

Disaster capitalists target Native lands in Maui

By Will Hodgkinson

The destruction from the wildfires still raging on Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) lands in Hawaiʻi continues to worsen. The worst fires broke out in Hawaiʻi and Maui, Hawaiʻi's largest islands. As of Aug. 22, the death toll has risen to 115. Up to 1,000 people still remain unaccounted for.

The direct causes of the fires remain unclear, but new information has come out implicating the privately owned utility Hawaiian Electric, which left its poorly maintained power lines running despite the threat of fire. Preliminary data have identified critical faults in other Hawaiian Electric lines at the sites of the major fires.

Thousands of Kānaka Maoli residents remain unhoused and lack adequate

assistance from U.S. settler authorities. Despite the scale of devastation and suffering caused by the fires, both state and federal authorities have failed to provide necessary support.

On Aug. 15, the Biden Administration announced an inadequate "one time" payment of \$700 per household affected by the fires. The total disaster relief

pledged comes to just \$3.8 million, which is a tiny amount, less than one-sixth of the \$24 billion Biden requested from Congress a week earlier for the imperialist proxy war in Ukraine.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has pledged only marginally more disaster funding, and its response remains grossly inadequate. This reflects the agency's infamous track record when responding to disasters that



As Joe Biden visits, local residents make their point. Maui, Hawaiʻi, Aug. 21, 2023.

disproportionately affect working-class, Indigenous, and Black communities.

Kānaka Maoli activists lead relief efforts

Without adequate assistance from settler authorities, Kānaka Maoli activists continue to lead relief efforts, providing water, food, and other supplies to survivors.

"People aren't waiting on FEMA, or even the state and county," said Professor Kapua'ala Sproat, Associate Director of the Ka Huli Ao Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law, in an Aug. 18 Democracy Now! interview. "Relief organizations are springing up in people's homes, in their garages, and supplies are coming in by boat, by plane, by vehicle when the roads are opened."

In the same interview, Professor Sproat called attention to the disaster capitalists already exploiting the suffering and devastation inflicted by the fires. Mere hours after residents evacuated, some reported getting calls from real estate developers pressuring them

to sell their damaged property. "There are realtors and there are others who are making offers to people in their most desperate time of need ... People are getting offers on their ancestral homes."

Although Hawaiʻi's settler governor, Josh Green, has promised to prevent such land grabs, his state administration has taken no concrete action. Without such action, tens of thousands of Kānaka Maoli residents remain at disproportionate risk of extortion by property developers.

Capitalist real estate markets imposed on Kānaka Maoli lands have already made Hawaiʻi the most expensive place to live out of all the territories ruled from Washington, forcing many Kānaka Maoli to go unhoused on their own lands.

Theft of water reserves

Worsening this situation, corporate interests — such as the West Maui Land Company, Inc. (WML), which has a monopoly on most of Maui's irrigation infrastructure — are taking advantage of the disaster to secure their theft of water reserves.

While many Kānaka Maoli families lack enough water to bathe, the WML has diverted crucial streams to resorts and luxury developments.

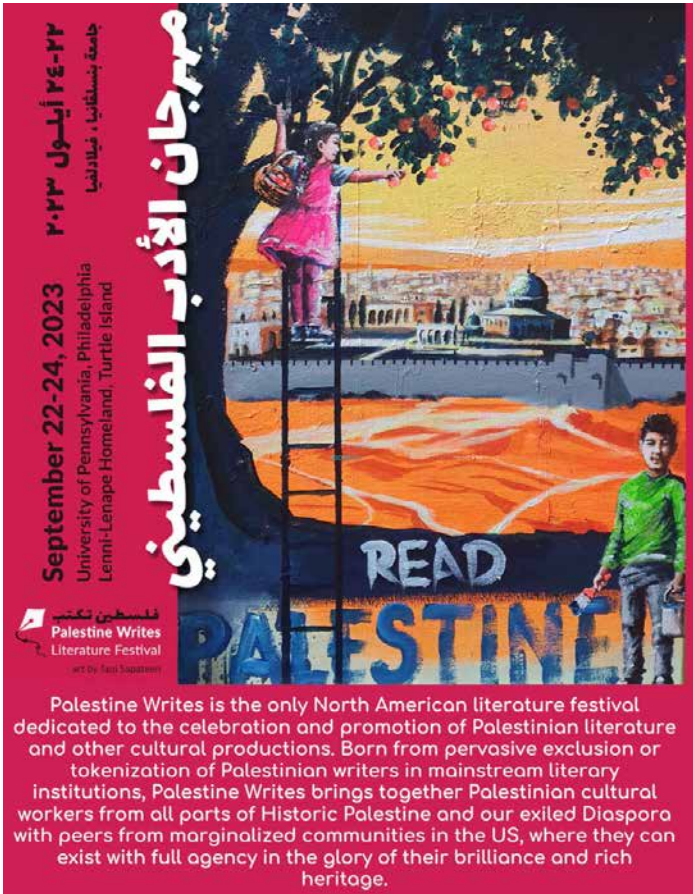
Kānaka Maoli activists and residents have fought against the WML's water theft, and in 2022, the Maui Water Commission approved a new permitting

Continued on page 11

Palestine Writes Festival returns

Workers World Party is proud to be an endorser of this very important festival that will highlight important artists especially from the Palestinian diaspora. These artists will share with the world movement more than 70 years of painful experiences at the hands of the U.S.-backed Israeli apartheid regime and the heroic resistance against it concentrated in the Occupied Territories including Gaza, Jenin and the West Bank. The fact that this Festival is taking place in the belly of the beast, the U.S., reflects the growing global isolation against Israel with economic, political and cultural boycotts, direct actions and mass protests. From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!

See news release on Festival on page 9.



6, 7

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

Seminar behind bars

Profit gouging protest

Ruchell Magee is free

Black August tribute

George Jackson

Reinstate Steve at Trader Joe's	3
UAW rejects boss's bid	3
Ohio abortion access	5
Flight attendants' CHAOS	5
NY Times' hit job	8
COMMENTARIES & OPINION	
Transgender fear	
and women's sports	4
Lenin on the working class	5
Editorial: Presidents & border brutality	10

On Labor Day, hail workers in motion!

Support Workers World!

Workers World/Mundo Obrero newspaper cheers on the Amazon and Starbucks workers who are leading struggles to unionize their workplaces. These mainly young people of many nationalities and genders are in the forefront of the class struggle in the U.S. Their bold actions have sparked an upsurge of worker-led union drives in other companies and industries. Their bravery in defying vicious corporate union busting is inspiring workers around the country.

This newspaper has closely followed and featured the organizing drives of Amazon and Starbucks workers and recent unionization campaigns at Trader Joe’s, Chipotle, REI, Apple and other companies.

On this year’s Labor Day, WW expresses solidarity with these workers, all those celebrating union pride on this day, and the unorganized and low-wage earners who are fighting for workplace rights and a union. We laud the workers, especially young people, women, other gender-oppressed and LGBTQ2S+ individuals, immigrants and Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, Arab and disabled people, who are fighting for all workers.

WW joins with the actors and other SAG-AFTRA members and writers in WGA now on strike against profit-seeking billionaire studio owners. The newspaper supports auto workers who are fighting to reverse concessions when their contracts expire Sept. 14. Our pages write of health care workers, longshore workers, graduate students, and many more who stage walkouts and other protests to demand better wages and working conditions and RESPECT.

Since Workers World’s first issue in 1959, the newspaper has featured coverage of workers’ struggles. Our newspaper is partisan, siding with workers and oppressed people fighting for their rights against capitalist bosses. The struggles of our class are covered in our pages and in our biweekly column “On the Picket Line.” Not only does WW write about worker organizing, but our writers and staff members join picket lines and rallies!

WW needs your support!

If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program. WW depends on its readers’ backing. The program was established 46 years ago so readers could help WW publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to fight against capitalism and for revolutionary change leading to socialism.

Since the early 1990s, the fund has sponsored workers.org, where news and analysis of global and domestic issues and struggles are posted continually. The website is a resource for political activists. It contains first-hand accounts by writer-activists in many countries, translated by our staff. Timely articles written by writer-organizers keep the newspaper current on union drives and worker activism, as well as anti-war, anti-racist, women’s, LGBTQ2S+ and other progressive movements.

While WW’s staff members are volunteers, the 12 issues printed and shipped each year and the website incur expenses. Although many online publications require payments to read their articles, WW does not. **Our online articles are free to all readers.**

Join the WW Supporter Program!

Can you donate \$50, \$100 or \$200 a year or more? Donating \$50 or more will entitle you to receive 12 print issues a year, an email link to articles posted online, and, upon request, a copy of the book “What Road to Socialism?” (Download this and other WW books at workers.org/books)

By donating to this fund, you can help get class truth to more readers. Write checks, either monthly or annually, to Workers World. Include your name, address and email; write “Supporter Program” on the memo line. Mail to Workers World at 121 West 27th St., Suite 404, New York, NY 10001.

We are thankful for your help in building Workers World! □



Workers rally in Philadelphia, July 20, 2023, supporting SAG-AFTRA strike. WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the 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. □

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this week

♦ In the U.S.	
UAW members reject contract cuts	3
Trader Joe’s workers: ‘Reinstate Steve now!’	3
Transgender fear and women’s sports	4
The working class ‘is a revolutionary class’	5
Abortion access win in Ohio election	5
Flight attendants: ‘Pay us or CHAOS!’	5
NY Times hit job on anti-war activists	8
♦ Around the world	
Disaster capitalism targets Maui	1
Why we must defend China	8
Palestine Writes Festival	1,9
No U.S.-French-backed invasion of Niger	10
Environmental racism links Lāhainā to Katrina	11
Petition to take Cuba off ‘terrorist’ list	11
♦ Tear down the walls	
Incarcerees organize against life sentences	6
Protest hits water profit-gouging	6
Ruchell Magee wins his freedom	7
The legacy of Black August	7
♦ Editorial	
Obama, Trump, Biden share blame with Abbott	10
♦ Noticias en Español	
¡No a la invasión de Níger!	12
Petición por Cuba	12

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UAW members reject concessionary contract demands

By Martha Grevatt

Contract negotiations between the United Auto Workers and Ford, General Motors and Stellantis (which includes Chrysler) began in July. Instead of engaging in the traditional handshake across the table with company executives — a photo op implying the parties were working together to achieve a “competitive agreement” — UAW President Shawn Fain visited auto plants to shake hands with the UAW rank and file. This represented a break with the class-collaborationist former leaders of the union.

Both parties have submitted written proposals to the other side. For the first time in decades, the UAW is making bold demands on the companies, including substantial pay increases, elimination of tiers in wages, benefits and pensions, restoration of the cost-of-living allowance (COLA) and, significantly, a 32-hour work week at 40 hours pay.

Currently, workers at the Big Three who were hired after October 2007 are termed “in progression,” in contrast to higher-seniority “traditional” workers. After eight or more years, in progression workers make the same pay as traditional workers, but they still don’t get a traditional pension or health insurance when they retire.

Before they begin the eight-year wage progression, they may spend a number of years as a “supplemental employee,” making less pay with fewer benefits. While the UAW agreed to these tiers in



Attendees at UAW’s annual Women’s Conference are ready for the contract fight, Aug. 6-11, 2023.

PHOTO: UNITED AUTO WORKERS

the past, now “equal pay for equal work” is a key contract demand, and the workers are ready to strike over it.

The union has been stressing that over the past 10 years the three auto companies combined made \$250 billion in profits off the backs of the workers. Stellantis raked in net profits of a record \$12 billion for the first half of 2023.

Company proposals called ‘trash’

Fain made waves on Aug. 8 when, in a live Facebook appearance, he held up the written proposals from Stellantis and then deposited them in a waste basket. He took issue with Stellantis’ Aug. 1 statement that the company was “not seeking a concessionary agreement,” pointing to a number of concessions the company is demanding, and reiterated what the UAW is pushing for.

Fain’s righteous gesture drew howls of indignation from the corporate media and from Stellantis Chief Operating Officer Mark Stewart, who sent an email to UAW-represented employees calling the union proposal “a losing proposition.” The company claims that what the members are demanding will raise labor costs to \$100 an hour, or even \$150 an hour, according to “two people briefed on the matter.” (Reuters, August 11)

That is supposedly up from \$63 an hour that the company, using fuzzy math, claims are current labor costs. Actually, it is a drop from the figure of \$75 claimed 14 years ago, before Chrysler and GM filed for bankruptcy. The cost of living has risen significantly since 2009, but autoworkers’ wages have not kept pace. With all benefits included, average hourly labor costs are probably closer to between

\$40 and \$45 per hour. Moreover, labor costs for the auto companies have fallen, due to a steady drop in the number of hours needed to produce a vehicle. Even if the hourly labor costs remain the same, the costs per vehicle are lower if it takes 20 hours of labor to build a vehicle instead of 25 hours.

Those five hours mean more profits for GM, Ford and Stellantis. But these cost savings — generated by the ongoing introduction of the latest automation technology, combining jobs, speedups and other capitalist means of eliminating workers — are never mentioned, especially not at contract time.

As production transitions from fossil-fuel burning cars and trucks to electric vehicles, which have fewer component parts, an estimated 30 percent fewer workers will be needed on the assembly lines. This latest restructuring could mean a huge loss of jobs.

That’s why the demand for a shorter work week — not only to give workers more leisure and family time but to offset the need for fewer workers — is absolutely critical in this round of negotiations.

It’s possible that workers at all three auto companies will be striking for a bold program of demands when contracts expire on Sept. 14. The UAW’s current slogan, “Back in the fight,” signifies a new, overdue and welcome mood of resistance.

Martha Grevatt is a retired Stellantis worker.

Trader Joe’s United pickets HQ: ‘Reinstate Steve now!’

By Steve Gillis
Boston

A powerful delegation of rank-and-file Trader Joe’s United (TJU) workers traveled over four hours in driving rain Aug. 15 from their store in Hadley, Massachusetts, to corporate headquarters in Boston’s Financial District. Over 100 supporters joined them on Federal Street to hand deliver petitions with 22,000 signatures to reinstate Steve Andrade, who was framed up and unjustly fired in June for his union advocacy at the Hadley store.

As if borrowing from the playbook of Starbucks or Amazon, Trader Joe’s bosses and high-priced lawyers cooked up a fake story. This one involved a tool used to make corporate advertising art, not even Andrade’s tool, allegedly left out without incident at the Hadley store. Andrade, a beloved and soft-spoken crew member of 18 years, has been instrumental in advocating for the union and improved conditions for his co-workers and neighborhood customers.

The Hadley store (site 512) was the first Trader Joe’s in the country to win a National Labor Relations Board election in June 2022, inspiring others in Minneapolis; Oakland, California; Louisville, Kentucky; and elsewhere

to organize with TJU and United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). The union’s founders in Hadley petitioned the NLRB as an independent, unaffiliated union.

‘Trader Joe’s: We can see your greedy side!’

Despite its hippie, artsy beginnings in 1967 in Pasadena, California, Trader Joe’s now leads U.S. grocery giants in revenue per square foot — over \$2,100. It made \$13.3 billion last year from 560 stores nationwide, most located in relatively wealthy small towns and city neighborhoods.

Wielding a bullhorn, Local 1 President Jamie Edwards fired up the crowd and the Financial District. “What’s disgusting? Union Busting!” and “Trader Joe’s, you can’t hide. We can see your greedy side!” echoed off skyscrapers occupied by JPMorgan Chase-owned First Republic Bank, Rockport Capital and Trader Joe’s East Coast offices. Nervous armed security guards ushered clients through picketed gilded doors.

Edwards reported a list of union-busting tactics and unfair labor practices endured by the workers in the Western Massachusetts store this past year. They include retaliatory firings and other discipline on bogus accusations, coercion, in-store and at-home harassment, threats and intimidation, cutting hours, prohibition of union pins, interrogations and captive audience meetings, bad faith bargaining, taking health care coverage from workers — including one worker with cancer — and unrelenting written and verbal misrepresentations of the union’s legal rights, intentions and demands.

“Somehow this company still has an image of being progressive and proworker,” Edwards said. “Does this sound like a progressive company to you?” The crowd responded, “Hell No!”

An injury to one is an injury to all!

Union delegations from Service Employees (SEIU) 32BJ, UNITE HERE Local 26, UFCW and Starbucks Workers United represented the 22,000 petitioners for Andrade’s reinstatement. They declared that “An injury to one is an injury to all!” John Buonopane, United Steelworkers (USW) District 4 staff representative, called out “Trader Joe’s corporate thugs, who should be arrested for their criminal activities!”

Several socialist organizations, including Democratic Socialists of America, Young Communist League and Party for Socialism and Liberation, sent delegations and speakers. Mairead Skehan Gillis of Workers World Party



WW PHOTO: MAUREEN SKEHAN

Maeg Yosef, left, and Jamie Edwards, right, of Trader Joe’s United Local 1. Boston, Aug. 15, 2023

put Trader Joe’s on notice: “This corporation is hoping that the workers will be fearful and give up their organizing efforts so that they will accept less than what is owed to them. But all of us are here today together to show them that they are wrong ... We will not be silent. We are here today to demand that Steve be returned immediately. We will not stand for anything less!”

Maeg Yosef, TJU Local 1’s communications director, closed with a tribute “to all of you who’ve been retaliated against, harassed, and in the case of Steve fired; for all of us who’ve borne the brunt of union busting every day this past year, I am here to remind you that you are all badassess! ... Trader Joe’s is scared of your worker power, and they need to come to the negotiating table and deliver a fair contract now!”

Sign the petition to “Reinstate Steve” and support TJU Local 1 at linkin.bio/traderjoesunited.

Steve Gillis is a 37-year member and an elected leader of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751, now working for the members and retired from driving.



WW PHOTO: MAUREEN SKEHAN

John Buonopane, USW District 4 staff representative, Boston, Aug. 15, 2023.

Transgender fear and the belittlement of women’s sports

WW COMMENTARY

By Janisse Miles

In the latest efforts to eliminate the LGBTQ2S+ community, trans people have become the shiny new scapegoat, now that lesbian, gay and bisexual people are somewhat accepted by the mainstream at the moment. Non-binary people are disregarded or denied and often gaslit about their liminal experiences with the gender spectrum; trans men are condescended to, being viewed as frustrated “fallen sisters” who only transition in a desperate attempt to escape misogyny; and trans women are treated as the antichrist.

The most violent transphobic rhetoric usually targets trans women because bigotry against them is the easiest to weaponize.

This patriarchal society has allowed cisgender men to terrorize AFABs (assigned female at birth) to the point that they expect it. Cis men make up 80% to 90% of the sex offender registry and commit 85% of all homicides. Over 80% of women across the United States have experienced sexual harassment in some form. (NPR, Feb. 21, 2018)

Instead of working to reshape ideas of masculinity and the cultivated relationship with violence, for decades all genders are told that this is a natural part of the male experience. And since it’s biological and in no way encouraged and rewarded by society, the minute AMABs (assigned male at birth) hit puberty, the best everyone else can do is try to avoid being the victims of such inevitable violence.

Funnily enough, with this knowledge, women are often told their evolved reflex of viewing most cisgender heterosexual men as a potential threat is an overreaction, although all genders assess the threat levels of cis men upon meeting them.

Anti-trans stereotypes permeate society

Once a transgender woman enters the conversation, suddenly all these statistics matter and cis women need protection, a conversation that wasn’t had before. What the spouters of this rhetoric want people to do is associate trans women with this “biological” tendency of feminized violence.

Therefore one should view them as predators, going through an expensive and emotionally exhausting lifelong process just to get better access to the next victim — even though trans women aren’t a part of the male demographic and are much more likely to be assaulted and murdered themselves. This is effectively weaponizing patriarchy to pit cis women against trans women, and to justify the significant violence trans women face as “protecting women and children.”

While it should be considered a boogeyman, the looming threat of coming into contact with a transwoman permeates society. Its most popular manifestation is the sudden worry about the integrity of female sports. Like all transphobia, the problem with the bogus “concern” over female sports is that it negatively affects everyone.

When trans female athletes happen to be skilled at their sport of choice, their victories are never attributed to their merit, but to their hormones, invoking the argument that their presumed high testosterone levels alone is what brought them to the finish line.

Even though multiple studies reveal that testosterone levels and athletic performance correlate much less than originally thought, tests were conducted after the International Amateur Athletic Federation banned a South African runner — Caster Semenya, a cis woman — from competing in the Olympics due to her naturally high testosterone levels. (workers.org/2016/09/26751/)

Racism, sexism and transphobia in sports

Despite the aforementioned studies directly refuting the IAAF’s claim that women with testosterone levels comparable to the average male have “insurable advantage” over athletes in the average female testosterone range, the IAAF has

dismissed each counterclaim, staunchly sticking to their reasoning based in social mythos and, more importantly, the desire to scrutinize female bodies that don’t adhere to European beauty standards. (tinyurl.com/3dp9eh48)

Caster Semenya is a phenotypic Black woman. And just as the IAAF has equated her body with masculinity, in the same way specifically athletic dark-skinned Black women are masculinized for their bodies. In 2021, tennis star Serena Williams, a visibly muscular Black woman, went up against smaller, lighter, biracial Naomi Osaka and got into a conflict with the umpire. A racist political cartoon in the Australian Herald Sun portrayed Williams with caricaturish features throwing a tantrum while her opponent Osaka, of Haitian and Japanese descent, was drawn as a blonde white woman in contrast.



Caster Semenya

CREDIT: THEDAILYBEAST.COM

Semenya’s case emphasizes the “trans-vestigation” on Black women with similar body types, who are targeted for not being “feminine” enough through the eyes of white supremacy and are punished with public hormone testing and humiliation. Even former First Lady Michelle Obama to this day is called a man because of her toned arms, with celebrities such as Joan Rivers having misgendered her and referred to her as “Michael.”

Attacks impact children

The debilitating hatred of trans women deeply affects children. In June of this year an older man was escorted out of a school in British Columbia for harassing a nine-year-old girl with a pixie cut, demanding “certification” that this child was, in fact, assigned female at birth. What he’s requesting here is that this child be subjected to genital inspection, which is illegal in Canada. But it is legal in many U.S. states, including Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Mississippi and North Carolina, under bills named “Fairness in Women’s Sports Act.”

In bills specifically made for children, and framed as solely a woman’s issue, if an athlete’s biological sex is called into question they can be subject to genital inspection. If fondling a child isn’t enough “confirmation,” they will also undergo a DNA test to make sure there is no Y chromosome lurking, and if that’s not enough to satisfy the accusers, the child’s testosterone levels will be analyzed, just like Semenya’s.

The governors of Utah and Indiana actually vetoed the anti-transgender sports acts, resulting in a “rare split in culture wars” between Republicans. (Reuters, March 25, 2022)

Mind you, the British Columbia case is in an elementary school, where hormone levels are indistinguishable between sexes, as is average physical ability. A little girl had a random man request to see her genitals purely because of her short hair and what he described as “floppy boy shorts.”

And if asked in Florida instead of British Columbia, that request becomes infinitely more likely to be carried out. This kind of

increasingly accepted reaction teaches little girls their appearance matters more than their physical prowess. They are to appear feminine at all times or risk state-sanctioned molestation.

Weaponizing hierarchy

These practices promote bad conduct in women’s sports, easily weaponizing hierarchies of race, size, and adherence to Eurocentric beauty standards. If the competition is particularly challenging, especially if the girls are taller, darker, stronger, or less conventionally “attractive,” one might be more inclined to accuse them of being trans, and several people may be willing to put them on trial to prove their cis-ness and dainty testosterone levels, effectively demonizing their skill in the process.

And once again, when this athlete excels in their craft, it’s attributed to their physi-

cality, boiling ability down to a patriarchal idea of biology alone. In the summer of 2021, Ricci Tres came under fire for winning a women’s open skateboarding contest against a 13-year-old girl.

This was immediately painted as unfair because of her AMAB status, and not because she’s 29 years old with decades of skill, or that she was competing against children (and one 28-year-old who came in fourth place). She won \$500 and a trip to the hormone lab.

And although she had been on estrogen for years, her testosterone levels came back high, which was treated as the smoking gun on why she won — not because she’s been skateboarding since before 80% of her competition at the event could walk.

When pro surfer Sasha Jane Lowerson transitioned the year before entering a woman’s longboarding competition she was painted as looking for an easy win, which she wouldn’t need, as she had won men’s competitions before transitioning.

Do you notice how this never happens with trans men? This witch hunt infantilizes women. What the patriarchy wants them to believe is no matter how hard they train, they will never beat a cis man. Because all men are bigger, faster, stronger, and smarter than you! It’s simply biology! Sorry!

And when right-wingers point the finger at trans women instead of the men insulting their abilities, they feed into this ideology that AFABs are inherently weak.

Women steered toward ‘dainty’ sports

The liberal remedy to this hot button issue is that for many organizations, trans women can compete in sports if they’ve been on estrogen for a long enough time to bring down their T (testosterone) levels. But do we really need this? Women participating in sports at all was something hard-fought for and against.

In the Victorian era, women were discouraged from playing sports for fear that exerting that much energy with their frail delicate bodies would somehow affect their ability to bear children.

As the 20th century rolled around,

women had their share of dainty, gentle sports like lawn golf and competitive walking, acceptable to the point of their being able to compete in the Olympics.

In 1922, fed up with the Olympics refusing to acknowledge women’s athletics, French athlete Alice Milliat founded the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale (FSFI), which created the first (and technically only) Women’s Olympic Games, where women participated in more intensive sports like shot put and the 100 meter dash, shattering 18 male-held world records in the process.

Furious with the organization, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) demanded the term “Olympic” be snatched from the title. This resulted in the “2nd International Ladies Games” in 1926, infamous for an “upsetting” sight.

Although 22 world records were beaten, after the 800 meter run, the women exerting themselves appeared tired! What would become of their wombs?! This fear of female exertion outside of homemaking led to the termination of the already very few women’s athletic programs; many already reluctant sporting organizations pulled their support and funding, and the games were banned until the 1960’s.

Over a decade later, Title IX would pass, banning gender discrimination in federally funded education programs and quadrupling female participation in sports for generations to come. And although many modern-day professional women’s teams have averages comparable to men’s teams, the genders are not allowed to integrate. Ask any organization why this is and they’ll tell you this is to minimize the physical advantages men have over women.

Not a ‘fair game’

Realistically there’s rarely such a thing as a fair game in sports because many athletes hold physical advantages over each other whether that be weight, height, or lung capacity. If the delineation in body type greatly affects the outcome, the fairest strategy is to divide into weight classes like boxing, or only recruit athletes over a certain height like the National Basketball Association.

But to segregate over biological sex implies sweeping societal implications when performance studies such as that conducted by Lynda B. Ransdell and Christine L. Wells show you’ll find greater variation within a gender than between genders since gender isn’t a reliable marker for ability.

And in a marginally more accepting society, there will be more athletes outside of the gender binary participating in sports. If coed models are embraced, athletes don’t have to risk triggering dysphoria doing what they love, and don’t have to face the paranoid wrath of women who are taught to believe they are a vessel of biological disadvantages and nothing more.

Caster Semenya won her case against the IAAF, with the federation acknowledging that what took place was in fact a human rights violation. But she is still banned from running competitively again, punished for an unreliable sex marker as many women, trans and cis, expect to be.

Seeing trans woman athletes as athletes and not people trying to game the system against “easy competition” (meaning any cis woman in existence) strengthens positive attitudes towards female sports and women in general. Trans women in sports aren’t the enemy, but are treated as such, out of fear that the disregard and belittling of female athletes will be challenged.

All of the patriarchal and racist stereotypes that are so pervasive in sports reflect the oppressions inherent in the capitalist mode of production. Ending capitalism will lift the crushing weight of these oppressions from all of humanity — including athletes. □

The working class ‘is a revolutionary class’

By Martha Grevatt

This talk was presented July 31 on the Workers World Party webinar titled “Lenin and the working class.” Go to youtube.com/watch?v=bNLB1b3tFKY to view the entire webinar.

This is the first of several discussions leading up to the International Assembly Against Imperialism, which will be held in January 2024 on the 100th anniversary of the death of Vladimir I. Lenin.

Lenin was an anti-imperialist to the core, in every bone of his body. He explained that imperialism was, at that time, the highest stage of capitalism. He wanted to eliminate capitalism and imperialism altogether — not just give them a phony “human face.” Toward this end, Lenin was a revolutionary Marxist, one who not only embraced the theories of Marx, but who advanced the science of Marxism.

In 1848, in the Communist Manifesto,

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote about capitalism, recognizing the role of the working class as its “gravediggers.” With words that are even truer today than they were 175 years ago, they wrote:

“Modern bourgeois society, with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells...The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property. ...

“The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand, by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is

to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

“The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

“But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the people who are to wield those weapons — the modern working class — the proletarians.”

Lenin fought an ideological struggle to defend revolutionary Marxism at a time when some so-called “Marxists” were revising Marxism and suggesting that the workers revolution was no longer a valid concept. Lenin fought these “revisionists” in a furious fashion.

Lenin’s view of the working class is so

important today, with so many workers in our global class struggling just to make ends meet, especially workers of color, here and in the Global South. And capitalism is threatening the world’s inhabitants with endless war and a climate catastrophe.

We again need to revive and elevate this fundamental principle of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism — that the working class is a revolutionary class. It is the revolutionary class whose historic mission is to bring forth the downfall of the capitalist system of exploitation — and by doing so usher in a whole new phase of human development.



Martha Grevatt WW PHOTO

Martha Grevatt is a long-time member of Workers World Party’s Cleveland branch and a managing editor of Workers World newspaper. She has served on the executive board of United Auto Workers Local 869.

Ohio special election Abortion access advocates, unions crush right wing

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

Issue 1, a maneuver by right-wing Ohio legislators to thwart efforts to enshrine abortion access in the state constitution, went down in defeat Aug. 8. In a special election closely watched around the country, 57% of the voters said “no” to requiring a 60% supermajority to amend Ohio’s constitution. Issue 1 also would have made it more difficult to collect the requisite number of voter signatures to place a constitutional amendment on the state ballot.

On July 5, Ohioans for Reproductive Freedom submitted 710,000 signatures of registered voters supporting the Reproductive Freedom with Protections for Health and Safety amendment. This amendment states in part: “Every individual has a right to make and carry out one’s own reproductive decisions, including but not limited to decisions on: contraception; fertility treatment; continuing one’s own pregnancy; miscarriage care; and abortion.”

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose ruled July 25 that nearly 496,000 signatures — well over the legal requirement — were valid, and the amendment would be on the Nov. 7 ballot.

After months of claiming otherwise in media interviews, LaRose, a Republican, told a rally of supporters May 22 that Issue 1 was, “100% about keeping a



Issue 1 opponents celebrate victory at Fire Fighters Local 67 hall, Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 8, 2023.

radical pro-abortion amendment out of our constitution.” He went on to issue a warning of “dangerous plans,” saying, “The next thing they want to do is put a \$15 an hour minimum wage in our state constitution.” (ohiocapitaljournal.com)

Record turnout thwarts right-wing effort

In 2022, the state legislature voted to stop special elections in August, citing low voter turnout. But these same legislators voted to hold this special August election, solely to decide on Issue 1, counting on

a low voter turnout that would ensure its success.

In fact over 3 million Ohioans voted Aug. 8, a record turnout for an August election. This was due to a massive mobilization by reproductive justice activists, organized labor, the NAACP and others who viewed Issue 1 as an attack on voting rights. All across the state, union members volunteered their time through phone-banking, door-to-door canvassing and writing postcards.

Issue 1 supporters made a desperate

appeal to anti-trans bigotry, falsely claiming that the Reproductive Freedom amendment would allow minors to obtain gender reassignment surgery without parental consent. However, trans youth whose parents are bigots do need access to gender-affirming health care without having to obtain parental permission.

None of the frenzied, lying propaganda by the right wing was able to sway the outcome. Now the reproductive justice movement can work on winning the vote in November, which will make Ohio the seventh state where voters either enacted a reproductive justice initiative or shot down laws blocking abortion access. Polls show Ohio’s Reproductive Freedom amendment passing with a significant majority.

More state votes over abortion access are likely to take place in 2024. Every win helps to limit the impact of the horrendous 2022 Dobbs decision by the Supreme Court of the United States that overturned Roe v. Wade and ended almost 50 years of legalized abortion access. Within six months after the ruling, 24 states instituted full or partial abortion bans.

Regardless of the outcome at the polls, the fight for reproductive justice must continue on many fronts. These include clinic defense, mass rallies and underground efforts, such as those of “The Janes” in the 1970s, to provide a safe abortion to anyone who needs one. □

Flight attendants say: ‘Pay us or CHAOS’

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Some 400 to 500 flight attendants at Alaska Airlines rallied and marched on Seattle-Tacoma International Airport Aug. 15 for a contract that meets their demands.

The workers have not had a significant pay raise for the life of a nine-year-old contract that has been extended twice, first due to a merger with Virgin Atlantic, and then due to COVID-19. Yet Alaska Air had \$9.6 billion in revenue in 2022! Revenue was even higher, \$10.34 billion, during the 12-month period ending June 30, 2023.

The flight attendants have promised a strategy of “CHAOS” — Create Havoc Around Our System, meaning unannounced work stoppages — as they fight for a living wage and better working conditions. Many workers carried the sign, “Pay us, or CHAOS!”

Sara Nelson, President of the Association of Flight

Attendants-CWA, told the crowd that as labor they have all the power — the power to shut this country down. She talked of being on the picket line with the striking actors and writers and the importance of solidarity with all of labor. Nelson thanked the pilots and machinists along with other union members who joined the march on Sea-Tac Airport.

The flight attendants marched on the airport on the hottest day of the year in Seattle, but first stopped and chanted at the Alaska Airlines headquarters. They stood and continued chanting at the airport entrance for over an hour. The airport is dominated by Alaska Airlines planes.

Honks from workers driving trucks, buses and other transport vehicles never stopped.

The rally, march and mass picket showed the AFA members’ determination to struggle for what is rightfully theirs. □



PHOTOS: THE STAND

Incarcerees organize unprecedented seminar against life sentences

Part 3



By Joe Piette

A group of incarcerated worker leaders at Pennsylvania’s State Correctional Institution Coal Township united last year around the idea that if state legislators and officials could meet and talk to those sentenced to life without parole (LWOP), unfair, repressive laws might be changed. Amazingly, from behind bars, they were able to organize an unprecedented gathering called “A Criminal Justice Reform/Lifers Seminar” on May 23 inside SCI Coal Township.

This is part three of the interviews conducted by Joe Piette with seminar organizers. Go to workers.org to read the entire interview.

In prison, training dogs, creating art

Dominick Serratore is 61 years old, from Mountaintop. He’s been incarcerated since he was 24 years old, almost 37 years ago.

DS: “It was a middle-class life with a lot of child abuse. It was a very strict upbringing. My father was a state trooper. He was a disciplinarian. You can imagine my dad being in the position he was in, and with the homicide — it was his friends that picked me up, his friends that made the phone call to him. So it was a big embarrassment and hurtful for them. I never lived a criminal lifestyle. It was a shock to them. They just wanted to wash their hands and be done with me.”

DS: “It took some months, but my family including a brother, two sisters and nieces and nephews have supported me with lawyers, regular visits every chance they get.”

In 2001, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections began a program in which incarcerated people train dogs. Now 18 Pennsylvania prisons have incarcerated dog handlers who train puppies to become service dogs or to be adopted in local communities. Serratore’s job in prison is training dogs. Serratore brought one of the dogs, named Ranger, a German shorthaired pointer, to the interview. They both participated in the May 23 Seminar.

DS: “Lt. Gov. Davis asked about the dog program. I told him we’ve adopted out over 900 dogs. They’re very well trained when they leave, understanding basic commands like sit, stay, down, recall, walk on heels; some play frisbee; some play fetch. Some you point at them with your finger, they fall down and they play dead. It depends on the animal, how smart they are and how much energy they have.

“I have five things that I’m really big on — animals, nutrition, health, self-help programs and music/art. We’ve done a few murals in here. I did one 25 feet tall by 100 feet wide, with two full-sized eagles, a full-size elk and characters from Sesame Street. We painted bleachers on the wall in our gymnasium with people sitting in them, including Howard Cosell, Muhammad Ali, John Madden, Jack LaLanne, Einstein, and they’re all sitting in the stands. Everybody gets a kick out of it.”

WW: What about second chances?
DS: “I think only if we deserve it. I think they could look at the things we’ve accomplished. Look at the things we’re doing today — the things we want to do

tomorrow. And you look at that over a long, extended period of time, you know, 20 years, 25 years. If you’re doing all the right things for the right reasons for that period of time, there should be a body of people that look at our conduct and give us that chance.”

In the mid-90s, Pennsylvania made commutation almost impossible, requiring a unanimous vote from the Commutation Board to release anyone.

DS: “At the seminar, they did talk about getting the vote down to 4-to-1. I think that would be a monumental step. Lt. Gov. Austin Davis said he has the support of the governor for that.”

DS: [Referring to the seminar], “I think it was good to put faces to the bills or with the things that legislators are pushing for. Meeting with people, hearing them speak, hearing what we’re doing. I think that was important.”

Compassionate Release law = secret death penalty

Bryant Arroyo, 51 years old, has been incarcerated for 30 years. Still fighting against the conviction that sentenced him to life without the possibility of parole, he is a frequent contributor to WW. Here are some excerpts of his interview.

BA: “I want to thank PA DOC Acting Secretary Dr. Laurel R. Harry and SCI Coal Township Superintendent Thomas S. McGinley for not only collaborating with us to come together on such an unprecedented and historical event, the first criminal justice seminar. To me it was remarkable. For once, in my entire 30 years, I’ve seen the men come together, and regardless of our particular

differences, whether we like each other or not, everybody pulled up and played their part. And they definitely left an indelible mark across the board with the people that they met.

“Since SCI Coal Township’s construction in 1993, this is the first time that a lieutenant governor or any legislators, senators and state reps ever came here to attend such an event.”

Arroyo was instrumental in winning the compassionate release of Bradford “Bub” Gamble in 2021, who passed away just a few months after his release, because the state statutes didn’t allow him to take any medical treatment to treat the cancer that was killing him.

BA: “It’s shocking to me Pennsylvania legislators passed statutory laws like the Compassionate Release Statute 42 Ba, CS 9777 preventing terminally ill prisoners from receiving treatment in order to get compassionate relief. What they’ve created, in reality, is suicide relief. Blood is on their hands. This is a secret death penalty in the state of Pennsylvania.

“Former Gov. Tom Wolf and current Gov. Josh Shapiro both declared a moratorium against the death penalty, but there’s a secret death penalty. They need to expeditiously legislate a bill for those that are terminally ill and the elderly to be able to not only get treatment, but, once doctors declare a person to have a terminal illness, to be released within a few weeks and get them home or to hospice.

“The main opponent we have to contend with is Lisa Baker, who’s the chair of the Judiciary Committee. In 2009, she put in place this current statute which is not com-

Continued on page 7

Roll back water prices now!

Protest hits profit gouging in Texas prisons

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Activists demonstrated Aug. 19 against a corporation, Royal Pacific International, because during this summer of dangerous heat it doubled the price for its bottled water sold in prison commissaries. RPI increased the price of a bottle of water from 15 cents to 30 cents and now charges \$7.20 for a case of water.

According to the protesters, this increase is price gouging during an emergency.

It has been over 100 degrees around Texas most days this summer. Every day news reports warn people to avoid the dangerous heat and stay hydrated. Cell phones flash “Warning: Heat Emergency!” almost every day, but the public can go to the store and find a case of water for around \$2.50.

Prisoners — who can’t go to the store — are literally being cooked to death. Media are reporting two prisoners die every day in Texas. Temperatures in cells are well over 100 and go as high as 140 degrees. Staying hydrated is sometimes impossible, because the tap water can be so disgusting that the incarcerated people refuse to drink it.

“It smells.” “It is brown like it came from a dirty lake.” “I cut up my sheet and make a filter and tie it to the faucet. The crud that accumulates is scary.” These are the comments families and friends are getting from those inside.

Most Texas prisoners have no money in their commissary account. If no one can help them, they are out of luck. Reason? Texas prisoners earn not even one cent an hour, even though they are forced to work.

Prisoners may work in the fields or in the kitchens or in laundries. They may get a “good job” cleaning inside the administrations’ offices, or cutting hair or working in the visitation area where they can get some air. But no matter their job, it is forced labor; it is slavery.

A man on death row told this reporter that a case of water usually lasts him a few weeks, but this summer, he needs much more. “I’m fortunate that family helps me with commissary money. Others either have to drink from the faucets, or they just don’t drink.”

Royal Pacific International boasts that the company has have over 40 years of experience and is “your number one choice for the finest quality gourmet food and beverage products worldwide.” RPI sells to county, state and federal government institutions, dollar stores, restaurants, grocery stores, drug stores and fast-food chains. RPI also sells to large-scale correctional institutions and their commissaries.

Demand free water in prisons

It is outrageous that RPI is the vendor for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and has doubled water prices. More outrageous is that the Texas Comptroller and the prison administration have agreed to this.

According to a 2022 USA Today investigation, at least 44 states lack universal air conditioning in their prison facilities. Across the South, including Texas, there is no air-conditioning in all prisons. This makes clean water a necessity for life.

Some Texas prisons are so old—and that includes their plumbing—they were built to accommodate the convict leasing system implemented after the 1861-65 U.S. Civil War. All these older prisons should just be shut down.

The Aug. 19 protest was organized by the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement. The group will also be speaking before the prison system’s board meeting on Aug. 25 regarding the heat crisis and lack of AC, as well as demanding

that bottled water be given out for free during this crisis. The Texas legislature has a surplus budget and can well afford to give out free water and install air conditioning for all of the more than 120,000 prisoners.

Gloria Rubac is a founding member of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.



PHOTO: CALEB GRANGER

Gloria Rubac and Abdul Haleem protest price gouging for water sold in Texas prisons in front of a Houston restaurant owned by Royal Pacific International. Aug. 19.

After 67 years in prison

Ruchell Magee wins his freedom

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, California

Black August events this year will no doubt celebrate the release of Ruchell Magee, the longest-held political prisoner in the U.S. and perhaps the world. Magee is a hero of the Black Liberation struggle, the fight to release all U.S. political prisoners and, were it not for this racist, colonialist system, would never have spent one day incarcerated.

The Coalition to Free Ruchell Magee recently announced the imminent freedom of Magee from the California Medical Facility at Vacaville.

Magee, now 84 years old, was imprisoned in the racist South at the age of 16 for an alleged attempted rape charge against a white woman in 1955, the same year that Emmett Till was brutally lynched for allegedly whistling at a white woman. Upon release, he headed to Los Angeles, where he was arrested and sentenced to 10 years in prison for a dispute involving \$10 worth of marijuana.

But Magee was not only a victim of this racist system; he emerged as a freedom fighter. While in prison, Magee became a jailhouse lawyer, helping others with writs and legal cases. He also took on the name of Cinqué, an African freedom fighter who led a rebellion on the Amistad, a ship transporting enslaved people, in 1839.

It was Magee’s heroic actions in August 1970, when an armed Jonathan Jackson burst into the Marin County Courthouse to demand the freedom of his brother, George Jackson, that won the admiration of the worldwide movement for freedom and prison abolition.

Magee, without hesitation, joined Jonathan Jackson’s bold attempt to free his brother, which ended in a murderous hail of gunfire by deputy sheriffs, killing young Jackson, a judge, two prisoners and three jurors. Magee, badly wounded, survived and was held in prison for the next 53 years for his selfless act of solidarity.

Magee and his supporters have worked tirelessly over many decades to win his

release. The Coalition to Free Ruchell Magee, which formed in 2019, has gathered over 37,700 signatures and over 2,600 letters, organized many demonstrations and made countless calls to Governor Gavin Newsom. The Coalition notes, however, that Magee has been the main organizer of his release effort.

“We must be clear that Ruchell has been the main driver of his own release. This release will allow him to spend the rest of his life outside of prison walls, with his loved ones,” the Coalition announced. (#ruchellmageeisfree)

After his announced release from CMF-Vacaville, the Coalition launched a “reentry” fundraising effort for Magee to help with his living expenses. According to the initiator of the fundraiser, Charlie Hinton, a prisoners’ rights activist, the goal is to raise \$500 for each of the 67 years suffered by Magee inside prison.

The Coalition hopes that his release will inspire renewed efforts by the human rights, progressive and prison abolitionist movements to free all U.S.-held political

prisoners, many of whom are elderly and suffering from decades of brutality and medical neglect behind the walls. Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, and Imam Jamil Al-Amin are only a few examples of elderly political prisoners who must be released immediately. Go to tinyurl.com/54ttusks to donate to the reentry fundraiser. □



GRAPHIC: FREE RUCHELL MAGEE COALITION

The legacy of Black August

By Monica Moorehead

The following excerpts are from a Black August tribute given by Workers World managing editor Monica Moorehead at an Aug. 19 New York City branch meeting organized by Workers World Party on “Why we defend China.”

For many revolutionaries and activists of my generation, Black August, which was ignited in the early 1970s, played a significant role in our political development and activism. I had just graduated from high school in Virginia when Jonathan Jackson attempted to free his brother, George Jackson, an imprisoned leader of the Black Panther Party, Ruchell Magee, another political prisoner — who was recently released after being incarcerated for 67 years — and others. Jonathan took a judge and others hostage in a Marin County courtroom in San Rafael, California, on Aug. 7, 1970.

And even though Jonathan, at the tender age of 17, and others were brutally slaughtered by the police, this daring escape attempt to this day continues to have a profound impact on the Black Liberation Movement — including prison abolition — 53 years later. It was a prelude of what was to come, with the most significant prison rebellion of the 20th century after George Jackson was executed a year later on Aug. 21, 1971.

Because George Jackson was so revered throughout much of the U.S. prison

system, his assassination sparked the heroic, historic Attica Prison Rebellion in upstate New York. Then incarcerated workers took guards hostage to voice their righteous grievances to the world in early September 1971. Larry Holmes, WWP’s first secretary, stated in a 2016 Workers World article that the Attica Prison Rebellion was the “Black Liberation Movement’s Paris Commune.” (workers.org/2016/09/26893/)

The legacies of Jonathan and George Jackson forever enshrined Black August as a commemoration of Black resistance, in whatever form, to white supremacy.

Lenin’s contribution to the national question

Black August is rooted in a theoretical and practical understanding of the national question: that there are super-exploited oppressed nations and a dominant white oppressor nation with a repressive state apparatus to protect profits and private property.

Today we build towards an anti-imperialist assembly in January 2024 to commemorate the centennial of the death of Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that led to the birth of the Soviet Union. It was Lenin’s theory that defined the colonial question at a time when national liberation movements began erupting in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and elsewhere against the onslaught of imperialist plunder and exploitation.

Great revolutionary leaders like Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Mao Zedong, Amilcar Cabral, Ho Chi Minh and others took the teachings of Lenin to heart. They applied those lessons to guide the masses in their own countries toward national liberation from neocolonialism and in many cases to socialist revolution.

It was Lenin’s understanding of the national question and the need for proletarian internationalism that prompted him to expand the Marxist slogan, “Workers of the World Unite” to “Workers and Oppressed Peoples of the World Unite.”

Black August is an important month to rededicate ourselves today as revolutionary socialists and communists to defend the right to self-determination for nationally oppressed peoples — Black, Latinx,



WW PHOTO

Monica Moorehead speaks at Aug. 19, 2023 webinar. Behind her is a George Jackson poster.

Indigenous, Arab and Asian nations. We must support their fight against a billionaire class and its repressive arm on a global scale, “by any means necessary” to quote the great Malcolm X.

There are so many anniversaries and struggles that can be tied to Black August, whether it’s the birth of the nationalist leader Marcus Garvey, founder of the largest mass movement of Black people worldwide, the United Negro Improvement Association, or the 1995 mass mobilization in Philadelphia that stopped the scheduled execution of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, which was to take place on Aug. 17, the birth date of Garvey.

At George Jackson’s funeral, Black Panther Party co-founder Huey P. Newton gave the eulogy, saying in part, “George Jackson was my hero. He set a standard for prisoners, political prisoners, for people. He inspired prisoners, whom I later encountered, to put his ideas into practice, and so his spirit became a living thing. He will go into immortality, because we believe that the people will win as they advance, generation upon generation.”

Long live the spirit of George and Jonathan Jackson!

Free all political prisoners!

Long live the legacy of Black August! □

Incarcerees organize seminar against life sentences

Continued from page 6

passionate in any way, shape or form.

“There’s no mechanism in place for releasing prisoners who have served decades in prison and are medication dependent. Yet, when these lawmakers find the time to go to a prison and meet prisoners face to face, they’re amazed and astonished at our intelligence, remorse and our ability to express our heartfelt pain from the harm we caused. Perhaps if they visited prisons more often, they would comprehend the change in our

humanity, and they wouldn’t be so quick to pass or keep in place legislation that brings about death by incarceration.”

At the seminar, Arroyo, who began his speech in Spanish, handed a Spanish translation of the Commutation Application to Board of Pardons Secretary Shelly Watson and Lt. Gov. Davis. He told them “the Board of Pardons and Commutations do not provide a Spanish language application for the Latinx prison population. This presents an outright constitutional violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.”

BA: “I also pointed out to Davis that once a terminally ill incarcerated person files a compassionate release application with the courts, there’s no mechanism to speed up the process for commutation. If a positive decision was rendered in a timely manner for commutation, it would allow the terminally ill to receive treatment for their insidious disease.”

It’s a significant step forward that incarcerated people in Pennsylvania are organizing themselves to fight for the simple recognition that they are human, that they can change over time, that keeping

them incarcerated until they die decades later is nothing less than cruel and inhumane. Reforms to Pennsylvania’s criminal and prison statutes are long overdue. Ending life without parole and giving ill and elderly people an opportunity to live out their last months and years outside of prison with their families shouldn’t be seen as radical reforms.

Those in positions of power who continue to resist those reforms are confirming what Angela Davis said in a 1971 interview: “Prisons are concentration camps for the poor.” □

Why we must defend China

By Sara Flounders

This edited talk was presented during an Aug. 13 book launch: “The East Is Still Red: Chinese Socialism in the 21st Century.” For a report on full webinar see socialistchina.org, Aug. 16 posts.

It is such an honor to participate in this discussion. Thank you, Carlos Martinez, for a real contribution to the political level of discussion among Marxists. Thank you also for over 1,000 footnotes to back up every point you make.

There have been great reviews — it is such a valuable resource.

In a Workers World review of “The East Is Still Red,” Carlos Martinez’s book is defined as “**a necessary read.**” The book is a contribution to the discussion regarding the class character of the People’s Republic of China. (workers.org/2023/07/72231/)

In whose interests does the People’s Republic of China operate? In the interests of the people of China, of course.

But China’s impact on the global working class is enormous. So it is in our class interests everywhere to defend China from the aggressive ideological attacks and the economic attacks, sanctions and now military encirclement, all led by U.S. imperialism.

Carlos reminds us of President Barack Obama’s famous quote in describing the Pivot to Asia: “To preserve U.S.



Left to right, Sara Flounders, Arjae Red and Lee Siu Hin at Shanghai airport, June 1, 2023. WW PHOTO

hegemony. we have to make sure that America writes the rules of the global economy or China will.”

What do the U.S. and British imperialism and the G7 imperialist countries fear? China’s state-owned enterprises and publicly-owned banks, the largest source of profit, and China’s regulations on private businesses.

The Chinese state, via the Chinese Communist Party, directs the economy. Capitalists from around the world can invest. But they can’t just pull their equipment out. China owns it and Chinese staff must be trained to operate it. The imperialist corporations consider this restriction on foreign investments to be property theft.

China’s state-owned industries do not need the extraction of profits that privately-owned banks and industries do need. For imperialism this is the most essential requirement, their life blood.

China is a defining point for left forces globally, but especially in the United States today. Why? Because the U.S. war machine is directly targeting China.

The entire U.S. productive capacity is focused on how to disrupt China’s supply chain, even if it dislocates U.S. production and wreaks havoc on a world scale.

This is a New Cold War and there is a real danger of it going much further. U.S. aircraft carriers and nuclear subs through the Taiwan Strait, and the constant overflights in the South China Sea are now daily provocations.

All of this is justified with the most unrelenting media campaign not seen in decades — a propaganda campaign so insidious, so pervasive in every form of media, culture and sports and openly funded by the National Endowment for Democracy.

Disclaiming imperialist lies

I’ve had two incredible opportunities to visit the People’s Republic of China. In particular, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region — the center of U.S. atrocity myths like claims of slave labor. But as we found, agriculture is entirely mechanized — tractors, planters, drones. Not one Islamic or Arab country has backed up false U.S.

Continued on page 9

NY Times publishes hit job on anti-war activists

By John Catalinotto

Once in a while, the New York Times runs an article that reveals what this media conglomerate really represents.

People often call the Times “liberal.” That’s because it seems to oppose some of the most reactionary politicians, like president #45, and gives ample opinion space to diverse voices.

When Washington mobilizes for war, however, the Times doffs its liberal cloak and exposes itself as a loudspeaker for U.S. imperialist interests. That’s what it did Aug. 5, running a front page hit job on progressive organizations and on a donor to these causes. The verbal attack replayed 1950s McCarthyism.

Though the article had clear political goals and lacked hard evidence, the Times disguised it as investigative journalism. Four Times’ reporters produced propaganda aimed at repressing voices that oppose Washington’s preparation for war, in this case war with China. It’s important in the context of the Aug. 5 article to be conscious that the Times pays these journalists to follow editorial “guidelines.”

The New York Times and imperialist war

People in the anti-war movement who have read the Times over the past 60 years know that whenever the U.S. government and the Pentagon prepare for war, the Times uses its influence to magnify the government’s lies and pretexts to mobilize public support behind the war drive.

This happened with the alleged Gulf of Tonkin attack in 1964, which provided the pretext to expand U.S. intervention in Vietnam. It happened with the demonization of the Belgrade government in the 1990s that led to the 1999 U.S.-backed U.N. bombing war against what was then Yugoslavia. It happened with Judith Miller’s reports in 2003 for the Times, filled with lies about Iraq’s “weapons of mass destruction.” It happened with the demonization of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 as NATO bombs and rockets destroyed Libya.

And it has been happening all year, with every article written about China as well as about the war in Ukraine, with the bulk of the Times articles backing

Washington’s war mobilization.

A blurb in the Times describes the lead writer of the Aug. 5 hit piece, Mara Hvistendahl, as “an investigative reporter focused on China.” All Hvistendahl’s articles published earlier this year bludgeoned China for its COVID-19 policy.

The Aug. 5 article aimed to discredit organizations that have campaigned against the U.S. starting a new Cold War against China. It labeled the groups and some individuals as “agents of a foreign power,” while presenting no hard evidence. All was insinuation, slanted language.

Anyone who is familiar with the organizations under attack — No Cold War, Code Pink, the Peoples Forum and the think-tank Tricontinental — knows they have taken consistent positions throughout their history, acting on the convictions of their leading bodies.

No evidence given

The Aug. 5 article claimed, without evidence, that the Chinese government or the Chinese Communist Party gave aid to and imposed positions on the donor, Neville Roy Singham. It offered no evidence that Singham imposed his views on the organizations receiving funds.

If you remove the biased negative language used to describe Singham, his story appears remarkable. Son of a Marxist political scientist the Times calls “a leftist academic,” Singham started a “software consultancy firm, Thoughtworks” where people “jokingly called each other comrade.” He then sold the company and decided to donate his own wealth to progressive causes.

Consider other so-called “philanthropists.” Those who made their fortunes getting millions of people addicted to painkillers, or breaking unions, or those who show signs of megalomania, usually insist that their names adorn opera houses, museums or hospitals. Some back right-wing politicians and expect a payback with tax breaks or rights to plunder natural resources.

As one rare progressive Times opinion columnist, Jamelle Bouie, gave examples of these types of philanthropists in an



Left, Jodie Evans of Code Pink, who the New York Times attacked for the group’s straightforward message.

Aug. 12 piece: “A whole coterie of Silicon Valley billionaires and millionaires have lent their time and attention to [Richard] Hanania,” whom Bouie described as “an unremarkable racist.” Since white supremacy is as U.S. American as cherry pie, however, no one will demand that Hanania or his billionaire backers register as “agents of a foreign power.”

Unlike others, Singham actually did give away significant parts of his fortune, and to leftist causes. That’s why he, as well as his life partner Jodie Evans, a founder of Code Pink and a leading political activist, were targeted.

McCarthyism II — and how to fight it

The Aug. 5 article named other individuals as being friendly to, or present at, functions involving the organizations, insinuating that these individuals, too, were changing their actions or speech because someone paid them. There were no quotes of anything these individuals said about China, pro or anti. Like the original McCarthyism tactics of the 1950s, this was “guilt by association,” an attempt to intimidate anyone who might be friendly to those targeted.

The reactionary Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin once waved a phony list, claiming he had the names of a couple hundred “card-carrying communists in the State Department.” This effort, in the then burgeoning Cold War

aimed at the Soviet Union, coincided with a wave of repression. Some organizers were imprisoned, others expelled from their valuable roles as labor organizers, anti-racists, teachers, and film directors. Perhaps the most famous were the film workers known as the Hollywood 10.

The Times hit job follows other attacks by the government on left political organizations. Omali Yeshitela, chairperson of the African People’s Socialist Party (APSP), and other members face charges of “failing to register as foreign agents,” merely for expressing their views on Ukraine.

Li Tang “Henry” Liang — a hotel worker active in Boston’s UNITE

HERE Local 26 and in Pivot to Peace — was indicted by a federal grand jury for “conspiracy to act as an agent of a foreign government without prior notification” and “acting as an agent of a foreign government without notice to the attorney general” for acts such as publicly holding a banner reading, “China is not our enemy: Stop the provocations!”

It’s important to include all these attacks, because the movement must respond in a united way. An attack on one is an attack on all.

Even the comments responding to the Times article had the smell of an organized effort. Many cookie-cutter comments lauded this proofless report. Many attacked individuals, who were named only for being present at a wedding party with the article’s main targets. This appeared to be an attempt to frighten people away from supporting those under attack.

Anyone really confused by the Times’ phony “investigative report” should realize this was a contrived, premeditated Big Lie aimed at disrupting the movement to combat the U.S./NATO proxy war in Ukraine and the Cold War against China.

What’s needed is that all who want to resist war and injustice redouble their solidarity with all the groups and individuals under attack — and raise their voices even higher against the new Cold War. That’s the best strategy for combating this new McCarthyism. □

Palestine Writes Literature Festival returns with an outstanding line-up of writers and artists

عودة المهرجان الأدبي العالمي "فلسطين تكتب" بثلة مميزة من الكتّاب والفنانين البارزين

Philadelphia, July 24 — Three years after COVID-19 forced the inaugural Palestine Writes Festival to be held virtually, the only Palestinian literature festival in North America is back with an impressive list of writers, artists, musicians, dancers, filmmakers, and other intellectuals. The festival will be held at the University of Pennsylvania’s historic Irvine Auditorium from September 22-24, 2023.

Speakers include Pulitzer Prize winner **Viet Thanh Nguyen**, Arabic Booker Prize winner **Ibrahim Nasrallah**, celebrated filmmaker **Darin Sallam**, rock music legend **Roger Waters**, and dozens more renowned authors, such as **Elias Khoury**, **Huzama Habayeb**, **Isabella Hammad**, **Sahar Mustafah**, **Suad Amiry**, **Salman AbuSitta**, **Gary Younge**, **Nur Masalha**, and more.

The festival will be bilingual, with simultaneous translation for most sessions. The program and speaker list are published online, featuring (1) continuous children and YA (young adult) programming; (2) Coffee and Books sessions; (3) panel discussions; (4) plenaries; (5) Hakawati oral storytelling; (6) an art exhibit; (7) workshops; (8) presentations; (9) a film screening, and; (10) live performances.

Some highlights of the festival include:

Spoken Word Poetry. Palestinian poet Dana Dajani with Aboriginal Australian poet [Wiradjuri/Gamilaroi] poet Lorna Munro on opening night.

The Cost and Rewards of Friendship. A discussion with Viet Thanh Nguyen, Gary Younge, Roger Waters, and Rachel Holmes on what it means to live ethically and in solidarity with Palestinians in the midst of an empire that holds Palestinians in contempt.

The Novel as a Historic Record. Lebanese writer Elias Khoury, Aboriginal Australian writer Ali Cobby Eckermann, and Viet Thanh Nguyen will talk about the



ways in which novels correct, obfuscate, reinvent, or destabilize history.

Literature from a Collective Wound. Huzama Habayeb, Mahmoud Shqeir, Ibrahim Nasrallah, and Mahmoud Muna will discuss how Palestinian writers and artists often write from the shared generational trauma born from the Nakba and its impact on literature across the diaspora.

Film director Darin Sallam, creator of “Farha,” a ground-breaking Palestinian film that streamed on Netflix and was Jordan’s submission for the Oscars, will talk about her film and Palestinian cinema in general.

Salman Abu Sitta will give a presentation on the Right of Return, and How to Achieve it.

A series of Hakawati and Hakawatiyyeh sessions will narrate stories from Palestine in this ancient oral storytelling tradition.

Palestinian chefs Fadi Kattan, owner of Fawda Restaurant and Akub London, and co-author of “Craving Palestine,” and Reem Assil, owner of Reem’s California and author of “Arabiyya,” will talk about Palestinian cuisine, food appropriation, and agricultural traditions cultivated over centuries in Palestine.

Al-Ajaweed Dabke Troupe, traveling to Philadelphia from the Palestinian refugee camp of Baqa’a in Jordan, will perform the Palestinian traditional line dance to folkloric songs.

The Festival will be the most dynamic gathering of Palestinian creatives in North America. In addition, the newly formed Palestine Writes Press will launch its first book, a translation and reprint of “Ghassan Kanafani,” at the Festival. The book was written by the legendary Palestinian writer’s widow, Anni Kanafani, and will feature a new foreword by Kanafani’s childhood friend Dr. Fadle Naqib and an introduction by scholar and historian Louis Allday.

The Press also plans to release an anthology of fiction, poetry, and other creative prose by Palestinians across the diaspora in 2024.

About Palestine Writes

Palestine Writes is the only North American literature festival dedicated to celebrating and promoting cultural productions of Palestinian writers and artists. Born from the pervasive exclusion or tokenization of Palestinian voices in mainstream literary institutions, Palestine Writes brings Palestinian cultural workers from all parts of Historic Palestine and our exiled Diaspora together with peers from other marginalized groups in the United States.

Crossing multiple borders — geographic, linguistic, generational, and cultural boundaries — writers, artists, publishers, booksellers, scholars, musicians, and thinkers hold conversations about art, literature, and the intersections between culture and power, struggle, politics, climate change, sexuality, human rights, animal rights, food sovereignty, and more.

For more information, visit palestinewrites.org.

Why we must defend China

Continued from page 8

or G7 claims.

It is essential for left and progressive forces to be clear on what we defend in China and why, and what does Wall Street want to destroy in China.

Workers World Party is in the midst of organizing discussions in a number of U.S. cities on this topic

This is why “The East Is Still Red” is a “necessary” read. We have to arm ourselves with political arguments. We need to be aware that this is not an abstract topic. It is a living challenge in the class struggle today.

We don’t get to choose our battles. The U.S. imperialist ruling class has pushed this topic of China to the top of our agenda.

It is without dispute that China has pulled hundreds of millions of people out of poverty into a stable and secure life, the greatest anti-poverty achievement in world history! Something no capitalist country has successfully achieved.

The big question for those who consider themselves to be on the side of socialist revolution is: What is the class character of People’s China?

We need to answer the vicious twists, ugly distortions of crude U.S. propaganda and the polite academics and intellectuals who want to convince working-class organizers that there is nothing worth defending in China, that it is no different than the U.S.

We can’t just limit our attention to immediate bread-and-butter struggles. In the class struggle you have to take sides on all the major issues.

As the title implies, Carlos makes a powerful case that China is still a socialist country and that anti-imperialists worldwide should step forward and defend People’s China against U.S. and world imperialism.

Consider if imperialism prevailed and was able to halt China’s development. That would be a historic defeat, not only for the workers and peasants of China. It would have a global impact.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a terrible setback

for the working-class struggle globally. The capitalist class gained a huge advantage and set out to recolonize whole parts of the world that had made huge gains. Eastern Europe reverted to its former semi-colonial status compared to Western Europe. In Africa and throughout the Arab world, U.S. imperialism set out to unravel the gains of nationalist regimes.

Which side are you on?

Our task is to win over the working class in Britain and the U.S. No imperialist war is in our class interests. Imperialist wars are for the immediate profit of a small handful of corporate giants. We pay. They benefit.

But in order to defend China against the unrelenting corporate propaganda, the left needs to consciously organize to stop imperialist wars and needs material to answer the attacks and propaganda.

Every page of Carlos’s book contains concrete facts to answer the corporate media.

How about the charge that China is creating a debt trap for African countries? The corporate media claims repeatedly that China is a new imperialist power stealing Africa’s resources. Carlos quotes the 2022 Debt Justice Report:

- African governments owe three times more debt to Western banks than to China.
- Only 12% of Africa’s external debt is owed to Chinese lenders.
- China’s interest rates are one-half of those of Western loans.
- China has built more infrastructure in Africa in two decades than the West has in centuries. This means railroads, ports, water filtration plants and power stations.
- China offers more scholarships to African students than the West’s combined scholarships.

Carlos always gives footnotes for each assertion.

China has much to teach the world movement. It is a progressive world formation and we defend it against the

imperialist oppressor.

Among those who are for socialism, how we understand China and really step forward to defend China is the immediate challenge. All the most powerful imperialist forces are aggressively mobilizing for war. It seems impossible, unbelievable.

Increasingly, the imperialist state apparatus and their corporate media are determined to silence those explaining and defending China. People who write and explain China and its incredible accomplishments are being openly attacked. There is an increasing effort to silence them. The New York Times article of Aug. 5 is the latest example.

Carlos’s book is a real primer in basic arguments.

There are now 600 million workers in China. This is larger than the entire working class in the G7 imperialist countries combined.

There are nearly 100 million Chinese Communist Party members who are committed to defending socialist property rights. And even though a capitalist class has grown and there are great inequalities in wealth, the sheer size of a politically conscious, highly organized communist leadership is a powerful bulwark.

That China’s economy weathered the 2008 capitalist crisis that brought capitalist finances to the brink of collapse is proof that the billionaires are not driving decisions. The capitalists of the West or the Chinese capitalists were not those who were bailed out in China.

State resources went into the biggest infrastructure building program in China’s history. Millions of Chinese workers who were suddenly laid off overnight when capitalist firms globally collapsed were immediately hired into Chinese programs.

This is “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Martinez convinces the reader to resolutely oppose the U.S.-led New Cold War on China. This is a service to the worldwide movement for socialism.

Let’s remember this essential distinction: U.S. bombs, China builds!

Our task is to defend People’s China! □

Obama, Trump, Biden share blame for Abbott’s horrors

Reports in recent weeks from a whistleblowing Texas Department of Public Safety trooper have laid bare the state-sponsored, inhumane, anti-migrant policies confronting families seeking asylum at the Texas/Mexico border.

An article in the July 3 Houston Chronicle disclosed previously unreported incidents witnessed by the trooper in Eagle Pass, Texas. There, Gov. Greg Abbott ordered state troopers to set “traps” of razor wire-wrapped barrels in parts of the river with low visibility; to push small children and women nursing babies back into the Rio Grande, resulting in their deaths; and to refuse water to asylum seekers despite the oppressive heat.

The consequences of these terrorist directives include drownings of adults and children; a miscarriage by a pregnant woman caught in the wire; serious lacerations suffered by children and adults from the barbed wire; and children, among others, passing out from heat exhaustion, but then pushed back into the river by Texas National Guard soldiers.

The DPS trooper wrote that the placement of wire along the river “forced people to cross in areas that are deeper and not as safe for people carrying kids and bags.” (HoustonChronicle.com, July 10)



Migrants trying to enter the U.S. from Mexico are confronted by large razor-wired buoys used as a border barrier along the banks of the Rio Grande in Eagle Pass, Texas, July 11, 2023.

Workers World totally agrees with a Texas comrade who wrote to us: “Despicable Texas Gov. Greg Abbott should be deported to hell!” But we recognize that Abbott is able to get away with the atrocities he’s pursuing at the Texas border because of decades of xenophobic policies by both Democratic and Republican administrations that set the stage for this barbaric treatment of migrants, immigrants and asylum-seekers.

Under pressure from 800,000 young undocumented immigrants known as

Dreamers, President Barack Obama created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, yet failed to make it permanent. In March 2014, at a rally in Los Angeles, a coalition of immigrant groups denounced Obama, calling him “the deporter-in-chief” because of the record number of deportations — 2 million during his two terms.

The Trump administration’s “zero tolerance” immigration policy separated over 5,000 children from their parents, with no tracking process or records, so many

of the families could not be reunited.

Presidential candidate Joe Biden secured broad backing from immigrant groups during his 2020 campaign with promises to undo the criminalization and punitive nature of immigrant detention. Biden has instead expanded detentions and deportations and embraced Trump-era anti-immigrant policies, including “Remain in Mexico” and deportations of migrants previously protected from Title 42 expulsions. Haitians and other immigrants of African descent have been particularly targeted by racist policies and politicians.

Biden has also continued deadly imperialist, economic sanctions against many Latin American and Caribbean countries. These sanctions have been the driving force behind the migration of hundreds of thousands of people.

Obama, Trump, and now Biden share the blame for Abbott’s horrors by failing to create a secure, humane policy for migrants seeking to enter the U.S. without retaliation.

Workers World is in solidarity with all immigrants and migrants forced to attempt unsafe border crossings, driven by economic oppression caused by decades of U.S. neoliberal policies in their countries and U.S.-backed political repression.

No U.S./French-backed invasion of Niger!

WWP STATEMENT

“When Africa becomes economically free and politically united, the monopolists will come face to face with their own working class in their own countries, and a new struggle will arise within which the liquidation and collapse of imperialism will be complete.”

– Kwame Nkrumah

Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of imperialism

August 6 was the deadline issued by the Economic Community Of West African States for the current government of Niger, headed by Abdourahamane Tchiani, to abdicate power or face a possible military intervention by ECOWAS forces. That deadline has come and gone, but the danger of military intervention, orchestrated by U.S. and French imperialism, is still a real threat.

The Biden administration recently sent an envoy to Niger to apply “diplomatic” pressure on the new government to restore former President Mohammed Bazoum to power. The regime in France,

the former colonial power in most of the Sahel region, is unwilling to even engage Niger’s current leaders.

Tchiani came to power through a military coup, which has been condemned by imperialist powers, especially the United States and France, which have a vested interest in maintaining a foothold in Niger.

Demonstrations in Niger and elsewhere support the new government, along with targeting the French Embassy, a symbol of brutal French colonialism and exploitation of Nigerien people. (Nigerien refers to the people of Niger; Nigerian refers to the people of Nigeria, formerly a colony of Britain.)

Niger is a target of imperialism for many reasons. Its natural resources include uranium, which supplies up to one-third of France’s entire electrical grid. Yet Niger remains one of the poorest countries in the world with the majority of its over 27 million people lacking access to their own electricity.

Niger also holds strategic importance to the U.S. military as a hub for its drone operations in Central Africa, used to maintain U.S. influence in the region as well as assist in French military interventions. The U.S. government says it is considering relocating its two drone bases from Niger to elsewhere in the region.



countries have been hesitant to participate. Algeria, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Mali — all former French colonies — are among the countries that have come out in support of the new Niger government against imperialist threats. In Nigeria — a former British colony which shares a long border with Niger — popular protests have opposed an ECOWAS intervention.

African opposition to invasion of Niger

The governments of Burkina Faso and Mali issued a joint statement Aug.1, asserting that any attempt at military intervention to remove Tchiani would be taken as a declaration of war against both their countries.

On Aug. 19, these two countries sent planes from their air forces to Niger as a show of solidarity against a possible invasion.

Other neighboring countries have refused to participate in the U.S.- and French-backed ECOWAS invasion. People within countries whose leaders advocated intervention have shown hesitancy and even resistance to such an action. Together these add up to major fractures in the imperialist grip over West Africa and the Sahel.

Niger was one of the last remaining governments friendly to the U.S. empire

in the Sahel region. Put into power by a series of earlier coups, the governments of Mali and Burkina Faso cut ties with French colonialism and expelled French troops. Since then, ECOWAS has established its own military presence to attempt to prevent anti-colonial coups from taking place within ECOWAS member states, without U.S. or French troops having to intervene directly.

Workers World Party affirms the right of Niger’s people to take the fate of their country into their own hands. We oppose any U.S.- or French-backed military invasions, sanctions or meddling in African politics. We support the expulsion of all U.S. and French troops and the dismantling of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM).

We support the right of African nations to make economic and security relationships on their own terms with other countries, including with Russia and China, rather than being forced into a position of subjugation as a neocolony of imperialist powers like the U.S. or France.

We oppose any U.S., French or NATO plans to launch yet another major proxy war. Such a war would spread havoc in the region in its attempt to maintain economic dominance over and perpetual superexploitation of the African people.

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

Edited by Monica Moorehead

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.

Available at major online booksellers.

Free PDF at workers.org/books

MARXISM REPARATIONS AND THE Black Freedom Struggle

Environmental racism links Lāhainā and Katrina

By Monica Moorehead

August 29 will mark the 18th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, one of the deadliest hurricanes in U.S. history, which devastated much of the Gulf Coast (specifically Louisiana and Mississippi) and disproportionately struck New Orleans. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration states that this Category 4 hurricane caused at least \$108 billion in structural damage, leading to more than one million people being displaced, many permanently, especially the poor and people of color.

According to livescience.com, an estimated 1,833 people died in the hurricane and the flooding that followed. (Aug. 27, 2015) That flooding, mainly caused by broken levees, overwhelmed the Ninth Ward, a predominant working-class Black neighborhood in New Orleans. Over 1,000



Ninth Ward flooded after Hurricane Katrina, August 2005.

people died from flooding in this neighborhood alone.

Fast forward almost 18 years later to Aug. 9, when tragic wildfires swiftly devastated huge swaths of the Hawaiian island of Maui, including the historic town of

Lāhainā. Over 100 people have died and the death toll is expected to rise even higher. The structural damage for residents is estimated to be over \$1 billion with the destruction of over 2,000 buildings.

There were no sirens to warn people before the rapidity of the wildfires as many people died from being burned alive, smoke inhalation and general lack of escape routes. DNA findings are now being required to identify many of the victims.

While no source of the fires has been officially determined, one possibility was the dangerous active power lines combined with high mountain winds emanating from Hurricane Dora, a Category 4 storm located to the south of Maui in the Pacific Ocean.

Katrina and the Hawaiian wildfires have more in common than not. Both were impacted by climate change, which has grown dramatically worse between 2005 and 2023.

Regarding the potential impact of Katrina, Kerry Emanuel, Professor of

Atmospheric Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, stated in the scientific journal Nature in early August 2005, that “North Atlantic hurricane power was strongly correlated with the temperature of the tropical Atlantic during hurricane season, and that both had been increasing rapidly over the previous 30 years or so. It attributed these increases to a combination of natural climate oscillations and to global warming.”

Before the recent wildfires, Maui had already been suffering from a combination of a severe drought and high humidity, deadly precursors to wildfires.

Hurricane Katrina and the Maui wildfires have something else in common: They are both social disasters that expose historical and present-day issues of racism and national oppression that permeate every aspect of U.S. society.

Is it surprising that Native Hawaiians reported that the local government did next to nothing? It did nothing to help evacuate people before the wildfires and provided little aid in the aftermath of the destruction.

Is it surprising that thousands of people were unable to escape Hurricane Katrina days before it landed due to apathy and unpreparedness by various levels of government — local, state and federal?

The lack of response in Hawai‘i is similar



Aftermath of Maui wildfires, Aug. 10. PHOTO: BIG ISLAND NOW

to what happened during Katrina when the Federal Emergency Management Agency rightfully came under heavy fire for its lack of aid for the most marginalized people, especially in the Black community.

The Indigenous people in Hawai‘i and the Black population both constitute internal nationally oppressed populations who have been historically occupied, exploited and repressed by white supremacy for centuries.

Hawai‘i was colonized by the U.S. in 1893 before it became a U.S. state in 1959. Hawaiian lands are now dominated by at least 12 U.S. military bases and thousands of acres have been privatized by billionaires.

Black people were enslaved starting in 1619 and are still denied full democratic rights.

Both groupings deserve reparations as a result of all forms of institutionalized discrimination including environmental racism. □

Disaster capitalists target Native lands in Maui

Continued from page 1

system that would have allowed Kānaka Maoli residents to allocate water for their needs. The deadline to apply for permits was Aug. 7, 2023, the day before the fires engulfed Maui. The Governor’s Emergency Declaration suspended this process, and the WML wasted no time slashing regulations on water use.

Gov. Green even insinuated that the Kānaka Maoli campaign was to blame for the spread of the fires, claiming “there are still people fighting in our state about giving us [the government] water access.” (Guardian, Aug. 17)

In reality, it was centuries of water theft and cash-crop cultivation — licensed by Hawai‘i’s settler-colonial regime — that depleted reserves and left Hawai‘i at risk of fire.

The exploitation of the catastrophe in Hawai‘i is part of the vicious cycle of disaster capitalism, in which corporate predators take advantage of disasters to continue the very practices of imperialism and settler-colonialism that created the conditions leading to these disasters in the first place.

As Professor Sproat explained, “What’s happening right now epitomizes plantation disaster capitalism, because here we have a handful of incredibly privileged, large landed interests using this terrible tragedy to displace and to push through laws that they were unable to secure when Hawai‘i’s state water code was in place.”

Speaking on community resistance, Professor Sproat said: “We, as a community, need to circle up. We need to come together, and we need to lean into each other and really look to and embrace the principles that have — like aloha ‘āina, that have enabled us to thrive here in Hawai‘i for a millennium.”

The extensive damage from this fire in

Hawai‘i is the consequence of over a century of capitalist exploitation since U.S. settlers seized the islands in the late 19th century. The Kānaka Maoli — as well as Indigenous nations in the continental U.S. and worldwide — deserve the solidarity of the world’s working class in their struggle to win liberation from settler-colonialism and imperialism to stamp out these practices. □

End the War in Ukraine! No to NATO! No Weapons, No Money for War!

The United National Antiwar Coalition — UNACpeace.org — along with the Peace in Ukraine Coalition, Code Pink, Veterans For Peace and many others are planning a week of action to demand: End the War in Ukraine! No to NATO!

The actions will take place in local areas around the country during the week of **Sept. 30 to Oct. 7**. Start planning in your local area now. We will soon have more information and we will be putting together lists of actions around the country and the world.

LET
CUBA
LIVE!

ONE
MILLION
SIGNATURES

Submit via website: letcubalive.info
Submit via WhatsApp: +1 718 878 5242
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Take Cuba off the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism

For more than 60 years, the US government has pursued a hostile policy against Cuba with the clear political intent to isolate the Cuban people through a cruel and inhumane blockade.

In the midst of the pandemic, the Trump administration sought to further damage the Cuban economy not only by reinforcing the blockade with 243 new sanctions, but also by including Cuba on the of State Sponsors of Terrorism list.

This designation makes it much harder for Cuba to make transactions using international banking systems and acquire necessary goods on the international market, such as fuel, food, construction supplies, hygiene products, and medicine.

We want to reach more than one million signatures to demand that the current US government remove Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list and unconditionally end the blockade, which is rejected by the entire international community.

SIGN AND SHARE - #LetCubaLive #OffTheList

NAME

COUNTRY

E-MAIL

SIGNATURE



FOTO: AGENCIA ANADOLU

Miles de nigerinos exigen la retirada de las tropas francesas y otras tropas extranjeras en Niamey, Níger, el 3 de agosto.

¡No a la invasión de Níger apoyada por EE.UU./Francia!

“Cuando África llegue a ser económicamente libre y políticamente unida, los monopolistas se encontrarán cara a cara con su propia clase obrera en sus propios países, y surgirá una nueva lucha dentro de la cual la liquidación y el colapso del imperialismo serán completos.”

— Kwame Nkrumah,
El neocolonialismo, última etapa del imperialismo

El 6 de agosto era la fecha límite fijada por la Comunidad Económica de Estados de África del Oeste para que el actual gobierno de Níger, presidido por Abdourahamane Tchiani, abdicara del poder o se enfrentara a una posible intervención militar de las fuerzas de la CEDEAO. De momento, la CEDEAO ha aplazado su intervención. Tchiani llegó al poder mediante un golpe militar, que ha sido condenado por potencias imperialistas como Estados Unidos y Francia, que tienen interés en mantener un punto de apoyo en Níger.

Las manifestaciones en Níger apoyan al nuevo gobierno, además de atacar la embajada francesa, símbolo del brutal colonialismo francés y de la explotación del pueblo nigerino. (Nigerino se refiere al pueblo de Níger; nigeriano se refiere al pueblo de Nigeria).

Níger es un objetivo del imperialismo por muchas razones. Entre sus recursos

naturales se encuentra el uranio, que suministra hasta un tercio de toda la red eléctrica de Francia. Sin embargo, Níger sigue siendo uno de los países más pobres del mundo, con la mayoría de sus más de 27 millones de habitantes sin acceso a su propia electricidad. Níger también tiene una importancia estratégica para el ejército estadounidense como centro de operaciones de sus drones en África Central, utilizados para mantener la influencia estadounidense en la región, así como para ayudar en las intervenciones militares francesas.

Además de los 1.500 soldados franceses, hay más de 1.000 soldados estadounidenses destacados en Níger, que el gobierno de Estados Unidos se niega ahora a retirar, a pesar de que se han suspendido los acuerdos de seguridad entre Estados Unidos y Níger y de que varios países europeos han evacuado a sus ciudadanos. La maquinaria militar estadounidense se atrinchera, con la esperanza de restaurar el gobierno proimperialista por cualquier medio necesario.

Ya se han aplicado sanciones contra Níger, pero sigue sobre la mesa una opción militar, mediante la cual Estados Unidos y Francia podrán utilizar a las fuerzas de seguridad de la CEDEAO como apoderadas. Francia ha dado su pleno apoyo a una intervención de la CEDEAO, aunque muchos países africanos se han mostrado reticentes a participar. Argelia, Burkina

Faso, Guinea y Mali -todas ellas antiguas colonias francesas- se encuentran entre los países que han salido en apoyo de Níger frente a las amenazas imperialistas.

Oposición africana a la invasión de Níger

Los gobiernos de Burkina Faso y Mali emitieron una declaración conjunta en la que afirmaban que cualquier intento de intervención militar para destituir a Tchiani se tomaría como una declaración de guerra contra sus dos países:

“Los gobiernos de transición de Burkina Faso y Mali, Uno: han expresado su solidaridad fraternal de los pueblos de Mali y Burkina Faso con sus hermanos de Níger que han decidido por voluntad propia tomar las riendas de su destino y asumir su soberanía. Dos: Denuncian la persistencia de las organizaciones regionales en aplicar sanciones que agravan el sufrimiento de la población y ponen en peligro el espíritu panafricanista. Tercero: Rechazar la aplicación de estas sanciones ilegales, ilegítimas e inhumanas contra el pueblo y las autoridades nigerinas: Cualquier intervención militar contra Níger equivaldría a una declaración de guerra contra Burkina Faso y Mali”, rezaba el comunicado. (africanews.com, 1 de agosto)

El presidente de Nigeria, Bola Tinubu,

que es también el actual presidente de la CEDEAO, ha autorizado el despliegue de soldados nigerianos contra Níger, que constituirían el grueso de las fuerzas de la CEDEAO. Sin embargo, el Senado nigerino votó en contra de este despliegue.

La renuncia de otros países vecinos a participar en la invasión de la CEDEAO respaldada por Estados Unidos y Francia, así como la indecisión de la población de los países cuyos dirigentes abogaron por la invasión a llevarla a cabo, mues-

tra importantes fracturas en el dominio imperialista sobre África Occidental tras cientos de años de colonialismo.

Níger era uno de los últimos gobiernos amigos del imperio estadounidense que quedaban en la región del Sahel. Los gobiernos de Mali y Burkina Faso, puestos en el poder por una serie de golpes anteriores, cortaron los lazos con el colonialismo francés y expulsaron a las tropas francesas. Desde entonces, la CEDEAO ha establecido su propia presencia militar para tratar de impedir que se produzcan golpes anticoloniales dentro de los Estados miembros de la CEDEAO, sin que intervengan directamente tropas estadounidenses o francesas.

Algunos de los nuevos gobiernos africanos están trabajando con el Grupo Wagner -fuerzas mercenarias con base en Rusia- para controlar y reprimir a los grupos locales afiliados al Estado Islámico. Estos grupos armados similares al ISIS han sido una preocupación de seguridad para los países de la región desde que la agresión de la OTAN destruyó Libia en 2011 y desestabilizó la región. El imperialismo estadounidense y francés han utilizado la existencia de estos grupos como pretexto para la intervención militar.

El Partido Mundo Obrero afirma el derecho del pueblo de Níger a tomar el destino de su país en sus propias manos. Nos oponemos a cualquier invasión militar, sanción o intromisión en la política africana respaldada por Estados Unidos o Francia. Apoyamos la expulsión de todas las tropas estadounidenses y francesas y el desmantelamiento del Mando de Estados Unidos en África (AFRICOM).

Apoyamos el derecho de las naciones africanas a establecer relaciones económicas y de seguridad en sus propios términos con otros países, incluidos Rusia y China, en lugar de verse forzadas a una posición de subyugación como neocolonia de potencias imperialistas como Estados Unidos o Francia.

Nos oponemos a cualquier plan de Estados Unidos, Francia o la OTAN de lanzar otra gran guerra por poderes. Una guerra así sembraría el caos en la región en su intento de mantener el dominio económico y la perpetua superexplotación del pueblo africano. □

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Por la exclusión de Cuba de la Lista de Estados Patrocinadores del Terrorismo

Desde hace más de 60 años, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos de Norte América ha impulsado una política hostil contra Cuba con una clara intencionalidad política de aislar al pueblo cubano a través de un bloqueo cruel e inhumano.

En medio de la pandemia, la administración Trump intentó dañar aún más la economía cubana no sólo reforzando el bloqueo con 243 sanciones nuevas, sino también incluyendo a Cuba en la Lista de Estados Patrocinadores del Terrorismo.

Esta designación hace que sea aún más difícil que Cuba realice transacciones utilizando sistemas bancarios internacionales y, en última instancia, adquirir bienes necesarios en el mercado internacional, como combustible, alimentos, suministros de construcción, productos de higiene y medicamentos.

Queremos llegar a más de un millón de firmas para exigir a la actual administración de EE. UU la exclusión de Cuba de la lista de países patrocinadores del terrorismo y la eliminación incondicional del bloqueo que es repudiado por la comunidad internacional en su totalidad.

FIRMA Y COMPARTE - #CubaVive #FueraDeLaLista

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