

# Hurricane Irma's devastation Nothing 'natural' about it

By Deirdre Griswold

Sept. 11 — Scientists know it. The rash of powerful storms to hit the Caribbean and the Southern states of the U.S. in the last month was not "natural." It was directly related to human-caused climate change and the "new normal" of warmer ocean temperatures and higher seas. In this country, popular awareness of the danger came with the suffering and many deaths caused by Hurricane Harvey and its massive flooding along the Gulf Coast.

Now comes Hurricane Irma, which brought absolute devastation to many islands in the Caribbean as a Category 5 storm with 175+-mile-an-hour winds.

Irma was downgraded to a Category 2 storm, with 110-mile-an-hour winds, by the time it slammed into Naples, Fla., but it still did a lot of damage.

But more than climate change is responsible for the deaths and destruction accompanying the storm. A look at some of the islands where the hurricane damage and loss of life have been the worst reveals the political side of the disaster.

### Heritage of colonialism and racism

Most are colonies or former colonies — of the U.S., Britain, France and the Netherlands.

The island of St. Martin, with about 78,000 permanent residents, reported 11 deaths. One side of the

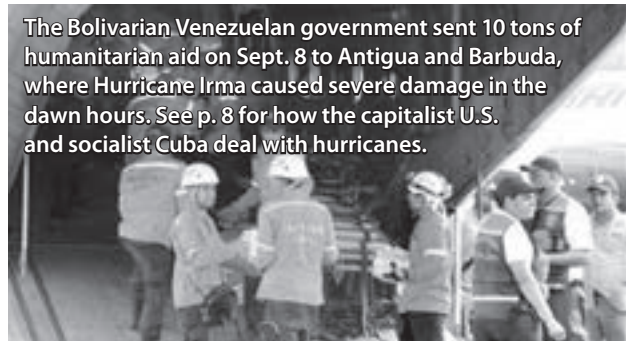
island is Dutch, the other French. Some 95 percent of the structures on the French side and 75 percent on the Dutch side were damaged or destroyed.

More than 1,200 U.S. tourists were evacuated on Sept. 9 from the Dutch side, with the help of the U.S. State Department and the Pentagon. But the residents who survived were left behind with the wreckage.

France and the Netherlands, which did nothing to help the people before the storm hit, have since sent police

*Continued on page 11*

The Bolivarian Venezuelan government sent 10 tons of humanitarian aid on Sept. 8 to Antigua and Barbuda, where Hurricane Irma caused severe damage in the dawn hours. See p. 8 for how the capitalist U.S. and socialist Cuba deal with hurricanes.



GRAPHIC: TELESURTV

## North Carolina arrestees say:



PHOTO: WW DURHAM BUREAU

## 'Toppling white supremacy is not a crime!'

Nine of the arrested Freedom Fighters arriving for their court date in Durham, N.C., on Sept. 12. About 200 people marched with them in solidarity through hurricane-driven rain. Takiyah Thompson (far left) climbed a local Confederate monument on Aug. 14 to start the People's Removal of the racist symbol. More on people smashing white supremacy, pp. 4-7.



Labor Day was infused with a new militancy this year, uniting workers in the fight against the bosses and the fight against racism. National coverage, p. 3.

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# Detroiters protest Taser killing of Black youth Damon Grimes

By C. Parnell  
Detroit

Damon Grimes, a 15-year-old African-American youth riding an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) on Aug. 26 died of injuries from an accident after he was tasered by Michigan State Police officer Mark Bessner from his police vehicle on the East Side of Detroit.

Grimes lost control of his ATV, crashed into a pickup truck and suffered a head trauma, dying later in a local hospital.

This incident, which amounts to a brutal racist murder by the Michigan State Police — really an occupation army — has aroused a series of demonstrations and legal actions.

Grimes' family has launched a \$50 million lawsuit against the officer, who has been sued in the past for his brutality with Tasers. In the meantime, Bessner is receiving paid leave for violating police protocol, as it is supposedly against police rules to discharge a Taser from a vehicle.

The Grimes' family held a vigil on Aug. 30 at the intersection of Gratiot Avenue and Rossini Drive that turned into a protest of over 200 community members. Those at the vigil gathered to show their support for Grimes' family, wearing his favorite colors of red, black and white or laying out balloons and candles.

In honor of the youth's memory and in defiance of the rarely enforced ban on riding ATVs in the streets of Detroit, a group of riders gathered on their ATVs and blocked the streets until police arrived and ordered them to disperse.

On Sept. 2, around 30 protesters gathered in downtown Detroit to condemn this attack and to demand that Bessner be arrested and prosecuted. This protest, organized by the Moratorium Now! Coalition, also called for an end to the use of Tasers in the city of Detroit and an end to high-speed chases.

With the crowd from the annual Detroit Jazz Festival circulating around the demonstration, several speakers condemned this racist action and said that Detroit needs funding for education and housing for the city's children,



Detroit community grieves for Damon Grimes.

PHOTO: STEVE NEAVLING

not a police army that kills and terrorizes the Black community. These speeches put this attack into the context of the continued dispossession and looting of the city by banks and developers like Chase and Quicken Loans. State senator and mayoral candidate Coleman Young II also spoke, calling for a fight against this injustice.

A group of about 50 also gathered on Sept. 1 to protest Grimes' death outside of the Detroit Police Headquarters. Some in the group confronted Chief of Police James Craig about the brutality of the Detroit police. The group also called for ending state troopers' pursuit of drivers who have committed traffic violations.

The ruling class in Detroit is waging a war to dispossess Black residents in this city to make way for their racist fantasies of a "new Detroit," where everyone is welcome except for Black, working-class people and immigrants, who have lived there for decades.

The murder of Damon Grimes is an injustice that the Detroit community cannot abide. His murder comes at a time when the connection between imperialist violence abroad and at home couldn't be clearer, with President Donald Trump allowing the sale of military equipment to municipal police forces.

People are calling for justice for Damon Grimes and his family and the immediate arrest and conviction of Mark Bessner, and to end the killing of Black people by racist police armies! □

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Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, joblessness 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 and Brown youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

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# More Labor Day 2017: When we fight, we win!

By **Betsey Piette**

On Labor Day 2017, along with traditional union parades, workers in U.S. cities from coast to coast held direct actions supporting the fight for \$15/hour and calling for unionization of low-wage workers. Demands were raised for equal pay, especially for Black women workers who receive the lowest wages while facing rampant racism. Opposition to the elimination of DACA was heard in cities with larger immigrant workforces.

In **Buffalo, N.Y.**, Buffalo Democratic Socialists of America, Buffalo Roja y Negra, Black Lives Matter and Workers World Party-Buffalo joined with Food and Commercial Workers/Change-Walmart.org on a picket at McDonald's in solidarity with low-wage workers fighting for what's theirs — the right to \$15/hour and a union. Together they marched to take their history-changing place as one of the leading contingents in the Labor Day parade held by the Buffalo Central Labor Council on Sept. 4.

— **Ellie Dorritie**

A **Chicago** South Side rally on Sept. 4 organized by BYP 100 honored the too-often-overlooked contributions of Black women and femmes to the struggle for economic and social justice. The demonstrators then marched to Oak Woods Cemetery and the burial site of famed civil rights fighter Ida B. Wells — which is marked by only a small, nondescript gravestone — and demanded that a properly respectful monument to Wells replace the insulting federal monument to pro-slavery soldiers that currently mars the cemetery.

— **Jeff Sorel**

Members of the #D15 coalition assembled for Labor Day before dawn Sept. 3 in **Detroit's** rapidly gentrifying New Center area. Their march began outside of an old McDonald's, nestled between new condo developments. As the day broke, they marched toward Henry Ford Hospital, whose food service jobs were the subject of their latest campaign. The #D15 coalition is composed of low-wage workers, clergy and Service Employees Union or-



Buffalo, N.Y.



Detroit

WW PHOTO, LEFT: ELLIE DORRITIE

WW PHOTO: TYLER VOSGERCHIAN

ganizers from national campaign #fight-for-fifteen. They all united around one campaign: "\$15 and a union!"

SEIU International Secretary-Treasurer Gerry Hudson made a striking comparison between the appallingly low wages in Detroit and those in other areas. "We got organizers here from California, from New York, from all over the country, here in Detroit. It's a damn shame that in the heartland of labor, brothers and sisters at this hospital are making \$9 an hour.

"We got a brother from LA who is making \$27 an hour working as a home health care aide, and why is it that he's making \$27 an hour? Is it because he's got a generous employer? Is it because he works harder? Is it because one of the bosses likes him? No! It's because UHW [United Healthcare Workers] is one of the strongest unions in the country. That's why he's making \$27 an hour!"

After that rally dispersed, the participants regrouped at Detroit's 20,000-strong Labor Day parade. Democratic hopefuls made appearances at both rallies, saying they had the workers' backs. But the workers know that with or without the corporate Democrats' help, the struggle is up to them. They summed it up with the chant, "When we fight, we win!"

— **Tyler Vosgerchian**

During the early morning hours of Labor Day in **Los Angeles**, Workers World Party members joined in solidarity with McDonald's fast food workers demanding a \$15-an-hour wage. Around 1,500 people demonstrated, and numerous speakers described the day-to-day exploitation of workers.

— **Timothy Bluiett** □

## Low-wage workers go on strike, fight for \$15

By **Mike Kuhlenbeck**

On Labor Day workers in the Hawkeye State rallied for \$15 an hour and a union.

The Service Employees Union (SEIU) and Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement are organizing Iowa workers in the Fight for \$15 and preparing them for future battles in the class war being waged across the state. Earlier this year, a series of anti-worker laws enacted by the state was met with fierce opposition by workers.

Two Des Moines rallies took place early on Labor Day — one for fast food workers and the other for health care workers. The demonstrations were part of a national day of action in over 400 U.S. cities. Iowa CCI Executive Director Hugh Espey told WW it was "a great day" for holding corporate power accountable and showing community support for Iowa's workers and their right to organize. ([tinyurl.com/y7ukjf9b](http://tinyurl.com/y7ukjf9b))

**Fast food workers**

The first demonstration was a strike at a Burger King. At 6 a.m., 42 fast food workers from Burger King, McDonald's and Subway joined nearly 200 community allies in a solidarity demonstration.

The night before at 11 p.m., BK workers in Ankeny, Iowa, went on strike. The workers are not being paid overtime while being short-staffed and forced to work in a hot environment with poor air-conditioning. Shift manager Jake Laun told the Des Moines Register that workers deserve better wages, better bonuses and better working conditions. (Sept. 4)

Sonia Mae Sayers, who participated in the day of action, is a 54-year-old McDonald's employee in Des Moines. Despite over 20 years' experience in the industry, her hourly wage is only \$8.50. In an op-ed in the Sept. 1 Des Moines Register, Sayers wrote: "We need to stand together and use our power in numbers to make sure that corporations and our politicians listen." ([tinyurl.com/y8zakjs8](http://tinyurl.com/y8zakjs8))

Although she receives health care through the state, Sayers noted that many co-workers "fall through the cracks" and "millions of underpaid workers" receive no health care whatsoever. "Together, with our allies, we have the power to push back on lawmakers and corporations who

have stacked the deck in their favor. We have the power to ensure every person can live a healthy life and dignity on their job."

**Health care workers**

Nearly 300 people rallied in solidarity with health care workers at the second demonstration at 8 a.m. Like many Midwest states, Iowa has seen a decrease in manufacturing while the health care industry has boomed.

**Iowa**

According to the SEIU, Unity Point Health with over 8,000 employees and Mercy Medical Center with over 7,000 are the second and third largest private employers in the region. In 2015 the hospital industry in Des Moines made over \$236 million in profits.

Health care workers are denied a living wage and adequate benefits despite the massive profits garnered by health care companies. The National Employment Law Project reports that while 1.3 million hospital jobs were added since 2011, 71 percent of those jobs pay less than \$15 an hour.

SEIU International President Mary Kay Henry stated: "Hospitals are the biggest employers in many cities and generate enormous revenues. There is no excuse for them to keep wages so low that thousands of their nursing assistants, housekeepers, and dietary workers live in poverty." (USA Today, Aug. 31)

Tacoma, Wash., hospital worker and SEIU Local 199 NW member Candy King said, "Some workers have to work one or two extra jobs in order to make ends meet because their wages are so low. That is really shameful and terrible for both the workers and the patients they care for." (SEIU press release)

**The struggle must continue**

The term "living wage" is not hyperbole. A 2016 report in the American Journal of Public Health found that "a \$15 minimum wage could have prevented 2,800-5,500 premature deaths between 2008 and 2012" in New York City alone. The study concluded, "Most of these avertable deaths would be realized in lower-income communities, in which residents are predominantly people of color." (May 6, 2016)

Iowa's \$7.25 minimum wage is less than half a proper living wage. The struggle continues! □

## Anti-racist contingent 'Uniting all workers'

By **Sue Davis**

"No Trump! No KKK! No Fascist USA!" was the slogan on the lead banner of the United Auto Workers' contingent in New York City's Labor Day march on Sept. 9. The slogan was also chanted as UAW Region 9A members marched uptown on Fifth Avenue, along with thousands of other unionists. As the contingent approached Trump Tower, those holding the banner turned defiantly to face the building for several minutes while chanting against Trump.

In the center of the banner, instead of the usual UAW logo, were the words "Uniting All Workers." Cheers and applause greeted the contingent along the route of march.

The NYC Central Labor Council handed out well-received signs calling for support for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood



PHOTO: REGION 9A OF UAW LOCAL 1981

Arrivals). And "Vote No on Con Con" was promoted by several contingents. That refers to a New York state ballot initiative for a constitutional convention, which unions oppose because it could be used by big business to destroy hard-fought gains won by labor.

Unlike the giant inflated cartoon figures in Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, no Labor Day march would be complete without several huge inflated gray rats, often positioned near construction sites to protest scabs! □



Des Moines, Iowa

PHOTO: IOWA CCI AND SEIU



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



PHOTOS: JOE BRUSKY



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

# DACA for Dreamers & full rights for all immigrants

By Kathy Durkin

Protests led by immigrant rights organizations have taken place from coast-to-coast following the Sept. 5 announcement by Trump administration attorney general and archracist, Jeff Sessions, to end the Delayed Action on Childhood Arrivals program. Begun in 2012, DACA gave 800,000 young immigrants, the “Dreamers” — who were brought here as children — the right to stay, study and work in the U.S., without the threat of deportation.

Sessions announced the elimination of DACA and warned these young immigrants, who have done nothing wrong and who work, pay taxes, study, have families and are tied to communities in the U.S., that they must plan to leave the country in six months. In a further attack on the rights of DACA recipients, confidential information given by them to the government is now being used against them by Immigration, Customs and Enforcement for the purpose of deportation.

This hostile, racist action by the Trump administration is an intensification of its aggressive war on immigrants, especially people of color. The bigot in chief in the White House began his election campaign with outrageous slanders against Mexican people and a pledge to build a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. Then he imposed a travel ban against people from Muslim countries.

Moreover, ICE is currently deporting undocumented immigrants at twice the rate of a year ago. Five million immigrant families are at risk of being torn apart by deportations; 5 million children face losing a parent by forced expulsion.

Many progressive organizations, labor unions, faith-based groups and elected officials have expressed solidarity with the young people who will lose DACA protection, in many cases joining them in the streets. It is a good sign that officials of the United Auto Workers, Service Employees Union, UNITE HERE! and other labor unions have denounced DACA's termination.

However, it is crucial that all these forces and more show solidarity with, and support the right of, all 11 million undocumented workers, students and family members to remain in the U.S. Yes, a strong demand should be to uphold and expand DACA. And supporters should also call for full legal and civil rights for all undocumented immigrants in this country, so they can live, work, study and take care of their families, free of ICE harassment and deportation.

Here are highlights of protests against the administration's decree to eliminate DACA, in addition to the many held in Washington, D.C.

## CALIFORNIA

Over 10,000 Dreamers and their supporters filled the streets of **Los Angeles** on Sept. 10 to demand DACA protections. The march, which was organized by a coalition of groups, began with a rally at MacArthur Park and then snaked through the streets to Echo Park. Everyone chanted, “If they won't let us 'dream,' then we won't let them sleep!” and “El pueblo UNIDO jamas sera vencido!” (The people united will never be defeated.)

After the Echo Park rally, thousands of protesters finished the four-hour demonstration at the historic downtown Placita Olvera. They all pledged to fight on to stop the deportations and protect DACA, with the slogan, “No hate, no fear! Immigrants and refugees are welcome here!”

— Maggie Vascassenno

Chanting “undocumented and unafraid,” thousands of Bay Area youth and their supporters took to the streets to loudly protest the Trump administration's decision to end the DACA program. In **San Francisco**, on Sept. 5, the day of the decision, over 3,000 protesters took over the streets in front of the federal building. The rally was led by young Dreamers.

In **Oakland** on Sept. 9, nearly 500 people gathered at Oscar Grant Plaza for a speakout by Dreamers. This rally was followed by a march through the downtown area to demand, “No bans, no walls, sanctuary for all!” Organizers at both actions promised to continue to build resistance against the decision to end DACA and to overturn all of the racist, xenophobic, anti-LGBTQ, anti-worker and inhumane policies emanating from the White House and Washington, D.C.

— Judy Greenspan

## TEXAS

The day after Trump took their dreams away, hundreds marched and rallied in **Houston** to say, “We're undocumented and here to stay!” The protest was organized by the Brown Berets de Tej Aztlan. César Espinosa, who is with Familias Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en Lucha, set the mood when he proclaimed: “We Dreamers will continue to realize our

dreams.” As the march wound its way to City Hall, motorists honked and waved their support.

— Gloria Rubac

## WISCONSIN

Hundreds marched in **Milwaukee** on Sept. 6 in a protest sponsored by the Young Peoples Resistance Committee and endorsed by numerous labor, student and faith-based organizations.

Hundreds marched in **Racine** on Sept. 5 to register their outrage over the Trump administration's decision to end the DACA program. The lead banner was held by a group that had been on a hunger strike since the previous week to pressure Rep. Paul Ryan to push for a legislative overturn of Trump's unilateral action. Voces de la Frontera and Youth Empowered in the Struggle sponsored the protest.

— Workers World Wisconsin bureau

## ILLINOIS

Prisoners at the Metropolitan Correctional Center, a federal prison in **Chicago** which holds many undocumented prisoners, cheered in support

of a Sept. 5 demonstration of over 5,000 people protesting Trump's announced termination of the DACA program.

— Jeff Sorel

## GEORGIA

Hundreds of youth, their families and community supporters gathered in front of the ICE building in downtown **Atlanta** on Sept. 4 to demand the continuation of DACA. The protest was organized by the Georgia Undocumented Youth Alliance, as well as many other groups, including Freedom University, Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights and Asian Americans Advancing Justice Atlanta.

The large crowd then marched to the Atlanta City Detention Center, which jails hundreds of poor men and women and also contracts out cells to ICE for immigrant detention. Demonstrators could see the waving hands and upraised fists of prisoners as they responded to the chants, signs and speeches passionately demanding justice, equality and freedom.

DACA recipients, undocumented workers, whole families of immigrants and those with citizenship papers made clear that the fight to win legal status and defeat anti-immigrant bigotry will not be derailed by any action of the Trump administration. The mood was defiant and unified.

Over 24,000 DACA recipients in Georgia are students and/or workers. Under this program, many have graduated from colleges elsewhere due to draconian anti-immigrant laws that require them to pay out-of-state tuition at public institutions here. The ability to drive and work legally has allowed DACA youth to help sustain their families.

— Dianne Mathiowetz

## PENNSYLVANIA

“DACA si! Migra no!” was chanted by 200 people, including labor unionists, in an important show of unity against white supremacy outside Department of Justice offices in **Philadelphia** on Sept. 5. They gathered to support undocumented workers and students as they awaited the Trump administration's decision on DACA. Sessions' announcement of plans to dismantle DACA puts these young people at increased risk of deportation.

Several rally speakers, including people directly impacted by DACA's elimination, denounced Trump and Sessions for repeatedly standing with white supremacists and against people of color. Speakers noted that right-wing attacks, including in Charlottesville, Va., actually result in building working-class unity. On the program were union representatives speaking for UNITE HERE, Service Employees Union, Philadelphia Teachers Federation and Working Educators. Philadelphia City Council members and Pennsylvania state representatives also spoke.

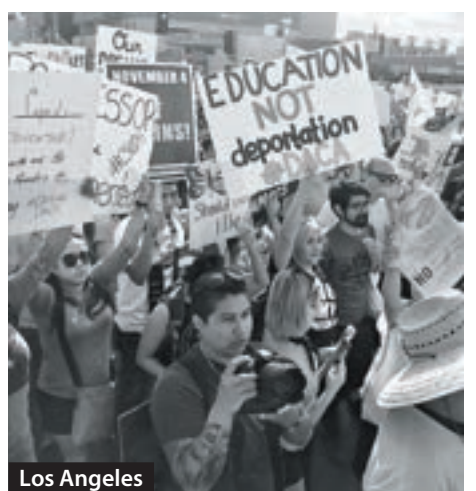
As Sessions gave the anti-immigrant announcement in Washington, rally participants took to the streets with chants loudly denouncing deportation, racism and increased repression of Black and Brown communities. The march, warmly greeted by people in Center City, ended outside the federal prison and ICE offices with a chant, “You build a wall, we'll tear it down!”

— Betsey Piette

## NEW YORK STATE

Thousands of people demonstrated on Fifth Avenue near Trump Tower in **New York City** on Sept. 5 to defend the Dreamers. Then they marched to Fifth Avenue and 57th Street where they blocked traffic. Several arrests were made when young militants carried out a civil disobedience action, “DACA Fight Back Midtown Shutdown!”

At the city's Labor Day protest on Sept. 9, there was support for immigrant workers. The NYC Central Labor



WW PHOTO: MAGGIE VASCASSENNO



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN



WW PHOTO: G.DUNKEL

# SMASH WHITE SUPREMACY

Council, AFL-CIO, distributed signs supporting DACA. The Professional Staff Congress/City University of New York had placards reading, "Immigrant rights are workers' rights!"

Many other local demonstrations have been held since Sept. 5, including on Sept. 9, to support the Dreamers. They called on the Trump administration to retain the DACA program.

— WW New York bureau



Rochester, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: LYDIA BAYONETA

A large crowd gathered in front of the federal building in downtown Rochester to defend DACA and obtain justice for all immigrants. The action was organized by the Workers Justice Center, with many community groups participating, including Workers World.

— Gene Clancy

## MASSACHUSETTS

In Cambridge, 31 professors from Harvard University and Boston-area colleges were arrested on Sept. 7 when they blocked traffic-laden Massachusetts Avenue to protest Trump's attack on DACA. Because their students include those affected by the DACA repeal, they were demanding the youth be given a pathway to legalization.

Forming a human chain, the professors were supported by 300 protesters, including members of UNITE HERE! Local 26 which represents dining hall workers and Service Employees Union Local 32BJ which represents custodians and guards. Both unions have members who are under Temporary Protected Status. They have vowed to defend their DACA workers and the students on campus.

— WW Boston bureau



Cambridge, Mass.

PHOTO: CHRISTINE MITCHELL

## DACA: The latest from the Un-Obama

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

If there is one unifying principle emerging from the disaster known as the Trump Regime, it is the president's singular mission to erase the executive presence of his predecessor, Barack Obama.

This may be seen most recently in Trump's bumbling undoing of Obama's executive order known as DACA — the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program — done to further endear him to his so-called "base," white nationalists who love to hear about the suffering of nonwhite Others.

Under DACA, some 800,000 young people, many brought to the U.S. as babies, were given a pass to live, study and work in the U.S., often the only home they've ever known.

Trump's revocation of DACA snatches that pass away, sending tremors of fear of deportation in nearly a million people.

Incredibly, just days before he formally issued his executive revocation, he talked about how much he "loved" DACA kids.

Meanwhile, Latinx — who are among the largest number of DACA recipients, who came here because of U.S.-supported state violence in Honduras, Guatemala

Mumia is innocent  
FREE MUMIA!



la [and other parts of] Central America — after the slap-in-the-face of the pardon of Joe Arpaio, the former Arizona sheriff found in criminal contempt of a federal court order for intentional racial profiling, are in no mood for Trumpian "love."

They know that he ran on anti-Mexican fear and hatred.

What's love got to do with it?

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL © 2017

## Solidarity at Chicano Park thwarts racists

By Gloria Verdieu  
San Diego

The San Diego chapter of Unión del Barrio, the Association of Raza Educators (ARE) and other local progressive organizations and individuals thwarted a threat by fascists to remove the political murals at San Diego's historic Chicano Park on Sept. 3. Over 650 community members responded to the call for a solidarity gathering at the site and stood unified against racism. They outnumbered the handful of neo-Nazis, who were escorted out by park defenders.

These white supremacists call Chicano Park "a huge monument honoring communism and La Raza ultranationalism." They are campaigning to take down the site as payback for the removal of Confederate monuments in San Diego and around the country.



San Diego

WW PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU

However, Unión Del Barrio and community members are on the alert for neo-Nazi vandalism of the statue of Mexican revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata and the beautiful murals in Chicano

Park — now recognized as a National Historic Landmark.

This writer distributed copies of Workers World newspaper at the solidarity gathering. □



## Georgia marchers to racists:

Confederate Memorial" in Decatur Square in front of the Old County Courthouse and close to the current courthouse. Decatur Square, surrounded by restaurants and small stores, is the crossroads for public transportation and the location for many public events for the diverse communities living in the area.

The towering obelisk with its salute to white supremacy, honoring those who kept the "covenant" of racism, was erected in 1908 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Just two years earlier, in 1906, 10,000 white men and boys rampaged through the streets of downtown Atlanta, killing and beating Black men and women, burning down their businesses and homes. By 1908, the Georgia Legislature had denied African Americans the right to vote.

To allow the Confederate monument a place near the doors of the courthouse continues to serve notice to Black people that they still have no rights.

Rally speakers included NAACP leaders, high school students, labor leaders, members of the clergy and other faith-based groups, immigrants, Black Lives Matter activists and city residents. This writer read a solidarity message from the Durham 14, the North Carolina activists arrested for the toppling of a Confederate statue in Durham on Aug. 14.

Georgia, like many U.S. Southern states, has a law forbidding the removal of any Confederate monument without legislative approval.

Sara Patenaude, a co-founder of Hate Free Decatur, made clear in her remarks that the struggle to rid public spaces of white supremacist symbols is only a part of the larger goal of ending all the institutionalized methods of criminalizing, denigrating and impoverishing people of color. □

## Solidarity drives out fascists

By Misha Litvak  
Portland, Ore.

A paltry showing of barely a dozen of Joey Gibson's "Patriot Prayer" goons disgraced Portland's Waterfront Park on Sept. 10 before they were swiftly driven out by anti-fascist warriors backed by thousands of working people acting in solidarity.

Portland police declared this action to be "violent and criminal" after they realized they would not be able to protect the gaggle of reactionaries from the crowd. The cops sprayed anti-fascists with "bear" mace and fired pepper ball bullets into the crowd, striking a Workers World comrade in the hand. The fascists fled

under heavy police escort, at which point the crowd took to the streets, marching despite police threats to fire more pepper balls. The police retreated, and the anti-fascists regrouped in a park, where speeches were given by socialist organizations and representatives from the Indigenous community.

At the park it was announced that the main force of Patriot Prayer had rallied in their headquarter city of Vancouver, Wash., across the Columbia River from Portland. The Portland anti-fascists made their way north to provide support for their comrades in Vancouver. Portland



Portland, Ore.

WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

police followed suit, making the crossing to help their northern counterparts in the Vancouver Police Department prevent the far-right demonstration from being interrupted.

However, once again the white supremacists were overwhelmed and surrounded — a crushing defeat in their own hometown! □

## North Carolina arrestees:

# 'Toppling white supremacy is not a crime!'

**A letter from #DefendDurham arrestees to the Movement:**

**From Charlottesville to Durham to the White House —**

## TEAR DOWN WHITE SUPREMACY!

Aug. 12 marked a day of resistance in Charlottesville, Va. For months, it had been a frontlines site of progressive forces organizing to remove the symbols of the Confederacy from their town. The call from a local white nationalist to "Unite the Right" to defend these "cherished" symbols of white supremacist ideology came to a head on Aug. 12. More than 1,000 fascist, white nationalist and neo-Nazi groups converged and occupied the town, terrorizing the community and instigating violent confrontations.

We honor the thousands of resisters who confronted them, and we honor Heather Heyer, an anti-racist activist murdered that day.

On Aug. 14, reeling from the images and firsthand stories from Charlottesville, anti-racist and anti-fascist activists in Durham, N.C., decided that Durham's own Confederate monument had to go. Hundreds of Durham residents attended the event, where HBCU student and Workers World Party member Takiyah Thompson scaled a ladder and placed a rope around the statue, throwing the rope to the crowd, inviting folks to tear down the white supremacist symbol. The result was the successful and much celebrated People's Removal of the Confederate statue.

In response, Durham County Sheriff Mike Andrews has conducted a witch hunt against Durham's Freedom Fighters. As of Aug. 31, there have been 14 arrests connected to the righteous takedown of the statue. Many of us are facing felony and misdemeanor charges. Simultaneously, those arrested have been targeted by the so-called "alt-right" through doxxing, hate mail and death threats.

Sept. 12 marks one month since Charlottesville. It is also the next court appearance for nine of us facing felony and misdemeanor charges related to Aug. 14. We are calling on anti-racist, anti-fascist people of conscience everywhere — across the world — to organize solidarity actions in your city from Sept. 11 through Sept. 17 or join us in Durham, to boldly and unapologetically proclaim: Toppling white supremacy is not a crime!

### The present carries remnants of the past

What we witnessed in Charlottesville cannot be separated from the origins of the United States, the history of the U.S. South and the rise of fascist ideology in the last century. We are part of historic ideological struggles.

There are two sides: justice, equity and freedom, and the other side of domination, exploitation and oppression. We are not in a post-racial age. White supremacists today use the same arguments that slavers and eugenicists use(d) to justify violence and death of Black, poor and disabled people in this country.

We know that we cannot predict what this new period will hold — both opportunities for unity, and new, expanded threats. Today's white supremacists are emboldened by the Trump regime. Widespread poverty, joblessness and suffering mean that entire segments of the population are considered disposable. Many have become prison slave labor. Meanwhile, many poor whites cling to rhetoric that scapegoats migrants, Muslims and poor Black communities as the cause of their own suffering

### Law enforcement: White supremacist enablers and property protectors

We say to Sheriff Mike Andrews: **We will not let you bully, intimidate and isolate the people's resistance. END YOUR WITCH HUNT! DROP THE CHARGES NOW!**

We ask Sheriff Mike Andrews: *Why have you prioritized punishing those who removed a racist statue over taking responsibility for the lives of the six prisoners who have recently died in your jails? Instead of sending 15 squad cars and 2 ambulances to look for a ladder at the home of anti-racist activists, we want you to stop lying about your ongoing collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to terrorize families and steal children from school bus stops. Instead of pushing for inhumane video visitations for the family and friends of prisoners, take responsibility for the death of 17-year-old 'Niecy' Fennell and step down from office.*

The sheriff's decision to prioritize property over people is nothing new. In Charlottesville, countless witness accounts confirm that Charlottesville police stood idly by as demonstrators were attacked by white supremacists. The U.S. is full of overt and covert instances of collaboration and overlap between the Ku Klux Klan and law enforcement.

**SMASH  
WHITE  
SUPREMACY**

What are the real crimes in society? Removing racist statues? Or terrorizing Black, Brown and undocumented people? We say that prisons, raids, homelessness, poverty and police violence are the real crimes against humanity.

### You cannot stop us! We will take 'em all down!

A sleeping giant is waking. Not only do the people have the right to remove symbols and institutions of racism — we have the power. We are unafraid. We will not be complicit. We will not stand by. And we need everyone to become a soldier in this struggle.

The ideology behind erecting Confederate statues is the same ideology that defunds historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs); that rescinds DACA; that pays police to protect property rather than sending aid to Black communities facing floodwaters; that pits workers against LGBTQ people through transphobic hysteria; that characterizes Muslims as terrorists while carrying out massive surveillance programs at home and abroad; that passes preemptive laws that limit local government and curb organizing and free speech; that wages international wars against Black and Brown people.

Durham removed our statue ourselves because it was the only way to do the right thing. Freedom Fighters took on the Nazis and Klan in Charlottesville because they had to.

Because we believe in and love our people.

Toppling racism is an act of love.

In order to win our future, we must understand our history, the history of poor and working-class people, the history of people of color who have been resisting repression and domination on this soil since Columbus. We call on the spirit of Harriet Tubman and John Brown to guide and inspire us to be bold and to take risks. Every opportunity in front of us is one where we can choose unity and action, or silence and complicity. We urge you to choose the first, to forge a collective path toward liberation for us all.

Organize where you are to topple racism and white supremacy! Use this moment to lift up and link up ongoing work to expose and undermine an ideology that refuses to recognize the full humanity of the majority of people on this planet. The time is now to reclaim public spaces; to change the course of history; to forge a new future.

**Visitations, not video! Black Lives Matter!**

**Defend migrants!**

**Abolish prisons, ICE & the Pentagon!**

**End attacks on organizers!**

**Smash capitalism! Topple white supremacy!**

## National Days of Solidarity with #DefendDurham

By LeiLani Dowell

An uplifting Bull City Block Party was held on Sept. 9 to celebrate Durham's continued resistance and tenacity against white supremacy, including the toppling of a Confederate statue on Aug. 14. Some 200 people showed up for the event, held in the parking lot of the Hayti Community Center in the heart of Durham's Black community.

WWP organizer and 2016 vice-presidential candidate Lamont Lilly emphasized "Activism is going to the people. Activism is feeding the people and meeting the people where they are."

Participants in the "block party for activism" were treated to delicious Southern food, music, speeches and bouncy houses for the children. The event was co-sponsored by WWP, the Durham Solidarity Center, the Youth Organizing Institute, Duke Grad Student Union, Fight for \$15 and Alerta Migratoria.

The block party was just one event in the Sept. 11-17 National Days of Action called by a broad national coalition in solidarity with the Durham Freedom Fighters. The week continued with the court appearance of arrested Fighters on Sept. 12.

For updated coverage, go to [workers.org](http://workers.org) and to [tinyurl.com/yctq5t64](http://tinyurl.com/yctq5t64).



WW PHOTO



PHOTO: THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE

In Durham, Freedom Fighters Kintasha Hall and Takiyah Thompson (r) get ready for more struggle, as SNCC founder and Civil Rights icon Ella Baker watches over them. Baker called the first Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee conference in 1960 at Shaw University, a historically Black college in Raleigh, N.C.

At the Durham "block party for activism" on Sept. 9.

## The legacy of Muhammad Ali

By mYia X

"You my opposer when I want **FREEDOM**. You my opposer when I want **JUSTICE**. You my opposer when I want **EQUALITY!**" These fiery words spoken by Muhammad Ali 50 years ago ignited and inspired a struggle in the United States against racism and war, from the streets to the barracks and across the globe.

A historic summit was held in Cleveland 50 years ago in solidarity with heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali, to support his status as a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War, based on his religious beliefs. He faced jail time by the U.S. government.

As a Black man living under segregation and Jim Crow in Louisville, Ky., Ali knew that the U.S. military draft would send him to kill Vietnamese people. He refused to be inducted into the military on April 28, 1967, saying, "I have searched my conscience and I find I cannot be true to my belief in my religion by accepting such a call."

A June 4, 1967, press conference followed this meeting of the minds in the battle of ideas, featuring Ali, other Black athletes and political figures. For a summit clip, go to [youtu.be/XthuWlpTyk8](http://youtu.be/XthuWlpTyk8).

Ali's resolute defiance was also coupled with a deep understanding of U.S. imperialism and the role of its military.

Facing the loss of his heavyweight title and income while appealing his conviction for draft evasion, Ali never wavered as he spoke to thousands of anti-war activists to explain his refusal. "Clay aka Ali v. United States" was



# 'The system failed me' NFL star Michael Bennett survives cop attack

By Monica Moorehead

Michael Bennett is a six-foot-four, 270-plus-pound, 31-year-old defensive end for the National Football League's Seattle Seahawks. He has been selected to the Pro-Bowl twice and is a Super Bowl champion.

Bennett is also an African-American and socially conscious athlete who has been very outspoken against racist injustice, especially police brutality, and for gender equality, Palestinian and Indigenous rights. Bennett not only talks the talk but also walks the walk.

He has been highly vocal in defending former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, sitting by himself during the national anthem in 2017 preseason games.

Bennett recently organized a fundraiser and rally for the family of Charleena Lyles, an African-American mother of three, fatally shot seven times by Seattle police earlier this year. Lyles was four-months pregnant at the time of her murder.

Most recently, Bennett became a direct survivor of police brutality.

After a much ballyhooed fight between Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor in Las Vegas on Aug. 26, Bennett, who attended the fight, was thrown to the ground, kned in the back and handcuffed by two Las Vegas police officers. Video footage shows a gun pointed at his head by one of the cops threatening to arrest him. (TMZ.com)

Bennett is heard asking what he had done to warrant such treatment. In a "Dear World" Twitter letter disclosing the incident, Bennett stated that the police officer threatened to "blow off his fucking head" if Bennett moved. Several hundred people, including Bennett, had run for cover when gunshots were thought to be heard nearby, but no shots had been fired. Only when the police discovered Bennett's identity was he released.

Bennett and his lawyer, John Burris, a civil rights attorney who represented the family of Oscar Grant, a young Black man murdered by a Bay Area Rapid Transit cop on New Year's Day 2009, have demanded the release of the two arresting officers' names and of all related video footage. Both Bennett and Burris announced plans to file a civil rights violation lawsuit and to demand an independent investigation of the Las Vegas police.

## Bennett, Kaepernick: More than just football players

When Bennett announced the incident on Sept. 6, Kaepernick responded: "This violation that happened against my Brother Michael Bennett is disgusting and unjust. I stand with Michael and I stand with the people." (Twitter)

Kaepernick is viewed by many as a modern-day Muhammad Ali, for protesting racist police violence by kneeling during the national anthem for the entire 2016 NFL season. His action sparked many athletes from diverse sports — amateur and professional, regardless of age, gender and gender expression — to do the same.

No NFL team has yet signed Kaepernick since he opted out of his contract with the 49ers. This whiteballing of Kaepernick by NFL owners has generated calls to boycott the 2017 season.

Seahawks' coach Pete Carroll and NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell have expressed support for Bennett, but have not connected Kaepernick and Bennett's actions. This is not the case for the Las Vegas police.

In their public letter addressed to the NFL, the Las Vegas Police Protective Association Metro Inc., stated: "While the NFL may condone Bennett's disrespect for our American Flag, and everything it symbolizes, we hope the League will not ignore Bennett's false accusations against our police officers." Steve Grammas, president of the association, underlined the cops' right-wing attack by demanding the NFL "investigate" Bennett. Goodell stated no investigation would take place.

Bennett said in his Twitter letter: "Las Vegas police officers singled me out and pointed their guns at me for doing nothing more than being a Black man in the wrong place at the wrong time. ... I have always held a strong conviction that protesting or standing up for justice is simply the right thing to do. This fact is unequivocally, without question, why before every game I sit during the national anthem — because equality does not live in this country and no matter how much money you make, what job title you have, and how much you give, when you are seen as a 'n—er', you will be treated that way. The system failed me. I can only imagine what Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice and Charleena Lyles felt."

In a press conference, Undersheriff Kevin McMahon stated that "race was not a factor" in targeting Bennett because the two arresting officers were "Hispanic." Teresa Gutierrez, a long-time Latinx national leader of Workers World Party, commented: "For this cop to play the race card is disgusting and nothing new. Once a person puts on a police uniform, no matter their nationality, they are trained to racially profile people of color and occupy their communities. This kind of racist dehumanization can be traced back to the days of slavery, the legacy of which lives on today. We are in an ongoing struggle against all forms of white supremacy."



## Build Black and Brown unity

Gutierrez went on to say: "The racist targeting of immigrants by ICE and the Border Patrol, who are the police on a federal level, cannot be separated from how Black people are treated. Migrants, be they documented or undocumented, are constantly being threatened with raids and deportations. This repression has deepened with Trump's repeal of

the Deferred Action for Child Arrivals, which targets at least 800,000 young people, born to undocumented parents in the U.S., with deportation.

"There is a police war against Black and Brown people — and that lays the basis for building Black and Brown unity. I know I speak for millions of immigrants in expressing my total solidarity with political Black athletes like Michael Bennett and Colin Kaepernick, who are risking their livelihoods and even their lives by tackling racism."

When the Seattle Seahawks and the Green Bay Packers met at the Sept. 10 season opener, Michael Bennett continued to sit during the national anthem, while his brother, Martellus Bennett, a Packer player, raised his fist.

When Martellus heard about the Las Vegas incident, he said to Michael on Instagram: "The emotion and the thought of almost losing you because of the way you look left me in one of the saddest places ever. I'm sad that you have to share this type of experience with the world but at the same time I'm happy that ... you lived to talk about it because we all know you're going to talk about it. The conversation is growing and I'm glad your voice is one of the ones being heard."

Michael Bennett Sr. remarked that his son's experience brought back the painful talk almost all Black parents are forced to give their sons on reacting very cautiously when stopped by the police. He emphasized this is why Kaepernick and his son Michael Jr. are so outspoken.

"When you don't have to give your speech to your 16-year-old African-American son or your 15-year-old Hispanic son, when you no longer have to give that speech so that they can survive, we'll know we've finally come a long way as a society. That's why they're kneeling." (Sports Illustrated, Sept. 6)

This incident and the Las Vegas police response emphasize once again that when conscious athletes speak out and take a bold action against racist oppression, their voices resonate throughout all sectors of society.

Kaepernick and Bennett forcefully counter the reactionary argument that athletes should just shut up and play ball. □

## Muhammad Ali lives on



Photo taken after Cleveland summit, front row, left to right, Bill Russell, Muhammad Ali, Jim Brown and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (formerly Lew Alcindor). Back row: Mayor Carl Stokes, Walter Beach, Bobby Mitchell, Sid Williams, Curtis McClinton, Willie Davis, Jim Shorter and John Wooten.

heard by the U.S. Supreme Court on April 19, 1971. A unanimous (8-0) decision in favor of Ali came down on June 28, 1971.

As a new generation of athletes boldly rises with their fists in the air, kneeling and speaking out, we are reminded that U.S. imperialism, and the system of racism, oppression and bigotry that is part of it, must be confronted, dismantled and abolished. Muhammad Ali, Presente! □

## On NFL opening day Actions sparked by Kaepernick

By Monica Moorehead

Former San Francisco 49ers quarterback and Super Bowl star Colin Kaepernick is still unemployed as of Sept. 10 at the official start of the National Football League's 2017 season. Seattle Seahawks' defensive end and Super Bowl star Michael Bennett was attacked by Las Vegas cops on Aug. 27. These facts continue to spark protests around the country, on and off the field.

Both Kaepernick and Bennett, who are African American, have been protesting racist police brutality.

While Bennett sat during the playing of the national anthem in Green Bay, Wis., white teammate Justin Britt put a hand on his shoulder in solidarity. On the same day, Bennett's brother, Martellus, who plays for the Green Bay Packers, as well as Philadelphia Eagles' safety Malcolm Jenkins, raised their fists in protest.

Cornerback Marcus Peters on the Kansas City football team refused to stand during the national anthem at a nationally televised game with the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots on Sept. 7. Oakland Raiders running back Marshawn Lynch sat during the national anthem before playing the Tennessee Titans.

Kaepernick expressed his appreciation to Stephen Curry, star guard with the National Basketball Associa-



PHOTO: JUANITA WATSON

tion's Golden State Warriors, who posted #freekap on his Twitter feed while attending the opening game for his favorite NFL team, the Carolina Panthers, in Charlotte, N.C. The Panthers' quarterback and 2015 most valuable player, Cam Newton, questioned at a recent press conference why Kaepernick is not playing for an NFL team.

A Los Angeles rally in solidarity with Kaepernick for social justice and against police murders was held outside the LA Coliseum on opening day for the home team Rams. A coalition of religious and community leaders, led by the National

Action Network, blocked a driveway into the stadium. Organizer Najee Ali was arrested and released. Many of the passersby showed appreciation for the rally for Kaepernick. Inside the LA stadium, Robert Quinn from the Rams raised his fist during the national anthem.

About 100 people marched outside Chicago's Soldier Field and held a "Standing 4 Kaepernick" rally as the Bears played their opening game. Some sports bar owners in Chicago are boycotting the NFL in solidarity with Kaepernick by refusing to show any games.

A number of civil rights groups and other activist groups associated with Black Lives Matter have called for a boycott of the NFL season.

Contributors to this story include Jeff Sorel, Maggie Vascassenno and mYia X.

# A testament to socialist planning

## Cuba leads world in managing disasters

Reprinted from the Jan. 20, 2005, issue of *Workers World*, this article was written after a tsunami wreaked havoc on the people living around the Indian Ocean. Its message is just as pertinent today as hurricanes Harvey and Irma, and advancing hurricanes José and Katia, devastate lives and lands in the Caribbean and in Texas and the southeastern U.S.

Hurricane Irma made landfall in Cuba on Sept. 8 with 160 mph winds, the first Category 5 hurricane to hit the island since 1924. There were major economic losses of homes and municipal buildings, communication networks, agricultural crops and tourism infrastructure. But so far, only 10 deaths out of 11.5 million people, mostly from the collapse of old buildings unrepaired because of the economic blows of the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

With the aid of mass organizations like the Committees for Defense of the Revolution, towns are announcing, down to each person, where neighbors are being



Despite effects of Hurricane Irma, health services were available, here in Santiago, including admission to hospitals of pregnant women close to term or at risk.

PHOTO: SIERRA MAESTRA/GRANMA

sheltered. With emergency supplies and equipment in place before the storm descended, brigades of electrical workers have already started restoring power. Health care facilities are continuing to provide services, including an ambulance system for emergency assistance. Health care professionals are also helping in recovery efforts in Antigua and Barbuda, island countries almost leveled by the storm. (en.granma.cu/cuba, Sept. 8)

By Fred Goldstein

The utter failure of the imperialists and the region's capitalist governments to warn the people of the Indian Ocean about the tsunami and to mitigate the chaos that reigned both during and after the devastation brings into bold relief the monumental accomplishments of socialist Cuba in the sphere of disaster management.

The capitalist propaganda machine has focused on the suffering of the people victimized by this disaster and has opened up a false debate over whether the tsunami was an act of god or an act of nature. The message is that, either way, this is fate and nothing could really be done to change things. Missing from the debate is the crucial question of how the catastrophic effects of this disaster could have been avoided.

The record of the Cuban government in preparing its population for hurricanes and other natural disasters so as to minimize the loss of human life gives the lie to religious mysticism and fatalistic thinking. It also stands as a practical example of how to reduce the needless loss of life.

Cuba has been cited by the United Nations, the International Federation of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent Society and other agencies and authorities who deal with the effects of natural disasters as the world model in disaster management, not only for underdeveloped countries but for all countries. Massive, humane evacuations of hundreds of thousands of people have been carried out within hours during hurricanes that reached high levels.

In 2001, when Hurricane Michelle, a level-4 storm, hit with sustained 125-mile-per-hour winds and widespread floods, more than 700,000 people were evacuated. Only five Cubans lost their lives in the storm, which killed 20 people in Central America.



PHOTO: SIERRA MAESTRA/GRANMA

In preparation for approaching Hurricane Irma, agricultural workers in Cuba accelerate harvest and bring produce to a state wholesaler for distribution to the people.

### More dead in California than Cuba

It is noteworthy that prolonged rains in California have already killed almost twice as many people in a two-week period as the 16 who died in six major hurricanes in Cuba between 1996 and 2002. The Cuban method of education, preparation, warning and organized mass intervention during natural disasters is sorely missed right now in California.

In California, many people were killed by a mud slide in La Conchita after two weeks of rain. The same spot had suffered a similar mud slide 10 years ago. If the Cuban method had been applied in California, there would have been no loss of life.

An analysis of the Cuban method by Oxfam, a prestigious bourgeois British humanitarian organization that works in a variety of areas, led to the publication of a 68-page study in 2004 entitled, "Weathering the Storm: Lessons in Risk Reduction from Cuba." (oxfamamerica.org) This study praised the effectiveness of the Cuban system of centralized, planned organization based on mass participation that has saved many lives during natural disasters.

"Cuba is unusual in that its socioeconomic development model and its disaster-response policies combine to substantially reduce its population's vulnerability to hazards. Over the past 40 years, Cuba's socialist government has emphasized social and economic development, prioritizing an equitable distribution of resources, universal access to social services, and a narrower urban-rural development gap," says the report.

"Cubans are highly educated, with a strongly developed sense of solidarity and social cohesion, extensive experience in mobilization and highly organized through mass organizations, professional groups and political structures."

Cuba has a comprehensive National Civil Defense system which, the report says, "is as much a concept of organization as it is a system of measures and procedures." Its work is based on a national plan, formulated both from above and at the grass roots level, which relies on mass organizations such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), the Cuban Women's Federation, student groups, trade unions and the Association of Small Producers.

"In addition to specific assets for work on disasters," continues the report,

"there is a political commitment at all levels of government to allocate all resources at hand for the preservation of life in emergencies. This allows the Cubans to make use of any and all available resources, such as using local schools as evacuation shelters, securing boats and buses for evacuation purposes, or tapping the ham radio association as a communications network." All other aspects of preparation are "secondary to the basic commitment of saving lives."

### Detailed planning at all levels

The national plan for disaster preparedness is refined and worked on every year, from the highest levels to the neighborhoods and block associations. The report carried the results of numerous interviews which revealed the results of detailed planning, organization and education.

"Regardless of their role, everyone was clearly aware of what measures and what procedures they needed to follow in case of a hurricane. They knew the stages of emergency warning, where to get information, how to secure their house, and where they would go for shelter if they needed to evacuate. A belief that the government would prioritize people's safety prevailed. The Cuban population clearly has developed a 'culture of safety.'"

José Castro, secretary of the Commission of Evacuation and Students in the Civil Defense of Cienfuegos, told Oxfam that "Any child in school can give you an explanation: how you prepare, what you do. Students, they know what you do ... how to gather things in the house and put them away ... shut off the water and electricity. All students, workers, campesinos get this training."

Basic to preparedness is what is called "community risk mapping." In fact, according to Oxfam, "[i]t is the meticulous, ongoing risk mapping at the community level by community members that functions as the mortar in Cuba's wall of risk reduction."

A discussion with a representative of the Cuban Women's Federation in the district of Havana illustrated this point: "I am responsible for this part of the neighborhood. ... If a hurricane hits, I know that inside one multi-family unit is an old woman in a wheelchair, who is going to need help to leave. I have 11 single mothers on second and third floors of apartment buildings with children under two who will need more support to evacuate and special needs in the shelters. I have two pregnant women, one on that block and one on this one, who will need special attention."

Each year the plan is updated to include new information and an evaluation of past experience. "Beginning at the CDR level," said Jose Castro, "authorities update the plan in their neighborhood. The CDR members write down the houses that may be vulnerable in their census, including the name of the family and number of children. They note who goes where during an evacuation, who will need extra help, etc." The neighborhood plan then goes up to the municipal, provincial and national level to be integrated into the national plan.

### All public officials responsible for safety

Unlike in the United States, all public officials are charged with dealing with emergencies. "By law," says the report, "all heads of provincial and municipal governments are the provincial and municipal Civil Defense directors in charge of organizing, coordinating and monitoring all the work related to prevention, mitigation, emergency response and reconstruction in their area. ... This creates both a centralized decision-making process, which is key for emergency situations, alongside a decentralized implementation process, providing agility and adaptation equally necessary for effective emergency preparedness and response."

"In practice, the head of the Civil Defense in any given province or municipality is someone closely familiar with how government works in that province. It also means that the local groups are taking orders from someone familiar to them, not a stranger brought for the duration of the emergency. In the event of an emergency all heads of work places, hospitals, schools or businesses assume their responsibilities to direct their staff in carrying out civil defense measures."

All the organizational structures are mobilized to alert the population as a hurricane approaches. Meetings are called, plans reviewed, command centers are organized. "At the community level, the CDRs, mass organizations, family doctors, school directors, and heads of institutions" review emergency plans and check evacuation procedures, destinations and supplies.

In the evacuation phase: "If a person's house has a roof of tile, fiber-cement or thatch, they must move to a house of poured concrete. If those options have already been assigned in the neighborhood, the family is assigned to a group shelter and transport provided. Everything from cars to trucks to horse carts is mobilized for transport by the heads of the civil defense. ... In order to evacuate people in high-risk areas, all necessary means of transport, such as helicopters and boats, are put at the service of Civil Defense rescue teams for this purpose."

"In Cuba," continues the report, "structures that run everyday life are the structures also used for implementing civil defense measures."

In other words, the revolutionary organization of the mass of workers and peasants in a socialist society puts the interests of the people first in all spheres of life; it naturally becomes the general framework within which it is possible to prepare effectively for natural disasters and minimize the loss of life.

### World leader despite U.S. blockade

Cuba is a relatively poor country, underdeveloped by centuries of Spanish

Continued on the next page



## Irma hits Florida

# Who will help those most in need?

colonialism, 60 years of U.S. imperialist control and decades of a vicious economic blockade. Yet, it has surpassed the richest and most developed country in the world in the sphere of natural disaster management.

Had India, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and other countries in the Indian Ocean region had socialist regimes that put the interests of the people at the forefront, day-in, day-out, as in socialist Cuba, they would have seized upon the scientific and technological technology to detect tsunamis that is already deployed in the Pacific Ocean and collectively either purchased or developed it themselves.

The greatest loss of life during the [2004] tsunami was in Banda Aceh in northern Sumatra, nearest the site of the undersea earthquake that triggered the waves. Capitalist television networks have recently carried footage of amateur video showing the tsunami hitting Banda Aceh. But first you saw people cleaning up from the earthquake, slowly and methodically for 25 minutes, completely oblivious of what was to follow — despite definite danger signs, like the sea receding.

An organized, educated, prepared population with the government fully behind it could have evacuated thousands of people, even at the site closest to the epicenter of the tsunami. Evacuation to safety in most areas involved moving people only a relatively short distance from the coast. This holds in even greater measure for the high-casualty areas further from the quake, such as Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and of course East Africa.

Tsunamis are not at all unknown in the Indian Ocean region. There have been three in Indonesia alone in the last 12 years.

A socialist government such as exists in Cuba would have been alert to all the warnings coming from the scientific community about the vulnerability of the region to tsunamis. And of course the population would have been thoroughly trained and organized to deal with typhoons and other natural disasters, so it would have had the means in place to deal with a tsunami.

Cuba, poor as it is, has worked virtual miracles of public safety despite all the obstacles put in its way by the blockade and the undying hostility of U.S. administrations for over four decades. Its struggle to overcome the effects of hurricanes and natural disasters by integrating its disaster mitigation work within the general framework of socialist planning and organization, despite its extreme material limitations, shows that in the natural world humanity can take increasing control over its destiny. But Cuba laid the groundwork by first expelling imperialism, overturning capitalism and taking control over the means of production and the resources of society so it could organize them to serve human need and not profit — that is, by carrying out the socialist revolution. □

By John Catalinotto

As of Sept. 11, people around the world have read millions of words and seen extensive television reports and photos of the devastation Hurricane Irma has caused throughout the Caribbean and, because of the storm's mammoth size, across the entire Florida peninsula.

This article concentrates on the impact on the 3 million to 6 million, out of Florida's 20 million people, who are least likely to have the means to self-evacuate, especially after the last-minute shift in Irma's direction.

More than 3 million people in Florida live below the national poverty level. Another nearly 1 million live in mobile homes — if these homes still exist, since they can't resist high winds. More than 1.6 million are older than 75, and about half are considered to have disabilities. More than 150,000 live in nursing or assisted-living facilities. Another nearly 100,000 people are in jails or prisons. If the Texas experience with Hurricane Harvey serves as an example, prisoners may be abandoned should the prisons be flooded or run out of food.

Florida has poor public transportation and lax construction laws that serve the housing industry's profit margins. Many of its numerous new residents live in housing vulnerable to high winds, storm surges and torrential rains.

Florida's Gov. Rick Scott ordered — but did not organize — the evacuation of 6 million people.

### 'I'd like to leave but I can't'

Darlina Cunha wrote in the Washington Post on Sept. 8: "I'm not leaving my home in Gainesville, in north-central Florida. I can't. ... Florida has only two main roads: interstates 95 and 75. They are parking lots, and have been for days. People are sitting in their vehicles, completely stopped on four-lane highways, running out of gas. ...

"Meaningful evacuation would have meant public transport, safe shelters along the way, medical help and facilities throughout, and safe shelter, food, water and sanitary supplies on the other side of it all. For free."

Reuters reported on Sept. 9 from Estero that Sheryl Estes, released from a hospital days earlier and still suffering the aftereffects of an automobile accident, sought relief in the Germain Arena, "a sports and concert venue in the state's southwest corner. ... The shelter offered hot dogs but no medical care."

The article points out: "A 2008 study of deaths from Hurricane Katrina found that nearly half of a representative sample of victims were older than 75" and that Florida's elders with disabilities include "497,000 people who have trouble



Evacuees in Miami as Hurricane Irma makes landfall, Sept. 9.

PHOTO: WUFT

walking or climbing stairs, 202,000 people who have trouble bathing or dressing and 221,000 who have trouble concentrating, remembering things or making decisions."

### Shelters fill up

According to a Sept. 10 New York Times article, "By Sunday afternoon, more than half of the 45 shelters in Hillsborough County, which contains Tampa, had filled, including a shelter for people with special medical needs that had sprung up on the floor of the Sun Dome arena at the University of South Florida. There were nearly 800 people there, including patients, volunteers, nurses and doctors, and they were out of cots and pillows. Mike Wagner, the shelter manager, had to tell a woman and her family there was no room.

"We just had to tell her, you have to go back home and hunker down," Mr. Wagner said. "It's a patient with five family members and a pet. It's a sad state of affairs, but you have to draw some limits."

Gov. Scott said 1,000 nurses were needed, but resources to feed and care for such caregivers were lacking. Volunteer Jenna Ferreira said: "I wish there was more information and training on how to volunteer. [The USF Sundome's] physical capacity is 10,000 but they have a limit of 1,000 sheltered people. I assume this is because of a lack of trained staff. ... I've talked to a lot of elderly and disabled people who were scared. Several hadn't been to the store yet. I wish there was a way they could register and either government employees or volunteers could help them prepare." (Fight Back! News, Sept. 8)

This article also makes the point: "The police of central Florida have proven to be equally unhelpful, and even more harmful. One of the communities that is the most heavily affected by the local government is that of undocumented immigrants."

Just as in Houston, throughout Florida many ordinary citizens and their organizations provided volunteer help. One volunteer, Ahmed Youssef from the Islamic Society of Tampa Bay, told National Public Radio on Sept. 10: "We just built a

new building that is sustainable to withstand up to a Category 5 hurricane. And we thought about, why can't we open our doors to the community?"

"Since a lot of shelters are checking immigration status, different backgrounds, we wanted to welcome everybody in to show [our] support and unity of the Tampa Bay community." Even here, with the best of intentions, the building's 650 places were quickly filled. Youssef added that "one of the hardest moments of my life is to turn people away mid-storm."

The lapse, though, is not Youssef's. It's the failure of capitalist U.S. society and the right-wing Florida government that didn't care for those who need help the most. □

WORKERS WORLD  
MUNDO OBRERO

## Hurricanes, y capitalismo

Continua de página 12

Un increíble 78 por ciento de las/os evacuados fueron recibidos en los hogares de otras personas. Las/os niños en internados fueron trasladados. Se trasladaron animales y pájaros. Nadie murió." (Fred Goldstein, Workers World, 13 de enero de 2005, "Las muertes no son sólo actos de la naturaleza - La organización y la planificación socialista pueden salvar vidas". El artículo, disponible en workers.org, da una explicación detallada de cómo Cuba está organizada en todos los niveles para enfrentar estos problemas.)

Lo que parece ser posible y verdadero depende del sistema social de una sociedad.

Sí, Houston, tenemos un problema. El problema es el capitalismo. El capitalismo es hostil a las necesidades del pueblo y la capacidad de mantenernos a nosotras/os mismos y a nuestros seres queridos saludables.

Lo que ha causado tanto sufrimiento en la costa del Golfo también causa despidos, racismo, pobreza y guerra. Debemos derrocar al capitalismo y sustituirlo por el socialismo. □

## Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era



By Fred Goldstein



### El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to [LowWageCapitalism.com](http://LowWageCapitalism.com) Available at all major online booksellers.



## TURN THE GUNS AROUND

Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions

by John Catalinotto

Weaving together GI letters, interviews and first-hand narratives with historical research, the author brings to life GI resistance in the Vietnam War era, shows its relation to capitalist state power and highlights why breaking the military chain of command is an essential step to ending oppression around the globe.

Available at online booksellers

# WORKERS WORLD

## editorial

### Vietnam War: Whose truths?

When the Vietnamese people smashed U.S. imperialism's attempt to conquer their country in 1975, the imperialist propaganda machine immediately began rewriting and distorting the history of the decades-long struggle for Vietnam's national liberation.

The Public Broadcasting System will begin airing a 10-part, 18-hour documentary on Sept. 17 about the Vietnam War produced by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick.

Burns and Novick say their Vietnam epic will be "a film everyone can embrace" and that in it "there are many truths."

Without even seeing the opening credits, this tells us that it will be far from a clear indictment of the U.S. criminals who provoked and pursued the wars against Vietnam and the rest of Indochina.

U.S. presidents like John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, generals like William Westmoreland and cabinet members like Robert McNamara and Henry Kissinger — among others — committed war crimes against the Vietnamese and other Indochinese peoples. They also lied continuously to the people in the U.S. to justify sending millions of U.S. youths to kill and die.

The most egregious lie the Pentagon Papers disclosed in 1971 was the phony Tonkin Gulf "attack" in August 1964, used to get congressional approval under Johnson for a mammoth war escalation.

The Veterans For Peace organization, whose membership includes many vets of that period, reacted to the announcement of the series by publishing "Full Disclosure: Truth About America's War in Vietnam." This newspaper has 28

pages of articles to reverse what the VFP fears will be miseducation if the viewing public sees a film that war criminals can also embrace.

There are really only two truths that need to be presented in a documentary on the U.S. war against Vietnam:

One is the truth of the Vietnamese, who liberated the northern half of their country first from French imperialism in 1954 after an eight-year war and signed an agreement for an election in 1956 that would have liberated the southern half. Then, after the U.S. and French regimes broke that agreement, the Vietnamese fought from the early 1960s to 1975 to free their country. This is a story of unimaginable heroism from the Vietnamese soldiers and the entire population.

The other truth is that of the worldwide movement that opposed U.S. intervention, including that in the U.S., which was greatly inspired by the courage and determination of the Vietnamese.

This was a movement that penetrated so deep into the U.S. Armed Forces that, as military historian Marine Lt. Col. Robert Debs Heinl wrote in the Armed Forces Journal of June 7, 1971: "By every conceivable indicator, our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, ... and dispirited where not near mutinous." In other words, a large section of the troops understood they were misused, fighting for the wrong side, and many decided to resist.

The upcoming documentary will provoke discussion of the war on Vietnam. This discussion should be led by those in the U.S. who opposed the war and those in Vietnam who fought for their country's freedom. □

## Anti-NATO protests in Sweden, Germany

By Mike Powers  
Stockholm

More than 350 people gathered in central Stockholm on Sept. 9 to protest U.S. and other NATO participation in the Aurora military exercises in Sweden. Demonstrators saw Sweden's participation as proof of a gradual movement toward membership in NATO.

Sweden has been a neutral country in all European wars since the Napoleonic wars 200 years ago.

The right-wing parties in opposition have openly called for Sweden to join NATO. Because of strong popular support for non-alignment, the left-of-center ruling coalition has refrained from openly espousing such a major change.

Sweden has become more entangled with U.S. foreign policy in recent years. U.S. components are used in the JAS fighter jet produced by SAAB, and Swedish arms are used, contrary to Swedish law, in conflicts in the Middle East.

Anti-imperialists in Sweden have protested against the small contingent of Swedish troops participating in the so-called "Partnership for Peace" operation in Afghanistan, as well as against

Swedish reconnaissance aid during the bombing of Libya and the training of separatist Peshmerga (Kurdish) troops in Iraq. Under extreme U.S. pressure, even non-NATO countries have been forced to contribute to U.S.-coalition actions under the guise of "fighting terrorism."

NATO policy is based on a nuclear umbrella "defense guarantee" that few in Sweden wish to be part of. Recently 121 nations in the U.N. General Assembly, including Sweden, adopted a convention calling for the total prohibition

of nuclear weapons. The U.S. government then sent a threatening letter to the Swedish defense minister, warning that Swedish ratification of the convention would endanger all future military cooperation and assistance to Sweden.

This blatant interference in a Swedish decision has infuriated opponents of the ongoing exercises and of any moves toward further NATO involvement. A broad national demonstration is planned

## WWP congratulates DPRK for its courage



WW PHOTO

Workers World Party delegation to the DPRK Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York City, to honor the anniversary of the country's founding.

Comrade Kim Jong Un  
Chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea  
Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Dear Comrade Kim Jong Un,

On this 69th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK, Workers World Party sends its heartfelt congratulations to the Workers' Party of Korea and to the people of the DPRK for your courage and honesty in standing up to U.S. imperialism.

Despite all the vile threats coming from the Trump administration and the Pentagon, you have successfully moved forward and taken the measures necessary for the DPRK to defend itself.

This is a great victory for the DPRK — and for the struggle everywhere of the working class and all oppressed nations to exercise their sovereignty and liberate themselves from capitalist exploitation and imperialist domination.

Be assured of our continued solidarity, in word and in deed, as we struggle within the "belly of the beast" for the socialist future.

Comradely,

On behalf of the Secretariat of the National Committee, Workers World Party:

Larry Holmes, First Secretary

Monica Moorehead, WWP 2016 Presidential Candidate

Deirdre Griswold, Editor, Workers World newspaper

## 'No to threats, sanctions against DPRK'

By Gene Clancy  
Rochester, N.Y.

Local anti-war organizations held a press conference here on Aug. 22 to denounce the the U.S. war drive around the world and to defend the Democratic People's Republic of Korea against U.S. nuclear threats and sanctions.

Representatives from the International Action Center, the Nazareth College Peace and Justice Studies program and the United National Antiwar Coalition presented the following demands: Halt the provocative joint military exercises in Korea! Sign a peace treaty with North Korea (DPRK)! Stop the threats of military intervention and end the sanctions against Venezuela!

Lydia Bayoneta, from the International Action Center, put the threats toward the DPRK in historical context, noting that Korea was literally leveled by U.S. bombs during the 1950-53 Korean War. "Korea has a right to defend itself against the only country to have dropped atomic bombs on human beings," she said.

Dr. Harry Murray, chairman of the sociology department and director of Peace and Justice Studies at Nazareth College, responded to sending more U.S. troops to Afghanistan and decried the U.S. worldwide war drive, which he called an "imperialistic drive toward empire in search of resources."

Judy Bello, a member of UNAC and other upstate New York peace organizations, described the horrendous U.S.-backed war in Yemen and put responsibility on the U.S. government for the violence going on in the U.S. and elsewhere.

The press conference was also attended by a representative of the local Palestinian community, who participated in the extensive discussion.

While participation by the local corporate media was minimal, reporting by local alternative media was very strong. Rochester Indymedia made the press conference the lead story on its blog and included a video of the entire event. □

in the city of Gothenburg on the Sept. 16 weekend.

5,000 ring Ramstein AFB, Germany

In a major action by the German peace movement, some 5,000 people ringed the perimeter of Ramstein Air Force Base in western Germany on Sept. 9 to protest NATO aggression and the U.S. use of drones to kill people. Ramstein is the center for U.S. drone operations worldwide — operations responsible for killing hundreds of civilians as they allegedly target "terrorist" leaders.

One major global defense contractor involved in drone-related development for the U.S. is Saab Defense and Security, whose U.S. headquarters is in Syracuse, N.Y. It recently was co-awarded a \$9.6 million contract from the U.S. military's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). (syracuse.com, August 30)

These European protests may present a welcome obstacle to U.S. efforts to increase European involvement in its global military operations. □



# Hurricane Irma's devastation Nothing 'natural' about it

Continued from page 1

and troops to the island to protect private property. There is little word on how the residents are doing, other than reports of "looting" — of water and biscuits!

The U.S. seized Puerto Rico from Spain in 1898 and euphemistically calls it an "unincorporated territory." Its neo-colonial status has led to a debt crisis and growing poverty. Although Hurricane Irma only "grazed" Puerto Rico, "at least three people died and almost 70 percent of households were plunged into darkness. The storm knocked out Puerto Rico's fragile power grid, exposing the island's decrepit infrastructure and raising questions about its future viability amid a worsening economic crisis." (New York Times, Sept. 10)

The islands of Antigua and Barbuda were virtually destroyed by the hurricane. These small islands were British colonies that in 1981 became "independent," but remained part of the Commonwealth, with Elizabeth II still the Queen.

Dr. Gabrielle Thongs of the University of the West Indies summed up the situation of these islands: "[W]e must be clear that climate change is not the only villain. Regional underdevelopment and global economic polarization exacerbate the effects of disasters. ...

"Irma's Category 5 assault ... has resulted in 28 confirmed deaths across the Caribbean so far — and thousands will be displaced. Those whose lives have been washed away, leaving them without shelter, include street dwellers, homeless people, squatters and others living precariously in rural, hillside and coastal areas, which are prone to landslides, collapse and flooding. ...

"Irma has characteristics that could make it one of the Caribbean's most damaging hurricanes on record, due in part to the low levels of economic development that hamper the region's ability to cope with natural hazards. ...

"[I]n Barbuda Irma destroyed more than 90 percent of the housing stock and telecommunications infrastructure. ... By comparison, although serious damage was reported in Bermuda and Cape Verde, nothing nearly as devastating as this occurred. These two islands can expect to return to normal life much more quickly than the islands with fewer economic resources." (The Guardian, Sept. 11)

Some 87 percent of the people of Antigua and Barbuda are descendants of African people enslaved by the British. Bermuda, by contrast, reports 54 percent Black and 31 percent white, with the whites the entrenched rulers of the island since it was first settled by Europeans.

Haiti did not sustain a direct hit from Irma, but the heavy rains caused widespread flooding. Haiti's terrible poverty has denuded the hillsides, making it especially vulnerable to flash floods.

Haiti became an independent Black country in 1804 through a successful revolution against French rule that ended slavery. But for nearly two centuries, the colonial and imperial powers have strangled its economy and undermined its sovereignty. For example, U.S. Special Forces kidnapped popular president Jean-Bertrand Aristide on Feb. 29, 2004, and flew him to the Central African Republic.

## Cuba hit hard but saves lives

The one bright spot in the Caribbean is Cuba. With 11.5 million people, it reported just 10 deaths from Hurricane Irma — approximately 1/150th the death rate on St. Martin.

The wealthy state of Florida in the U.S. suffered from a weakened Irma packing winds of 110 miles an hour. Try to imagine what it was like when Cuba took a direct hit from 175-mile-an-hour winds.

Most of the Cuban deaths came from the collapse of old buildings, a direct consequence of the cruel U.S. economic blockade that has deprived the nation of trade and the wherewithal to upgrade its housing stock. The casualties could have been much worse, but Cuba has a world-class program to save lives and evacuated a million people from the coastal area, including 5,000 tourists from recently developed vacation facilities on offshore islands battered by the storm.

Earlier, when the storm was still just threatening the eastern Caribbean, socialist Cuba sent 750 volunteer medical workers to help the smaller nations at risk there.

## What can be done?

Hurricanes are not the only consequence of global warming. Wildfires are raging in the Pacific Northwest, where they have claimed 732,000 acres of forest this year, creating hazardous smoke conditions in cities like Portland, Ore. Average summer temperatures in the area are predicted to rise later in this century by between 4.7 and 6.5 degrees, foretelling even greater destruction.

Scientists say this is just the beginning. So why is there no plan to mitigate, much less try to reverse, this cataclysmic forecast?

Is it that the U.S. government is unable to plan for the future?

Not at all. It does have a very, very expensive plan to upgrade the Pentagon's nuclear arsenal. Begun under the Obama administration, the total cost over the next 30 years will come to between \$1.25 trillion and \$1.46 trillion, according to U.S. government budget data analysis by the Arms Control Association.

What this reflects is not the danger that some "rogue" country is going to attack the U.S. with nuclear weapons. That is ridiculous hype, used to justify such enormous expenditures. The real reason is the entrenched political and economic position of the military industries, which are intertwined with big banking capital. In a time of economic uncertainty, they are guaranteed huge profits from government contracts.

The Trump administration represents capitalism without its liberal mask. He and his billionaire cronies want to dispense with environmental protection, claim global warming doesn't exist and cut the budget for cleaning up toxic spills. He appointed budget director Mick Mulvaney, who says climate science is "a waste of money." He proposed ending a program to improve research and predict tornadoes in the South and would cut the weather-satellite budget by 17 percent. (The Atlantic, May 24)

The struggle to save the planet and all the endangered species on it — including us — boils down to one thing: taking control of economic life out of the hands of the profiteers. We need a revolution to empower those who do the work and can plan for human need, not for capitalist greed. □

## WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

Available at all major online booksellers.  
PentagonAchillesHeel.com

# Solidarity and supplies From the people of Venezuela to the people of the U.S.

*The Bolivarian government of Venezuela has made free gasoline available to all Hurricane Harvey rescue workers, firefighters and other first responders in Texas and Louisiana. Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza announced on Twitter on Sept. 2 that the government was acting in solidarity with suffering area families. The gasoline is available at Citgo stations, through Citgo Holding Inc., a subsidiary of the country's state-owned oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela. The announcement came a day after Citgo administrators made a U.S. \$5 million donation to Houston's Harvey Relief Fund. (teleSUR)*

## Open Letter to the People and Government of the U.S. from the People of Venezuela

We, the People of Venezuela, want to address the People of the United States of America. You must know that on August 11, 2017, President Donald Trump threatened the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with direct military intervention. This dangerous threat was rejected by all nations and by the People of the United States. Nevertheless, two weeks later, President Trump imposed severe and unfair sanctions on us, publicly admitting his intention was to economically isolate Venezuela. It is the same strategy — recognized by the U.S. Government — that was implemented to overthrow the democratic government of Chile in 1973, paving the way for the ruthless dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

These threats and unilateral decisions will affect our economy and our means to obtain resources for food, health care and production, seriously impairing our citizens' everyday life. President Trump seeks to manufacture a political crisis in our country by forcing President Nicolás Maduro out of office, even though he was democratically elected in 2013.

Furthermore, these actions also affect ordinary U.S. citizens, who could face the possibility of a hike in gasoline, while thousands of workers risk losing their hard-earned savings as retirement funds are affected by the ban on Venezuelan bonds.

This behavior is inconsistent with Donald Trump's campaign slogan, "Make America great again." Rather, it creates new problems, both inside and outside the United States, making life harder both for Venezuelans and millions of U.S. citizens, while at the same time, it generates global rejection and resentment toward the U.S. government, and indeed towards its people, who have nothing to do with these warmongering actions.

As was the case in Iraq, we might be on the verge of an unfair and baseless military intervention, where oil is paramount. Yet nothing can justify that



PHOTO: TELESUR

young Americans are driven into another military conflict, much less if it entails confronting a friendly and peaceful country such as Venezuela.

Venezuela is neither an enemy of the United States nor does it represent a threat to its security. We admire its history, culture and scientific achievements. It is, therefore, imperative to cease this irrational policy of aggression and instead promote political understanding, so this long tradition of friendship between the two countries can be made to flourish.

President Maduro has tried to reach out to President Trump several times, so as to facilitate communication and generate solutions based upon International Law and mutual respect. Regrettably, thus far, the U.S. Government has ignored and disregarded all dialogue initiatives proposed by the Venezuelan Government.

The People of the United States are a people of peace, and we believe you should lead efforts seeking to neutralize the jingoist intentions of your government. That is why we reach out to you, in fraternity and sincerity, to urge all Americans of good will, to join us in working together for the defense of our peoples' freedoms, our children's well-being, towards cooperation and peace for our region. It is a time for dialogue and understanding. Let us not miss this opportunity and in the words of John Lennon: Let's give peace a chance.

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## THE KLAN & GOVERNMENT: Foes or Allies? Read at <http://tinyurl.com/y9t8d8ok>



## WHY COLIN KAEPERNICK IS RIGHT

Articles from Workers World/Mundo Obrero Newspaper  
[www.workers.org/books](http://www.workers.org/books)

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

Anthology from WW newspaper edited by Monica Moorehead.

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Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy  
Black Youth: Repression & Resistance Leilani Dowell  
The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

Domestic Workers Demand a Bill of Rights Imani Henry  
Black & Brown Unity Saladin Muhammad  
Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal  
Alabama's Black Belt Consuela Lee  
The 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

Available at major online book sellers.



FOTO: LORRAINE FONTANA

Georgia La Alianza Latina por los Derechos Humanos marcha contra la supremacía blanca.

## Huracanes, inundaciones y capitalismo

Por Tony Murphy

En “El Capital”, Karl Marx describió al capitalismo como un sistema que está totalmente diseñado en torno a la explotación del trabajo, pero su verdadero carácter está oculto.

A diferencia de los sistemas sociales anteriores como la esclavitud y el feudalismo, donde el uso y el abuso de esclavos o de siervos para producir riqueza era evidente para todos, la explotación del capitalismo se oculta bajo un puñado de ideas de que obreros y patronos son iguales y parte de un sistema democrático que garantiza una completa libertad para todas/os.

Para que el capitalismo sobreviva como un sistema de explotación, necesita ocultar constantemente el verdadero carácter de todos los fenómenos. No importa lo que esté en juego, lo que sea importante, lo que cualquier lucha sea - la interpretación de los eventos por la clase dominante tiene el efecto de oscurecer la realidad.

Hay una lucha muy pública por la verdad sobre si el huracán Harvey era prevenible o sin precedentes. En esta lucha, los lados opuestos son, por un lado, científicos y activistas ambientales que trataron de advertir al público sobre el calentamiento global y cómo la expansión de Houston evitó la absorción de las inundaciones por el suelo. Por otro lado están los negadores del cambio climático y los políticos que deliberadamente ignoraron las advertencias de los científicos por razones de conveniencia, planificación inadecuada o codicia.

Este debate es crucial. El cambio climático está afectando a millones de personas. La experiencia de la Costa del Golfo se ha multiplicado por diez en la India, Nepal y Bangladesh, cuyas poblaciones sufren masivamente ahora - 1.200 muertos y decenas de miles de personas sin hogar - bajo otro monzón que rompe récord empeorado por el cambio climático.

Pero incluso esta lucha por cómo ocurren los desastres, con excelentes puntos de la comunidad científica (la “inundación de 500 años” ha ocurrido tres veces en los últimos tres años), oscurece la verdadera naturaleza de lo que está ocurriendo en Houston, la Costa del Golfo y Asia Meridional: un colapso masivo de la sociedad debido a un sistema social global que da prioridad sobre las necesidades humanas, al derecho de explotar al pueblo para obtener ganancias.

### Reacción capitalista de EUA vs. preparación socialista de Cuba

Generalmente se deja fuera de la discusión que la emisión de gases de efecto invernadero es causada por el capitalismo. También se ignora el crimen que, a diferencia del 1% rico, la gran mayoría de esta sociedad queda abandonada a su suerte en las crisis climáticas extremas causadas por el sistema.

Esto se vuelve más evidente cuando se comparan las masivas preparaciones hechas por el gobierno cubano para y con su pueblo cuando llega un huracán. La pérdida de vidas allí es muchísimo menos que en los países capitalistas.

Este hecho es rápidamente aceptado por las agencias humanitarias y de rescate como la Cruz Roja, la Media Luna Roja, la ONU, Oxfam, etc. Una persona tiene 15 veces más probabilidades de morir por un huracán en EUA que en Cuba, admitió el Centro de Política Internacional en 2013. Pero nunca atribuyen estos asombrosos resultados al sistema social cubano.

Lo primero que distingue a Cuba de los países capitalistas es que la respuesta a los huracanes tiene lugar mucho antes de que se produzcan. Cada sector de la sociedad está involucrado, y los entrenamientos anuales comienzan con la gente cuando son jóvenes.

Con ejercicios anuales de capacitación, reservas de emergencia, alertas ininterrumpidas en los medios y preparativos de evacuación comenzando 48 horas an-

tes del huracán, el modo dominante de manejo de huracanes en Cuba es preventivo. La forma dominante en que los regímenes capitalistas responden a los huracanes es reactiva.

Otro enfoque sobresaliente en Cuba se denomina “cartografía del riesgo de la comunidad”. Un estudio realizado en 2004 por Oxfam informó de cómo esto es llevado a cabo por líderes comunitarios. Una miembro de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas explicó: “Si un huracán golpea, sé que dentro de una unidad multifamiliar hay una anciana en silla de ruedas, que va a necesitar ayuda para salir. Tengo 11 madres solteras en segundo y tercer pisos de edificios de apartamentos con niños menores de dos años que necesitarán más apoyo para evacuar y necesidades especiales en los refugios. Tengo dos mujeres embarazadas, una en ese bloque y otra en este, que necesitarán una atención especial”.

Algunos argumentan que tener que lidiar con huracanes más frecuentemente es lo que hace que la defensa de huracanes de Cuba sea superior - no su sistema social.

Pero la forma de abordar otras cuestiones de salud y bienestar humano es también superior en Cuba. Tomemos el virus Zika, un fenómeno devastador para el pueblo de Haití, Puerto Rico, Brasil, Colombia y otros países, así como en el sur de la Florida.

Es cierto que la respuesta de Cuba al Zika fue ayudada por sus años combatiendo el dengue y la chikungunya, enfermedades transmitidas por mosquitos. Pero eso no explica por qué su tasa de infección y muerte por Zika han sido mucho más bajas que en los países capitalistas que la rodean y, al igual que su sistema de huracanes, es elogiada universalmente por expertos en salud.

Carlos Espinal Tejeda, especialista en enfermedades tropicales de la Universidad de Miami, dijo a la publicación de salud STAT: “En Miami y en lugares de Latinoamérica, esperaron hasta que tuvieran casos y luego se movilizaron. ... En Cuba, es todo lo contrario. Cuando ven un virus a punto de llegar, se movilizan”.

Y, por supuesto, Cuba hace todo bajo las duras condiciones del bloqueo estadounidense, que impide a sus planificadores y médicos comprar suministros en el mercado mundial que están disponibles para los países capitalistas.

El 1 de septiembre, HuffPost publicó el artículo llamado “Houston, tenemos un problema”. Refiriéndose al clima extremo tanto en la costa del Golfo de EUA como en el sur de Asia, el autor emitió un llamado a la humanidad para abordar el flagelo del cambio climático.

“Al continuar con los negocios como de costumbre, explotando y utilizando el petróleo y el gas en niveles récord, a pesar de las advertencias de los científicos”, escribe el autor. “No debemos vivir en un paraíso de tontos pensando que podemos continuar en nuestro curso actual y que todo va a estar bien”.

Esto es verdad. Pero un sistema social como el capitalismo se centra en ganar dinero ahora. No tiene la capacidad o la motivación para pensar con anticipación y evitar problemas, a menos que esos problemas afecten la capacidad de la burguesía para obtener ganancias.

El político texano Bill King escribió un artículo de opinión en el New York Times el 28 de agosto titulado “El Alcalde de Houston tenía razón al no evacuar”. Afirmó: “Es logísticamente imposible evacuar a millones de personas de áreas bajas antes de un fuerte huracán”.

Comparemos esto con lo siguiente: “En septiembre de 2004, Cuba sufrió Iván, el quinto huracán más grande que ha golpeado al Caribe, con vientos de 124 millas por hora. Cuba evacuó a casi 2 millones de personas - más del 15 por ciento de la población total. Cien mil personas fueron evacuadas en las primeras tres horas.

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Editorial WW/ Mundo Obrero  
5 de septiembre de 2017

## ¡Defendamos a las/os soñadores!

Se supone que el Intolerante-en-jefe anunciará el 5 de septiembre, su decisión de eliminar o no la decisión sobre el programa DACA [Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia]. DACA fue iniciado por el presidente Barack Obama para defender - al menos temporalmente - el derecho a permanecer aquí de las/os niños que nacieron en otros lugares, pero crecieron en EUA.

No hay duda de que cualquiera que no tenga el cerebro lavado por propaganda xenófoba o sea parte de la camarilla racista con todo el poder en este país, defiende el derecho de las/os jóvenes inmigrantes - las/os “soñadores” - a permanecer en EUA si así lo desean.

Dado que estas/os niños - ahora trabajadoras/es adultos - no tienen ningún país de origen para ir, ya que sus familiares, amigos, escuelas, empleos y raíces están aquí, cualquier decisión de deportarlas/os contra su voluntad no sólo es injusta, sino un cruel e inusual castigo para personas que no han cometido ningún crimen.

La mayoría de sus progenitores vinieron aquí durante la década de 1990 - 2000. Muchas/os de ellos fueron expulsados de sus fincas y de su tierra de origen cuando los acuerdos de “libre comercio” abrieron sus países a los agronegocios estadounidenses y otros monopolios. También son inocentes de cualquier crimen. Fueron parte de la fuerza de trabajo que construyó el relativo auge de la economía durante esos años en EUA.

El derecho de las/os soñadores a permanecer aquí es apoyado por dos tercios de la población, según las encuestas. Es apoyado por sindicatos que tienen inmigrantes entre sus miembros y por sindicatos con liderazgo progresista. Esto quedó expuesto por una demostración pro-DACA en la Ciudad de Nueva York el 30 de agosto, con la participación de UNITE HERE - Local 100, el Sindicato de Empleados de Servicio 32BJ y el Personal Profesional Congreso / Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York.

DACA es apoyada incluso por algunas grandes empresas - incluyendo la agroindustria - que necesitan su trabajo y se esfuerzan por seguir pagando salarios más bajos a una fuerza laboral que está menos segura de sus derechos y vulnerable a las amenazas de los patronos de llamar a las autoridades de Inmigración y Aduanas.

Pero la clase obrera debe evitar desorientarse por el apoyo que aparentemente tienen las/os soñadores de un sector de la clase dominante. Mucho más importante es la necesidad de que las/os trabajadores de todas las nacionalidades en los EUA creen solidaridad con las/os trabajadores a través de todas las fronteras y todos los mares.

Solamente mediante la construcción de esa solidaridad de la clase obrera internacional, las/os trabajadores dentro de EUA pueden esperar derrotar a nuestros gobernantes imperialistas, o incluso ganar salarios y beneficios más altos.

El primer paso es exigir que el principal intolerante, que construyó su campaña presidencial calumniando a las/os trabajadores mexicanos, mantenga intacto el programa DACA. Si no lo hace, y en cambio mantiene sus lazos con los republicanos más reaccionarios y los súper-racistas de ultra-derecha, debería recibir protestas mayores por las masas populares. □