

Emergency call to action

Amazon, Starbucks, recognize unions now!

By Support Amazon Workers Network

The Support Amazon Workers Network issued the following call for mass solidarity actions Aug. 10. By Aug. 14 close to 200 organizations and individuals from many states and other countries had signed in support.

Warning: The worker organizing wave is in danger because of union busting!

The national wave of union organizing and militancy spearheaded by Starbucks workers and Amazon workers is the biggest upsurge in worker organizing since the 1930s and 1940s. The organizing wave has spread to Trader Joe's, Chipotle, Apple, REI and a growing list of chain stores and industries.

However, this uprising of workers, which holds the potential of not only saving the labor movement but transforming it, is under life-threatening attack. We must unite in defense of the brave young



Amazon Labor Union celebrates election win outside NLRB offices, New York City, April 1.

workers that are the vanguard of this transformative workers struggle.

We propose these dates for coordinated mass actions across the country:

Monday, Sept. 5, Labor Day (or

around that date, depending on the city): Organize a presence at Labor Day marches or organize your own action; the Amazon Labor Union is holding an action with Starbucks Workers United in New

York City, Sept. 5.

Thursday, Sept. 8: Attend a national virtual planning meeting for the days of coordinated mass actions.

Thursday, Sept. 29: Put on a pro-union protest action on "National Coffee Day," promoted by Starbucks management.

Saturday, Oct. 1: The six-month anniversary of the Amazon Labor Union (ALU) election victory on April 1 (which up to this point Amazon has refused to recognize) (and also International Coffee Day).

From their corporate boardrooms down to their worksite managers, Starbucks and Amazon are engaged in an outright war to crush the organizing wave.

Starbucks is firing union organizers, closing stores, cutting workers hours and denying pro-union workers wage increases and benefits. Starbucks workers are fighting back. Starbucks Workers United is still winning union elections all

Continued on page 4

Philadelphia solidarity with Gaza



Philadelphia, Aug. 10.

A "Philly Stands with Palestine" march blocked rush hour traffic around Philadelphia's City Hall for an hour Aug. 10 to protest the most recent Israeli criminal bombing of the people of Gaza, which murdered at least 16 children.

After an initial rally on the east side of City Hall, over 150 activists marched in support of the Philadelphia Coalition for Palestine's demands: "Honor the 45 Palestinian martyrs; End the blockade on Gaza; Defend Palestinian resistance!" A final rally took place in the street on the west side of City Hall, punctuated at the end by the burning of an

Israeli flag.

The PCP is a network of Philadelphia-area Palestinian and Palestine solidarity organizations, including Students for Justice in Palestine at Temple and Drexel Universities; Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Philadelphia); Anakbayan Philly; Black Alliance for Peace; Workers World Party; Philadelphia Coalition for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against Israel (Philly BDS); Jewish Voice for Peace Philadelphia; and IfNotNow Philly.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

Black August tribute

6

TEAR DOWN
THE WALLS



George Jackson

Editorial Operation Lone Star 8

Brianna Grier: Cops lie 3

No justice for Black farmers 3

UAW members push for change 4

Postal workers protest 4

Drug rehab sabotage 5

Oakland teacher-community unity 6

Lessons of Charlottesville 2017 8

Sierra Leone revolt 5

German anti-fascism 7

U.S. wars sow chaos 9

Honor the legacy of Black August

Support Workers World

Did you know the month of August holds special meaning for the Black Liberation struggle? This August marks the 403rd anniversary of the arrival of the first ship of Africans brought in chains to the shores of the English 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.

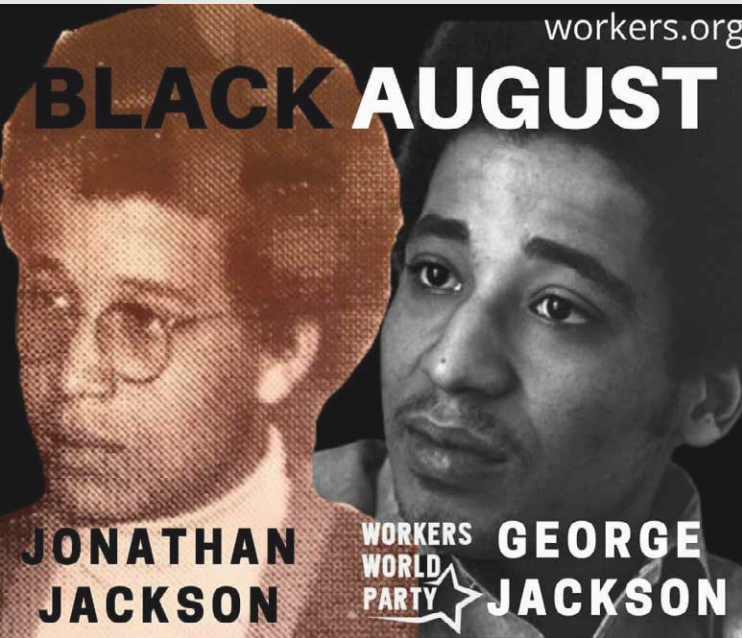
But August is also a time to commemorate the Black Resistance Struggle, from the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 to the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831, from the Fugitive Slave Law Convention of 1850 to the Underground Railroad that ran from the late 18th century to 1865, from the Brotherhood of Sleeping 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.

Your donations matter!

Workers World depends on your help. The WW Supporter Program was founded 45 years ago to help build this revolutionary socialist newspaper. Since the early 1990s, the fund has supported the website workers.org, where WW articles are posted daily and the PDF file of every weekly paper is displayed.

Staff health concerns during the pandemic caused us to reduce the number of printed issues to once a



month. But the weekly online newspaper has never been skipped during this 2 ½ year health crisis. And while WW’s staff is voluntary, both the printed newspaper and the website require monthly expenses.

Workers.org contains news and analysis of global and U.S. events and struggles and is a resource for political activists. The website posts first-hand accounts by writer-activists in many countries, with translations by our staff. Timely articles by worker-organizers keep the newspaper up to date on what is happening in key U.S. union drives, led by young people of many nationalities and genders. Workers World cheers them on.

For a donation of \$75 to \$100 to \$300 a year, members receive a year’s subscription and one, two or three free subscriptions, respectively, to give to friends. Supporters can receive the book, “What road to socialism?” (Notify us of your request.) Or read it for free at workers.org/books.

Write monthly or annual checks to Workers World, and mail them with your name and address to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at workers.org.

We’re grateful for your help in building Workers World!

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 neverending 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. □

If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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

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

Austin
austin@workers.org

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

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

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

Central Gulf Coast
(Alabama, Florida, Mississippi)
centralgulfcoast@workers.org

Cleveland
cleveland@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
919.322.9970
durham@workers.org

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

Minnesota
minnesota@workers.org

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

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio
sanantonio@workers.org

West Virginia
WestVirginia@workers.org

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

this week

In the U.S.

- Demand Amazon, Starbucks recognize unions! . . . 1
- Philly solidarity with Gaza 1
- Cops lie about death of Brianna Grier 3
- White supremacy and Black farmers. 3
- Reviving UAW’s fighting tradition. 4
- Stop Dejoy’s privatization of Postal Service 4
- Nicotine ban sabotages drug rehab, harms users . . 5
- Oakland: Teachers, community fight retaliation . . 6
- Charlottesville’s lessons: How to fight fascism. . . 8

Around the world

- Hunger in West Africa, protests in Sierra Leone . . 5
- East German lawyer Friedrich Wolff. 7
- U.S. imperialism sows chaos 9

Tear down the walls

- Black August: A tribute to freedom fighters 6

Editorial

- ‘Operation Lone Star’—white-supremacist ploy . . 8

Noticias en Español

- Ucrania: ¿Saboteará EE.UU. el acuerdo? 12
- Reportaje desde Panamá. 12

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

Vol. 64, No. 33 • August 18, 2022
Closing date: August 17, 2022

Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

Tear Down the Walls! Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly

Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Sasha Mazumder

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, S. Hedgecoke

Contributing Editors: LeiLani Dowell, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Sara Flounders, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Carlos Vargas

Copyright © 2022 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published monthly by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$36; institutions: \$50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.



Cops lie about death of Brianna Grier

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Marvin and Mary Grier loved their 28-year-old daughter, Brianna, who delighted in dancing and having fun with her three-year-old twin daughters.

But on July 15, they were worried that she was not taking her medications for her schizophrenia diagnosis and was talking about harming herself or her children. They called 911 for help and expected an ambulance to come and take Brianna to the hospital, as had happened in the past.

Instead two Hancock County deputy sheriffs showed up and arrested Grier, forcibly handcuffing her as she lay on the ground. The police video shows the two deputies roughly pulling Grier by the legs and arms toward the car, threatening her with a taser, as she cries repeatedly for them to “get off” her. After pushing her onto the back seat, they search for several minutes in the underbrush and then drive off.

Both passenger doors of the squad car

were opened to enable the two men to leverage Grier into the back seat on the passenger side. Her seat belt was not fastened, and her hands were handcuffed in front of her.

Shortly after the squad car left the family residence, Grier fell out of the vehicle onto the pavement, sustaining what turned out to be life-ending head injuries.

The video shows the deputies suddenly stopped the car and then walked back to where Grier’s body lay face down on the pavement. They prod her multiple times and tell her to sit up. Finally, they turn her over and declare, “Alright, she’s breathing.”

They can be heard asking each other if they had shut the squad car door.

Grier’s parents were not told that she had been injured and taken to Grady Hospital in Atlanta, until the next day.

The Hancock County deputy sheriffs originally claimed that Brianna Grier threatened to commit suicide if she was taken to jail and that she had kicked the passenger side door open and fallen out.

This is what Marvin and Mary Grier were told.

But an investigation by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation proved that the door had never been closed by the officers, despite their claims they had done so.

Briana Grier died July 21. A family autopsy shows that she died from blunt force trauma to her head.

Scores of family members, clergy, civil rights and Black Lives Matter activists and others attended Grier’s funeral service at the historic West Hunter Baptist Church on Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard in Atlanta Aug. 11.

Rev. Al Sharpton roused the crowd with his eulogy, declaring that they had gathered there to celebrate Grier’s life, but “we also come to condemn her passing. Her life matters; and that’s why we are here and will stay here.” (Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Aug. 12)

Attorney Ben Crump, representing the family, introduced Tamika Palmer, mother of Breonna Taylor, killed by Louisville, Kentucky, police executing a



Brianna Grier

no-knock warrant. Palmer expressed her support for the Grier family, knowing all too well the difficulty of achieving justice for those killed by police.

Marvin and Mary Grier, surrounded by Brianna’s siblings, appealed to the attendees: “We are here to seek justice, accountability and transparency. We need answers.”

After the service, a march to the Georgia State Capitol made demands on state officials to take action in Brianna Grier’s case and to provide needed mental health resources. □

Inflation Reduction Act: white supremacy and Black farmers

By Monica Moorehead

Black farmers, fighting white supremacists in the South since Reconstruction to try to keep possession of their land, were dealt another blow in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. Wording in that legislation, designed to give loan assistance to Black farmers, was rewritten by Democrats to remove discrimination on the basis of race as a criteria for eligibility. Previous wording specifically designated help to farmers who had suffered racial or ethnic prejudice, including those who were Black, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian American, Pacific Islander or Hispanic.

White ranchers had sued to stop the earlier version of the plan; bank authorities had objected that their institutions would lose money if the Black farmers got help and paid off their loans quickly! Groups representing Black farmers voice skepticism about receiving any loan relief money now, as the U.S. Department of Agriculture can continue to allocate the money at will and has a sordid history of discrimination against Black farmers. The recent act’s failure to acknowledge the role of white supremacy in both “legally” and illegally seizing land owned by formerly enslaved Black people and their descendants argues forcefully, yet again, for a systematic and thorough program of reparations, ultimately possible only under socialism.

The following article, “Black farmers demand justice” chronicles some of the 21st century struggles of Black farmers, particularly in the South. It first appeared on workers.org on July 18, 2002, and is featured in the book, “Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle” available at workers.org/books.

According to the 1920 U.S. census, there were over 925,000 Black farmers who controlled over 15 million acres, mainly based in the southern Black Belt.

Today [in 2002], the number of Black farmers has tragically decreased to between 15,000 and 18,000. They control less than a million acres collectively and are losing an estimated 1,000 acres daily.



Black farmers from South Carolina protest at the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., in August 2002.

These numbers just begin to tell the tale of the plight of those remaining Black farmers and their will to survive total extinction by any means necessary.

This will to survive was reflected in a heroic sit-in from July 1-4, 2002, at the Department of Agriculture regional office in Brownsville, Tennessee. An estimated 300 Black farmers took part in this sit-in. They traveled from 16 states by car, train and pickup truck to show solidarity with five of their brother farmers who filed loans that were never processed.

These loans are necessary in order to be able to purchase land, fertilizer and seed to plant and harvest crops that can be sold to agribusinesses. If the farmers are lucky enough to produce a successful crop, they can usually pay off their loans at the end of the harvest season from their gross income.

These five Black farmers — Coach Perkins, James Hood, Barton Nelson, Earnest Campbell and Gerald Pettaway — submitted loan applications in Fayette County. But their applications were sent to Haywood County, where they sat gathering dust for more than a month.

The five farmers were unable to produce any crops, and, as a consequence, they face the prospect of thousands of dollars of debt, foreclosure on their homes and loss of their land.

The 300 Black farmers who took part

in the sit-in know all too well that they could easily face the same situation.

There has been less than adequate attention paid by the big business press to this development and the issue in general.

The Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association organized the sit-in. One of the demands of the protesters was to have the five farmers meet with Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman in Washington, D.C., to discuss and resolve their grievances. There has not been any response from the Bush administration to this request. The farmers called for Veneman to be removed from office.

BFAA spokesperson Tom Burrell stated: “We’re at the point right now where we’re all but extinct. This is the last stand of Black farmers. If we don’t get a victory in the next six months, it’s curtains for the Black farmer. This is all part of a conspiracy to get rid of us. ... We are willing to stay in this building until we get what’s necessary.” The bank foreclosed on Burrell’s farm in 1981.

Lawsuit by 25,000 Black farmers

There are many examples that justify this righteous defiance.

For example, in 1997 six Black farmers initiated a class-action lawsuit against the USDA, charging its regional offices with racism in denying Black farmers equal

access to federal loans, disaster relief payments and other programs mandated under the law for low-income farmers.

Once the original lawsuit was filed, another 25,000 Black farmers became plaintiffs in the lawsuit, *Pigford v. Glickman*. Dan Glickman was the secretary of agriculture during the Clinton administration. Black farmers went to Glickman’s office twice to demand a meeting with him. They were arrested both times.

This is not the first time that Black farmers have brought charges before the USDA. In fact, so many Black farmers had filed claims against the USDA for racial discrimination that in 1983 then-President Ronald Reagan shut down the agency. When it was reopened in 1996, there were thousands upon thousands of grievances sitting in its office.

In 1999 the USDA settled the 1997 class-action lawsuit out of court, by awarding the plaintiffs \$450-\$600 million in damages. This came out to \$50,000 or less for each plaintiff—a drop in the bucket, when you consider that a new tractor costs \$125,000, a new planter \$40,000 and a new cotton picker \$20,000.

Knowing the tremendous resources it takes to maintain a productive farm, the six original plaintiffs had demanded \$3 billion in damages from the USDA. They attempted to legally challenge the court’s final decree along with hundreds of other farmers. But the courts would not budge.

Most of the farmers decided to take the money but were not informed by their attorneys that only 40% of them would receive any monetary restitution.

It is the legacy of slavery that has created a genocidal U.S. policy against southern Black farmers. And it is the injustice that they continue to face in the racist courts and from an insensitive capitalist government that has forced them to take direct action in Tennessee to show that they have the right to make a decent living from the land that their ancestors once tilled and made fertile as slave labor.

Minnie Bruce Pratt contributed to this article.

Members United slate forms to revive UAW’s fighting tradition

By Martha Grevatt

“Change is coming to the UAW.” This is the promise made to the rank and file of the United Auto Workers by the Members United candidates running for the union’s International Executive Board. This multinational grouping is challenging the entrenched Administration Caucus (AC) bureaucracy for leadership of the UAW. Led by candidate for International President Shawn Fain, Members United is campaigning under the banner of “No concessions. No corruption. No tiers.”

This is the first IEB election in the UAW’s history, where the rank and file will vote directly for its top leadership. For almost nine decades the IEB was chosen by delegates at the union’s Constitutional Convention. Conventions have been tightly controlled by the AC (which also calls itself the “Reuther Caucus,” named after former UAW President Walter Reuther) since it won control of the union during the witch hunt of the 1940s and 1950s, when Reuther drove Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party workers out of union leadership.



CREDIT: MEMBERS UNITED

Members United has the support of the rank-and-file caucus Unite All Workers for Democracy, which waged a successful grassroots campaign to win “one member, one vote” — direct elections of the IEB — in a referendum by the membership that defeated the convention system by a 2-1 margin.

Beside Fain, the candidates are Margaret Mock for Secretary-Treasurer, Rich Boyer and Mike Booth for Vice Presidents, and LaShawn English, Brandon Mancilla and Dan Vicente for Directors of Regions 1, 9A and 9, respectively. Other unaffiliated reform can-

didates are also running for the IEB. Because the AC is still able to exert tremendous pressure on local UAW leaders, AC candidates were unchallenged in several IEB races.

Part of a new labor fight-back

Members United represents a real alternative to the top-down business unionism of the AC, which for decades has promoted a “partnership” with the companies that the union bargains with. This partnership has led to numerous contract concessions, one of the worst being tiered wages and benefits. This pay system has two workers, working side-by-side, doing the same work, but not getting the same compensation, because one has more seniority than the other.

“The days of unchallenged concessions will end,” English pledged in a campaign leaflet. She is a three-term president of UAW Local 1264 at the Stellantis (formerly Chrysler) Sterling Heights stamping plant. All the candidates are current or former elected local officers.

The challenge to business unionism inside the UAW is not happening in a vacuum. Earlier this year rank-and-file Teamsters union members voted to throw out the old guard, giving every national officer position to the Teamsters United slate led by President Sean O’Brien.

Members United has come together in the context of an emerging labor resistance, led by radicalized young workers at Amazon, Starbucks and elsewhere. Young workers in the UAW, including second-tier workers in manufacturing, along with higher education workers, are among the most outspoken — as July’s UAW Constitutional Convention demonstrated. Members United candidates include two young union leaders, Mancilla and Vicente.

These defiant candidates are part of a push throughout the labor movement for a return to class-struggle unionism.

Martha Grevatt is a retired executive board member of UAW Local 869 at the Stellantis Warren Stamping Plant.

Workers say Stop DeJoy’s privatization of Postal Service

American Postal Workers Union (APWU), National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and United Auto Workers (UAW) members, environmental groups and other union activists held a dinosaur-themed rally outside the U.S. Postal Service Headquarters at L’Enfant Plaza in Washington, D.C. Aug. 9 to demand the use of union-made electric vehicles for the postal service.

The rally was held just before the

Postal Board of Governors meeting opened. Workers also protested against Postmaster Louis DeJoy’s 10 Year Plan to privatize the postal service. Currently, DeJoy plans to eliminate 50,000 jobs and close many small post offices. Workers at the rally demanded his firing and to “keep the postal service a service and not a business.”

— Joe Hirsch, retired postal worker



UAW members on strike at Case New Holland in Racine, Wisconsin, since May.

Amazon, Starbucks, recognize unions now!

Continued from page 1

over the country and flexing its muscles with walkouts and strikes.

Amazon is determined to overturn the historic April 1 Amazon Labor Union victory in Staten Island, New York, and crush the ALU. At the same time, new ALU chapters are forming around the country. Amazon workers in North Carolina have formed Carolina Amazonians United for Solidarity and Empowerment

(CAUSE) and are getting stronger every day. Amazon workers everywhere, including in Amazonians United and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union in Alabama, are coming together in spite of their different approaches to organizing.

In order for these groundbreaking battles to defeat union busting, immensely greater forces must join and strengthen them.

Howard Schultz and Jeff Bezos are this

year’s poster boys for union busting. But efforts to crush the workers uprising are by no means limited to Starbucks and Amazon owners. Wall Street and the U.S. capitalist class are fully behind this war to destroy a new workers movement before it spreads further.

Our response to this threat must be equal to the danger. A level of mass solidarity and mass mobilization in defense of workers on the front line is required — greater than anything we have seen in our lifetimes. Unified organizing and widespread mass solidarity is absolutely central to the continuation of this historic transformation of the working-class movement.

- At stake is nothing less than the long awaited and necessary evolution of the working-class movement, from its present weak state to a more radical, militant, inclusive and classwide movement that:
- Is led by rank-and-file workers;
 - Is not dominated by business unionism;
 - Is not dependent upon or subservient to the Democratic Party;
 - Views all struggles as workers struggles, including the fight against racism, the fight for access to abortion,

- the antiwar struggle, the struggle to stop climate disaster, the struggle for LGBTQ2S+ rights, the struggle of incarcerated workers and the struggle for full access and justice for people with disabilities;
- Is a vital part of the struggle against evictions and all community struggles;
 - Prioritizes the most oppressed workers, including migrant workers;
 - Wants to be part of a militant global workers movement; and
 - Is strong enough to smash the threat of fascism.

A growing section of the left is now engaged in varying levels of solidarity work with these critical workers struggles. But as of yet, the left’s commitment to this struggle is alarmingly insufficient. While some in the organized labor movement are taking the need for solidarity against union busting seriously, unfortunately most of the top leadership of the labor movement remain unmoved by this threat and have focused on electoral politics and reliance on the Democratic Party.

This must change. Now is the time to intensify the pressure to compel that change. □



Pro-union Starbucks workers, Lansing, Michigan.

PHOTO: STARBUCKS WORKERS UNITED

WW COMMENTARY

Ban of nicotine sabotages drug rehab, harms users

By Princess Harmony

What would you do, if you were an addict living with the constant agony of addiction? What would you do, if you were an incarcerated addict whose only chance for freedom — from substances and from prisons/jails — is getting rehab? What would you do, if you genuinely wanted recovery?

You would go to a rehabilitation facility, right? Drug rehabilitation might help you recover from your drug problem!

According to a research report written about in Forbes, Sept. 15, 2015, more than half of all substance abusers also consume nicotine products. Trying to quit nicotine is difficult for anyone, even with aids like nicotine patches, gum or medications. It becomes even harder for people who are addicted to quit because of their addictive personalities.

So when a rule from the city of Philadelphia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Service (DBHIDS) and the county’s Medicaid Community Behavioral Health (CBH), a managed-care organization, imposes a rule stating that smoking outside is no longer permitted at the facilities they pay for, people listen.

People will listen, and they will react poorly. On Jan. 1, 2019, the smoking ban was enacted in all facilities that Medicaid pays for in Philadelphia County. Before this ban, many facilities permitted smoking and vaping at designated times and in designated areas. This policy was ended.

Within a week of the implementation of the ban, experts in recovery and social work spoke out against the ban, saying that access to nicotine products can be deal breakers for people seeking recovery. Noted community activist and organizer Brooke Feldman said in a story for WHYY that the only thing that stood between addicts and treatment centers was a packet of cigarettes. (whyy.org, Jan. 4, 2019)

Pitfalls of smoking bans

Research regarding smoking bans, even those planning for a transition rather than stopping cold, have shown that bans have lowered retention rates in addiction-rehabilitation programs. Many more patients left treatment facilities against medical advice than did before these bans were instituted.

At a meeting discussing the ban’s harms, Dr. Chris Tjoa said the number of people leaving against medical advice increased after the ban was enacted. He blamed this on insurance issues, rather than tobacco/nicotine policy.

In the first year of the smoking ban, approximately

1,150 people died of drug overdoses in the city of Philadelphia. In the ban’s second year, 1,214 people died. In 2021 before the ban was rescinded, 1,250 more people died. In total 3,614 people died during the period when the smoking ban was in effect. Many of these people could have been alive, if the smoking ban hadn’t become a stumbling block.

Another factor that must be considered is that after patients are clean from drugs, particularly opioids, overdose risk spikes, because as the amount of drugs in their system decreases, their tolerance does too. People have died when this happens.

Smokers denied medical help

Addicts report seeking recovery and then being pushed away or forced out of treatment. In one case a woman was ejected from treatment at the Behavioral Wellness Center at Girard (formerly North Philadelphia Health Systems/Girard Medical Center) because she got caught smoking. She reported this to her probation officer and was then sent back to jail for nine months.

Community organizer Brooke Feldman attempted to intervene on this woman’s behalf by notifying the District Attorney’s Office.

Another incident, reported by Feldman, involved a patient at CleanSlate, who was able to get into the inpatient rehabilitation facility Keystone Center. He had to leave the facility, because after getting an upsetting phone call, he needed to smoke. He died on Roosevelt Boulevard a few days after leaving the rehabilitation facility against medical advice.

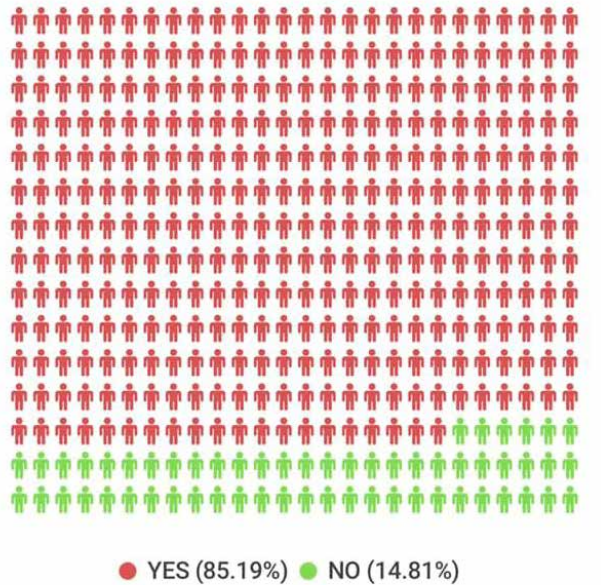
On June 25, 2019, community organizations, including Angels in Motion, Operation in My Back Yard, Sol Collective and ACT UP Philadelphia, united for a protest demanding the smoking ban end. They didn’t know yet that the ban was the result of a cruelly designed research study produced by the University of Pennsylvania and CBH.

These organizations couldn’t have ended the study, because if they did, the city would have had to return the money. The results of the smoking ban study can be found in the research paper: “Changes in voluntary admission and restraint use after a comprehensive tobacco-free policy in inpatient psychiatric health facilities.” They did not note that there were potential patients who were leaving treatment against medical advice, being forced out of it or not entering it at all.

Impact of ban

There was a study, “Impact of Inpatient Smoking Ban,” which was done with all participants giving informed consent. This study looked at whether or not

Of Those Who Entered Into But Left Treatment Prematurely Was Smoking Part Of The Reason For Leaving?



Impact of Inpatient Treatment Smoking Ban

being forced to stop smoking cigarettes or vapes played a role in a person’s desire to enter treatment or a person’s departure against medical advice due to the smoking ban.

The study found that 85% of people who left against medical advice did so because they were denied the right to smoke. It found that smoking impacted a little under half of all people’s decisions to go into rehabilitation. This study’s participants were majority unhoused and came from the Kensington section of Philadelphia, the heartland of the addiction epidemic.

Why did the city of Philadelphia, CBH and other entities in the city participate in this charade? They did it for money, which they needed for other city expenses. They certainly weren’t putting it to good use to help people who were addicted or abusing substances.

Progressives should hold the authorities’ feet to the fire and demand reparations for the people of Kensington, especially to those most impacted by this inhumane study, those with low incomes, people who are addicted and their loved ones. □

Hunger in West Africa drives protests in Sierra Leone

By G. Dunkel

According to the World Bank, the index price of agricultural products — which includes food — is up 19% from January 2021. Corn and wheat prices are, respectively, 16% and 22% higher. For a third of the world’s countries — the 60 or so the World Bank calls lower income — this is a real crisis. The major expense of most households is food, followed by shelter.

In West Africa, which includes some of the world’s poorest countries, the sharp, painful price jumps are frightening: 30% in Ghana, 22.4% in Sierra Leone, 18.6% in Nigeria, 15.3% in Burkina Faso. According to the World Food Program, 7.7 million children under age five in the Sahel face severe malnutrition.

Given projections from the International Monetary Fund that the world’s economy is, at best, slowing down, it’s unlikely that this food situation will improve soon.

The recent announcement that Ukraine and Russia had reached an agreement allowing them to export grain and fertilizers was some relief, but only a few countries in West Africa — Benin, Senegal and Togo — consume much wheat. Locally produced sorghum, millet and yams are primarily what people eat.

The fallout from COVID-19 and Ebola, two of the diseases which affect many countries in West Africa, disrupted supply chains and has driven food production



Women lead protest in Freetown, Sierra Leone, July 4.

costs up. The war in Ukraine and the various boycotts and embargoes flowing from the situation have caused spikes in the price of fuel, which is necessary to transport locally grown food. Activists point to the high profits oil companies are making as a major cause of growing hunger.

A number of countries in Africa, in particular Nigeria, Egypt and Morocco, produce fertilizer, but import/export restrictions and customs duties make it hard for them to supply neighboring countries. (Le Monde, 26 July)

Protests in Sierra Leone

Some officials in the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States are warning that if no substantial action is taken to relieve the growing hunger, especially in West Africa, social eruptions are

likely. They point to the 30 or more sustained protests that shook many poor countries in 2008 when similar problems arose.

Market women, who sell a range of goods in African markets and are a major organized economic force in West Africa, have nationwide associations. In Sierra Leone, they called small protests beginning in early July. According to Africa News, they sponsored a march July 4 through the business district of Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, with placards denouncing “the price of commodities, and police brutality.” A few leaders of the political opposition were arrested in connection with this demonstration. (tinyurl.com/26c9zcbd)

The market women’s associations, along with other smaller groups, called demonstrations Aug. 10 in Freetown and the northern cities of Kamakwie and Makeni. In all three places, serious fighting occurred between cops and protesters. Police claim three cops were killed in Kamakwie, one in Makeni and two in Freetown. At least 13 civilians were shot dead in Freetown, according to morgue attendants. A press report from Makeni said that four civilians were killed there.

From videos and photos of the incidents, the protesters seem to be mainly young people.

Protests on Aug. 12 were centered in various areas of Freetown, where the cops used live fire to break them up. A high number of casualties were reported.

Given the dire situation in West Africa, it is likely these protests in Sierra Leone will not remain isolated, but will spread to other countries in the region. □

Black August: A tribute to freedom fighters

By Lamont Lilly

The following slightly edited article was first published in August 2013. Lilly ran as Workers World Party’s candidate for vice president in 2016.

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on Aug. 28, 1963, galvanized hundreds of thousands in the streets of Washington, D.C. A. Philip Randolph helped to establish the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in Harlem, N.Y., on Aug. 25, 1925. The Haitian Revolution launched its destruction of French colonialism in August 1791.

August marks the Nat Turner slave rebellion of 1831 and the Watts Uprising of 1965. The Philadelphia Police Department first raided the MOVE organization on Aug. 8, 1978, giving way to the unjustly imprisoned MOVE 9. August also bears the births of Fred Hampton, Marcus Garvey and Mutulu Shakur.

George Jackson

“Black August” is a month-long celebration that marks the remembrance of the lives of freedom fighters who gave their all for Black liberation, freedom, radical resistance and mass consciousness. The official origin of Black August was in honor of the fallen soldiers who valiantly fought to liberate Black Panther leader George Lester Jackson from the modern-day slave trade we now call the U.S. penal system.

Jonathan Jackson and Angela Davis

Black freedom fighters — James McClain, William Christmas, Ruchell Magee, Khatari Gaulden and 17-year-old Jonathan Jackson — the brother of

George Jackson — led a courthouse rebellion on Aug. 7, 1970, in a brave display of all-out resistance and armed struggle. Unfortunately, lives were lost as they typically are in any war for liberation. Magee, who is currently still incarcerated, was the only survivor. And though our heralded comrade, George Jackson, was not freed, the efforts of Jonathan and others would inspire decades of continued resistance and revolutionary solidarity.

George Jackson had just completed his book “Soledad Brother,” a philosophical revolutionary classic. Jackson, however, was assassinated by San Quentin prison guards one year later on Aug. 21, 1971. His second book, “Blood in My Eye,” was published posthumously by Black Classic Press. Jackson’s legacy of resistance has inspired millions worldwide, while his literary works continue to teach even in his physical absence.

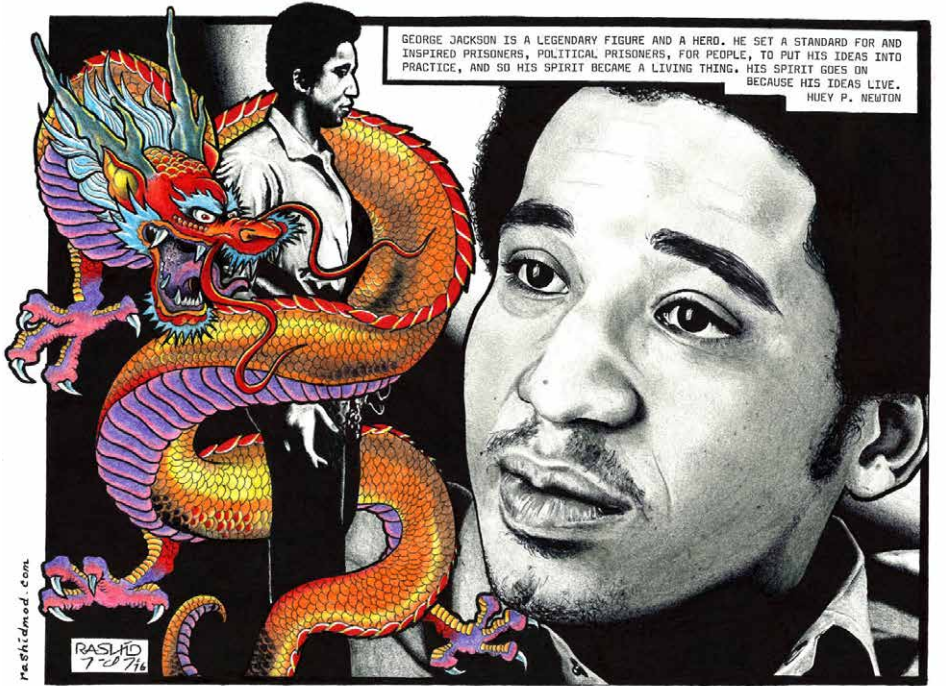
This is the background in which Black August was first formed. It was deep within the belly of the California penal system that it was first embraced and formally established as a month of reverence, as a time of revolutionary celebration.

The heroic Attica prison rebellion which began on Sept. 9, 1971, and was eventually drowned in blood by Gov. Nelson Rockefeller’s stormtroopers (the N.Y. state police), with the deaths of over 40 unarmed people, was sparked by Jackson’s assassination.

Incarcerated workers today have continued to protest and press forward all over the United States. Hunger strikes over the past year have roused hundreds of thousands in states such as California, Georgia and North Carolina. Letter writing campaigns have served as vital lines of inspiration and direct communication.

Human rights activists such as political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal have served as critical catalysts, tirelessly working to empower the voices of those who continue to be oppressed by the public and private prison industry.

nize the destructive ills of capitalism and its disastrous effects upon the oppressed worldwide. In the age of the prison-industrial complex, school-to-prison pipeline and widespread police brutality, the struggle for justice and liberation is alive



ARTWORK: KEVIN RASHID JOHNSON

‘George Jackson is a legendary figure and a hero. He set a standard for and inspired prisoners, political prisoners, for people, to put his ideas into practice, and so his spirit became a living thing, his spirit goes on because his ideas live’ — Huey P. Newton

Today, in the spirit of continued resistance, we honor the deaths of Mark Clark, Fred Hampton and Geronimo Pratt. We honor the sacrifices and life work of political prisoners Eddie Conway, Sundiata Acoli and our freedom fighters in exile like Assata Shakur. We honor the countless victims of COINTELPRO’s callous attacks upon the people. We duly recog-

now more than ever. In the 42nd year of Black August, may we all take heed to the spirited words of our brother and mentor, George Lester Jackson: “Settle your quarrels; come together; understand the reality of our situation; understand that fascism is already here, that people are dying who could be saved.” (“Soledad Brother”) □

Oakland, Calif.

Teachers and community fight retaliation

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, California

The new school year in the Oakland Unified School District began on a seriously sour and disturbing note: a physical attack on people protesting a school closure and the retaliatory firings of teachers.

Since the end of the school year, parents, students and community members have been occupying Parker School, one of three schools closed by OUSD. Throughout the summer, volunteers have been providing food, services and classes to young people in this East Oakland community.

The Oakland school district has maintained a hostile posture toward this community reclamation of a public school. On Aug. 4, a private security squad hired by OUSD arrived at Parker School and assaulted parents and community members. According to the community coalition pulled together to protest this attack, at least 11 people were injured, and four were sent to the emergency room.

Three teachers have been targeted for dismissal and retaliation due to their visible support for the Parker School occupation. Paloma Collier, a contracted gardening teacher at Markham Elementary, was abruptly fired and her gardening program terminated. Denise Huffstutler, a former Parker School teacher, received an unsatisfactory evaluation, which was placed in her personnel file and may impact her teaching career.

Craig Gordon, who has worked in OUSD for 32 years as a classroom teacher and most recently as a substitute teacher, was abruptly terminated for no reason by the district Aug. 8, the first day of school. Gordon was



WWW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

A student-led demonstration in spring of 2022 opposing Oakland school closures.

a very visible union and community activist, who has filed grievances on behalf of substitute teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the founders of Schools and Labor Against Privatization (SLAP), he was a strong supporter of the Parker School occupation.

Press conference hits firings, retaliation

At a press conference Aug. 10, organized by community members and rank-and-file teachers, two leaders of the Oakland Education Association’s Substitute Teacher Caucus spoke out against the retaliatory firing of Gordon. Sharon Thomas, Executive Board representative from the caucus and Judy Greenspan, chair of the caucus, set the tone of the press conference, which quickly became a speak-out for justice.

Thomas read from the statement circulated in her caucus: “This firing of a retired OUSD teacher and a long-time substitute teacher is outrageous and comes at a

time when OUSD is suffering a teacher shortage. On its face it makes no sense. However, we believe that Craig was targeted because of his outspoken activism on behalf of substitute teachers and possibly for his support of the community reclamation of Parker School.”

According to the California Education Code, school districts can hire and fire substitute teachers at will. However, during the pandemic, OUSD literally begged retired teachers to come back to work due to the many vacancies. The substitute caucus is trying to remedy that unfair practice.

Greenspan began their statement with the slogan of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union leadership, which has been a popular labor slogan for over a century: “An injury to one is an injury to all.” Greenspan reminded everyone, “We will not tolerate this attack on our Oakland community members or on our teachers. It is time to rise up and protest this violence and illegal retaliation against our union members and all educators.”

Gordon then spoke, calling out OUSD for its racist closing of schools in Black and Brown communities. “This is definitely an attack on teachers who are working to stop school closures,” he said. Gordon pointed out that OUSD is targeting the most vulnerable teachers — a substitute teacher and a contract educator.

A resolution from the substitute caucus will be presented Aug. 16 at an OEA union representatives council meeting. This resolution calls upon the leadership of OEA to take immediate action to ensure that Gordon be reinstated with back pay and that the retaliatory acts against the other two teachers be reversed immediately.

Community activists, educators and OEA members are making plans to oppose future school closings during this school year.

Judy Greenspan works as a substitute teacher at an Oakland public middle school.

‘I was never afraid of the big shots’

A conversation with German lawyer Friedrich Wolff

By Frank Schumann
junge Welt, July 23

Workers World makes excerpts from this interview available in English, as it gives a historical view from a senior legal expert in the socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR, East Germany), Friedrich Wolff. The parts selected counter the Big Lie promulgated by U.S. and German imperialism, expose individual Nazis’ roles in West German politics and, in passing, provide some information for understanding the historical role of the Bandera fascist organization now playing a prominent role in the pro-NATO Ukraine regime. Translation: John Catalinotto*

junge Welt: You will be 100 years old on July 30. Congratulations on this rare anniversary!

Friedrich Wolff: Please don’t congratulate me before it happens.

jW: What has always fascinated me about you is your humor — detached, self-deprecating, ambiguous wit.

FW: Conditions in the world are sad enough. You don’t change them by lamenting them or reacting depressively. Or, as Marx says, by putting one’s face into the prescribed creases. No, that was never my thing. One must try to stand above things, otherwise one sinks with one’s nose in every muck.

...
jW: Were you always so poised and serene? Or did such serenity only develop in old age?

FW: I don’t know. Well, I can remember phases when I was very emotional.

jW: When, for example?

FW: In the spring of 1960, when I defended Theodor Oberländer, the Federal Minister for Displaced Persons [under West Germany]. The Supreme Court of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) had indicted him for his involvement in war crimes.

As a first lieutenant, Oberländer had been involved in negotiations with the Ukrainian nationalists under Stepan Bandera on behalf of the High Command of the Wehrmacht in 1941. He was in the “Nightingale Battalion” ...

jW: ... consisting of Ukrainian nationalists, who had become prisoners of war, and which was under the control of [Hitler’s German] fascist secret service.

FW: Oberländer was the liaison officer for the “Abwehr [military intelligence service].” The unit entered Lviv [in western Ukraine] even before the Wehrmacht and, together with Ukrainian collaborators, massacred “Jewish Bolsheviks.” The exact number of victims could never be determined, but it was in the thousands. So the charge was generally: “for murder.” And I was assigned to the accused “as a public defender.”

jW: So the socialist was supposed to defend a Nazi?!

FW: Even for a suspected war criminal, the presumption of innocence applies first. Every defendant must be treated fairly in court, even if he himself did not act legally. I know that this is sometimes difficult to understand, especially when the facts are conclusive.

jW: Did the Nazi federal minister appear at the court hearing in Berlin?

FW: No, the trial was held in absentia. Together with my colleague Gerhard Rinck, I had tried to contact our client beforehand. But our letter came back from Bonn [capital of West Germany] after it had been opened and resealed there. The envelope bore the handwritten note: “Acceptance subsequently refused. Caretaker has no power of attorney for Federal Minister for Displaced Persons, Refugees and War-Affected Persons.”

jW: You said earlier that you had been emotional. Because of the prominence of the client? Because of the international attention?

FW: Well, I was never afraid of big shots. It was the trial as such. Never before had a West German former Nazi, especially one with government responsibility, been indicted by a GDR court for his war crimes. The trial was not only aimed at the specific person but at the political leadership of the Federal Republic of Germany



PHOTO: FRANK SCHUMANN, JUNGE WELT

Friedrich Wolff, top defense lawyer in the German Democratic Republic.

as a whole. The trial had great symbolic significance.

jW: In the West, people still speak of a “show trial” today.

FW: Of course it was a show trial. The GDR thus proved the continuity of the Nazi dictatorship in the West German state, the ally of the U.S. and its anti-communist bulwark against the East. So the scope of defense was limited.

Nevertheless, we defense lawyers declared that the Supreme Court had no jurisdiction. First, the acts had not been committed on our territory; second, the criminal law of the GDR had not applied to Oberländer when he committed the acts. And thirdly, Oberländer was protected by the immunity of the German Bundestag.

The application was rejected. On April 29, 1960, Oberländer was sentenced to life in prison for the shooting of several thousand Jews and Poles in Lemberg. This did not even take into account the murderous acts he later committed with the [Nazi] German-Caucasian “Sonderverband Bergmann” in the Soviet Union.

jW: Oberländer probably did not spend a day in jail.

FW: No, but he had to resign six days later, although he remained politically active. In 1981, for example, he was one of the co-signers of a “Heidelberg Manifesto” that spoke out against the “infiltration of the German people” and the “alienation” of the German language and culture.

jW: Let me guess: Oberländer was rehabilitated after 1990 [German “reunification”]?

FW: Yes, he was. In April 1990, fellow lawyer Wolfgang Vogel let me know that 85-year-old Prof. Dr. Theodor Oberländer had asked him to instruct me as his defense counsel at the time to apply for the dismissal

of the Supreme Court’s verdict. Oberländer was rehabilitated by the Berlin Regional Court on Nov. 24, 1993.

Without examining the accusations of the prosecution, the verdict was annulled on technical grounds “because the main hearing was unlawfully conducted in the absence of the person concerned.”

jW: In 1993, when Oberländer was rehabilitated, the historian Götz Aly called him a “mastermind of extermination.”

FW: Which he most certainly was.

jW: Two years later, you defended another Nazi, Hans Maria Globke. He had not only contributed to the so-called Nuremberg Race Laws but had also formulated anti-Semitic laws himself. For example, [requiring] that Jewish women had “Sara” and men “Israel” entered in their papers. Globke was not simply a pen-pusher but also significantly involved in the deportation of about 20,000 Jews from Greece to the gas chambers of Auschwitz ...

FW: ... and since 1953 he was [West German Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer’s left and right hand in Bonn, the “gray eminence” responsible for personnel policy, for the work of the cabinet, for the establishment and control of BND and Constitutional Protection [political police organizations].

Not to be forgotten: He also pulled the strings in the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). It was not for this, however, but because of his incriminating Nazi past that the GDR put him in the dock.

The GDR’s attorney general charged Globke with “acting in concert to commit crimes against humanity and war crimes in Berlin and other places from November 1932 until the crushing of fascist tyranny in 1945.”

Globke was, you’re right, the classic pen-pusher in the Nazi empire. And now his desk was in the Federal Chancellery.

jW: But weren’t there the same problems with Globke as in the Oberländer trial?

FW: The GDR had learned its lesson. The indictment and the opening decision were based on Article 6 of the London Statute for the International Military Tribunal in conjunction with Article 5(1) of the GDR Constitution. That paragraph read: “The generally recognized rules of international law bind the state authority and every citizen.”

Globke fit the category “every citizen,” and international law applied equally to the two German states. The GDR expressly submitted to it in its constitution. One should see this calmly also in connection with the mendacious statement of the “unjust state GDR.”

State Secretary Globke received a life sentence in prison on July 23, 1963. A quarter of a year later, he resigned as head of the Federal Chancellery, was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany and wanted to move to Switzerland as a pensioner.

In the 1950s, his spouse had purchased a property on Lake Geneva in the canton of Vaud. However, after Globke’s intention became known, the cantonal parliament declared that it would not grant the former [West German] minister a residence permit. This showed very clearly how Globke was viewed abroad — and how right the GDR was in putting such pillars of the West German state on trial.

This was not propaganda, as is still claimed today, but a principled political confrontation with the fascist dictatorship and its protagonists. In other words, coming to terms with the past [“Vergangenheitsbewältigung” in German]. This was not something that was only invented after 1990.

‘Coming to terms with the past’

FW: I first believed that this was a word created by the West Germans when they wanted to get at our past and our biographies. No. In fact, when I looked through my documents from the Oberländer trial, I repeatedly read this term “coming to terms with the past” on my sheets from 1960.

The GDR was clearly a pioneer in both the public and the legal discussion of fascism, of the perpetrators and the victims. The first Auschwitz trials in the West took place in Frankfurt am Main only in 1963.

At that time, there had already been discussions in the Federal Republic of [West] Germany (FRG) for years about whether Nazi and war crimes should not be considered time-barred. In 1965, the Bundestag discussed the “final stroke.” Even after the U.N. had determined in a resolution in 1968 that war crimes and crimes against humanity were not subject to a statute of limitations, discussions in the Federal Republic continued to stall.

It was not until 1979 that the Bundestag — after 30 years of debate! — decided to lift the statute of limitations for murder crimes committed during the Nazi era. By 255 votes to 222!

jW: And that is why today there are show trials, for example, against 100 year olds who stood guard in extermination camps almost 80 years ago.

FW: I think that there is a serious difference between our trials and these trials today. At that time, we wanted to draw the public’s attention to certain facts, and, in doing so, we also made a political and moral judgment, which is not usually the task of the judiciary.

So these were show trials in the sense of enlightenment and social ostracism. They were a political tool in the GDR’s anti-fascist struggle against Nazis who were actively involved in the reorganization of a part of Germany.

**Friedrich Wolff, born in Berlin-Neukölln in 1922, son of a Jewish doctor and a Protestant mother, joined the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1945. After studying law at Humboldt University from 1946 to 1949, he was “judge by order of the court,” from April 1951 trainee in the Justice Department of the Berlin Magistrate’s Office; lawyer since 1953 and chairman of the Berlin Bar Association from 1954 to 1970, from 1984 to 1988 and in 1990. He served as defense attorney in various political trials, including of Nazi and war criminals; of June 17, 1953, demonstrators; and of Erich Honecker and other members of the Politburo in the 1990s. Wolff has authored several books published by Edition Ost in Berlin.*

‘Operation Lone Star’ – a white-supremacist ploy

Proto-fascist Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas is getting a lot of publicity these days for busing asylum-seeking migrants, who have entered the U.S. from the Mexican border, up north to Washington, D.C., and to New York City. He’s now been joined in this political stunt by Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey.

Since mid-April, Abbott has sent over 6,000 migrants to D.C. from Texas, on more than 135 buses, as part of “Operation Lone Star.” In New York City, Department of Social Services Commissioner Gary Jenkins said he estimates more than 3,000 migrants have arrived there since May, including a significant number of families with children.

The reason given by these white-supremacist governors? According to Abbott on Aug. 5, “the chaos created by Biden’s open border policies.” (gov.texas.gov)

In fact, many of Trump’s racist border policies have remained in place during Biden’s presidency, due to the multiple anti-immigrant lawsuits spearheaded by Republican state officials and endorsed by SCOTUS and the lower courts.

What we are seeing in real time is the

ugly spectacle of two capitalist-controlled political parties jockeying over which can squeeze the most political profit out of the desperate plight of migrants fleeing their countries devastated by U.S. military and economic imperialism.

And this jockeying is not simply with words. Oh no! Actual people are being shunted this way and that, across thousands and thousands of miles, with despair, homelessness, starvation, sickness and often death the result.

The current struggle between “federal power” and “states’ rights” is a replay in the struggle about which current within capitalism can claim power and control over the fates of workers and oppressed people.

And white supremacy is a deadly premise on which that power is based. Either capitalist current is ready to use any technique available to win — legal suppression including incarceration and forced labor, “dog whistle” racist language and publicity stunts like the busing. These practices are handed down generation to generation from one ruling-class politician to another.

Because Abbott’s busing ploy is not new. It’s a page right out of the loathsome

playbook of the White Citizens’ Council that fought desegregation in the South during the 1950s and ’60s, under the banner of “states’ rights.”

Founded in 1954 in Mississippi, as part of the segregationist backlash to the Brown v. Board of Education desegregation ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, the WCC was “the businessman’s Klan.” Mayors, newspaper editors, business owners and Boy Scout leaders met openly in this network of white-supremacist organizations throughout the U.S.

In 1985 the Missouri-based Council of Conservative Citizens continued the bigoted work, using the WCC mailing lists and some of its board members. The CCC has close ties with the Republican Party in the South, with prominent politicians like Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott being open members while in office.

One of Workers World’s managing editors, who grew up in Alabama under segregation, witnessed a WCC campaign in her small town to “send Black people up North” to expose “hypocrisy” about fighting racism. A front-page photo story in the local newspaper showed local white Democratic

Party business leaders “escorting” a group of Black people onto a Greyhound bus, bound ultimately for Detroit.

The white supremacists organizing these political stunts then, like Abbott and Ducey now, cared not a whit for the fate of those being displaced and moved around, treating people like pieces in a game of political chess. In fact, on Aug. 11 in northern Georgia, authorities got a call that migrants being shipped out of Texas on an Operation Lone Star bus were about to be dumped near rural Rising Fawn, Georgia — where there was only one gas station and farmland. The migrants were being told it was only a “short walk” to Chattanooga, Tennessee — 25 miles away on mountainous local roads.

Workers World is committed to the struggle to fight and end white supremacy! We are sick and tired of the hypocritical charade of so-called “democratic” government under capitalism. We demand and will win safe refuge, shelter, health care, jobs, education, freedom from incarceration and the chance for both “bread and roses” for all under socialism. No borders in the workers’ struggle! □

Lessons from Charlottesville: How to fight fascism

By Nathaniel Chase

This article first appeared on workers.org on Jan. 13, 2021, in response to the Jan. 6 pro-Trump, violent takeover of the U.S. Capitol following the 2020 presidential elections.

The writer was part of a Workers World Party delegation, amongst thousands of left forces confronting racist and fascist thugs in Charlottesville, Virginia, on Aug. 12, 2017.

A week later on Aug. 17, young anti-racist forces tore down a statue of an unknown Confederate soldier in Durham, North Carolina, that sparked a movement across the U.S. and the world to remove monuments honoring pro-slavery figures.

The large demonstration of fascist, white-supremacist forces in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6 [2021] brought back memories for this writer of the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, over three years ago.

Aug. 12, 2017, was filled with the most horrible racism and violence and the murder of anti-racist activist Heather Heyer and severe injuries to others there.

And that day this writer saw the fight-back of working-class and oppressed people overcome the fascists and send their movement into disarray. As far-right forces are increasingly emboldened and organized in the U.S., it’s worth looking back on Charlottesville for lessons we can apply today.

Lesson one: Kops and Klan go hand-in-hand

The police and far right have a long history of collaboration, evident on Jan. 6 and in Charlottesville. In both cases the police stood by and even assisted, as far-right violence escalated. Why? Because police and fascists serve similar roles for the ruling class: deploying violence and intimidation against the most oppressed — especially Black, Brown and Indigenous people — in order to keep the whole working class down. Once we understand this relationship, it will be clear we can never rely on the police to counter fascist violence.

Police function inside the structure of the state and fascist groups outside of it. Their similar roles explain why so many cops are members of fascist organizations and vice versa.

Only rarely will police arrest the occasional white supremacist to cover their real role. Revolutionaries must continue to expose the link between the police and the far right, dispelling the liberal notion that we can count on the cops.

(For a deeper look at the connections between the police and the far right, read “The Klan & the Government: Foes or Allies?” by Sam Marcy, workers.org/books.)



Lesson two: The working class is not the base of fascism

The common stereotype of a white supremacist is a dirt-poor white worker, often from a rural area. In Charlottesville, it was immediately clear the fascists were coming from a different social strata: The majority had substantial disposable income, enough to buy expensive uniforms, tactical equipment, guns and vehicles and to travel from across the country for the rally.

A similar pattern could be seen Jan. 6, with many of the rioters being businesspeople and at least one arriving on a private jet! While fascist movements draw in some white workers, their primary base is the petty bourgeoisie: small business owners and self-employed sectors. These elements are anxious on the one hand about the rising power of workers, especially from oppressed nations, and on the other hand the power of large capitalists, who threaten to grind them down into the working class.

The far right does not speak for the working class. The exploited class is not only white — it is Black, Brown and Indigenous. It is undocumented migrants, Muslims, women and gender-nonconforming people, LGBTQ2S+ people, seniors and individuals with disabilities. It is primarily the most oppressed sectors of society, whose labor is most brutally exploited for profit by the capitalist class. The working class is comprised of the very people most targeted by a fascist movement — those who have historically led the resistance against it.

Lesson three: Workers and oppressed people need to respond independently

No elected politicians or sections of the Democratic Party showed up in Charlottesville to oppose the far right. The opposition consisted of various left political forces (Marxists, anarchists, social democrats), Black activists and unaffiliated workers.

The common liberal response to fascists is to ignore them, asserting they will disappear if they don’t draw attention. This dangerous notion allows white-supremacist ideas to flourish unchallenged.

The ruling class deliberately encourages a passive approach, because they know that a large anti-racist, anti-fascist movement will ultimately condemn capitalism

as a whole. The ruling class goes along with the violence of the far right, because it aligns with their class interests. On the other hand, they denounce the resistance of workers and the oppressed that endangers their rule.

While the Democratic Party may disagree with the right wing on how to keep working-class and oppressed people in line, the two are united in their goal of doing so.

We must build an anti-racist, anti-fascist movement deeply rooted in the working class and independent of the Democrats. We must also overcome the fear, entirely understandable, of directly confronting fascists in the streets.

Lesson four: The fascists are not invincible!

The morning of Aug. 12, 2017, began with left and right forces gathering and the balance of forces still unclear. As far-right violence increased, militant, disciplined resistance pushed them back until the police were forced to intervene, preventing the rightists from holding their rally.

The seemingly all-powerful fascists scattered and fell into bickering and infighting. Those who arrived in Charlottesville to unite the various factions of their movement left divided and demoralized.

When it seemed that the right might overwhelm the left, revolutionaries played a key role by conveying confidence that we could fight back. Organization, discipline and communication boosted morale, playing a decisive role in turning the tide.

It is the duty of revolutionaries to instill this confidence — in the streets, in meetings and in our propaganda. As Mao Zedong famously put it: “All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying; but in reality, they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are powerful.”

Lesson five: Seize the moment!

Charlottesville provided an opportunity to speak about the prevalence of white supremacy in a country founded on the genocide of Indigenous peoples and the enslavement of Africans. One could show the connections, for example, between open white supremacy and the more veiled white supremacy of a liberal politician rezoning a Black neighborhood for gentrification. Or how little difference is to be found between police lynchings and Klan lynchings.

In periods of crisis, people are more open to new ways of thinking. The opportunity to win people to revolutionary ideas is greater than ever, but revolutionaries must seize it. We must deepen our roots in the working class, encouraging working and oppressed people to defeat the fascist movement and ultimately the capitalist system itself. □

Taiwan, Kosovo, Afghanistan

Where it does not dominate,
U.S. imperialism sows chaos

By Manuel Raposo

Raposo is editor of the Portuguese web magazine, jornalmudardevida.net, where this article was published Aug. 10. Translation: John Catalinotto.

While declaring itself ready to prolong the war in Ukraine, “for as long as necessary,” U.S. imperialism is dedicating itself to creating new hotbeds of tension in various parts of the world, in a bid to threaten and show strength.

Three events reveal this: the visit to Taiwan of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, second in succession to the president behind the vice president, defying China; the Kosovo authorities’ provocations against the ethnic Serbian population, provoking the Serbian Republic and Russia; and the assassination of an Al-Qaeda leader in Afghanistan, with the aim of keeping the Taliban government under fire.

With this, the U.S. gives a practical demonstration of what the new NATO strategy, defined in Madrid at the end of June, means. Leaders expressed their intention to extend the Alliance’s radius of action all over the world, namely to the Pacific. Supported by the complicity of Western allies, the United States is venturing into what it knows best: military threats.

Taiwan

Pelosi’s visit is an obvious provocation to China and a denial of international treaties that recognize one China, of which Taiwan is an integral part. In concert with Biden’s presidency (this is the only way to understand the tour), Pelosi has acted as the spearhead of U.S. imperialism in its confrontation with China. It is clear that she intends to reverse the political course set 50 years ago between [late President Richard] Nixon and [the late Chairman] Mao [Zedong] and, in this way, add a military dimension to the economic war started by the U.S. against China.

The agreement made in 1972 — which seven years later provided the basis for

the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the People’s Republic of China — is clear: There is only one China, the People’s Republic, the only one represented in the United Nations; Taiwan is an island province which is part of China; U.S. policy towards China respects these principles and cannot interfere in Chinese internal affairs; and differences between Taiwan and the Chinese government will be resolved without outside interference.

The duplicity of the U.S. leads it to swear allegiance to these precepts — as did Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Pelosi herself at the height of the present crisis — while at the same time encouraging independence ambitions in Taiwan and selling arms to the current Taipei government, under the guise of responding to Beijing’s “threats.” It was this second side of U.S. policy that Pelosi took it upon herself to defend to the current Taipei government.

The White House’s game-playing, to make it look like it had nothing to do with the congresswoman’s decision, is a demonstration of political cynicism that convinces no one. Above all, it did not convince China, which deployed considerable military assets in the waters around Taiwan in response to both the political provocation itself and the U.S. deployment of naval military forces to accompany Pelosi’s move.

The message left by Pelosi is clear about U.S. purposes: to strengthen ties with Taiwanese independence seekers “now and for decades to come,” as she put it. The point is that time is running in Beijing’s favor, both because of China’s growing economic and political power in the region and the world and because of the decline and increasing isolation of the U.S. A peaceful course of events will lead to Taiwan’s integration into China and its more immediate sphere of influence. It is this course that the U.S. wants to stop by introducing conflict factors into the region.

Kosovo

The Kosovo government, entirely subordinated to Washington’s orders, has

set in motion a campaign of harassment of the Kosovar Serb population, repeating the process applied in Ukraine by Zelensky against the Russian-speaking population. The target is to stir up the Serbian authorities in Belgrade and, through them, Russia.

One of the largest U.S. military bases in Europe is in Kosovo [Camp Bondsteel]. Set up in 1999 following the bombing of Yugoslavia by NATO forces, its function is to serve U.S. strategic interests in the Balkans and the Middle East. A Council of Europe Human Rights envoy who visited the base in 2005 called it “a reduced version of Guantánamo,” and it was known that the CIA secretly used it as a detention and torture camp for individuals labeled “terrorists.”

With the outbreak of war in Ukraine in February, Kosovo was ready to go along with sanctions against Russia. At the end of July, while increasing discriminatory pressures on the Serbian population, the Kosovo government called, through the voice of its defense minister, for accelerated integration into NATO.

The Republic of Serbia, it should be recalled, did not cooperate in the sanctions against Russia. Furthermore, it does not recognize the independence of Kosovo, self-declared in 2008 and forged under the military action of the USA and NATO. In keeping with Serbia’s reasons, Russia and China, along with five other European countries, do not recognize the independence of Kosovo, which, therefore, has no representation at the U.N.

Afghanistan

The assassination of Ayman al-Zawahiri, in Kabul, followed the script that Barack Obama had applied to eliminate Bin Laden: state terrorism masquerading as a righteous action. With the right to a presidential speech, the feat is intended to show the world the muscle that the U.S. state still has in “special operations” (i.e. extrajudicial targeted assassinations), but which the U.S. infrastructure lacks on the



U.S. military left Afghanistan in ruins. Above, the results of a 2017 bombing raid that killed 90.

economic and political fronts.

It seems clear, after U.S. forces left Afghanistan with their tails between their legs, that U.S. imperialism intends to intimidate and destabilize Taliban power. As if the 20 years of destruction caused by the military occupation were not enough, when the U.S. withdrew, it exhausted the country’s finances by stealing \$7 billion from the Afghan treasury, thus contributing to the dramatic misery in which the population (almost 40 million) finds itself. Now Washington completes the gigantic theft with the warning that any member of the Taliban regime can be put under the Pentagon’s drone guns.

Again, the Kabul assassination has an indirect target: the more shaken Afghanistan remains, the more difficult the efforts by China, Russia and Iran to help the country recover will become.

Here is a further demonstration of what characterizes the policy of the imperialist powers today: Where they cannot dominate, they must create chaos.

The disasters of imperialism

The destructive power of imperialism is the source of countless and well-known human misfortunes: direct and indirect deaths by the thousands; devastating famines; displacement and migration of millions of people; economic collapse of entire countries ...

But, from another angle, this policy of deliberate chaos shows how the world is slipping through the fingers of the powers that have dominated it for the last seven or eight decades. In the midst of this apparent disorder, strong winds of change are blowing. □

Ucrania

¿Saboteará Estados Unidos el acuerdo sobre los cereales?

Continúa de la página 10

puerto de Odesa es uno de los mayores puertos de la cuenca del Mar Negro.

La ciudad de Odesa es un gran centro industrial, con muelles y astilleros bien equipados, una amplia gama de industrias de ingeniería, industrias químicas, refinado de petróleo y procesamiento de alimentos.

Este acuerdo para trasladar alimentos y evitar la hambruna se enfrenta a una ardua batalla. Ucrania está inundada de contratistas militares, entrenadores y fuerzas mercenarias estadounidenses.

La ciudad de Odesa está controlada por fuerzas fascistas. El 2 de mayo de 2014, fuerzas paramilitares con símbolos nazis y de la Bandera fascista ucraniana masacraron a manifestantes antifascistas que buscaban refugio en la Casa del Trabajo.

Su control de la ciudad y la región circundante continúa.

Más de 7.000 sanciones

Durante más de cinco meses, las duras sanciones impuestas por Estados Unidos

y la Unión Europea -a petición de Estados Unidos- han impedido a Rusia exportar cereales, fertilizantes, petróleo y gas al mercado mundial. Esto ha creado una crisis económica más allá de Rusia.

Entre el 22 de febrero y el 20 de julio, Australia, Canadá, la Unión Europea (UE), Japón, Suiza, Gran Bretaña y Estados Unidos impusieron un total de 7.271 sanciones a Rusia, entre ellas a 1.350 entidades. Las medidas incluían la congelación de activos y la prohibición de viajar. (statista.com, 22 de julio)

Las sanciones impidieron al Banco Central de Rusia acceder a más de \$400.000 millones de dólares de reservas de divisas en el extranjero. Los países del G7 decidieron desconectar a varios bancos rusos del sistema SWIFT. Esta imposición de las sanciones más severas de la historia moderna pretendía crear una catástrofe económica, hiperinflación, levantamientos y el colapso del Estado ruso.

Rusia es uno de los mayores proveedores de materias primas del mercado mundial. Rusia tiene la mayor masa de tierra

del mundo y es autosuficiente en cereales, proteínas, fertilizantes y energía. Las sanciones destinadas a desestabilizar y desmembrar a Rusia se han vuelto contra los países que impusieron las duras medidas. Y las sanciones impuestas a Rusia han afectado especialmente a África, creando una espiral de trastornos económicos en todos los países africanos.

Aunque Estados Unidos exigió las sanciones a todas las exportaciones y transacciones rusas, incluidos los cereales, los fertilizantes y la energía, los medios de comunicación corporativos estadounidenses y los políticos de Estados Unidos y de la OTAN han culpado a Rusia de retener los suministros que los propios países imperialistas han bloqueado.

Los países de todo el mundo, incluyendo la mayoría de los países de los continentes de Asia y América del Sur y todos los de África, se han negado, sin embargo, a aceptar o reconocer las sanciones de Estados Unidos y la UE.

El jefe de la Unión Africana, Macky Sall, relacionó las sanciones estadouni-

denses con la escasez de alimentos en el continente. “Las sanciones contra Rusia han empeorado esta situación, y ahora no tenemos acceso al grano procedente de Rusia, principalmente al trigo”. Sall continuó: “Y, lo más importante, no tenemos acceso a los fertilizantes. La situación era mala, y ahora ha empeorado, creando una amenaza para la seguridad alimentaria en África”. (bloomberg.com, 3 de julio)

Lo que se ha borrado por completo de los medios de comunicación estadounidenses es cualquier mención a las sanciones que Estados Unidos ya impuso durante años a 17 países africanos. Estas han tenido un impacto desestabilizador en toda la región.

La clase gobernante, con sus planificadores militares y políticos, entiende bien el impacto de sus decisiones. Pero para preservar la fabulosa riqueza de los gobernantes y su posición dominante, “la administración está dispuesta a tolerar incluso una recesión mundial y el aumento del hambre”. (Washington Post, 17 de junio) □

Ucrania

¿Saboteará Estados Unidos el acuerdo sobre los cereales?

Por Sara Flounders

24 de julio — Un acuerdo negociado por Turquía para la exportación de granos de Ucrania y Rusia presenta un problema político para el imperialismo estadounidense y sus objetivos de guerra. La respuesta de Washington: enviar más armas.

El histórico acuerdo para trasladar cientos de toneladas de grano, si sigue adelante, socava la determinación de Estados Unidos y la OTAN de continuar la guerra en Ucrania a pesar del coste para ese país y de la terrible amenaza de hambruna en países de todo el mundo.

A Washington le frustra especialmente que el acuerdo haya sido concertado por el presidente de Turquía, miembro de

la OTAN, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, y que haya participado el secretario general de la ONU, António Guterres. Erdogan se ha negado a secundar las miles de sanciones impuestas a Rusia.

Los estrategas de Washington pretenden dirigir esta guerra por delegación en Ucrania y ampliarla, si es posible. Están en juego miles de millones de dólares en contratos militares y beneficios de la guerra.

Sin embargo, el gran plan de un frente global que haga colapsar a Rusia se está torciendo.

En otro acontecimiento, las fotos del presidente ruso Vladimir V. Putin, el presidente iraní Ebrahim Raisi y el presidente turco Erdogan los mostraron reunidos en Teherán el 19 de julio, proporcionando

una advertencia de que el imperialismo estadounidense está perdiendo el control político. La reunión de los dos principales objetivos de Washington pone en tela de juicio la afirmación de que Irán y Rusia están aislados y se enfrentan al colapso. El gigante del gas ruso Gazprom ha firmado un acuerdo de \$40.000 millones de dólares con la Compañía Nacional de Petróleo de Irán para ayudar a los productores iraníes a desarrollar los yacimientos de petróleo y gas en todo su país.

Una semana antes, el viaje del presidente Joe Biden a Israel y Arabia Saudí terminó en un fracaso total. Biden no consiguió formar una coalición contra Irán. No logró convencer a Arabia Saudí de que aumentara la producción de petróleo ni de

que aceptara el tope propuesto por Estados Unidos para el precio del petróleo ruso.

La respuesta de Estados Unidos: más armas

La respuesta inmediata de Estados Unidos al acuerdo sobre el grano que implicaba tanto a Ucrania como a Rusia y a la reunión en Teherán fue anunciar una ayuda militar de \$270 millones de dólares a Ucrania. La administración estadounidense se comprometió a suministrar a Ucrania más sistemas de cohetes de artillería de alta movilidad (HIMARS) junto con 580 drones tácticos Phoenix Ghost. Estados Unidos y Ucrania describen los lanzacohetes HIMARS como “un potencial cambio de juego” en el conflicto.

El portavoz del Consejo de Seguridad Nacional de la Casa Blanca, John Kirby, anunció la nueva transferencia de armas augurando de nuevo una larga guerra: “El presidente ha sido claro en que vamos a seguir apoyando al gobierno de Ucrania y a su pueblo durante el tiempo que sea necesario”. (AP, 22 de julio)

En los últimos cinco meses, Estados Unidos y sus aliados europeos han suministrado miles de millones de dólares en armas a Ucrania y han impuesto sanciones sin precedentes a Moscú. Se entiende que la continua afluencia de armas, contratistas militares y medidas económicas coercitivas prolongarán la guerra.

El acuerdo de alimentos

El complejo acuerdo para transportar cientos de toneladas de cereales y fertilizantes, tanto ucranianos como rusos, a través de estrechos canales desminados en el Mar Negro, y luego a través del Bósforo hacia el Mar Mediterráneo y los mercados mundiales, implicó acuerdos separados con Ucrania y Rusia.

Los militares ucranianos habían minado el puerto de Odesa y se negaban a retirar las minas, alegando prioridades militares. Al mismo tiempo, el gobierno ucraniano culpó a Rusia de bloquear el puerto minado.

El acuerdo limitado de 120 días -que no es un alto el fuego- crea un corredor desmilitarizado a través del Mar Negro para las exportaciones agrícolas. Los combates continúan incluso en la zona inmediata de Odesa. Pero el acuerdo abre una brecha en las sanciones que han bloqueado el grano ruso de los mercados mundiales.

El acuerdo también permite el acceso sin trabas de los fertilizantes rusos a los mercados mundiales. Rusia es un importante productor de fertilizantes, que son vitales para maximizar la producción de alimentos.

Los barcos serán supervisados por un centro de coordinación conjunto dirigido por la ONU, que se establecerá inmediatamente en Estambul y que incluirá representantes de Ucrania, Rusia y Turquía. (tinyurl.com/2s3s5zhp)

Según el Secretario de Estado estadounidense Antony Blinken, 85 barcos del puerto marítimo de Odesa estaban llenos de grano, con entre 20 y 25 millones de toneladas de grano cerca en silos. El

Continúa en la página 9



Silo de grano en el puerto de Odesa, Ucrania.

Panamá

Los trabajadores se declaran en huelga y consiguen una reducción de precios

Por Deborah Rodríguez

La autora estaba en Ciudad de Panamá, Panamá, de viaje de estudios con su hija, cuando comenzó la huelga nacional para reducir los precios el 1 de julio. Combina sus observaciones con la investigación para contar esta historia.

El pueblo panameño ha ganado una importante batalla. Están en las calles desde el 1 de julio exigiendo a su gobierno que reduzca el coste de la vida y de los bienes necesarios, cuyos precios repercuten en el día a día de los panameños. También exigen que el gobierno abandone la protección de las normas neoliberales que protegen a la élite del poder del país.

El día que comenzó la huelga, desde la cima del cerro Ancón, en Ciudad de Panamá, se podía escuchar un cántico lejano que sonaba a protesta. Es difícil ignorar las marcadas diferencias entre los barrios desarrollados y los subdesarrollados.

En Ciudad de Panamá, cerca de la Plaza de la Independencia hubo una manifestación “Alto a la gentrificación”. Las diferencias en las condiciones de vida de una manzana a otra eran muy marcadas. En una manzana había bares, restaurantes y tiendas para turistas. A dos manzanas había viviendas precarias con sábanas a modo de puertas y ventanas.

Dirigentes de la Alianza Pueblo Unido por la Vida, de la capital, Ciudad de Panamá; de la Asociación Nacional por los Derechos del Pueblo Organizado (ANADEPO), de Veraguas; y de las organizaciones indígenas de la comarca Ngäbe Buglé organizaron y convocaron el paro nacional.

El pueblo exigió al gobierno del presidente Laurentino Cortizo la congelación de los precios de los combustibles, las medicinas y otros productos básicos; la solución al desabastecimiento de medicinas; la mejora de las condiciones en el sector de la salud



El bloqueo de las carreteras durante tres semanas en julio ayuda a conseguir la reducción de los precios en Panamá.

y la educación; el aumento de los salarios y las pensiones; la reparación de las infraestructuras públicas del país; el compromiso de acabar con la corrupción; el rechazo a las bases militares estadounidenses; la retirada de sus planes de recortar el 10% de la plantilla del sector público; y la implantación de un programa de jubilación voluntaria para los empleados del sector público, entre sus 30 demandas.

Es evidente que las necesidades básicas del pueblo han sido ignoradas por el gobierno neoliberal, lo que ha provocado que millones de panameños se acuesten con hambre. El pueblo ha sufrido la pandemia del COVID-19 y los efectos de las sanciones de Estados Unidos y la UE contra Rusia.

La huelga nacional cerró las carreteras e interrumpió los servicios, ya que los piquetes bloquearon el acceso a los edificios públicos. Los organizadores persistieron a pesar de la represión del gobierno, los ataques de los medios de comunicación y las agresiones de las fuer-

zas de la derecha, que las fuerzas de seguridad ignoran descaradamente.

Tras tres semanas de negociaciones, el 24 de julio el régimen aceptó una disminución del 30% en los precios de más de 72 productos esenciales. El gobierno aceptó apoyar los toques de precios y las subvenciones a las marcas nacionales y reforzar el organismo encargado de regular los precios y la calidad de los servicios: la Autoridad de Protección al Consumidor y Defensa de la Competencia (ACODECO).

Los dirigentes del paro nacional son persistentes y señalan que siguen negociando la reducción y congelación de precios de los combustibles y la electricidad, el costo y la falta de medicamentos, la asignación del 6% del PIB para el presupuesto de la educación pública, entre otras demandas.

Las demandas del pueblo son justas y dignas. Demuestran que el pueblo exige el fin de las políticas neoliberales y represivas; y a pesar de la represión, seguirá luchando hasta alcanzar la victoria. □