A year after Hurricane Maria, people say

DECOLONIZE PUERTO RICO!

By Workers World staff

A groundswell of resistance is surging against the colonial and U.S. imperialist oppression of Puerto Rico. An International Tribunal on U.S. Colonial Crimes in Puerto Rico will be convened Oct. 27 in New York City at Holyrood Church/Iglesia Santa Cruz. (puertoricotribunal.org) Among the distinguished participants will be Rafael Cancel Miranda, a Puerto Rican hero who, on March 1, 1954, along with Lolita Lebrón, Irving Flores and Andrés Figueroa Cordero, fired on the U.S. Congress to bring attention to the colonial status of Puerto Rico, which had just been made a U.S. commonwealth. (For more participants and sponsoring organizations, see the website.)

Meanwhile, a Week of Action to defend Puerto Rico was held Sept. 20-27 (tinyurl.com/yba8zflo). This marked both the Sept. 20 first anniversary of Hurricane Maria’s catastrophic landfall on the island and the 150th anniversary of the first Puerto Rican uprising for independence, Grito de Lares, on Sept. 23. Here are some highlights of the week.

In Boston, the one-year anniversary of Puerto Rico’s devastation by Hurricane Maria was marked by about 100 people gathered at Plaza Betances in Villa Victoria. At this historic site, the heart of the city’s Puerto Rican community, mass resistance in the late 1960s stopped the bulldozers of racist “urban renewal” and won community control of the neighborhood.

The Sept. 20 rally was organized by Mijente and co-sponsored by organizations, including Raices Borinken Collective, Black Lives Matter Boston and United American Indians of New England.

After an opening ceremony that included a Taíno blessing and stories and poems from community members, the demonstrators marched to the office of Seth Klarman, a hedge fund vulture who owns over $900 million in Puerto Rican debt.

The marchers carried a coffin decorated with slogans calling for cancellation of the island’s debt. The coffin’s words also announced the true death toll of those who died in Puerto Rico during the hurricane — 4,645 people and still counting. Placing the coffin at the entrance to Klarman’s office, the protesters covered it with flowers to create a memorial.

Jasmine Gomez of the Raices Borinken Collective spoke about the colonial policies of the U.S. that have led to such devastation and death on the island. Then demonstrators marched back to Villa Victoria, accompanied by Puerto Rican folk music, to hold a healing space and dance bomba.

Over 100 people gathered Sept. 22 in Washington Square Park in downtown Rochester, N.Y., to commemorate the suffering of Puerto Rico during and after Hurricane Maria. A relatively large number of refugees from the hurricane have resettled with relatives in

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Texas racism and Botham Jean

Strike targets McDonald’s

Profits trump politics

Liar Kavanaugh

Cuba & Venezuela EDITORIAL

Poland’s Fort Trump?

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Protest naming street after MOVE-bombing Mayor Goode

By Joe Piette

On May 13, 1985, then Mayor Wilson Goode gave the OK to drop a bomb on 6221 Osage Ave., the Black Working-class West Philadelphia Cobbs Creek neighborhood. To burn, the fire that the bomb started destroyed more than 60 homes, leaving 250 people homeless and killing 11 members of the MOVE organization, including five children.

Today, the lone adult survivor of that bomb, Ramona Africa, is fighting for her life. She has cancer that the smoke, gas and hot air that she inhaled while fighting to breathe before she escaped from the burning house may have caused.

Despite Goode’s role in this disaster, last June the Philadelphia City Council passed a resolution, introduced by councilman Curtis Jones Jr., to rename the 2400 block of North 99th Street “W. Wilson Goode, Sr. Way.” Despite petitions, community protests and lobbying, city officials insisted on carrying out the street renaming. At the official renaming ceremony on Sept. 21, as politicians and their supporters sat on chairs in the middle of the targeted street in Philadelphia’s ritzy Overbrook Farms section, dozens of armed cops were needed to prevent demonstrators from putting an end to the hypocrisy.

Protesters, angry that Goode had received such an honor, held signs, chanted, yelled and spoke out against the 1985 massacre of MOVE, at times drowning out the celebration of destruction and death. At one point, Goode turned to the protesters and said: “I was responsible. I was responsible. I’m going to man up for what happened on May 13.” But no state official put the former mayor in handcuffs and read him his rights for admitting his guilt. In fact, there is only one person who ever spent time in prison for the violent state-sponsored act of terror. That person was MOVE member Ramona Africa.

Over a loudspeaker, Maisha Sullivan-Ongoza, neighbor- resident and protest organizer, explained why she opposes the street renaming, even over 30 years after the bombing: “It’s painful. People are still traumatized. It’s like pulling a scar off an unhealed wound.”

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

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGITIQ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and exploitation of those who are not able to pay for it.

Wage is lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college.

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Wage is lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college.

Brown, Black and Indigenous youth

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by peoples’ movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should re-

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Workers World (ISSN 1977-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. and Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: $30; institutional $50. Workers World World supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis.

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Workers World

147 W. 24th St. and Fl., New York, NY 10011.
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Vol. 66, No. 39 - Sept. 27, 2018

Closing date: Sept. 25, 2018

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Workers World (ISSN 1977-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. and Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: $30; institutional $50. Articles can be freely reprinted with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. and Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc. P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription.

Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.

Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. and Fl., New York, NY 10011.
Botham Jean killing highlights history of racist violence

By M. Matsemela-Ali Odum

Botham Jean, a migrant in Tex- as from the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, died at the hands of Dallas police officer Amber Guyger on Sept. 7 after she entered his apartment and shot him, claiming she believed it was her own apartment. His death reveals a crucial component of the struggle against police violence. The murder challenges the dominant narra- tive of police killings as solely the result of white male reactionary ideology.

In Dallas County, the struggle for jus- tice also brings activists into confronta- tion with liberalism.

The history of racist violence in Texas is among the worst in the United States; some might argue it’s the worst in West- ern Civilization. The contemporary state of Texas is the result of Anglo-American migration, land speculation and filibus- tering into the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas. In response to the Mexican ab- olition of slavery, among other issues, from the fall of 1835 to the spring of 1836, Anglo Texans waged a war of “independen- ce.” Mexico’s President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna prof- essor Raul Ramos has described it more accurately as the Texas War of Secession, with Anglo Texans far more akin to the Confederate cause in the U.S. Civil War.

Botham Jean’s killing exposes the nexus of immigrant rights and the Move- ment for Black Lives. Texas is where the Southernmost part of the Southern border meets the Border- lands. With an enslaved population that eventually overtook the Mexican popu- lation, independent Texas introduced a legacy of “Juan Crow” policies that dis- enfranchised Mexican-descent people while growing its slavocracy. At least one million Black Slaves migrated into the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas.

During the Civil War, Texas was the only state to register an increase in its enslaved population, as it became a refu- rage for the Southern slaveholding class. During post-Civil War reconstruction, Texas was a bastion of racist violence. Ac- cording to the book, “Major Problems in Texas History,” between 1865 and 1868 there were over 5,000 recorded lynchings and over one execution for murder statewide. In that same time- span, African Americans endured over 1,500 racist attacks, while Mexicans and Native Americans endured similar rates of violence.

Accustoming the long history of ra- cist violence, Texas leads the nation in state-sanctioned executions with over 500 since the 1970s, eight times its clos- est rival Georgia. The national response to the June 1998 murder of James Byrd in Jasper helped produce a new generation of struggle against racial violence in which many in the contemporary Movement for Black Lives initially “cut their teeth.” Yet, despite this long history of white supremacy, settler colonialism and state-sponsored violence, the metropol- itan areas of Texas have become liberal enclaves in a deeply conservative state. The development of real estate specula- tion, science and technology, tranna- tion investment banking and factories on both sides of the border has increased the migration of workers of color into the state’s urban hubs. Dallas has become one of those places.

‘The world is watching this case’

The political and economic shifts in Texas have changed the demographics and electoral representation in Dallas. Over the past 25 years, five out of six Dallas mayors have been Democrats. One-quarter of Dallas residents are Black, over twice the state average. The median household income of nearly $64,000 eclipses the state and national average by $7,000.

Dallas has a Black woman chief of po- lice, and Dallas County has a Black Demo- cratic district attorney and a Black woman county sheriff, with all but one registered Democrats. In the wake of the federal gov- ernment’s oversight of the Black Power movement, generations have been taught that “the color of Black Power is green,” as Richard Nixon once pronounced when endorsing Black capitalist strategies. So- cial mobility and electoral politics were taught as the way to make change. Yet, for Botham Jean and underscored the long history of police violence and corruption within the Dallas Police Department.

In the early 2000s, DNA evidence led to overturning nearly 20 cases in Dallas County, thirteen of which involved Black defendants. In August, police officer Roy Oliver was surprisingly convicted of the 2017 murder of African-American teen- ager Jordan Edwards. In 2015 a dozen police officers were captured on camera swimming a pool party in the Dallas sub- urb of McKinney and brutalizing Black teens. None of the officers was indicted. Days before the killing of Jean, Black
don’t have rights in here, “ Arroyo ex- plains to WW, “only privileges.” Even the right to unfettered legal defense can be capriciously suspended without warn- ing by state authorities. But Arroyo is intent on fighting for restoration of the precious few resources prisoners have to defend themselves in a prison system that has renounced solidarity protests and vig- ils from New York to California.

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urb of McKinney and brutalizing Black teens. None of the officers was indicted. Days before the killing of Jean, Black
Workers say ‘Boycott Burgerville!’

By Ray St. Warren
Portland, Ore.

Burgerville workers here went on strike and held a picket line on Sept. 18, International Cheeseburger Day, to protest the company’s bad faith bargaining. They were also reminding Portland that a boycott was still on at all 42 of the burger chain’s locations in Oregon and Washington state.

“The cheeseburger” date was strategically chosen to apply maximum economic pressure on a day that would usually see extremely high sales.

In August, Burgerville bosses targeted workers who were Black Lives Matter supporters with a change in dress code policy that prohibited workers from wearing buttons displaying any personal or political message. The company implemented the change in Seattle on Sept. 20, demanding that the dairy company end its superexploitation and abuse of workers.

A United front of labor and community groups came together at Darigold headquarters in Seattle on Sept. 20, demanding that the dairy company end its superexploitation and abuse of workers.

A five-day fast by 12 farmworkers demanding justice for farm workers ended Sept. 20 on at all 42 of the burger chain’s locations in Oregon and Washington state.

Inmates launch boycott of prison profiteers

Inmates at Oregon’s Coffee Camp prison are participating in a boycott of Ruby Ridge Dairy, a member of the Darigold family of companies that was targeted by the People’s Defense Organization in an action on Sept. 14.

In the latest high-profile case, members of Local 2325 and Service Employees International Union are seeking to organize employees at the company’s Oregon facility. The company is a subsidiary of Darigold, a national dairy cooperative based in Seattle.

Inmates received after the new policy began was a card from UFW.org: “Starbucks: Take responsibility for the milk you use,” and tell your neighbors: “I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks.”

Inmates also launched a similar campaign targeting the Ruby Ridge Dairy, a member of the Darigold family of companies.

The boycott is part of a larger campaign by the People’s Defense Organization, which is seeking to end the superexploitation and abuse of workers.

Northwest farmworkers battle Darigold dairy

By Jim McManahan
Seattle

A united front of labor and community groups came together at Darigold headquarters in Seattle on Sept. 20, demanding that the dairy company end its superexploitation and abuse of workers.

Dairy products juggling a thousand huge factory farms in the Pacific Northwest with $2 billion in yearly sales. Stan Ryan, brother of Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, is Darigold’s CEO.

In retaliation for the workers’ suing for labor abuse, Ruby Ridge Dairy, a member of Darigold, fired and countenanced 12 dairy workers. The company’s bad faith bargaining. They were also reminding Portland that a boycott was still on at all 42 of the burger chain’s locations in Oregon and Washington state.

Darigold Dozen. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. I am here to stop sexual harassment at Starbucks. I am here to support the Darigold Dairy. 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Green energy vs. jobs and pensions?
There are no ‘market-based’ fixes
By Martha Grevatt
The Sept. 12-14 Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco, convened by California Gov. Jerry Brown, drew thousands of delegates from many countries to the Moscone Center. Summit delegates were primarily elected officials, business and nonprofit representatives, mainstream environmentalists, scientists and academics. Thousands protested outside the summit. Those outside were not right-wing climate science deniers, but Indigenous activists and critics of “market-based” approaches protesting their exclusion from the summit.
One of the featured speakers on the inside was AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. The theme of his talk was “Fight Climate Change the Right Way.”
Trumka raised concerns about “climate strategies that leave coal miners’ pension funds bankrupt, power plant workers unemployed, construction workers making less than they do now,” as well as the impact of a shift to green energy on coal mining jobs.
The latest threat to employment among union miners has not been the struggle to defend the environment, but rather the sprawling effort to mine coal profit.
The bosses have closed union mines in favor of unorganized mines, a shift that has cost miners their lives. Mountain top removal — also known as strip-mining — has devastated the economy and the landscape of states like West Virginia.
Did Trumka think he was going to convince this gathering of corporate philanthropists and capitalist politicians to prioritize new, union jobs to his constituents in conjunction with a profit-motive-orientated approach to saving the environment?
Green energy vs. pensions?
Pensions are legally understood to be “deferred wages” — money already earned when the retiree was on the job. How would converting a coal-fired power plant to one powered by green energy impact the pensions of current or future retirees? The question is how changes in the capitalist economy impact funding.
In 1946, Trumka’s United Mine Workers (UMWA), under the leadership of President John L. Lewis, pioneered the first union pension plan. The UMWA negotiated what’s now known as a “defined benefit” that a miner was guaranteed each month upon retirement. However, retirees were not paid directly by the employers they had worked for, but from a multiemployer pension fund to which the coal bosses were required to contribute a negotiated amount.
The UMWA defined benefit plan became a template for other unions to secure a decent living for their members in their retirement years. Defined benefit pensions were won through struggle — the United Auto Workers struck Chrysler for 104 days in 1930 — and are now under siege by bosses who want to replace them with 401(k) plans that cost the bosses less and do not guarantee a set monthly income for the retired worker.
When they first won pensions, unions demanded that pension funds be kept independent from the companies’ finances. That way the funds could not be raided if a company had a cash flow problem in an economic downturn, and the funds would still be there if a company went out of business.
Company contributions, however, were affected by how many workers were on the payroll. This worked fine with a stable workforce, where a steady stream of new workers replaced workers who retired, quit or died on a more or less one-for-one basis.
The problem now is that, due to downsizing, outsourcing and other factors that shrink the workforce, the number of UMWA retirees outnumbers active mine workers by more than 12 to 1. Also, mine owners who go bankrupt or are out of business make no contributions. Last, the funds are invested in the stock market, leaving pensions vulnerable to fluctuations in a volatile market.
For all these reasons, the income from company contributions has failed to keep up with the outflow. This failure puts pensions and retiree health benefits in jeopardy. Many union-negotiated plans, such as the Teamsters’ multiemployer plan, are now underfunded.
So now Trumka is stoking fear that measures to combat climate change will end up costing more jobs in coal, in addition to creating unemployment in hard-hit mining communities that will cause the pension fund to be even more underfunded. Yet these measures are urgently needed to slow climate change.
Isn’t the real problem capitalist re-structuring? The goal of restructuring is to drive down the cost of labor by squeezing maximum productivity from the fewest number of workers and at the lowest possible wage. Isn’t the capitalist drive for profit also responsible for the over reliance on fossil fuels that created global warming in the first place?
It’s absolutely right to programmatically combine the fight for climate justice with the fight for full employment. Trumka, however, frames the issue the wrong way. Intentionally or not, he ends up pit- ing jobs and pensions against the future of the planet.
Union workers have more in common with the protestors outside the summit, who marched for “climate, jobs and justice” and opposed environmental racism and capitalism.

McDonald’s workers strike vs. sexual abuse
A plane flew over Chicago displaying the message, “Stop sexual harassment!” aimed at McDonald’s headquarters on Sept. 18. That day, workers employed by the fast food chain engaged in a historic strike in 10 cities to protest workplace sexual abuse. They marched and rallied in Chicago; Durham, N.C.; Kansas City, Mo.; Los Angeles; Miami; Milwaukee; New Orleans; Orlando, Fla.; San Francisco; and St. Louis.
In many cities, the strikers carried banners that read: “#MeToo McDonald’s” and “Chicago and elsewhere, women put tape over their mouths on which the words “#MeToo” were written. These courageous low-wage workers — the majority women, who are African American, Latina and immigrants — were fed up with rampant sexual harassment at the restaurants and staged the one-day walkout to tell the bosses at McDonald’s this abuse has to stop. They all took risks because they are not unionized. But they were backed by the Fight for $15 — a national campaign linked to the Service Employees Union — which fights for a $15 minimum wage and unionization for all workers.
This was their first such action against sexual harassment, say these brave workers. They plan to keep on demonstrating and pressuring McDonald’s — and they seek to inspire other service workers to boldly demand the right to work in a safe, abuse-free environment and be treated with respect.

Tenants in Atlanta face challenges
By Atlanta Workers World bureau
Two major apartment complexes here, Forest Cove and Darlington, are in the midst of detrimental change. Gentrification has pushed many of the tenants who have started organizing for their rights just to make living tolerable in these places.
The Forest Cove apartment complex, located in Thomassville Heights, Atlanta, has been sold to the management company called Millennium. It is a predominantly African-American residence that has been neglected by the owners for years. Millennium has refused to make repairs to all areas of the apartments, from structural problems to plumbing and utilities like air conditioning.
All the apartments have maintenance issues like the second floor falling down into the first floor. The complex is surrounded by areas with no grass and sidewalks that are poorly maintained. In order to get from one side of the complex to the rental office, there are dirt paths through woods with no steps over the hills.
When the complex was sold, Millennium claimed they would start doing repairs. Millennium started displacing the tenants with no promises that they could stay in the renovated apartments or that they could afford the rents. Millennium owners did beef up security in order to harass tenants, with the security staff obtaining gear that makes them look like SWAT teams.
Forest Cove tenants have begun organizing for their rights. So far the owners refuse to meet with them.
The other apartment complex, the Darlington, is a high-rise in the higher income part of town. The complex was built after World War II and has always been affordable, with a long waiting list of people wanting apartments there. Millennium bought the complex 8 years ago.
Recently ownership changed, with the new owner cutting off air conditioning to the whole building, giving no notice or time for restoring it. This is a blatant maneuver to force longtime tenants out of the building. Several dozen tenants, many of whom are disabled or elderly, have held a rally demanding that their voices be heard by the new owners.

Atlanta is undergoing a tremendous real estate boom with both condominium and commercial buildings going on at a hectic pace. The city’s plan contains nothing about building affordable housing for the residents of Atlanta.
A bike and hiking trail built on a former rail line called the Beltline has been part of this building boom. Along the Beltline are new condos, hotels and bars, and the city has built parks for skateboarding and relaxing.
A movement with Atlanta’s Housing Justice League have been meeting with tenants in both these complexes to support their efforts to both remain in their homes and improve their living conditions.
Mueller is also looking into corruption during the elections of 2016. In addition, an investigation into the administration’s great danger to Trump. It is only in part on TV news shows, talk shows and ultimate by hundreds of news outlets, is spread the ruling class, when the Times publishes 28, 2017) As the “newspaper of record” for million digital subscribers and 1 million corporate struggle for the capitalist news reactionary domestic measures. nearly two years against the Trump ad-liberalism, has waged an editorial war for ther evidence of a plot against Trump. It is dismissed and asserting that this is fur-right-wing voices calling for Rosenstein’s removal and asserting that this is fur-right-wing voices calling for Rosenstein’s removal. The story gave a big weapon to protect the investigation, would be the first step on that path. Almost every time Trump takes the po-dium at a rally or wakes up in the morn-ing to tweet his venom, he attacks the in-vestigation as a “witch hunt,” part of the conspiracy of a so-called “deep state,” the Justice Department and the FBI. Of course, the FBI and the Justice Department are the arch enemies of the workers and the oppressed, who would have to destroy these repressive organs along with the rest of the capitalist state as a prelude to running the economy and society as a whole in their own interests. But at present what the Times is in-citing is the firing of Rosenstein, which would be a key step in destroying the in-vestigation — an investigation the Times has been fighting all along as a way to get rid of Trump.

The Mueller investigation presents a case for the right-wing media to va-duet to protect the investigation, would be the first step on that path. Almost every time Trump takes the podium at a rally or wakes up in the morning to tweet his venom, he attacks the investigation as a “witch hunt,” part of the conspiracy of a so-called “deep state,” the Justice Department and the FBI. Of course, the FBI and the Justice Department are the arch enemies of the workers and the oppressed, who would have to destroy these repressive organs along with the rest of the capitalist state as a prelude to running the economy and society as a whole in their own interests. But at present what the Times is inciting is the firing of Rosenstein, which would be a key step in destroying the investigation — an investigation the Times has been fighting all along as a way to get rid of Trump.

The Times did not slant the story. According to the Sept. 22 Times re-port: “Mr. Rosenstein made the remarks and comments.” [Author’s emphasis] But seven paragraphs into the story, the Times briefly cites the only person who was in the room and heard the re-marks as saying they were sarcastic. The Justice Department spokes- woman also provided a statement from a person who was present when Mr. Rosenstein proposed wearing a wire. The person, who would not be named, acknowledged the remark but said Mr. Rosenstein made it sarcastically. [Author’s emphasis] So these remarks were not described by someone who heard them as “propos- als” but as sarcasm. All the additional sources are third-hand, people allegedly briefed about the “proposals.” For the Times, this is all below its usu-al standards for sourcing this important an article. The rush for ratings puts one in mind of Los Moonves of the “liberal” CBS TV em-pire, who commented on Trump’s presi-dential campaign during its upswing that it might not be good for the country, but “it’s damn good for CBS. … Man, who would have expected the ride we’re all having right now? … The money’s rolling in and this is fun.” (Hollywood Reporter, Feb. 29, 2010)

Although Moonves implied he was opposed to Trump, his network, along with the other networks and cable channels, gave Trump millions of dollars worth of free publicity. They did this because Trump had high ratings and pulled in viewers. (This is the same Los Moonves who has been fired by CBS for sexual abuse of multiple women.) For the networks, Trump was a talented carnival Barker and knew how to hold an audience — with racism, misogyny, bigotry and militaristic belligerence.

Political lesson: Never rely on ruling-class liberals The political lesson of all this is that for the ruling class and their paid propa-gandists, money trumps politics. Liber- als and moderates and the Democratic Party corporate leadership cannot and will not stand up to capitalist reaction. At best, they will make a literary or rhe-toic protest. When rush comes to show, the work-ers and oppressed must have their own independent, struggle-oriented organi- zation, which can fight capitalist reaction. Liberals and radicals may get a sense of vindication and satisfaction when they read or hear about the exposures of Trump. Yet the right-hand man in the administration, in the Congress or in the electoral struggle. But that is of little consequence to the masses of undocumented workers who are being hunted down, their families forcibly separated.
Sugar Land

A crime against humanity

By Gloria Rubac

Sugar Land, Texas

“The convict lease system was a crime against humanity. It began right after en-slaved people won their freedom. People were murdered, lives were stolen, dollars of the labor of our enslaved and imprisoned anc-estors,” said Kofi Taharka, national chair of the National Black United Front. As she spoke, she was standing across the street from the old Imperial Sugar factory.

Ninety-five graves were unearthed in Sugar Land this summer as construction workers were building a school on prop-erty sold to the school district by the Tex-as prison system.

Taharka was Sept. 19 as the Task Force on a Convict Lease Memorial was meeting, organized by the city of Sugar Land to deal with the remains. Dozens of NBUF members and supporters rallied outside.

She continued: “These remains need to be honored appropriately. African people with expertise must be involved in all as-pects of this. We demand DNA testing be done so that reparations can be made, par-ticularly to the families of these people.”

Taharka added: “This is not just about history from 100 years ago. This is about the foundation of why we as African people are treated the way we are today. We re-member Sandra Bland, Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin. We remember the Panther 21, the Jena 6, the New York 3. We have the Dallas 9 right now. We are in solidarity with the [national] prisoners’ strike going on. And today we are here fighting for the Sugar Land 95.”

Ominous clouds were already hanging over Kavanaugh’s head before Dr. Blasey came forward. Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) protested, to no avail, that thousands of pages of information about the nominee had been purposely withheld, especially covering the time Kavanaugh was an in-dep-endent counsel Kenneth Starr during the failed Clinton impeachment and the Bush-era torture of detainees.

Reports of Kavanaugh’s heavy drink-ing starting in high school have since emerged, including his membership in a fraternity at Yale that was “notorious for disrespecting women” and in the “se-cret society” for seniors called Truth and Courage, also known by a slang sexist ex-pression: “Seeds.”

The hearings also revealed that Kava-nough had close ties to federal judge Alex Kozinski, who had to retire after accusations of sexual assault and harassment by at least 15 women. But Kavanaugh denied any knowledge of that.

Many people were arrested during the hearings, speaking out for the rights of working people for accessible health care, legal abortion and workers rights. (See two People, this writer: “Ka-vanough is no friend to workers,” in WW Aug. 9; “Trump nominated Kavanaugh to overturn legal abortion,” posted Aug. 14.)

Struggle to end patriarchy persists

Whatever comes of this ruling-class crisis, the struggle to end patriarchy, which is a pillar of capitalist oppression, can only continue to grow as misogyny continues to be exposed and denounced. Think of the display of working-class power on Sept. 18 as hundreds of workers came out in at least 10 cities from coast-to-coast protesting the sexual ha-rassment and abuse of low-paid women, often women of color and im/migrants, at McDonald’s restaurants.

The fight to end women’s oppression can only be advanced as more stories like Dr. Blasey’s become known and preda-tors like Kavanaugh are exposed. Kava-nough can deny Blasey’s allegations all he wants — just as Trump has lied about the 20 or more accusers who have point-ed their fingers at him. But times have changed. In a stunning rebuke to Trump and his ruling-class buddies like Kava-nough, “boys will be boys” no longer has any knowledge of that.

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Int’l Peoples’ Tribunal finds Philippines government guilty

By Monica Moorehead
Brussels, Belgium

“Guilty, guilty, guilty!” These were the unanimous verdicts read by eight international jurors, including this writer, following a day and a half of testimony — much of it gut wrenching, horrifying and educational — at the International Peoples’ Tribunal held in Brussels, Belgium Sept. 18 and 19. The tribunal was held in the Maisons des Associations Internationales hall on both days.

In total, witnesses appeared in person and via video to substantiate indictments for economic, social and military crimes. The defendants were Philippines President Rodrigo R. Duterte and his entire government; President Donald Trump and the entire U.S. government; and the World Bank and transnational and foreign banks doing business in the Philippines.

The tribunal represented the interests of the more than 100 million Filipino people, and included the groups BAYAN, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, GABRIELA, ANAKBAYAN, MIGRANTE, KADAYUNEAN, KARAPATAN, HUSTISYA!, DESPARECIDOS, SELDA, SANDUGOS, and RISE For Life and for Rights. These groups represent the vast majority of affected population sectors, including women, migrants, youth, farmers and workers.

The indictment included three main charges:

I. “Gross and systematic violations of human rights, particularly civil and political rights, with focus on extra-judicial killings, mass arrests, arbitrary detentions and torture, political persecution, attacks on media, and various rights violations arising from the imposition of martial rule in Mindanao.”

II. “Gross and systematic violations of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, with focus on labor, peasant, women, and migrants rights, and the rights to education, livelihood and housing, through the imposition of neoliberal policies and other important state-imposed to exploit the people; transgression of their economic sovereignty and national patrimony; and various forms of economic plunder.”

III. “Gross and systematic violations of the rights of the people to security of communication and development and violations of international humanitarian law, with focus on attacks on schools, massacres of horses d’combat (non-combatants), terrorist labeling and profiling, destructive mining activities, environmental degradation and crimes against humanity; and misrepresentations and attacks on the people.”

None of the defendants responded to the indictments, and none sent any legal representation to the tribunal.

The jurors, four women and four men based in Asia, Europe, the U.S., were Mambobah Hashabi, Azadeh Shahshahani, Sarojini Rentam, Ties Prakken, Monica Moorehead, Gianni Tognoni, Michael Yoshii and Roland Weyl.

The prosecutors representing the complainants were Nerí Colmenares, Jan Ferman, Rey Cortez and Kathy Parhuan.

Giving victims, survivors a platform

The witnesses were provided an international platform to speak on the atrocities and inhuman treatment that they, their families or communities have faced ever since Duterte took office in 2016 with the promise of carrying out a “war on drugs.” This war has resulted in an official slaughter of more than 4,400 people, including minors, and drug users. Other estimates state that upwards of 25,000 people have lost their lives from this war.

Ruth Saldivas testified about her spouse, one of the 477 noncombatants executed by the police on Aug. 15. Joms Salvador, a leader of the GABRIELA-LA women’s organization, spoke about Duterte’s blatant misogyny, including his despicable jokes about rapes of women.

Cecelia Veloso spoke about the frame-up charges against her daughter, Mary Jane, who was found guilty of possession of heroin in Indonesia. Ms. Veloso visited her daughter the day she was scheduled to be executed, before she received a last minute reprieve. Mary Jane was forced to leave the Philippines, like so many other migrants, to find a decent job.

Sultana Atar spoke on human rights violations, especially those suffered by youth, under the current martial law in Marawi, an Indigenous area. George San Mates spoke on the plunder of the Philippines’ rich resources by mining corporations, especially those based in Europe and the U.S., and the environmental disaster they create.

U.S. complicity

The findings of the verdict state: “The Defendant U.S. government continues to give support to Defendant Philippine government in terms of intelligence, funding, orientation, training and arms to promote and pursue its economic and geopolitical interests in the region. Militarization is intense in the countryside because of the country’s rich natural resources, and any resistance is met by suppression.”

The verdict continues: “Defendant Donald J. Trump, the President of the United States, is responsible for the continued, remarkable aggressive campaign to influence and promote various crimes against humanity and also war crimes that are committed on a daily basis against the Filipino people. The liability extends to Defendants Trump and the U.S. government, who exercise their domination over the Philippines for its strategic and economic importance.”

The day after the tribunal, on Sept. 20, a delegation representing the witnesses, jurors, prosecution and supporters presented the verdict to a representative of the minority left opposition in the European Parliament. The verdict was also submitted to the International Criminal Court at The Hague in the Netherlands, and will be submitted to various United Nations human rights committees. When the delegation presented the same findings to the Philippine Embassy in Belgium, they were met by police as they were exiting. No arrests were made.

Go to the Facebook page of the International Peoples’ Tribunal, facebook.com/IPT2018, to view videos of the testimonies, photos and summaries.

Elections and class struggle in Brazil

By John Catalinotto

In Brazil the class struggle grows sharper day by day. The national election for president and for the entire National Congress, with its first round scheduled for Oct. 28.

For the moment, most attention is focused on the election, which may find the Workers Party, with its first round scheduled for president and for the entire National Congress, with its first round scheduled for Oct. 28.

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Decolonize! Week of Action for Puerto Rico

Continued from page 1

Rochester and continue to need support. Participants were asked to bring needed items to donate, and many did. The rally was organized by the Ibero-American Action League, Puerto Rico Unidos, the Rochester Latino Theater Company and the local Latino radio station.

Both local politicians and rally organizers spoke at the rally, as well as community organizers. Lydia Bayona from the International Action Center gave a well-received talk on the history of Puerto Rico's colonial past. Bayona invited participants to attend the Oct. 27 Tribunal in Chicago.

In Buffalo, N.Y., community activists joined with the Buffalo International Action League, Puerto Rico Unidos, the Rochester Latino Theater Company and the local Latino radio station.

New York City saw a full week of activities in support of Puerto Rico. On Monday, Sept. 17, the monthly action at the United Nations for decolonization and independence for Puerto Rico was held; Workers World Party Secretariat member Teresa Gutierrez was one of the speakers. In June the U.N. Special Committee on Decolonization approved a draft resolution for the realization of the Puerto Rican people's right to self-determination and independence.

On Thursday, Sept. 20, an interfaith service, Boricuas Remember, was held at St. Bart’s Episcopal Church, co-sponsored by PowerPuertoRico, New York Disaster Interfaith Services and the PR-NYC Long Term Recovery Group. As the crowd of 100 people left the church, many were very responsive to the call of organizers leafleting outside to attend the Oct. 27 Tribunal and “put the U.S. on trial for 120 years of colonial crimes against Puerto Rico.” Many took Tribunal leaflets to distribute.

Also on Sept. 20, labor unions rallied in support of Puerto Rico at historic Union Square on East 14th St., including members from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees DC 37, Professional Staff Congress-City University of New York, Service Employees 32BJ and more. Significant unionized delegations, which also included executive board members, came from New York State Nurses Association, Transport Workers Union Local 100 and the Labor Council for Latin American Advance ment.

NYNAS President Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez traveled on one of the volunteer nurse response brigades to Puerto Rico after the storm. She spoke powerfully of her experience: “People told us of watching their abuela [grandmother] take her last breath because there was no power for oxygen or a nebulizer [breathing device]. Of burying loved ones quickly because there was nowhere to refrigerate the bodies and wait for a dignified funeral service. The neglect is just one chapter in the history of exploitation of Puerto Rico. The destruction by the storm became an excuse to privatize and impose austerity. These are crimes of the U.S. hedge funds, bondholders and the politicians they control.”

Throughout the Week of Action in New York City, including a Sept. 23 rally on the 150th anniversary of the Grito de Lares, Worker World Party had an active presence with solidarity signs. Worker World/Mundo Obrero newspapers and Tribunal leaflets were dispensed.

At Chicago’s Federal Plaza, 75 people came out Sept. 20 for a Day of Action for Puerto Rico: Rally against Austerity. The action was organized by Chicago Boricua Resistance, Chicago Teachers Union Latinx Caucus and Mijente.

As part of the Week of Action against U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico, a march and rally took place in Los Angeles on Sept. 23, the Grito de Lares anniversary. The demonstration began at Hollywood and Vine with a brief rally, then continued with a march to Hollywood and Highland, where a final rally took place.

The event featured cultural performances and food, several speakers and chants, including “Viva Puerto Rico Libre!” Convening organizations included Puerto Ricans In Action, SoCal for Progress, Assistance for the Resistance, Mijente y familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement. Members of the International Action Center-Los Angeles attended the rally and march in solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico.

Speakers and performers included actress Victoria Ortiz, the Conga Poet Julio Rodriguez, Lawrence Reyes of Puerto Rican Alliance/National Young Lords, Britney Craig of Black Lives Matter-Los Angeles and Nicole Hernandez, co-founder of Puerto Ricans in Action.

Demands called for during the demonstration were to cancel Puerto Rico’s debt, end the austerity imposed by U.S. banks, put in place a permanent waiver of the Jones Act (by which the U.S. restricts trade with Puerto Rico), recognize the Puerto Rican people’s right of self-determination and end U.S. colonial rule.

In Oregon, the Portland branch of Workers World Party held a Decolonize Puerto Rico demonstration on Sept. 20. Two dozen local organizers and students gathered in front of the Federal Court House to protest the U.S. response to the hurricane that caused the suffering of millions of Puerto Ricans. One speaker quoted San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz who said that the U.S. response to the hurricane is genocide. With no effective aid from the U.S. colonizer, thousands of people died during and in the aftermath of the hurricane. Meanwhile U.S. corporate interests continued to build lavish international hotel chains and highrise condominiums to line the streets of resort beaches.

Contributing to this article were Toni Arenstein, Sara Catalinotto, Gene Clancy, Elle Dorriris, Lyn Neeley, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Jeff Sorel and Workers World Boston and Los Angeles bureaus.
Long live Cuba and Bolivarian Venezuela!

The best thing about the United Na-
tions General Assembly's annual fall me-
ting is that it allows the US imperialist
leaders to New York City and gives
them an opportunity to speak with the
U.S. population. In the past they have
broken the floor for this purpose no
twice whatever goes on in the U.S. itself, where
U.S. imperialism has a heavy hand. Usu-
ally these speeches are a waste of time.

When it is possible to organize a public
meeting for them, as it is this year, that
offers the anti-imperialist movement in the
U.S. an opportunity to speak with the
U.S. ruling class and its organs of power,
including the Pentagon, the CIA and the
corporate media.

This week brings a special opportunity.
The new president of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-
Canel of Cuba, who recently succeeded
historical revolutionary leader President
Raúl Castro, will be representing social-
ist Cuba at the United Nations. He will also be speaking at Riverside Church on Sept. 26, for which the progressive movement in New York has been organizing.

Despite the "opening" to Cuba made
by President Barack Obama in December
2014, the U.S. has not lifted its economic
blockade, and the current president has
reinstated hostile trading rules. Cuba re-
 mains under continuing, vicious attack by
U.S. imperialism. Cuba also remains
determined to resist, resist and build a socialist path into the future.

Miguel Díaz-Canel of Cuba was inau-
gurated as president in April, on the an-
niversary of the U.S.-funded 1961 Bay of
Pigs invasion. Succeeding comrade-pres-
idents Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro,
Bolivarian Venezuela

The left-progressivist movement, as well
as all workers in the U.S., can strengthen
their struggle with the new in Diaz Canel's
inaugural speech: "[The Revolution] will
continue moving forward without fear and
without retreat; without renouncing our
ideology, our programs, and independence." Rebutting U.S. propaganda that Cuba's path to so-
 cialism will be a "stone wall" in the at-
helm, Diaz-Canel closed with these
words: "The world has received the wrong
message that the Revolution ends with its
failure."

We welcome the Cuban president's vis-
it and urge progressives and workers to
show their support for Cuba's message.

Defend Venezuela

If any Latin American country is un-
likely to engage in a direct U.S. attack at this
time than Cuba, it is Bolivarian Vene-
 zuela. Over the summer there was an
attempt to assassinate Venezuela's Pres-
ident Nicolás Maduro as he was speaking
in Caracas. A few weeks ago there were
reports that, frustrated by the failure of
the discreetly right-wing opposition in
Caracas, the U.S. military decided to plot a direct U.S. mil-
itary intervention. And today, Sept. 25,
the U.S. president's talk at the U.N. made
Maduro and Venezuela a special target of his.

This week the U.S. announced addi-
tional new sanctions against Venezuela
and its leaders, including against Madu-
ro's spouse, Cilia Flores, who is an elect-
 ed member of the National Assembly. In
the U.S. corporate media there has been
a continuous stream of attacks against
Maduro, a leader who continues the Bo-
 livarian Revolution process begun by
late President Hugo Chávez — moving a country toward socialism though capital-
 ism and reactionary forces still control the
economic sector.

In Maduro's first trip for a U.N. meet-
ing, he is reported to have been told by
the Washington Post that it is a foolhardy
shooting the Dear Leader dead with
disguising anti-work-
er rhetoric, calling him an "ecomonic-
ally illiterate former bus driver." Maduro,
trained in Marxist economics and theory,
retorted: "I'm proud that a bus driver can
be president of the Republic." (TeleSUR,
Sept. 22, 2014)

Supporters of Bolivarian Venezuela

are holding a meeting Thursday, Sept.
27 at Riverside Church at 6 p.m. where we
from Workers World Party will join oth-
ers in the progressive movement to sup-
port the Venezuelan spokespeople with
anti-imperialist enthusiasm, just as we
do the Cuban president a night earlier.

By Manlio Dinucci

The first trees have already been cut
down, the others marked with paint: 967
trees are now being removed in the "pro-
tected" natural area of the San Rossore
Regional Park between the municipalities
of Pisa and Livorno. The slaughtered
trees are the first "collateral damage"
of the massive reorganization, begun
canvassers, of the infrastructure of Camp
Darby, which contains the largest U.S.
an arsenal in the world outside the United
States.

Even if the U.S. command promis-
eds to replant more trees than those cut,
the construction of a railway and other
infrastructure, fragmentation of natural
habitats, will upset a vast ecosystem.

The project involves the construc-
tion of a new railway section that will
connect the station of Tombolo (on the
Pisa-Livorno line) to a new loading and
unloading terminal. The trains will cross
the Canale dei Naviglieri on a new rotat-
ing metal bridge. The loading and un-
loading terminal, almost 65 feet high,
will consist of four 375-foot-long tracks
accommodating effective time each wagon
for, each of a total of 36 wagons.

The terminal will be joined to the
ammunition storage area by large trucks.
By rail, the incoming cargoes, which will
in coming tomorrow, will be transferred
from railway wagons to trucks and those
newly transported to Rome from trucks to
railway wagons. The terminal will allow
the transit of two trains per day, which will
clock the base to the port through the normal lines of the
Italian state railways.

The reorganization of the infrastruc-
ture sector which has just begun, is based on
the plan to carry out the increased tran-
sit of weapons from Camp Darby. The
current connection via canal and the
PERC

The Tribunal needs your support! Since
Sept. 1st, 2018, The Tribunal has been
chronicling U.S. Crimes Against Puerto Rico
in the Shipyard Piscina (Piscina Shipyard) in
Puerto Rico, which is a U.S. military base
and weapons fighters to mainland U.S.
Puerto Rico.

The Tribunal will feature renowned Nicaraguan
journalist and politician, Nerminy Marzoua,
who will serve as prosecutor, and a distinguished
court of U.S. and international human rights lawyers.

A people's campaign. Only a people's campaign in solidarity with the Puerto Rican struggle for decolonization, self-determination and justice can begin to end the contin-
uing suffering and domination, not only in Puerto Rico but throughout the Caribbean, Latin America and elsewhere.

We hope that your organization will en-
dorse this very important effort and join with us on Oct. 27 in New York City.

A complete list of Tribunal convenors is at our website: PuertoRicoTribunal.org

For more information, contact us at TribunalPuertoRico@gmail.com.
The Great March of Return by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip will enter its seventh month.

The mobilization, launched by tens of thousands in the besieged coastal enclave on March 30 — Palestine’s annual Land Day — demands the right of return for millions of Palestinian refugees driven from their homes by Zionist militias and Israeli occupation forces starting in December 1947.

These ethnic-cleansing operations both separated ancient Gaza City and a sliver of land and sea from the rest of Palestine and transformed the newly isolated territory’s demographics overnight.

Today two-thirds of Gaza’s population are refugees living outside their homes, many from nearby cities and villages within sight of Gaza itself.

For the past six months, demonstrators have amassed every Friday along a barrier erected by the Israeli state around the Strip. Most demonstrators congregated in “return camps,” temporary villages outside the barrier, and more from nearby cities and villages within sight of Gaza itself.

Since March, Israeli soldiers stationed at the barrier have responded with tear gas, rubber-coated steel bullets, live ammunition and airstrikes. The air strikes continued, occurring nearly every day.

Thirteen days later, Israeli reserve brigadier-general Živka Fogel responded to a growing outcry over Israeli’s repeated killings of children by telling Kan: “It is not the whim of one or the other sniper who identifies the small body of a child now and decides he’ll shoot. Someone marks the target for him very well and tells him exactly why one has to shoot and what the threat is from that individual.” (Electronic Intifada, April 22)

Demonstrators responded to Israel’s brutal repression with creative tactics. Including the use of fireworks, laser pointers and smoke from tens of thousands of burning tires to obscure the vision of Israeli soldiers.

Their ballonettes and kites, many on fire, ignited nearby settlements and dragged Israeli military drones from the sky.

In several cases, protesters successfully broke through the barrier, sometimes disabling Israeli military posts on the other side.

March last May in NYC supports Palestine and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.

Closing its own borders on the March 30 — Palestine’s annual Land Day — demands the right of return for millions of Palestinian refugees driven from their homes by Zionist militias and Israeli occupation forces starting in December 1947.

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¡Qué ha hecho única a la Revolución Cubana? ¿Por qué es un faro para las/os trabajadores y las masas oprimidas, no solo en Cuba y el Caribe, sino para todo el mundo?

Ha habido muchos levantamientos, guerras de guerrillas, victorias electorales y golpes militares progresistas en América Latina en el transcurso de este siglo. Pero el triunfo del ejército guerrillero de Fidel Castro sobre la dictadura Batista hizo algo que ninguna lucha previa había logrado. Rompió el viejo aparato estatal. La revolución fue llevada adelante por grupos de gobierno, como había sucedido tantas veces anteriormente. Destruyó a la burguesía misma de su papel de clase dominante al demolir su instrumento de gobierno, el Estado burgués.

Una vez más demostraron las monumentales palabras de Karl Marx en la Comuna de París: que un cambio social sólo puede ocurrir a través de lucha. La burguesía especialmente desdeñó y hasta atacó vivamente los a la revolución campesina.

La historia de las rebeliones campesinas revolucionarias. El Ejército Rebelde de las Fuerzas Populares es un ejemplo de que esto ayudaba al imperialismo. La revolución campesina es una lucha revolucionaria, una lucha por la tierra. La tierra es el instrumento de lucha para el pueblo. Cuando está en manos de los terratenientes, la tierra es un instrumento de explotación y de dominación.

¿Por qué la revolución cubana fue más allá de las reformas estatales?

La Revolución Cubana llegó a más de 40 años después de la Revolución Mexicana. Luego, como ya se ha mencionado, en el Perú, en Bolivia y en otros países de América Latina, la revolución campesina, la lucha por la tierra, es una lucha revolucionaria. La lucha por la tierra es la lucha por la revolución.

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