ism. It is considered one of the poorest regions in Africa.

Any commodity production within the developing economies exists mainly for export on the world capitalist market and not to serve the interests of the indigenous population. For instance, Nigeria is the world’s sixth-largest exporter of oil and the fifth-largest supplier of oil to the U.S.

“Why do they treat us like animals?”

The first stage of the takeover took place on July 8, 2002 when an estimated 150 women took over four stations at the refinery. One of the first questions the women used was to occupy the aircraft runway, helipad and dock at the facility. No roads lead to this plant — only swamps and rivers. This technological underdevelopment, rooted in imperialist plunder, is the root cause of this protest.

An engineer among the hostages told Agence France-Presse that the women “are complaining that their children have not been given employment. They are not armed or violent. Most of them are over 45, and there is no way we would lay a finger on them.” The major-ity of the workers in this plant are from the U.S., Canada and England. There are some Nigerian workers as well.

This particular phase of the pro-test ended on July 17, 2002 when pro- testers won a verbal agreement from ChevronTexaco that their demands would be met.

Another takeover by women occurred on July 18, 2002 at four more ChevronTexaco facilities, 50 miles east of the first protest. Their demands were similar to the ones that inspired the first takeover.

These women demanded that the Chevron officials visit their village to see firsthand the unspeakable poverty they have been forced to endure, compared to the state-of-the-art hospital, cafeteria, satellite television and other modern conveniences pro-vided for the Chevron employees.

Atholina Okuro, a 28-year-old, suffered the loss of her husband from an unknown disease. Her children are chron-ically sick from mosquito bites that are the main transmission route of malaria. She commented, “I don’t know how [ChevronTexaco] can allow other human beings to live like this. Why do they treat us like animals?” (Associated Press, July 18, 2002)

The protesters also charged ChevronTexaco with environmental damage, especially the destruction of fish and cassava crops, both main staples of the Nigerian people, by the flaring up of natural gas.

“Why do they treat us like animals?”

The Nigerian women protesters who had taken over five fuel stations owned and operated by ChevronTexaco declared victory on July 25, 2002. The women said they decided to end their eight-day siege of the stations because manage-ment had agreed to meet their demands to build schools and hospitals and pro-vide for the nutrition of their people. It remains to be seen if ChevronTexaco bosses will actually live up to their end of the deal.

The second siege of ChevronTexaco within a two-week span. The first took place at the Escravos sta-tion when another group of Nigerian women made the same demands on the multimillion-dollar conglomerate. These women won concessions as well.

The women were highly organized during both protests as they blockaded entrances and took hundreds of mainly foreign oil workers hostage. The siege brought oil production to a virtual halt.

The Niger Delta, where both protests took place, is rich in oil reserves. But it is also one of the poorest regions of Africa due to the tragic legacy of colonialism and Western imperialist plunder.

The women understand the despicable role ChevronTexaco plays in taking the precious resource of oil from their com-munity while not helping to create an eco-nomic infrastructure for the well-being of everyone in the region. The women were using direct action to say, “Enough is enough.”

Esther Tolar, one of the protesters, said: “History has been made. Our cul-ture is a patriarchal society. For women to come out like this and achieve what we have is out of the ordinary.”

Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper
Edited by Monica Moorehead

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination
Larry Holmes • Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery
Sam Marc • Black Youth: Repression & Resistance
Patrice Dowell
• The Struggle for Socialism is Key
Sam Marc • Black Reparations: The unfinished revolution
Minnie Bruce Pratt • Black & Brown Unity
• A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice
Saladin Muhammad • Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior
Miguel Tito Thomas • The U.S. role in Darfur Sudan
Dara Flounders • Haiti Needs Reparations
• No Sanctions Pat Chr - • Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation
Deirdre Griswold
• Africa needs reparations, not occupation and sanctions
Larry Holmes • The May Day uprising of 2006

Available at workers.org/books.
**Starbucks recruits CIA goon for union busting**

By Arjye Red

An Aug. 2 post on twitter from @UnionBustingBot, revealing Starbucks had recently hired former Pinkerton employee and CIA agent Amanda Stanfill as the Manager for Global Partner Resources, went viral. Starbucks has quite an impressive resume as an agent of the imperialist U.S. security state and a union-buster.

For the past year and a half, Stanfill was listed as a full-time Intelligence Analyst for Pinkerton. In the previous 12 years, she worked multiple U.S. government jobs, including Collection Management Officer for the CIA, Political Affairs Foreign Service Officer for the U.S. Department of State — where she managed information collection programs on three continents — and two CIA jobs as a Counter-Narcotics and Organized Crime Program Manager and North Korea-Asia Political Analyst.

This hiring comes right in the middle of the ruthless anti-union-busting war Starbucks is waging against its own workers. Howard Schultz has now made a name for himself as an anti-worker tyrant, so that few people who’ve been keeping up with the campaign are surprised to hear about even the most blatant examples of union busting, such as store closings and mass firings, which have become routine over the months since the start of the union campaign.

But this most recent hiring of a former Pinkerton and CIA agent is so cartoonishly sinister, it’s astonishing even to many Starbucks workers like myself, who’ve seen the union busting firsthand.

On Global Tilt for a few days, Starbucks has escalated union busting to an unprecedented level by pressing charges of assault and kidnapping against union organizers in South Carolina, after workers engaged in a march on the boss to peacefully deliver grievances. Ten of the 19 workers at this store have received a call from Starbucks Partner Resources representatives telling them that they’ve been placed on indefinite paid time off. Those who are not permitted to enter any Starbucks store in the country. This leaves one wondering if this is a new move out of the Pinkerton playbook.

At the time of this writing, Stanfill’s LinkedIn profile says that the screenshots were derived from her own bosses, likely an effort by the company to clean up after her profile went viral. There was also a page on the website Apollo that listed much of the same information on Stanfill’s employment history and current job at Starbucks, which has now been removed or edited heavily. But the screenshots still exist.

**CIA and Pinkerton legacy of brutality against workers**

It’s no mystery why Starbucks would want to cover its tracks. The bloody history of these agencies speaks for itself and tells you everything you need to know about how the company views its own workers. Both the CIA and Pinkerton have an extensive history of violence against workers and union organizers. The Pinkerton agency started out in the mid-1800s as a private investigator firm and has expanded to all sorts of activities related to espionage, security and strikebreaking. They laid the framework for what modern government intelligence agencies have become today.

Pinkerton has taken part in numerous high-profile massacres of workers and union organizers. The Pinkerton agency was behind the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, when Pinkerton agents alongside federal troops violently put down a nearly 70-day strike of railroad workers across the country, killing around 100 people. Pinkertons played a role in the famous Battle of Blair Mountain, where a violent struggle ensued between

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**On the picket line**

*By Marie Kelly*

**United Farm Workers march to secure voting rights**

The United Farm Workers (UFW) union is marching to Sacramento, the state capital of California, to pressure the governor to sign the Agricultural Labor Relations Voting Choice Act, legislation that would make it safer for farmworkers to vote in union elections. Dolores Huerta — co-founder with Cesar Chavez of the National Farm Workers Association, which later joined with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee to form the UFW — spoke at the march starting point in Delano, site of the historic 1965 Grape Strike.

Huerta had a message for the protesters: “We want to give a message to the growers that it’s time that they recognize the farmworkers, that they’re the ones that make them wealthy.” The workers want the same rights as other union members in the state; agricultural labor has become today. Pinkerton has at many points historically been used to violently repress the labor movement.

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**Dollar General workers strike in South Carolina**

The workers at the Holly Hill, South Carolina, Dollar General have been on strike since July 16 to force Dollar General management to meet their demands. These demands include a living wage and worker safety. Workers want their hourly wage bumped up to $15 an hour. Minimum hourly wage in South Carolina today is a measly $7.25, the federal minimum.

Safety concerns center around fire hazards and management’s failure to respond to workers’ reports. The protest march will reach Sacramento Aug. 26, gathering support and solidarity along the way. (tinyurl.com/zp88xcmu)

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**Reuters journalists strike to protest stalled contract negotiations**

Journalists held a one-day strike Aug. 4 at Reuters, one of the largest news agencies in the world. The 300 workers, represented by NewsGuild, say Reuters is dragging their feet in contract negotiations. The last contract expired in December 2020.

Reuters has offered an insulting 1% pay increase, which translates to a pay cut, given the rising cost of living today. “While we reporters are called away from our families in the middle of dinner, something as small as a 1% pay increase is hardly enough to do for the job. Reuters executives sit in the comfort of their home offices managing the profits we bring in for the company,” Reuters video reporter Julio-César Chávez noted in a NewsGuild statement. The company’s second-quarter revenues were $1.6 billion. (tinyurl.com/450vzvpp)

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**Verizon wireless union drive spreads to three states**

Verizon Wireless retail workers in Washington, Oregon and Michigan all filed with the National Labor Relations Board to vote to be represented by the Communications Workers (CWA). The Seattle workers won their union vote already, and Everett and Lynnwood, Washington, workers voted to ratify their new contract Aug. 4. Portland Verizon Express retail workers and two Flint, Michigan, stores have not yet had their election.

(cwa-union.org/news/bargaining-update-211)

Demands include fair compensation, safety, on the job and consistent scheduling. Workers cite a corporate culture that undervalues employees and is aggressively anti-union. In 2014, the Brooklyn, New York, wireless store became the first Verizon Wireless location to unionize, despite Verizon’s nasty union-busting campaign, and those CWA workers have also ratified the new contract Aug. 4. Portland Verizon retail workers and two Flint, Michigan, stores have not yet had their election.

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![Image 523x947 to 756x1111.png](image.png)
Israel bombs Gaza — where is the Western outrage?

Global warming causing worldwide heat-wave crises

By Richie Merino

On Friday, Aug. 5, Israeli occupation forces launched another bombing campaign in residential neighborhoods of the besieged Gaza Strip. By Sunday, 31 civilians had been killed, including six children, and more than 260 seriously wounded, according to the territory’s health ministry.

This latest Zionist attack on Gaza follows a series of provocations targeting Palestinian resistance leaders throughout occupied Palestine and specifically the arrest of the leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement, Bassam Al-Saad, in Jenin refugee camp, in which Israeli snipers assassinated another child, 77-year-old Dirar al-Karini.

Amid upcoming Israeli elections and internal political chaos amongst Zionist forces, the assault on Gaza give current Prime Minister Yair Lapid and war minister Benny Gantz the opportunity to “campaign” for votes through violence against the Palestinian people. Israeli politicians regularly brag about their willingness to shed Palestinian blood as a way to win votes. Gantz, overseeing the current attack, has said “for office by beating” that in 2014 he had bombed Gaza “back to the stone age.”

Large-open prison

The Israeli occupation is once again using “Palestinian terrorism” and “self-defense” as a pretext for their war crimes; but in reality, it is an attack on the entire Palestinian people in — Gaza and throughout occupied Palestine, from the river to the sea — for their steadfastness and principled commitment to Palestinian liberation. The Palestinian people in Gaza are incarcerated in the “world’s largest open-air prison” and denied their right to return home for 75 years.

The Zionist entity bears full responsibility for the escalation in violence against Gaza. With its own state, it is capable of taking the necessary steps to undo the rebuilding efforts and political reunification that have taken place since the popular uprisings of May 2021.

Alaa Abdallah's facebook

Alaa Abdallah, 9-year-old Alaa Abdallah Riyad Qaddoum of the besieged Gaza Strip. By Sunday, his family has brought its meaning home to bil- lions of people, who now have glimpsed the future. And rest assured, there is worse to come.

Conditions this summer have produced record temperatures that have led th- hundreds of millions of people to endure without air conditioning, some because these temperatures are unheard of where they live, and some even lack electricity to run fans. Many more lack air conditioners because of poverty, lack of power or because their housing structures are inadequate to support these cooling units. Worse still, millions of workers must continue to work despite sweltering heat, because their livelihoods are at stake.

In some areas of the world, climate migrants have already left their traditional homes in search of more habitable lands. It is not only very high temperatures that are causing great suffering. There have been devastating wildfires in France, Greece, Pakistan, and the Western U.S. and Fire, the Northern Hemisphere, which is now experiencing winter.

If global warming/climate change has remained abstract until now, this summer has brought its meaning home to billions of people, who now have glimpsed the future. And rest assured, there is worse to come.

The intense heat waves have caused road surfaces to melt. Forests are lost to fires and to pests infestation. Hundreds of thousands of homes and millions of acres of crops are burned; water supplies dry up, and wildlife is driven from traditional habitats. Soon hurricanes will be blowing through the Caribbean and the North Atlantic.

South Asia: record-breaking heat

South Asia is the home of over 2 billion people. Countries in the region include Pakistan with a population of 235 mil- lion, India, where 1.4 billion people live, and Bangladesh, in which 165 million people reside. Many people who live in South Asia earn less than $2 a day; if they don’t work, they starve. Most people living in this region are familiar with very hot weather and can usually cope with it.

Beginning in March, earlier than usual, the temperatures in South Asia rose so high that birds fell out of the sky, because the hot air didn’t supply their wings with enough lift. The temperature grew so hot in the region — the boldest recent record — that on April 26, the Bhawal landfill, which handles about half of Delhi’s waste, burst into flames. Thick clouds of dark, nox- ious smoke filled the air. Previous fires in Bhawal were quickly extinguished, but this blaze burned for weeks.

Brabhumdeep Singh, chief medical offi-
cer of Civil Hospital located outside of Delhi, told the New Yorker magazine, “We are moving to a hotter, more dangerous world. We have damaged the environ- ment beyond repair. Now the environment is damaging us.” (July 25)

This heat wave ended with torren- tial rains that caused significant flooding to usual summer monsoons and were much heavier. Over 2,000 villages in India were actually submerged. Mawsonvair, a vil- lage in a country that is not used to heavy rain, got nearly 40 inches of rain in one day. Thousands of houses, roads, bridges, schools and other public facilities were damaged or destroyed. (Inside Climate News, Aug. 2)

What can be done

These are the weather conditions today. What can be done about them?

The approaches fall roughly into two categories of action: 1) cut back and ulti- mate eliminate burning fossil fuels — oil, gas, coal; find ways to increase carbon absorption — plant millions of trees, strengthen forests and wetlands; and develop sustainable/regenerative agricultural practices; and 2) develop effective warn- ing systems and build resiliency into land- scapes and essential infrastructure.

Unfortunately, many processes of cli- mate change are already impacting the Earth, with melting of the glaciers and ice caps; changes in ocean currents and extreme weather events. These will not end, even if or when the levels of green- house emissions are reduced.

What is the mighty U.S. government — whose main mission is to preserve and expand U.S. capitalism — doing about this? Nearly half the states have signed a bill that characterizes at best as ineffective and late in the game. Take the Inflation Reduction Act, now ready for the final vote in Congress.

A Faustian bargain

This package incorporates billions of dollars worth of tax credits and subsidies to rescue the climate and to support “green energy” producers. Yet the hypocrisy and cynicism of this bill is astounding. Forbes Magazine, a ruling-class organ, calls the bill a Faustian bargain: “Tradeoffs in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 between climate protections and fossil fuel inter- ests could be dire for offshore wind proj- ects and for solar panel manufacturers on federal lands.” (Aug. 3)

This legislation is not the result of the normal political process. It is a Faustian bargain, the competing ruling-class factions. Instead, the bill is the product of a process that has ensnared provisions within it ensuring that the oil and gas industries’ voice could continue, while intentionally hamstring- ing the green energy sector.

The trick is to tie leases for new wind and solar projects in the U.S. on铀-old and off- shore locations to the granting of leases for guaranteed fossil fuel projects. In fact, fossil fuel leases must be sold in the year before the green projects can be awarded leases. Billions of acres of federal lands the size of entire states must first be offered for oil, gas and coal development! These giant criminal enterprises are not so interested in new, uncertain invest- ments; they are more than happy to jeopardize the timely initiation of green projects, which are critically needed now!

Workers take action

The climate crisis is affecting workers everywhere. The Teamsters union, which represents the 240,000 UPS drivers and every worker, has called on the U.S. government to get UPS to mitigate the effects of heat on working conditions. A video showing a UPS driver collapsing from the heat in Scottsdale, Arizona, has gone viral.

The workers are calling on the company to provide water in every truck and work in a manner that does not endanger workers cooling neck towels and uniforms suited for hot weather. They demand that drivers be allowed to work at a pace that allows them to remain healthy.

Teamsters Local 804, which represents New York UPS drivers, has organized demonstrations to build support for this campaign. Progressive forces should back these workers and build a united fight- back against corporate greed and destruc- tion of the planet.

We stand with the Palestinian people in their effort to heat back yet another show of Zionist terror and stand unequivocally with their resistance as they attempt to repel the occupiers. No bombing campaign or siege from air, land or sea can ever overcome, or even dampen the spirit of Gazans or thwarting their col- lective determination to resist until all of Palestine is free.
Ayman al-Zawahiri killing proves the ‘war on terror’ was never over

By Maha Hilal

Those prosecuting this war want Americans to believe it has come to an end, while the U.S. continues to inflict massive violence abroad. In an uncharacteristic afternoon address in August, U.S. President Joe Biden announced the killing of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the successor to the al-Qaeda leadership after the killing of Osama bin Laden and previously his right-hand man. KILLED 15 years apart, both of their deaths were communicated in speeches by Biden and former President Barack Obama, respectively, in very similar language—under the guise of attaining justice. After the killing of Zawahiri, two things beg our reflection: What does “justice” mean in the “war on terror”—and does the “war on terror” have any conceivable end? In order to understand the first issue, it’s helpful to look back at the words of former President George W. Bush, whose administration built the apparatus for the “war on terror.” In his speech nine days after the 9/11 attacks, on Sept. 20, 2001, to a joint session of Congress, Bush asserted that “whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.” He did not specify how enemies would be brought to justice but nevertheless, those who are killed in legal proceedings like criminal trials— are the only way to obtain justice; that those killed were pure evil and deserving of their fate; and finally, that the assertion that justice has been served is subject to the U.S. government’s interpretation, regardless of any other considerations. But extrajudicial assassinations contravene the idea of justice, particularly in a country that constantly parades the superiority of its values, legal system and adherence to the rule of law.

Malleable justice

When his administration extrajudicially assassinated al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden by launching a secret early morning drone attack, announcing his death, saying: “And on nights like this one, we can say to those families who have lost loved ones to al-Qaeda’s terror: justice has been done.” Similarly, when the Trump administration extrajudicially assassinated Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, he declared: “Last night, the United States brought the world’s number one terrorist leader to justice.” When Biden delivered the news that Zawahiri had been assassinated, he said: “Now, justice has been delivered. And this terrorist leader is no more.” If these statements make anything clear, it’s that justice is malleable; that these killings—and not, for example, legal proceedings like criminal trials—are the only way to obtain justice; that those killed were pure evil and deserving of their fate; and finally, that the assertion that justice has been served is subject to the U.S. government’s interpretation, regardless of any other considerations. This was made clear when Biden announced the killing of Zawahiri, stated that “the United States did not seek this war against terror. It came to us; we answered with the same principles and resolve that have shaped us for generations. We provided the tools to protect the innocent, defend liberty; and we keep the light of freedom burning—a beacon for the rest of the world.” Even though Zawahiri was central to the 9/11 attacks, this narrative promotes the myth that extrajudicial assassinations are the only form of “justice” that the U.S. has pursued in more than two decades of the “war on terror.” However, the path to “justice” in the killing of Zawahiri was paved with the blood of millions of people—disproportionately Muslims—who have been harmed along the way. Moreover, the U.S. leadership and public have never reckoned with the killings of innocent civilians in the “war on terror” in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere or asked what justice looks like for them. No end in sight

Inevitably emerging, after the U.S. killing of Zawahiri and “justice” served, was the determination of the “war on terror” is over or would mark the end of the “war on terror”—and whether this was it. In the wake of Zawahiri’s death, assessing the U.S.’s ongoing and rampant infliction of state violence, we should no longer ask whether the “war on terror” is over; it’s not, and it’s unclear whether it will ever be. Instead, we should understand that the unmitigated violence it has unleashed is the new status quo. There is no going back. Contrary to arguments from mainstream U.S. outlets that “America has finally moved on from 9/11,” what has actually happened is that U.S. violence in the “war on terror” has become so firmly entrenched into our daily lives, that what counts or doesn’t count as war hardly seems visible anymore. When Bush gave his speech after the 9/11 attacks, announcing the nebulous and what could become the forever “war on terror,” he was laying out a blueprint for hegemonic U.S. violence, which would cross administrations and become so normalized that speculating about extrajudicial assassinations could be done without so much as a mention of the legalities, much less any consideration of them. Moreover, the U.S. has continued to define war so narrowly that troops on the ground count as active warfare; whereas, sovereignty-breaching drones are merely considered limited counterterrorism tactics.

This was made clear when Biden ended the war in Afghanistan, as he pulled troops out last summer. Biden’s commitment to using drones to target the country. But Biden’s war on Afghanistan hasn’t ended there—it also includes his decision earlier this year to block funds to the Afghan people and instead directing them to 9/11 families, using the Taliban’s leadership as an excuse. In other words, Biden has chosen to rely on collective responsibility, the modus operandi of the “war on terror,” to justify the economic stranglehold of the Afghan people—while all claim the war is over. A watershed moment

Viewed more broadly, therefore, the Biden administration’s killing of Zawahiri has thus far only been part of the sprawling “war on terror” with Biden proving that under his leadership, the war will continue with just as much force. Far from being a watershed moment, Zawahiri’s killing is an indication that those who are prosecuting the “forever war” are intent on continuing it less visibly. This is why Americans can believe it is over while the U.S. continues to inflict massive violence abroad. As Biden has cemented his commitment to the “war on terror,” it’s unlikely that many Americans are aware of the fact that this war has involved the expansion of military bases into the Sahara and the return of U.S. troops to Somalia—a country that the U.S. never officially declared war on, post-9/11, and in which counterterrorism is invisible anymore. Under former President Donald Trump. Whether through over-the-horizon drone attacks or covert tactics, one thing is clear: a war that has caused so much death and destruction will continue globally and across the globe is here to stay—and justice is as nebulous as ever.
First COVID-19, now monkeypox

By Olujimi Alade

The first years of the 2020s were plagued by the coronavirus. As the months wore on, COVID-19 has not only devastated people’s lives, over 1 million people have died, and it has brought the country to a complete fracas both financially and in a social manner.

COVID-19 exposed the limitations of the capitalist-driven health care system in the U.S. Doctors and nurses were overworked throughout the two years, as President Donald Trump and now President Joe Biden did little to support health professionals or aid the working masses, as they risk not only their own lives but their families’ lives in order to earn a living.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has given very flimsy advice in recent months, including ditching masks, apparently not knowing how rapidly the coronavirus could mutate into new variants. The working masses ultimately paid the price for the U.S. government’s carelessness.

Just when we thought we couldn’t catch a break with COVID-19, we have yet another potential pandemic on our hands. Monkeypox, which first gained prominence in Europe, is now threatening the U.S.

Monkeypox is a viral disease in the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox; and according to WebMD, it is transmissible through close contact with another person, in many ways, including the air. Monkeypox was first documented in humans in 1970 and was previously only endemic to countries in Central and West Africa. It is capable of being spread via contact into a wide range of other mammal species, many of which are apparently susceptible to infection. (tinyurl.com/6rpb4z28) The right-wing media is deciding to attack the LGBTQ+ population with the same callousness that it has over the past two years. Even though the virus can be spread through close contact of any kind, statistics have shown that gay and bisexual men are one of the populations most affected by monkeypox so far.

Reactionaries and right-wing talking heads have used this opportunity to stigmatize monkeypox as a “gay disease.” This is potentially dangerous for several reasons. Among others, it could cost queer-coded people jobs and gainful employment. Through association with the disease, the stigmatization of having a “gay disease” could force people afflicted with it to hide it and potentially infect others.

Combine the reputation of monkeypox with rising anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment, it is not irrational to predict a lot of queer youth being physically and psychologically harassed and disowned and cut-off by their families, leaving them in an even more precarious position.

Money for tests and vaccines not a priority

Unlike COVID-19, tests to detect monkeypox and vaccines to treat it have been available for years. Yet as predicted, the Biden administration is dragging their feet in response to the monkeypox outbreak. Testing has been slow and inadequate.

As subpar as the testing has been, access to vaccines has been just as mediocre, with the U.S. government purchasing only 400,000 doses of the Jynneos vaccine this month. Yet this is the same government willing to send billions of dollars to Ukraine in service of proxy wars. The low quantity of vaccines is unlikely to match the exposure of people to the monkeypox virus, as numerous epidemiologists are saying that the official CDC estimate of 7,509 cases, as of Aug. 5, is a severe undercount. (tinyurl.com/pdrp4z28)

The monkeypox global health emergency is shaping up to be a repeat of COVID-19; and as the days turn into months, this current outbreak will further lay bare the tragic inadequacies of U.S. capitalism and the cultural superstition it breeds.

Eviction resistance

Continued from page 1

their house in nearby Powelton Village on Aug. 8, 1978. Police destroyed the home, and nine MOVE members were imprisoned for over 40 years.

At 9:00 a.m., demonstrators stood along a pallet fencing, as 20 to 30 armed men and women wearing Sheriff’s Department badges marched to the encampment entrance. One of the plainclothes officers confronted resident organizer Foreman, telling her they were going to remove the tents. Foreman abruptly ended their conversation, picked up a bullhorn and started chanting: “We ain’t going nowhere!” and “Who do you protect? Who do you serve?”

The cops then moved into the grounds of the UC Townhomes and began knocking down the tents and canopies and hauling them away. Protesters resisted through the process, sometimes pulling on one side of tents as the cops pulled on the other. Some held on to canopy stakes as the cops tried to move them. Two residents remained in their seats, refusing to move as the sheriffs had to lift the canopies over their heads.

As the sheriffs moved through the area, demonstrators confronted them with chants and frequently circled around them. Many carried signs reading: “You can’t tear down community,” “Evict the developers; Save UC Townhomes” and “Housing is a human right.”

According to the court order, none of the tents are to be destroyed, and people have 30 days to claim them.

Workers refuse to assist racist gentrifier

Historically in Philadelphia, public sanitation workers have been made to dismantle houseless peoples’ camps and destroy their belongings. Anticipating that city workers would again be made to do the gentrifiers’ bidding, residents and activists issued an appeal to area workers to refuse any orders to dismantle the protest, noting that affordable housing is a workers’ issue. The appeal garnered over 400 local, national and even international signatures. Further strengthening residents’ voices, the Labor for Black Lives Coalition sent a strong statement of solidarity with the UC Townhomes residents to Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and other city officials. Signed by 16 labor organizations representing tens of thousands of Black and Brown workers — including some of the largest unions in Philadelphia — the statement called on the city to “immediately block the sale of UC Townhomes.”

Their statement read in part: “As a coalition of labor unions representing Black and Brown workers, we know that securing safe and affordable rental housing is a constant struggle for working-class people of color in the city. A large number of the workers we represent are required to reside in the city as a condition of their employment; but rising rent costs, a shortage of affordable housing and structural barriers embedded in the rental application and affordable housing voucher processes make securing housing increasingly difficult. We need our city’s leaders to stand with our Black communities so that our workers are able to continue living and working in Philadelphia for years to come.” (The complete statement is available at workers.org/2022/08/65911.)

When the sheriffs and later bicycle cops finally retreated, residents and supporters took to the streets, marching behind a huge banner with the slogan: “UC Townhomes tenants say ‘We ain’t goin’ nowhere!’”

The march wound through sections of the University of Pennsylvania campus before returning to the UC Townhomes site.

At several major intersections demonstrators blocked traffic and kept up a steady stream of chants. Speakers called out Mayor Kenney and members of the city council for failing to support residents, noting that city officials, the gentrifiers and the University of Pennsylvania all point the finger at each other, while doing nothing to stop the pending evictions.
A major victory for women and all who can become pregnant happened when Kansas voters voted NO Aug. 2 on a constitutional amendment that would have given the green light to the state legislature to vote on access to abortions. With 90% of the votes counted, 60% voted to eliminate from the state’s constitution, almost half of which are in the states, even of cases of rape and incest. Those who need access to abortions, but who live in states with these restrictions, are faced with the harsh reality of being forced to travel hundreds or even thousands of miles to a state that provides this vital health care procedure.

Three days after the Kansas vote, the Indiana state legislature passed a bill outlawing abortion except in very narrow cases of rape, incest or fetal anomaly or if the procedure is warranted to prevent severe health risks or death. Prior to this vote, a 10-year-old pregnant rape victim was recently forced to travel from Ohio to Indiana to have an abortion due to Ohio’s horrific abortion restrictions. How was this historic victory won in Kansas? Millions of dollars were raised in a grassroots effort to defeat this reactionary referendum. Kansans for Constitutional Freedom was a major backer and organized volunteers to go door to door, in both urban and rural areas, to reach out to voters no matter their political affiliation — Democrat, Republican or independent. This electoral outcome reflects the view of the majority of people in the U.S. who support the right to abortion. NARAL Pro-Choice America President Mini Timmaraju stated: “At a time when reproductive freedom is under unprecedented threat across the country, Kansans said loud and clear at the ballot box, ‘We’ve had enough.’ In the heartland of the United States, protecting abortion access is galvanizing voters like never before.” (Washington Post, Aug. 3)

The main lesson learned from the Kansas vote is not the form of the struggle, the electoral arena. It was the essence of the struggle to organize a mass mobilization to speak in one united voice and beat back political reaction — to help safeguard a life-and-death health care service for the multigender, multinational working class. Just as the struggle historically won Roe v. Wade in the states, the Kansas victory will be an important catalyst to continue the struggle beyond the outcome of the Nov. 8 midterm elections.

Breonna Taylor: still fighting for justice

Breonna Taylor was a 26-year-old, African American emergency medical technician, whose life was tragically cut short by a hail of an estimated 32 bullets fired by white police officers in Louisville, Kentucky, on March 13, 2020. Ms. Taylor was in her home when the officers used a “no-knock” warrant to invade her apartment for so-called drug possession. As it turned out, the officers had the wrong apartment.

Taylor’s partner, Kenneth Walker, attempted to defend himself and her from the police with a licensed gun. He was arrested but later released. The police who invaded the apartment were never arrested or charged with anything more serious than “wanton endangerment,” when some of their bullets were lodged in Taylor’s next door neighbor’s apartment. It took the public execution of George Floyd in May 2020, as well as local protests, to help bring national attention to Taylor’s murder.

Over two years later on Aug. 4, the officers in this Goodell case, Brett Hankison and Meany and Brett Hankison were arrested and charged with civil rights offenses, unconstitutional use of force, obstruction and conspiracy — on a federal level. One of those charges includes falsifying an affidavit for the warrant that led to Ms. Taylor’s death.

The one-year anniversary of her killing, Aug. 17, 2020, saw equal justice in the United States of America.” (kentucky.news, Aug. 5)

Just to be clear, these federal charges are just that, charges. Whether these charges will actually lead to convictions is anybody’s guess. It took more than two years just to bring about these arrests. A secretive grand jury refused to consider any murder charges against these killer cops, because the laws under capitalism protect their lawlessness and brutality, especially when Black, Latinx and other people of color are the victims.

At least 50 Black women have been killed by the police from February 2015 to March 2021, and not one officer has been convicted of their crimes. (insider.com/black-women-killed-by-police-database-2021-6) This number includes Breonna Taylor, showing once again that losing her life to state-sanctioned violence is not an isolated situation. In order to win real equal justice for ALL, the Breonna Taylors, we must not only abolish the police but abolish the system that perpetuates their terror — capitalism.

Did you know the month of August holds special meaning for the Black Liberation struggle? This August marks the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first ship of Africans brought in chains to the shores of the British colony of Virginia in 1619. And this August marks 246 years of the enslavement underlying the establishment of the U.S. colonial state — with its countless injustices, brutality and institutionalized crimes against humanity. Those atrocities continue in this white-supremacist, capitalist society to this day.

But August is also a time to commemorate the Black Resistance Struggle, from the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804, to the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831, from the Fugitive Slave Law Convention of 1850 to the Underground Railroad that ran from the late 18th century to 1865, from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925 to the March on Washington in 1963, the Watts Uprising in 1965 and the National Prison Strike from Aug. 21-Sept. 9 in 2018.

A number of freedom fighters were born in August, including Marcus Garvey, Fred Hampton and Russell Maroon Shoatz, while a number died in that month: W.E.B. Du Bois, Huey P. Newton and Jonathan Jackson. Jackson was killed Aug. 7, 1970, while attempting to free the imprisoned Soledad Brothers, who included his brother, Black Panther leader George Jackson. One year and two weeks later on Aug. 21, 1971, George Jackson was executed by prison guards. His assassination was an important spark leading to the heroic Attica Prison Rebellion in September 1971.

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worker's world
Nicaragua

‘The most beautiful day in my life’

By Hernán Cano

The author, an Argentine journalist in Venezuela, conducted this interview with Venezuelan Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein for the news agency Sputnik in preparation for the July anniversary of the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution. Its introduction noted that Rodríguez Gelfenstein, whose guerrilla father was forced out of Chile by the 1975 coup led by Augusto Pinochet, was, at 22, an officer in Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces and participated in the last months of Nicaragua’s war of liberation with an international contingent fighting the Somoza dictatorship and later in the training of the national army. Translation: John Catalinotto. The following is part 2 of 2.

Hernán Cano: How was the victorious march to Managua?

Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein: We started the march from the Refuge of Sandino, on July 19, [1979], because once they gave us the order to get ready to go to Managua, we had to start the military training to get ready. We took the trip; we had mortars battened, etc. And it was a very slow march, because people came out to the road to greet us; they gave us money, coffee, they wanted us to get on the trucks with their children.

We advanced, but they gave us the order to turn off and go to the city of Granada, which was the capital of the Nicaraguan dictatorship, a very reactionary city, and I think the Sandinista Front wanted to make a show of force. So we slept there, and we left very early for Managua.

There, in the final stretch we made toward Managua, the massiveness of the people in the streets was impressive. At the end, they told us that we had to go to what was called “Somoza’s bunker,” the National Security Office. There we left the artillery, the trucks, the ammunition; and the comrades began to go to the plaza, because it was known that that big celebration was being organized in the plaza.

And that day, which was July 20, was impressive – the guerrilla fronts were in the square, the national leadership of the Sandinista Front, the Government-Junta of National Reconstruction, and the people were totally involved.

HC: How do you feel about that day?

SRG: I say that it was the most beautiful day of my life. For the march, for the outpouring of people, for the happiness of the elderly and the children, for seeing so many happy people and for feeling that we had managed to help make the ignominy of decades disappear.

Transform the guerrilla army into a regular army

And there begins another story, since we had to transform the guerrilla army into a regular army. And we were the ones who knew how to do it. We did, because we had training from the military academies.

HC: What was that process like?

SRG: It was up to us, the artillery soldiers, to train the artillery school; we had to build the schools and the structures of the Armed Force that was needed to defend that country. That was the task of that army and of Sandino. And on August 27, the heroic day of Pansamut, was commemorated in Nicaragua, in which they celebrated some important struggles that had taken place in the past and which is a very important anniversary for the Sandinista Front – and it was decided that year to hold the first military parade of the then Sandinista Popular Army.

So, the tank mechanics started to fix the tanks; we fixed the artillery, and the infantry people taught the soldiers, who were guerrilla kids, to march in formation for the parade. And the parade was impressive; a little more than a month had passed since the triumph of the revolution.

That is how we began the military training, the methodology, the study of what is called the theater of military operations: the study of the terrain and the enemy, the capacity of our troops, and that year 1979 was all about that.

At the end of 1979 in December, the first manifestations of counterrevolutionary action began to take place.

HC: Were there still remnants of Somocismo?

SRG: No, there was nothing left of Somocismo. But there was a right wing that was anti-Somocista and was also part of the Government-Junta of National Reconstruction. And in the first days of December 1979, I was sent with a battery of artillery to reinforce an infantry battalion on the border with Honduras, because there were some provocations by the Honduras army.

They sent us to make a show of force. We even made an extraordinary move there, because we closed the highway where trucks go to all of Central America; and with the infantry battalions and the trucks, the soldiers, we left the highway to a side road and entered further on. And we did it again and again. The next day the newspapers reported a large contingent of thousands of soldiers arriving at the border, and it was just us.

HC: When did you decide to leave Nicaragua?

SRG: I stayed until 1983. I went through several assignments – we restructured the army; I went to work in the General Staff, then in the Air Force General Staff, and at the end I was sent to a school created for the training of sergeants. But there, Cuban officers with a lot of experience were already in Nicaragua; they were our teachers.

The head of the mission was a colonel, and all the others were colonels and lieutenant colonels – even our first chief had fought in the Cuban Revolution against Fulgencio Batista. The structure of the mission had already been set up in accordance with the requests made by the Sandinistas, according to the army they wanted to have.

Then in the ‘80s, I was part of the contingent of the Communist Party of Chile; and in the restructuring that we did, I was in charge of political relations, which were not public. Also, the artillerymen and other Sandinista collaborators arrived and contacted us to have a meeting with a leader from El Salvador. We went, and the meeting was with Schafik Handal [1930-2006, leader of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN)].

Schafik told us that progress was being made toward the construction of the unity of all the forces, that an organization was being created, the FMLN, and that an offensive was being prepared for the first days of 1981. And he asked us for help, because the Communist Party had great experience in mass struggle, workers’ struggle and in political organizational capacity, but not military. And then we supported the construction of the General Staff of the Armed Liberation Force, which was the armed wing of the Salvadoran Communist Party.

And I was there for three years because when the war began, the General Staff of the FMLN continued to function in Managua with Schafik until they created something and moved that structure. But our contingent was set on Chile, on the struggle against the dictatorship, so we began to put pressure on our leadership to leave. And then we supported the FMLN leader, who returned founded the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front. I returned to Cuba in 1983 and entered Chile in 1984.

HC: And what is your assessment of the FMLN’s 43 years?

SRG: Nicaragua has a very particular poll, which makes you always feel linked to it. I have many great friends there – not only today’s army generals were combatants 43 years ago; they were soldiers. And when you forge bonds of friendship in war, in insurrectional struggle, in that beginning period of construction of the Army, they are bonds that do not fade. For me they are eternal, and I believe that is true for the Nicaraguans too.

In all these years, there are three well-marked stages:

From 1979 until they lost the elections in 1990, a stage of revolution under harassment, aggression, blockade, with armed mercenaries, the Sandinistas had almost no time for peace in the midst of a war supported by the United States. And yet all social and economic levels of Nicaragua grew. Despite the devastation of the revolution made the country literate.

And in the second stage, when neoliberalism was enthroned in the 1990s, all of the gains of the first period backwords. Nicaragua is the only country in the world where two literary campaigns had to be carried out. Because Sandinismo returned in 2007, [the earlier campaign] had to be started again. Since 2007 different international organizations began to talk about the Nicaraguan miracle. In 2018, the United States and Europe [imperialist regimes] instigated, organized and financed an attempt to oust Daniel Ortega. But it was stopped, everything that had been going well up to that point, and did so much damage that the aftermath of that coup attempt is still being felt. Now Nicaragua is beginning a fourth period that we can call recovery: the fight against poverty and resistance. (?)
Una victoria indirecta y en unididad del pueblo panameño

By Polo Ciudadano
Panamá

La gran explosión social del pueblo panameño, que salió masivamente a las calles a repudiar el alza indiscriminada de los combustibles y medicinas. Que los gobiernos. Pero la victoria popular va más allá: en la mesa de diálogo, la nación Ngäbe-Buglé, así como a la población indígena que se quejan de los bloqueos le deben un “subsidio a los ricos”, que pagaremos los productores agropecuarios y ven- derle caro a los consumidores. Que mientras manden los políticos y no una dádiva del gobierno. Que mientras manden los políticos y no las clases explotadas indirectamente con impuestos. Que mientras manden los políticos y no una dádiva del gobierno. Que mientras manden los políticos y no una dádiva del gobierno.

Estos esfuerzos para hacer crecer la solidaridad serán de suma importancia ya que los trabajadores continúan el paro de trabajo por el tiempo que sea necesa- rio. Para los revolucionarios dedicados a la construcción de un mundo obrero, es esencial conectar con estos organizadores y ofrecerles apoyo, tanto a nivel de calle como a nivel nacional.

Las actualizaciones de la huelga se publican regularmente en la página de Twitter de Starbucks Workers United (@BostonSBWU). En el sitio web de SBWU, www.swworkersunited.com, se comparten recursos que incluyen un compromiso de #NoContractoNoCafé para los aliados que pueden “tomar la iniciativa de los tra- bajadores y responder a las llamadas a la acción de los trabajadores para impulsar su campaña [sindical],” así como un for- mulario de contacto para trabajadores de Starbucks que estén dispuestos a empe- zar a organizar en sus propias tiendas. El mensaje de unión coreado directamente desde el piquete es un recordatorio para #NoContractoNoCafé que no han de irse.

Panamá, 28 de julio de 2022