

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite! workers.org Vol. 66, No. 50 December 12, 2024

43rd anniversary of his arrest

FREE MUMIA!



Philadelphia, Dec. 9, 2024

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Demonstrators around the world this week marked the 43rd anniversary of the unjust and illegal imprisonment of U.S. political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was arrested and brutalized by Philadelphia police on December 9, 1981. At the time, Mumia was falsely accused of the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and found guilty in a trial that was widely seen as based on racist police, judicial and prosecutorial misconduct.

The following links are to articles that include what Mumia means for youth, and more on recent developments in his case.

- Mumia Abu-Jamal – a hero for young people (6/21/2022)
- Critical hearing for Mumia Abu-Jamal (12/16/2022)
- Mumia Abu-Jamal supporters: ‘Release the evidence now!’ (2/22/2023)
- Bearing witness in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal (3/6/2023)



Houston, Dec. 7, 2024

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Syria: the struggle is not over



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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 multina-
tional, multigenerational and multigen-
dered 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 auster-
ity, racism and repression, attacks on
im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+
oppression and mistreatment of people
with disabilities. It means joblessness,
increasing homelessness and impover-
ishment 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, edu-
cation or anything else — unless they can
pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and
youth are saddled with seemingly insur-
mountable 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, mul-
tigender 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 guar-
antee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has
been out in the streets defending the
workers and oppressed here and world-
wide. If you're interested in Marxism,
class solidarity, and joining us in the fight
for a socialist future, please sign up at
www.workers.org/join-form and an
organizer will get back to you. Or contact
a WWP branch near you. □

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Syria: the struggle is not over

Workers World condemns the overthrow of the democratically elected government of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Assad had served as president in Syria since 2000. Syrian “rebels,” backed by the U.S., Israel and Türkiye, took over Syria’s capital Damascus on Dec. 9. Assad has been granted political asylum in Russia.

Along with the liberation forces in Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon, the Syrian and Iranian governments had joined the Axis of Resistance. This alliance has been providing important military assistance to the Palestinian resistance on the front lines against the Zionist, terrorist state of Israel that has been committing genocide in Gaza for over a year.

The Syrian government had the revolutionary foresight to help uplift the Axis of Resistance. This was the only path towards liberation from U.S. imperialism and Zionism for the whole region. As a result, Syria remained in the crosshairs of imperialism and its client Israel, which maintains an expansionist perspective that includes annexing both Syria and Lebanon.

For the U.S. and Israel, Assad’s main

“crime” was refusing to be a puppet of imperialism.

This recent setback in Syria, which is harmful for the world movement, did not begin just a few weeks ago. It is rooted in over 13 years of imperialist attacks on this sovereign country.

After the U.S.-backed and -funded mercenaries and terrorist forces in 2011, whose all-out effort aimed to destroy Syria, the Syrian Arab Army was able to regroup and fought back heroically. At great cost it was able to retake the major cities of Syria, including Aleppo, which is 217 miles from the Turkish border. But the conflict to regain full control of Syria was frozen for years.

U.S./ Turkish mercenary and terrorist forces maintained control of one-third of Syrian territory. This included the oil-rich and agricultural base of Syria. Armies of terrorist forces, enemies of Damascus, were paid, trained and fully outfitted in Türkiye and Jordan.

U.S. imperialists bragged for years that they were able to maintain the political and especially economic isolation of Syria through sanctions and the complete denial of all reconstruction aid for Syria. Meanwhile, Washington

supplied ample funds for reconstruction in U.S.-controlled regions.

These deadly sanctions, another act of war, were an attempt by the U.S. to deny vital services, to starve the population and to hollow out the Syrian economy until it collapsed.

The worldwide anti-imperialist movement must keep the bigger picture in mind. This is a moment to uplift, salute and remember the martyrs and resistance fighters in Syria, who for decades and against all odds held firm against U.S. imperialist domination.

The global struggle has many fronts, including in occupied Palestine, Syria and the rest of West Asia. Because imperialism has no solutions to any crisis, we remain confident that the struggle will regroup and break forth again at a higher level.

Israel’s bombardment and invasion of Syria with plans to occupy more territory show how the Israeli expansionists are exploiting the reactionary changes in Syria.

Nothing is final in class struggle, except that it will continue until imperialism is finally defeated on a global scale. The temporary setback in Syria shows that a battle may be lost but not the war.

U.S. hands off Syria! Israel out of Syria! U.S. out of West Asia! □



Sept. 7, 2013, protest, New York City.

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No tears for slain CEO

Compassion 'out of network'



Protesters outside United Healthcare headquarters, Minnetonka, Minnesota, May 2023.

Normally when someone is shot dead, human beings feel sad for the victim. But in the case of Brian Thompson, CEO of UnitedHealthcare, killed before dawn on the streets of Manhattan on Dec. 4, a large majority of public comments are that empathy is “out of network.”

For example, Anthony Zenkus, a lecturer at the Columbia School of Social Work, posted on X: “Today, we mourn the death of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, gunned down ... wait, I’m sorry – today we mourn the deaths of the 68,000 Americans who needlessly die each year so that insurance company execs like Brian Thompson can become multimillionaires.” (theguardian.com, Dec. 7)

On TikTok a woman described being nine months pregnant when her one-year-old daughter had a medical emergency: “We sat in the hospital for three days, because UnitedHealthcare refused to approve the transfer via ambulance from the hospital where we live to another state. And at that point, I was ready to just get in my car and take her there myself. But UnitedHealthcare told us if we left the hospital by our own will, and it wasn’t via ambulance, they were not going to cover her at the next hospital we went to.”

Other posts quoted a Woody Guthrie song, “Pretty Boy Floyd:” “Some will rob you with a six-gun, some with a fountain pen.” Responses to UnitedHealthcare’s

Facebook post bemoaning the slaying of Thompson included over 90,000 “laughing” emojis.

These are all expressions of widespread mass hatred of the for-profit health care industry. It appears that this hatred may also have motivated the shooter; words written on bullet casings found at the site included “delay” and “deny.”

UnitedHealthcare stands out among all the greedy health insurers for denying the largest percentage of claims: about one in three. These refusals have led to tens of thousands of deaths as well as preventable illnesses and financial hardship for those who live after their health care needs are denied.

Profit system is to blame

Thompson collected over \$10 million in earnings in 2023, and his company took in \$32.4 billion in profit. (www.sec.gov, Jan. 12) Understandably, many people were hoping that Luigi Mangione, the alleged shooter, would not get caught.

But whatever the shooter’s fate, the crimes of the for-profit health insurance industry will continue. Every claim denied means money in the pockets of UnitedHealthcare, Blue Cross Blue Shield and the other health insurance barons. The root of the problem is capitalism, a system that prioritizes corporate profits over human lives.

What a contrast to this murderous

system is socialist health care in Cuba! No one is denied health care in Cuba. Infant mortality is lower in Cuba than in the U.S., and there are eight doctors for every 1,000 Cuban people compared to 2.5 doctors for every 1,000 people in the U.S. (bbc.com, Dec. 13, 2015)

Fighting for a single-payer “Medicare for All”-type system is important, as that would be a big improvement over what exists right now in the U.S. Winning that struggle will not be easy, as even the modest Affordable Care Act is being threatened by the incoming Trump administration.

But what is really needed to put an end to the profit-gouging by the likes of Thompson and company is a socialist system, where human needs come before profits and health care is a guaranteed human right. □

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German VW workers strike to save their jobs

By Martha Grevatt

Over 100,000 autoworkers struck nine Volkswagen plants in Germany on Dec. 2. The primary issues are VW's plans to close three German plants and cut workers' pay. The plant closings would be the first in the company's 87-year history.

VW's previous contract with IG Metall, the union representing German autoworkers, did not allow plant closures or job cuts, and workers' wages were higher than most factory workers in Germany earn. But the contract, which expired in December, prevented workers from striking.

The strikes, called by IG Metall, each lasted two hours. About 20,000 workers gathered inside and outside VW's headquarters in Wolfsburg, Germany, where its largest German plant is also located, on Dec. 5. They were organized by the union and the Works Council, which is a type of joint worker-management body that sometimes speaks on workers' behalf when the union rank and file are angry.

VW, Europe's largest auto company,

claims that the so-called "cost-cutting" measures — job cuts and pay reductions of at least 10% and as high as 18% — are necessary to keep the company competitive. Its profits have fallen for the first three quarters of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. But they are still almost 4.5 billion euros — about \$4.75 billion!

Works Council Chair Daniela Cavallo — who had offered wage concessions to VW in hopes that the plant closings would be canceled — recently countered that workers were not responsible for VW's business woes, "and that's why a solution involving plant closures, mass layoffs and cuts to monthly pay is still out of the question." (jungewelt.de, Dec. 5)

"It borders on mockery when [Volkswagen Group CEO] Oliver Blume stands in front of the workforce and wishes them a Merry Christmas, while at the same time the VW board would prefer to put letters of termination under the Christmas tree for the employees," said IG Metall negotiator Thorsten Groeger. (Reuters.com, Dec. 5)

On Dec. 9 workers held four-hour strikes, with strikes of a longer, possibly indefinite, duration taking place in the new year if issues are not resolved. Another mass rally took place at the Wolfsburg headquarters.

The Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany (MLPD) is calling for a reduction of the workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay. This would distribute the work to more workers, eliminating the rationale for job reductions.

VW union members are not the only workers whose jobs are threatened. About 5,800 Ford jobs in Germany are slated for elimination, and more attacks on German workers are threatened by Stellantis as well as parts suppliers and steel and mining companies. Altogether several hundred thousand jobs in Germany could be lost.

But the workers of the world are beginning to fight back. Italian workers facing job cuts struck Stellantis in October, and United Auto Workers union members could be on strike against Stellantis not long after the December holidays. Global solidarity is needed to beat back the vicious attacks by the capitalists on wages and job security.

Martha Grevatt is a retired UAW Stellantis worker.



Strike rally outside Volkswagen's largest German plant in Wolfsburg, Dec. 2, 2024.

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