

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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Some of the witnesses who gave powerful testimony during the International Peoples' Tribunal on the Philippines Sept. 18-19 in Brussels, Belgium.

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Philadelphia

Protest naming street after MOVE-bombing Mayor Goode

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

On May 13, 1985, then Mayor Wilson Goode gave the OK to drop a bomb on 6221 Osage Ave. in the Black working-class, West Philly Cobbs Creek neighborhood. Left 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 bombing, 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 member Curtis Jones Jr., to rename the 2400 block of North 59th 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



Maisha Sullivan-Ongoza confronting a city official

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

celebration of destruction and death. At one point, Goode turned to the protesters and said: "I was responsible. 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, neighborhood 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 scab off an unhealed wound." □

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Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth

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

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

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

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TEXAS

Botham Jean killing highlights history of racist violence

By M. Matsemela-Ali Odom

Botham Shem Jean, a migrant in Texas 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 narrative of police killings as solely the result of white male reactionary ideology.

In Dallas County, the struggle for justice also brings activists into confrontation 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 Western Civilization. The contemporary state of Texas is the result of Anglo-American migration, land speculation and filibustering into the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas. In response to the Mexican abolition of slavery, among other issues, from the fall of 1835 to the spring of 1836, Anglo Texans waged a war of "independence." Mexican American Studies professor 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 Movement for Black Lives. Texas is where the Southern Black Belt meets the Borderlands. With an enslaved population that eventually overtook the Mexican population, independent Texas introduced a legacy of "Juan Crow" policies that disenfranchised Mexican-descended people while growing its slavocracy. At least one in four white Texan families owned enslaved people, who made up nearly one-third of the population.

During the Civil War, Texas was the only state to register an increase in its enslaved population, as it became a refuge for the Southern slaveholding class. During post-Civil War reconstruction, Texas was a hotbed of racist violence. According to the book, "Major Problems in Texas History," between 1865 and 1868 there were over 5,000 pending homicide indictments and only one execution for murder statewide. In that same timespan, African Americans endured over 1,500 racist attacks, while Mexicans and Native Americans endured similar rates of violence.

Accentuating the long history of racial violence, Texas leads the nation in state-sanctioned executions with over 500 since the 1970s, eight times its closest 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 metropolitan areas of Texas have become liberal enclaves in a deeply conservative state. The development of real estate speculation, science and technology, transnational 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 police, and Dallas County has a Black woman district attorney and a Black woman county sheriff, with all but one registered Democrats. In the wake of the federal government's overthrow 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. Social mobility and electoral politics were taught as the way to make change. Yet, for Botham Jean, being an employee of the global accounting firm PwC, the official name of PricewaterhouseCoopers, did not protect him.

A multiracial, multigender and multigenerational coalition led by some of Texas's most dynamic Black radical organizations has waged a campaign against the Dallas Police Department and Dallas County District Attorney Faith Johnson. Dallas Communities Organizing for Change, the Huey P. Newton Gun Club, Guerrilla Mainframe and other organizations have demanded justice 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 teenager Jordan Edwards. In 2015 a dozen police officers were captured on camera swarming a pool party in the Dallas suburb of McKinney and brutalizing Black teens. None of the officers was indicted. Days before the killing of Jean, Black



Botham Jean

motorist Terry Oshae was killed in neighboring Arlington following a traffic stop.

One leader of these protests has been Rakem Balogun, founder of Guerrilla Mainframe and the Huey P. Newton Gun Club, who was jailed because of his 2017 Facebook posts and labeled a Black Identity Extremist. In a press release, Balogun states: "We refuse to let the status quo remain. This will not be the case with Botham Shem Jean."

Balogun and others have demanded a murder indictment as opposed to what they have called an orchestrated manslaughter charge, which provides for a sentence of two to 20 years. Southern social media journalist Beau of the 5th Column has reminded his followers that murder in Texas is a capital offense for which the state can seek the death penalty.

In a protest outside the Dallas Cowboys' football stadium Sept. 16 in support of Jean and Oshae, a multiracial, multigender group of activists dubbed the Dallas 9 were arrested. Two of the activists, identified as Brotha Shawt and Daryl X, have been held without bail and lost their jobs as a result.

As Balogun noted, the world is watching this case. Jean's killing has impacted the race for the U.S. Senate in Texas between Democrat Beto O'Rourke and Republican Ted Cruz. Most importantly it is being diligently followed in St. Lucia and has reignited solidarity protests and vigils from New York to California. □

Inmates launch boycott of prison profiteers

PART 1

By Ted Kelly

"I am going to boycott the third-party correspondence system," Bryant Arroyo, an activist and organizer currently detained at SCI Frackville in central Pennsylvania, told this WW reporter during an extended Sept. 23 interview.

Arroyo urges all prisoners to immediately cease sending and accepting mail in response to the draconian new prison policies of current Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf.

Eliminating the right of prisoners to send and receive correspondence via postal service is the most controversial aspect of a sweeping crackdown imposed in September by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. Prisoners will no longer be allowed to receive mail directly at state correctional facilities. Instead, their mail is being routed through a third-party company that rakes in profits from the enslavement of U.S. workers.

The PDOC awarded a \$4 million contract to Smart Communications, a Florida-based firm that bills itself as a "family-owned business" with "a reputation as the true innovator in the prison marketplace."

Under the contract, Smart receives



PHOTO: BENJAMIN IRVIN

all letters and photographs, photocopies them, stores the contents on its private servers and then forwards the photocopies to prisoners. Smart's website boasts, "We currently have over 50 clients worldwide." That means the company is paid to seize, open and duplicate the private correspondence of prisoners held in over 50 U.S. facilities. Pennsylvania is the 19th state to hire the company.

"I have other means of communication," said Arroyo, referring to the phone calls and emails he must pay for in order to talk to the outside world. "I don't have to comply with this policy, and I don't want to. I don't think our people should

be subjected to it. And I don't think the taxpayers' money is being well spent — do you?"

Bryant Arroyo has a long history of activism defending the rights and well-being of his fellow inmates. This has made him great friends and powerful enemies. In 2006, he organized a campaign of prisoners that scuttled plans to build a \$400 million coal-gasification plant next to SCI Frackville — a plant that would have poisoned the environment around the prison and the nearby community.

This organizing earned him the ire of the head of the anthracite coal cartel, Jack Rich, and his corporate backers, like former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge and the South African energy company Sasol. The successful movement also led political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal to dub Arroyo "the world's first jailhouse environmentalist."

'When you're backed into a corner, you fight to live'

Now Arroyo's focus is on the PDOC crackdown implemented in the middle of the nationwide prison strike from Aug. 21 to Sept. 9.

"Big Brother has invaded the DOC. We

don't have rights in here," Arroyo explained to WW, "only privileges." Even the right to unfettered legal defense can be capriciously suspended without warning by state authorities. But Arroyo is intent on fighting for restoration of the precious few resources prisoners have to defend themselves: "This is survival mode. When you're backed into a corner, you fight to live."

This is why he is urging prisoners to boycott the mail. Arroyo's boycott announcement comes as the American Civil Liberties Union and many public defenders have announced their intention to stop sending legal mail through the Pennsylvania prisons.

"Every prisoner must act as an individual and as a collective front not to send mail to the third party," he said. "This is not only a breach of our privacy but a breach of attorney-client privilege."

Under the Smart system, all supposedly protected correspondence pertaining to prisoners' legal cases is handled — and opened — by prison staff. Copies are made and given to prisoners, but the originals are retained by the PDOC for 15 days, after which they are allegedly destroyed. Regular personal correspondence is stored on Smart servers for seven

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On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

Nationwide steel strike imminent

Thousands of workers at U.S. Steel and ArcelorMittal USA voted overwhelmingly the week of Sept. 3 to authorize their union leaders to call a strike on 48-hours notice. The United Steelworkers master agreement with U.S. Steel covers more than 16,000 workers at 14 plants across seven Midwest states, Alabama and Texas. (USW.org, Sept. 7) USW also represents 15,000 workers in six Midwest states at ArcelorMitta USA, a subsidiary of the world's 10th largest multinational steel manufacturer based in Luxembourg. Since the collective bargaining agreements at both companies expired Sept. 1, union members have agreed to work under a rolling extension.

USW production, maintenance, office and technical workers at both companies are fed up. They were expecting a generous offer, considering their wages were frozen in the 2015 three-year contract. Over the same period, management gave itself more than \$50 million in pay and bonuses. Now Trump's 25 percent tariff on steel imports is fattening industry profits.

"Between the tariffs and the tax break for corporations, [bosses] stand to make \$2 billion this year," Don Furko, president of USW Local 1557 in Clairton, Pa., told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Sept. 21. The workers, meanwhile, are struggling to make ends meet. No wonder they're battling for better hourly wages and protection of health care and pension benefits.

USW membership rejected similar contract proposals on Sept. 21. An interview in the Washington Post put the chances of a strike at 90 percent. A thousands-strong steel strike would send a clear message that workers refuse to take crumbs from tariff- and tax-fattened corporations.

Unions for Legal Aid workers fight for im/migrant rights

A Sept. 14 report by Truthout painted a powerful picture of public defenders and judges struggling for im/migrant rights. Last November, when Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents abducted a Latinx client meeting his lawyers in court, New York City public defenders, members of the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, United Auto Workers Local 2325, walked out to demand state agencies stop collaborating with ICE. In March, 200 lawyers rallied against ICE's presence in public courts. After a Philadelphia-based immigration judge was removed from a case for not following the Trump mandate for quick deportation orders, Local 2325 and the National Association of Immigration Judges initiated a formal grievance.

In the latest high-profile case, members of Local 2325 and Service Employees Local 1199, which represent Legal Aid paralegals and social workers, played a leading role in the victory to stop the deportation of Pablo Villavicencio, whom ICE detained June 1 while he was delivering pizza to the Fort Hamilton Military Base in Brooklyn. Attorney Evelyn Malave told Truthout, "[T]hese issues that deeply affect us are also workers' issues. Pablo was at work when this happened to him."

Nonprofits once took center stage in fighting for im/migrant rights. Now unions are entering the ring in a new and important stage in this struggle.

Las Vegas casino union demands safety for female workers

Members of Las Vegas' largest casino union, Culinary Union Local 226, which represents 50,000 kitchen workers, wait staff, bartenders, housekeeping and baggage carriers, told the Nevada Gaming Control Board the week of Sept. 3 that women workers don't feel safe due to sexual harassment and other unsafe working conditions. Their testimony is essential in helping the NGCB adopt regulatory standards to better protect women in the gaming industry.

Several union members spoke publicly of their harassment. After one woman reported to the casino's human resources office that her supervisor refused to stop harassing her, after she had refused his advances for over a year, HR responded by interrogating her, insinuating she had elicited his behavior. Targeted by management, she was suspended twice before being fired in May. Another female worker reported that a guest asked her for "another kind of service" that he would pay extra for. When she told her supervisors, they laughed and said at least he offered to pay up. One woman summarized: The workers feel they're "not protected by anyone."

Contracts at 34 Las Vegas properties expired June 1, and a strike was authorized if new terms — higher wages, protection of existing benefits and increased workplace safety measures — weren't reached in a timely manner. As of early September a five-year contract was reached at all but four properties. The union is recommending that the NGCB establish more rigorous reporting procedures and eliminate nondisclosure agreements. (casino.org, Sept. 8)

Facebook job ads discriminate against women

Facebook ads have been found to let landlords discriminate against people of color and employers to discriminate based on age. Now charges have been filed against Facebook that it helped employers discriminate against women workers. The Communication Workers and the American Civil Liberties Union filed Sept. 18 with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission against Facebook and nine employers. The case involves use of Facebook's targeting technology that can exclude women from ads for openings like truck driver and window installer. The charges were filed on behalf of any woman who used Facebook to search for a job during the past year. (New York Times, Sept. 18) □

Workers say ‘Boycott Burgerville!’

By Roy 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 while the Burgerville Workers Union was in the collective bargaining process.



WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

Making such changes during bargaining is an unfair labor practice, illegal under the National Labor Relations Act. So this is a shout-out to the entire Northwest: Support the BVWU! Boycott Burgerville! □

Northwest farmworkers battle Darigold dairy

By Jim McMahan
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.

Darigold is a dairy products juggernaut of 500 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, has fired and countersued 12 dairy workers. The Sept. 20 rally kicked off a five-day fast by 12 farmworkers demanding justice for their counterparts known as the Darigold Dozen.

The Seattle City Council has just unanimously passed a resolution supporting the Darigold Dozen. Workers, including the fasters, picketed Darigold before the rally. The Darigold Dozen are seen as pioneers, motivating farmworkers across the Northwest to speak out against racism, sexual harassment, wage theft, workplace accidents and missing safety precautions.

Abuses at Ruby Ridge include the death

of Randy Vasquez in 2015, who drowned in a manure lagoon at the dairy. Speaking at the rally, dairy worker Yolanda Carrion declared: "I am here to support the Darigold Dozen. I am here to stop sexual harassment and to make sure workers get their lunch breaks and rest breaks."

After the rally a delegation from the United Farm Workers went to Starbucks international headquarters, home of a huge consumer of Darigold milk. The UFW made themselves heard, but Starbucks made no commitment to put pressure on Darigold. The next day the UFW picketed Starbucks in Pasco, in Washington's agricultural belt.

As the court case now reaches its final stages, supporters are asked to contact their nearest Starbucks to demand justice for Darigold workers. People can access a flyer from UFW.org: "Starbucks: Take responsibility for the milk you use," and tell your local Starbucks manager to pass the message on to corporate.

Speakers at the rally represented UFW, League of United Latin American Citizens, Washington State Labor Council, Martin Luther King County Labor Council, Teamsters Local 117, Food and Commercial Workers Local 21, Casa Latina and Church Council of Greater Seattle. □

Inmates launch boycott of prison profiteers

Continued from page 3

years. Video recordings of the mail-opening process are supposed to be purged every five days.

"But [the purging of legal correspondence] is a flat out lie," said Bryant. "What they're not telling you is that they're keeping it. And they can use it against you at any point in the future."

The Innocence Project, the Abolitionist Law Center and the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project are partnering with the ACLU to bring a lawsuit against the PDOC for this unprecedented attack on attorney-client confidentiality, which they say is "indefensible."

In the meantime, Arroyo urges his fellow inmates to follow his lead in communicating with legal teams and only set up urgent face-

to-face visits: "Everything except in-person contact is compromised."

Arroyo said the first piece of mail he received after the new policy began was a card that came in the form of photocopied sheets of paper: "It was lifeless. It takes away the joy of receiving mail."

Arroyo also described the for-profit firm's predictable failure to fulfill its contract. One inmate received a sheaf of papers that had photocopies of the front and back of an envelope — and the rest of the pages were blank.

"They don't want us to smile in here," he said.

The for-profit privatization of the prison mail system is having a deadly chilling effect on prisoners' legal right to private correspondence with their defense attorneys, and on their much-needed human contact with the outside world. □

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 Rich 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 biggest threat to employment among union miners has not been the struggle to defend the environment, but rather the mine bosses’ drive for profit. The bosses have closed union mines in favor of unorganized mines, a shift that has cost miners their lives. Mountaintop

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 promise new, union jobs to his constituents in conjunction with a profit-motive-oriented 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 problem 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 barons 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 1950 — 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 mineworkers by more than 12 to 1. Also, mine owners who go bankrupt or are out of business make no contributions. Lastly, 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 restructuring? 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 pitting jobs and pensions against the future of the planet.

Union workers have more in common with the protesters 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!” In Chicago and elsewhere, women put tape over their mouths on which the words “#Me Too” were written. These courageous low-wage workers — the majority women, who are African American, Latinx and im/migrants — 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.

— Report by Kathy Durkin



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 been ravaging Atlanta, so the tenants have started organizing for their rights just to make living tolerable in these places.

The Forest Cove apartment complex, located in Thomasville 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. Many people have lived there for years.

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 building 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 path there are new restaurants and bars, and the city has built parks for skateboarding and relaxing.

Organizers 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. □

For NEW YORK TIMES Profits trump politics

By Fred Goldstein

Sept. 23 — Millions of people who hate Donald Trump woke up yesterday morning to find a huge picture of Rod Rosenstein, deputy attorney general of the U.S., on the front page of the New York Times. Next to the picture was a two-column lead story, with the headline: “Rosenstein Raised Idea of Recording Talks with Trump.”

The subhead read, “Alarmed Justice Dept. Official Floated an Effort to Remove the President.” As we shall see, the story is based upon the scantiest of evidence.

The Times story amounted to an attack on one of Trump’s arch enemies — the Justice Department official who oversees all aspects of the Mueller investigation into “Russian meddling” in U.S. elections. The story gave a big weapon to Trump and his allies in the struggle against Mueller. There is now a chorus of right-wing voices calling for Rosenstein’s dismissal and asserting that this is further evidence of a plot against Trump.

The Times, the establishment voice of liberalism, has waged an editorial war for nearly two years against the Trump administration and denounced most of his reactionary domestic measures.

Why would the Times help Trump?

So why would the liberal New York Times attack one of Trump’s arch enemies so publicly and with such a high-profile story? After all, the New York Times has been denounced by Trump as “fake news” and the “enemy of the people.”

The answer is simple: circulation, ratings, money, profit. The Times threw its politics overboard for the moment because it is in a desperate struggle to boost its profits. It is under pressure from the Washington Post and in a fierce intercorporate struggle for the capitalist news market.

This gave a classic lesson to all progressives and radicals: Never rely on the liberal elements in the ruling class to fight political reaction.

The Times is the “newspaper of record” for the ruling class and sections of the middle class, whose impact goes far beyond its circulation. The Times has 2.5 million digital subscribers and 1 million hard-copy subscribers. (NBC News, Dec. 28, 2017) As the “newspaper of record” for the ruling class, when the Times publishes a sensational story like this, it is picked up by hundreds of news outlets, is spread on TV news shows, talk shows and ultimately reaches tens of millions of people.

The Mueller investigation presents a great danger to Trump. It is only in part an investigation into the administration’s alleged collaboration with the Russians during the elections of 2016. In addition, Mueller is also looking into corruption and Trump’s finances, which include money laundering, illicit financial deal-

ings with Deutsche Bank and real estate dealings by himself, his son and son-in-law, among other things.

(Of course, the anti-Russia drum beat in the Times and in sections of the ruling class is a reactionary justification for the Pentagon’s military buildup.)

Two of Trump’s closest associates — Paul Manafort and George Papadopoulos — have “flipped” and pleaded guilty to multiple crimes of money laundering, tax evasion, bank fraud, etc., and are now cooperating with Mueller. It is no wonder, then, that Trump has become obsessed with destroying the Mueller investigation. Firing Rosenstein, who has pledged 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 championed all along as a way to get rid of Trump.

Competition with Washington Post

Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, bought the Washington Post in 2013. Since the election of Donald Trump, the Washington Post has become the go-to publication for exposés of Trump, despite the Times’ supremacy as the dominant newspaper empire of U.S. imperialism.

Billionaire Bezos is determined to overtake the Times, and he has the deep pockets to do it. This was made clear in an NBC News article, “The Most Important Competition in Newspapers Heats Up,” last Dec. 28:

“Under its free-spending owner, Jeff Bezos, the CEO of Amazon, The Post has hired more than 100 new reporters and editors, and rebuilt its presence outside of Washington. It has become a much bigger part of the digital conversation on public affairs.

“Nikki Usher, an associate professor at George Washington University, opined: ‘You do see people who are opposed to the Trump administration making The Post now their first read. Maybe The Post is optimizing for anger a little bit better.’”

The competition between these two mouthpieces of the capitalist class means fighting for circulation, for an international audience, for page views, for website visits and ultimately for advertising rates and profits.

The Times gave a classic lesson — never rely on the liberal elements in the ruling class to fight political reaction.

Times slanted the story

According to the Sept. 22 Times report: “Mr. Rosenstein made the remarks about secretly recording Mr. Trump and about the 25th Amendment [to remove Trump] in meetings and conversations with other Justice Department and F.B.I. officials. Several people described the episodes in interviews over the past several months, insisting on anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. **The people were briefed either on the events themselves or on memos written by F.B.I. officials**, including Andrew G. McCabe, then the acting bureau director, that documented Mr. Rosenstein’s actions 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 remarks as saying they were sarcastic!

“A Justice Department spokeswoman 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 “proposals” but as sarcasm. All the additional sources are third-hand, people allegedly briefed about the “proposals.”

For the Times, this is far below its usual standards for sourcing this important an article.

The rush for ratings puts one in mind of Les Moonves of the “liberal” CBS TV empire, who commented on Trump’s presidential 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, 2016)

Although Moonves implied he was opposed to Trump, his network, along with all the other TV 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 Les Moonves who has been fired by CBS for sexual abuse of multiple women.) For the network, 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 propagandists, money trumps politics. Liberals 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 rhetorical protest.

When push comes to shove, the workers and oppressed must have their own independent, struggle-oriented organizations to combat bourgeois reaction.

Liberals and radicals may get a sense of vindication and satisfaction when they read or hear about the exposures of Trump and the right wing in the media, in the Congress or in the electoral struggle. But that is of little consequence to the millions of undocumented workers who are being hunted down, their families forcibly separated.

Exposures alone will not stop Immigration and Customs Enforcement from rounding up undocumented workers on the job or in their homes. Parents are being arrested when they come to see their children. Countless immigrants will now be denied Green Cards if they have ever accepted any form of government assistance. And millions are forced to live in the shadows because they fear ICE or the U.S. Border Patrol.

For the sake of profit, “liberal media” like CBS, NBC, the New York Times, the Washington Post, as well as the Democratic Party hierarchy, will carry on with their elections and their sterile debates. While they are exercising so-called “democracy,” they will stand by passively while African-American and Latinx people are driven into the prison system or ICE detention centers and suffocate behind bars, tortured by prison guards and prison administrations.

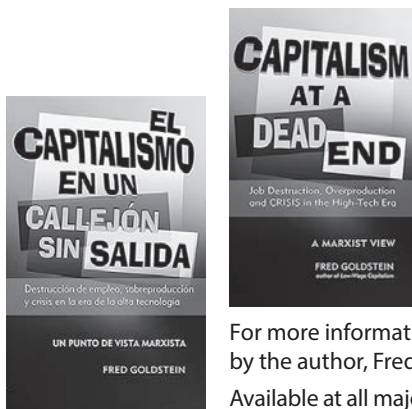
Mass incarceration does not touch the lives of those who sit on the board of directors of the New York Times or of the Washington Post. They may write “sympathetic” editorials but never once really stand up to the racist jailors, the sheriffs, the sadists and fascists at the border, or those in the police precincts.

And they would not dare call upon the masses to resist. On the contrary, when there is real resistance — such as in Ferguson, Mo., in the wake of a brutal police execution of a young African-American man in 2014 — the ruling-class liberals rush in to derail the struggle and are the first to denounce “violence” by the people.

This latest episode, with the New York Times setting up Trump’s enemy Rod Rosenstein, shows the whole world how quickly the bourgeoisie will toss aside their veneer of liberalism for the sake of enhancing or protecting their fortunes.

The workers and oppressed and all who hate the Trump reaction should take this as a signal to accelerate their independent organization and to build grassroots resistance in the workplace, in communities, on the campuses and in the prisons.

We the exploited, who suffer the oppression, can only rely on ourselves and our class. □



Capitalism at a Dead End

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

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Destrucción de empleo, sobreproducción y crisis en la era de la alta tecnología

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to LowWageCapitalism.com
Available at all major online booksellers.



The and

Liar Kavanaugh has got to go!

By Sue Davis

Sept. 24 — President Donald Trump’s Supreme Court nominee, Brett M. Kavanaugh, was considered a shoo-in when Senate hearings on his nomination began Sept. 4. But that was completely derailed 10 days later when allegations surfaced about a 1982 case of sexual assault, which Kavanaugh has unequivocally denied.

The tables have been turned upside down on Kavanaugh and all who support him. Now he — and his many lies — are on the defensive.

A hearing where Dr. Christine Blasey Ford (she’s professionally called Dr. Blasey) will describe the criminal attack she experienced as a 15-year-old is scheduled for Sept. 27. This situation is reminiscent of Anita Hill’s testimony about sexual harassment during the Clarence Thomas hearings in 1991.

But the 11 Republican senators, all older cis-gender males, face a dilemma in how they conduct that hearing: If they bluntly interrogate Dr. Blasey with open disbelief and hostility — as Trump, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee Charles E. Grassley and others have already attempted — then the hearing will look totally biased, a blatant replay of the sexist attacks on Hill in 1991 that began opening the floodgates on women’s consciousness against the patriarchal capitalist system.

Social and cultural attitudes of the vast majority of U.S. working women have evolved dramatically in the intervening 27 years. As noted in a front page article, “Nominee’s Fate Is Pivotal Point in U.S. Politics” in the Sept. 23 New York Times: “[T]he battle over [Kavanaugh’s] confirmation has swelled into an event of titanic consequence in the country’s evolution on matters of gender and women’s equality.” And as a Sept. 22 NY Times editorial headline summarized, “G.O.P. Leaders Can’t Fake Respect.”

To complicate matters, a second accuser has come forward — Deborah Ramirez, a classmate of Kavanaugh’s at Yale — in a Sept. 23 New Yorker article. Though Kavanaugh has also denied her account, it is too early to tell how this will affect his confirmation.

Dr. Blasey to testify

Dr. Blasey is a professor at Palo Alto University and teaches in a consortium with Stanford University, training grad-

uate students in clinical psychology. According to a Sept. 22 interview in the Washington Post, Dr. Blasey has researched depression, anxiety and resilience after trauma and published widely in academic journals. She has devoted her entire professional life to trying to understand, cope with and recover from the sexual assault she experienced as a youth.

Dr. Blasey attended the private all-girls Holton-Arms School and knew Kavanaugh because they were in the same elite country club circles. He went to all-boys Georgetown Prep. One summer evening in 1982 she attended a party in Bethesda, Md., with a few other youth, where Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her. In a letter to Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Dr. Blasey gave explicit details of the assault, which were quoted in the Washington Post article. Blasey said she was afraid Kavanaugh “might inadvertently kill me.” However, she was eventually able to free herself and escape after locking herself in a bathroom and after a while running out of the house.

As a Sept. 17 Vox.com article reported: In Maryland where the alleged incident took place, “using force to molest someone without their consent is a felony, with a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.”

Dr. Blasey did not talk about the incident until she was in psychotherapy years later. According to a Sept. 16 Washington Post article, “[S]he came to understand the incident as a trauma with lasting impact on her life. ‘I think it derailed me substantially for four or five years,’ she said. She struggled academically and socially, she said, and was unable to have healthy relationships with men. ‘I was ill-equipped to forge those kinds of relationships.’ She also said that in the longer term, it contributed to anxiety and post-traumatic-stress disorder symptoms with which she has struggled.”

After her name became public when mentioned in connection with Kavanaugh’s confirmation hearings, Dr. Blasey received death threats, so she, her two teenage sons and her spouse left their home. In addition she has been denounced in the most vile and disrespectful terms via social media. In response, she told the Washington Post: “Now I feel like my civic responsibility is outweighing my anguish and terror about retaliation.” Anticipating that her allegations might be denounced, she took a polygraph test ad-



ministered by a former FBI agent on Sept. 16, which verified her story.

Reactions from women’s advocates and others

Women’s advocates and those who support reproductive justice, who oppose Kavanaugh being added to the Supreme Court, are wary of how Dr. Blasey’s testimony will be received. As New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd wrote on Sept. 23: “It is unnerving to think how far women have come, only to find ourselves dragged back to the same place.” Dawn Lagoons, executive vice president of Planned Parenthood, quoted in the front page NY Times article, questioned how women are perceived in 2018: “Are we respected? Are we believed? Are we equal?”

Fatima Goss Graves, president of the National Women’s Law Center, said the Senate’s immediate negative reaction to Blasey “exposed an enormous gulf between the country’s political institution and the outlook of many American women,” especially if senators attack Dr. Blasey and ignore survivors.

Tarana Burke, who started #MeToo for survivors of sexual assault in 2006, worried that the current situation would be “more wrenching” than the 1991 hearings because, despite women speaking out against sexual violence today, “[W]e still have an unresponsive set of politicians.” In anticipation of a backlash, Garrett Ventry, Republican staff member on the Judiciary Committee, resigned Sept. 22 after NBC News revealed allegations of sexual harassment against him.

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 assisted independent counsel Kenneth Starr during the failed Clinton impeachment and the Bush-era torture of detainees.

Reports of Kavanaugh’s heavy drinking starting in high school have since emerged, including his membership in a fraternity at Yale that was “notorious for disrespecting women” and in the “secret society” for seniors called Truth and Courage, also known by a slang sexist expression. (People, Sept. 20)

The hearings also revealed that Kavanaugh 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 WW articles by this writer: “Kavanaugh 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 harassment 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 predators like Kavanaugh are exposed. Kavanaugh can deny Blasey’s allegations all he wants — just as Trump has lied about the 20 or more accusers who have pointed their fingers at him. But times have changed. In a stunning rebuke to Trump and his ruling-class buddies like Kavanaugh, “boys will be boys” no longer has credibility the way it once did.

Even though the Senate is packed with powerful older white men, their days are numbered. No matter how this crisis ends — even if Kavanaugh is voted onto the Supreme Court — the fact that senators are worried about how women will perceive them is a very good sign. They can no longer succeed by relying on their old lies or sexist maneuvers to control women. □



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

National Black United Front rallies for the enslaved imprisoned Sugar Land 95 on Sept. 19.

By Gloria Rubac Sugar Land, Texas

“The ‘convict lease system’ was a crime against humanity. It began right after enslaved people won their freedom. People have made millions of dollars off the free labor of our enslaved and imprisoned ancestors,” 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 property sold to the school district by the Texas prison system.

Taharka was there 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 aspects of this. We demand DNA testing be done so that reparations can be made, particularly 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 remember Sandra Bland, Mike Brown, Eric Gardner, 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.” □

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 on the Philippines held in Brussels, Belgium Sept. 18 and 19. The tribunal was held in the Maisons des Associations Internationales hall on both days.

In total, 31 witnesses appeared in person and 19 more on video to substantiate indictments for economic, social and military crimes. The defendants were Philippines President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and his entire government; President Donald Trump and the entire U.S. government; and the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and transnational and foreign banks doing business in the Philippines.

The complainants 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, KADAMAY, KARAPATAN, HUSTISYA!, DESPARECIDOS, SELDA, SANDUGO, and Rise Up 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 extrajudicial killings, massacres, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, political persecution, attacks on media, and multiple 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 imperialist impositions 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 national self-determination and development and violations of international humanitarian law, with focus on attacks on civilian communities and schools, massacres of hors d’combat (non-combatants), ‘terrorist’ labeling and profiling, destructive mining and environmental degradation, and crimes against humanity; and misrepresentations and attacks on the people’s right to national liberation.”

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, Africa, Europe and the U.S., were Mamdouh Habashi, Azadeh Shahshahani, Sarojeni Rengam, Ties Prakken, Monica Moorehead, Gianni Tognoni, Michael Yoshii and Roland Weyl. The prosecutors representing the complainants were Neri Colmenares, Jan Fermon, Rey Cortez and Kathy Panguban.

Giving victims, survivors a platform

The witnesses were provided an international platform to speak on the atrocities and inhumane 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 teenage drug users. Other estimates state that upwards of 23,000



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD
Azadeh Shahshahani and Joms Salvador inside the Philippine Embassy, Sept. 20.

people have lost their lives from this war.

Ruth Salditos testified about her spouse, one of the Antique 7 noncombatants massacred by the police on Aug. 15. Joms Salvador, a leader of the GABRIELA 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.

Sultan Atar spoke on human rights violations, especially those suffered by youth, under the current martial law in Marawi, an Indigenous area. George San Mateo spoke on the plunder of the Philippines’ rich resources by foreign 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 Duterte and his government have committed 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 interests.”

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.

The writer represented the International Action Center at the tribunal.

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. 7, reflects this class struggle.

For the moment, most attention is focused on the election, which may find the Workers Party (PT) candidate facing off against an ultra-right candidate in the second round on Oct. 28.

Behind it, all Brazil’s super-rich ruling class has over the past few years opened an austerity offensive against all of Bra-

zil’s working people. They have especially attacked African-descendent people — who are half the population — and the remaining Indigenous peoples. They have also attacked women’s rights on the job and elsewhere and increased persecution of LGBTQ people.

On the political scene, this ruling-class offensive led to a parliamentary coup against the elected PT President Dilma Rousseff in August 2016 — impeaching her — and to jailing former PT President Luis Ignacio “Lula” da Silva five months ago. Lula had planned to run for president and was leading in the polls by about double that of any other candidate; thus he was jailed to stop him from winning.

Despite his being in jail and the many slanders against him and the Workers Party, Lula is by far the most popular of any single political figure in Brazil.

The PT candidate who replaced Lula is Fernando Haddad, a former mayor of Sao Paulo, Brazil’s biggest city. Haddad’s weakness as a candidate is that he has little name recognition countrywide. Many people are even unaware that he is the candidate whom Lula favors. There are only three weeks left to inform 150 million voters.

Running for vice president with Haddad is the candidate of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), Manuela D’Ávila, a former youth leader. The PT, the PCdoB and the small Party of Social Order make up “The People Happy Again” coalition on the ballot.

Main opponent is ultra-rightist

Leading the polls with about 24-26 percent is ultra-rightist Jair Bolsonaro, a former captain in the Brazilian army. Openly and viciously misogynist, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-LGBTQ, he calls for even more police murders of Brazil’s poor and Black population.

Bolsonaro was stabbed while campaigning on Sept. 6 and apparently barely escaped with his life. He is still denouncing the PT from his hospital bed and accusing them of planning “electoral fraud,” with no evidence, of course.

Bolsonaro was not considered a viable candidate before the assassination attempt. Many voters say they will reject him in the second round. But because the usual center-right and right-wing candidates, like Geraldo Alckmin and Marina Silva, are compromised by corruption

charges, there is more of a possibility that an ultra-right extremist like Bolsonaro could win the vote.

There is another center-left candidate, Ciro Gomes. Many expect that either Gomes or Haddad will face Bolsonaro in the run-off.

This is assuming that the political struggle is confined to the electoral arena. Social organizations like the Landless Movement have taken the position of supporting Haddad and protesting Lula’s incarceration. Even those who might have been disillusioned by the PT’s willingness to make concessions to the ruling class during its time in office now see the election of the PT as a way of at least slowing down the offensive.

Behind it all is the growing inequality in the Brazilian population. As an example, the six richest people in Brazil own as much wealth as the poor half of the Brazilian population of 207 million.

U.S. imperialism has been lined up with those in Brazil who wanted to remove the PT from office and keep them out. Washington prefers a government, like the present one, hostile to Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia, in a country so large and powerful as Brazil. □

TURN THE GUNS AROUND

Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions
by John Catalinotto

“If schools in the United States really wanted to impart historical truth, Catalinotto’s ‘Turn The Guns Around’ would be required reading. He tells the true story of this epoch. Few participants know more about the massive GI rebellion against the Vietnam War, the anti-war veterans’ movement or the history of soldier revolts from the Paris Commune to the Portuguese coup.”

— Pvt. Larry Holmes *GI resister and organizer for the American Servicemen’s Union 1972-74.*
Available at online booksellers

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 Latinx radio station.

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

In **Buffalo, N.Y.**, community activists joined with the Buffalo International Action Center on Sept. 20 in solidarity with Puerto Rican demands for independence and reparations.

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 Power4PuertoRico, New York Disaster Interfaith Services and the PR-NYC Long Term Recovery Group. As the crowd of 500 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 strong 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 organized 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 Advancement.

NYSNA's President Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez traveled on one of the volunteer nurse response brigades to Puerto Rico after the storms. 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, Workers World/Mundo Obrero newspapers and Tribunal leaflets.

At **Chicago's** Federal Plaza, 75 people came out Sept. 20 for a Day of Action for Puerto Rico: Rally against Austerity. The



New York

WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Boston



WW PHOTO

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 Puerto Rico, California 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-



WW PHOTO: MAGGIE VASCASSENNO



WW PHOTO

Chicago



WW PHOTO: JEFF SOREL

Portland, Ore.



WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

termination 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 Yulín Cruz who said that the U.S. response to the hurricane is genocide. With no ef-

fective 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, Ellie Dorritie, 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 Nations General Assembly’s annual fall meeting is that it often brings revolutionary leaders to New York City and gives them an opportunity to speak with the U.S. population. In the past they have brought inspiration and hope despite whatever goes on in the U.N. itself, where U.S. imperialism has a heavy hand. Usually the U.S. refuses to let these leaders in. The ruling class here prefers to keep revolutionary leaders demonized, continuously slandering them and keeping them apart from people in the U.S.

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., and especially in the New York metropolitan area, an opportunity to express support for the defense of countries that have revolutionary leadership. Such nations are always under heavy attack from 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 historic revolutionary leader President Raúl Castro, will be representing socialist Cuba at the United Nations. He will also be speaking at a public meeting 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 remains under continuing, vicious attack by U.S. imperialism. Cuba also remains determined to resist oppression and build a socialist path into the future.

Miguel Díaz-Canel of Cuba was inaugurated as president in April, on the anniversary of the U.S.-funded 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. Succeeding comrade-presidents Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro, he represents the country’s triumph in continuing to build socialism despite decades of U.S. economic blockade and endless CIA dirty tricks and assassination attempts on Cuban leaders.

Born after the 1959 Revolution, Miguel Díaz-Canel reminds us of the triumphs wrested by Cuba despite unrelenting U.S. hostility. His commitment to education recalls the 1961 countrywide revolutionary mobilization of over a million people resulting in 96 percent literacy in the population in less than a year. His long support of LGBTQ issues and of same-sex marriage demonstrates the forward-moving evolution possible through building socialism.

The left-progressive movement, as well as all workers in the U.S., can strengthen our struggles with the steel in Díaz-Canel’s inaugural speech: “[The Revolution] will continue moving forward without fear and without retreat; without renouncing our sovereignty, independence, development programs, and independence.” Rebutting U.S. propaganda that Cuban’s path to socialism will be derailed without a Castro at the helm, Díaz-Canel closed with these words: “The world has received the wrong message that the Revolution ends with its guerrillas.”

We welcome the Cuban president’s visit and urge progressives and workers to show their support for Cuba’s message.

Defend Venezuela

If any Latin American country is under more direct U.S. attack at this moment than Cuba, it is Bolivarian Venezuela. Over the summer there was an attempt to assassinate Venezuela’s President Nicolás Maduro as he was speaking in Caracas. A few weeks ago there were reports that, frustrated by the failure of the discredited right-wing opposition in Venezuela to mount an effective attack on this elected leader, the U.S. was meeting with a handful of Venezuelan dissident military officials to plot direct U.S. military intervention. And today, Sept. 25, the U.S. president’s talk at the U.N. made Maduro and Venezuela a special target of his venom.

This week the U.S. announced additional new sanctions against Venezuela and its leaders, including against Maduro’s spouse, Cilia Flores, who is an elected 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 Bolivarian Revolutionary process begun by late President Hugo Chávez — moving a country toward socialism though capitalist and reactionary forces still control the economic sector.

In Maduro’s first trip for a U.N. meeting as president, the Washington Post damned him with disgusting anti-worker rhetoric, calling him an “economically 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 others in the progressive movement to support the Venezuelan spokespeople with anti-imperialist enthusiasm, just as we do the Cuban president a night earlier. □

U.S. weapons base in Italy expands— Trees are first casualties

This article was published in the Sept. 21 issue of Il Manifesto, written by that newspaper’s expert on militarism. Although it describes the expansion in only one of the many overseas U.S. military bases, Camp Darby in Italy, its expansion reveals the continued drive to war by U.S. imperialism to increase its military reach worldwide. Workers World Managing Editor John Catalinotto translated the article.

By Manlio Dinucci

The first trees have already been cut down, the others marked with paint: 937 trees are now being removed in the “protected” natural area of the San Rossore Regional Park between [the Italian cities of] Pisa and Livorno. The slaughtered trees are the first “collateral damage” of the massive reorganization, begun these days, of the infrastructure of Camp Darby, which contains the largest U.S. arsenal in the world outside the United States.

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

The project involves the construction 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 Navicelli on a new rotating metal bridge. The loading and unloading terminal, almost 65 feet high, will consist of four 575-foot-long tracks capable of accommodating nine wagons each, for a total of 36 wagons.

The terminal will be joined to the ammunition storage area by large trucks. By means of trolleys handling containers, incoming weapons will be transferred from railway wagons to trucks and those leaving the base will be transferred from trucks to railway wagons. The terminal will allow the transit of two trains per day, which will connect the base to the port through the normal lines of the Italian state railways.

The reorganization of the infrastructure, which has just begun, is based on the plan to carry out the increased transit of weapons from Camp Darby. The current connection via canal and the base road with the port of Livorno and the Pisa airport is no longer sufficient.

The U.S. continuously supplies the 125 bunkers at Camp Darby with over a million artillery bullets, bombs for aircraft and missiles, plus thousands of tanks, vehicles and other military equipment in these bunkers (according to approximate estimates).

Since March 2017, enormous ships have been calling at Livorno on a monthly basis. The ships unload and load weapons that are continuously transported to the ports of Aqaba in Jordan, Jeddah in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern ports. U.S. forces and allies use these weapons in the wars in Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

You do not need to be a skilled technician to understand what the dangers

are for the population of the Tuscany region. Moving thousands of high-powered explosive warheads continuously in a densely populated area involves obvious risks. Even though the project managers describe their strategy as taking into account “human health and public safety,” an accident with catastrophic consequences cannot be excluded.

Neither can anyone rule out the possibility of sabotage or a terrorist attack that could cause the explosion of an entire train loaded with bombs. This is confirmed by the fact that the plan provides for the construction of a second terminal which will be used for verification and inspection operations of the “suspect wagons.” Those are wagons on which a bomb could have been installed (for example, inside a container). Such a bomb, exploding on command, would cause a catastrophic chain reaction.

What have the authorities done about this danger? Instead of carrying out their duties to protect the citizens and the territory, the region of Tuscany, the municipalities of Pisa and Livorno, and the Park Authority have not only approved the strengthening of Camp Darby, but have contributed to carrying it out. The civil works carried out in recent years for real or alleged economic development projects (such as luxury shipbuilding) — in particular the works to improve the navigability of the Navicelli Canal and the rail links to the port of Livorno — are exactly those demanded for years by the command of Camp Darby.

Its most prominent representative, [U.S. Army Garrison Italy Cmdr. Col. Erik M. Berdy], has been received in recent months with all the honors by the president of the Tuscan Regional Council, Eugenio Giani (Democratic Party), who has committed to promoting “integration between the U.S. military base of Camp Darby and the surrounding community,” by the mayor of Livorno, Filippo Nogarin (Five Star Movement), and that of Pisa, Michele Conti (League). The representatives of these three major parties have expressed substantially the same position supporting military expansion. The trees of the park can be cut down and the bombs of Camp Darby can circulate on Italian territory, thanks to the mutual consent of the politicians.

In a July 11 interview in La Nazione, Col. Berdy said Camp Darby plays a key role in the Pentagon’s logistics, supplying the U.S. land forces and areas in much shorter time than it would take if they were supplied directly from the U.S. The base supplied most of the weapons for the wars against Iraq, Yugoslavia, Libya and Afghanistan. □

ENDORSE the PEOPLE’S TRIBUNAL on U.S. Crimes against PUERTO RICO

The Tribunal needs your support! Since the devastation of hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017, the world has heard of Puerto Rico’s economic, social and environmental crisis. This crisis is a culmination, not just of hurricanes, but of the savage colonialist domination and capitalist exploitation that the United States has imposed ever since its 1898 military invasion of Puerto Rico. On Oct. 27, activists

and witnesses from Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican diaspora, the U.S. and the world will meet in New York City to take part in this tribunal. **A people’s investigation.** The Tribunal will present a people’s investigation of the role of the U.S. government during its 120-year colonial rule, particularly since the hurricanes’ devastation. The Tribunal will feature renowned Nicaraguan legal scholar and attorney, Dr. Augusto Zamora,

List Your Organization As An Endorser.

On Oct. 27 at 9 a.m., join Rafael Cancel Miranda and other Puerto Rican and international personalities and organizations at the People’s Tribunal on U.S. Crimes Against Puerto Rico at Holyrood Church/Iglesia Santa Cruz in NYC.

who will serve as prosecutor, and a distinguished jury of U.S. and international human rights leaders.

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 continued U.S. presence and domination, not only in Puerto Rico but throughout the Caribbean,

Latin America and elsewhere.

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

A complete list of Tribunal conveners is on our website: PuertoRicoTribunal.org For more information, contact us at TribunalPuertoRico@gmail.com.



Gaza’s Great Return March has lasted half a year

Joe Catron

The Great March of Return by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip will enter its seventh month Sept. 28.

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 around it from the rest of Palestine and transformed the newly isolated territory’s demographics overnight.

Today two-thirds of Gaza’s population are refugees from outside the enclave, 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 filled with celebrations of Palestine’s culture and commemorations of its history. Some sought to push through the barrier and return to their original homes and communities, now occupied by Israel.

In recent weeks, these advances toward the fence have become more frequent, occurring nearly every day.

Since March, Israeli soldiers stationed by the barrier have responded with tear gas, rubber-coated steel bullets, live ammunition and airstrikes. By the end of Sept. 23, Israeli occupation forces had killed 185 protesters, injuring at least 20,492 more, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza.

Israeli fire killed 32 Palestinian chil-



WW PHOTO: JOE CATRON

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

dren and wounded at least 3,840. Another 5,139 protesters suffered injuries from live ammunition, while 76 have undergone amputations. Three medics and two journalists lost their lives.

Genocidal intent

Israel made little effort to hide the genocidal intent behind its free-fire policy. “Yesterday we saw 30,000 people; we arrived prepared and with precise reinforcements,” Israel’s military spokesperson tweeted on March 31, a day after its occupation forces had massacred 15 demonstrators. “Nothing was carried out uncontrolled; everything was accurate and measured, and we know where every bullet landed.”

On April 8, two days after his soldiers killed 10 more, including prominent journalist Yaser Murtaja, Israeli war minister Avigdor Lieberman told Israel’s public Kan Radio, “There are no innocent people in the Gaza Strip.” (Jerusalem Post)

Thirteen days later, Israeli reserve brigadier-general Zvika Fogel responded to a growing outcry over Israel’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 balloons 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.

Over the same period, seven flotillas of boats launched from the port of Gaza to breach Israel’s naval blockade and sail to their passengers’ ethnically cleansed lands. The Israeli navy captured some, confiscating the vessels and briefly detaining their occupants, and repelled others with tear gas and live ammunition.

Returning to our land

Various Palestinian political organizations, all of which have supported and participated in the March, vow to persevere until their demands are met.

“We will continue the March of Return until we achieve our goals of returning to our land in the long run and breaking the siege of Gaza in the near term,” Yahya al-Sinwar, leader of the Hamas movement in Gaza, said by the barrier as demonstrators gathered in five camps along it on Sept. 21. (Hamas website, Sept. 21)

Palestinian groups have also called for an escalation in international solidarity with Palestine and efforts to isolate Israel for its crimes against them.

“Strengthening, mainstreaming and popularizing Palestinians’ call for a two-way military embargo on Israel is the most effective response to Israel’s ongoing massacre,” the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) National Committee said in a statement on April 12. (bdsmovement.net)

“This means working to end all weapons sales and purchases to and from Israel, and ending military or police partnerships with the Israeli state.”

Joe Catron is the U.S. coordinator of Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network. He lived in the Gaza Strip as an international solidarity activist and freelance journalist from March 2011 until October 2014.

Polish gov’t asks U.S. to build ‘Fort Trump’ – And It Will Contribute \$2 Billion

By G. Dunkel

Poland’s president, Andrzej Duda, visited the White House on Sept. 18 for a photo op with President Donald Trump and to make an offer. His government will chip in \$2 billion if the United States agrees to build a military base named Fort Trump in Poland, cementing Poland’s allegiance to NATO and helping Poland confront Russia.

This offer and the picture of President Duda standing with a grin on his face while the stern-faced U.S. president was seated drew a storm of criticism in Poland.

Barbara Zdrojewska, a Polish senator from the Civic Platform, the major opposition to the ruling Law and Justice Party, tweeted: “President Duda decided to take advantage of Trump’s vanity and came out with this Fort Trump ... blurting it out during a news conference in front of half of the world was pathetic. He humiliated himself, us and Trump.”

Another leader of the Civic Platform, Tomasz Siemoniak, a former defense minister, tweeted: “What an embarrassment in front of the entire world!”

While the Civic Platform traditionally has supported Poland’s participation in NATO, Donald Tusk, president of the European Union’s executive council and a former prime minister from Civic Platform, has been a vocal critic of Trump since taking up his European-wide post. (There was a smaller, but explicitly anti-NATO demonstration in Warsaw this

past May when the NATO council was meeting in Warsaw.) Both the Civic Platform and Peace and Justice are hostile to Russia’s position in Eastern Europe, but they have major tactical differences. They also disagree sharply over Poland’s role in the EU.

President Duda was quoted on the Polish website Hlavy Spravy as claiming that all this criticism, these attacks and mockery are a sign of the success of his visit.

Public workers protest for higher pay

Tens of thousands of public workers, organized by the All-Poland Alliance of

Labor Unions (OPZZ) and the Union of Polish Teachers (ZNP), came out on the streets of Warsaw on Sept. 22. “We’ve had enough of living on 1,500 zloty (\$410 [monthly], our families are starving,” said OPZZ head Jan Guss to 20,000 workers gathered in front of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki’s office.

The ZNP held a separate demonstration of over 10,000 protesters the same day to demand a hike in teachers’ salaries by the equivalent of \$270 a month and the dismissal of Education Minister Anna Zalewska. The teachers marched, carrying banners with “We want to earn

with dignity! Now!” “Zalewska’s reform hurts children” and “Zalewska’s reform harms teachers.”

The head of the ZNP, Sławomir Broniarz, pointed out that Polish teachers are at the very bottom of teachers’ salaries in the EU and that this raise would keep more teachers in the profession. (Poland in English, Sept. 22)

Both these demonstrations raise the implicit question: If the Polish government has \$2 billion to pay for a U.S. base and billions more to subsidize it in the future, why doesn’t it have the money to pay public service workers and teachers more? □

Fight the power! Build Workers World!



Workers World newspaper has a point of view. Unlike the corporate press, we report events from the perspective of the workers and the oppressed. But you know that. That’s why you choose to read this newspaper.

But what you may not be aware of is that our purpose goes beyond passive reporting. Our Marxist-Leninist vision of an equitable, just world based on socialist planning and plenty for all peoples spurs us to advocate for change.

That’s why we’re devoting so much coverage to the outcry and mobilization against the cruel, Nazi-esque Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol “zero tolerance” policy against im/migrants that

has separated children from parents. That’s why we put forward FIRE, Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere, to be able to intervene and play a leading, anti-capitalist role in this vital struggle. Organizing FIRE to shut down ICE is just the latest example of having our fingers on the progressive pulse, as we have in many righteous anti-imperialist, anti-racist struggles over the past 59 years.

Workers World cannot be a bystander. We must take action in defense of our Marxist-Leninist principles and beliefs. If you agree with us, then it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program, which since 1977 has been helping us put out the paper. Members receive a year’s subscrip-

tion to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends for a donation of \$75 a year. For \$100 you also get a new publication or book from World View Forum. For \$300 (only \$25 a month) or more, you get your pick of five books.

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/; it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. And know that we’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future! □



Reforma y revolución

Este artículo del fundador del partido WorkersWorld Party/ Partido Mundo Obrero, Sam Marcy sobre la revolución cubana, apareció por primera vez en la edición de nuestro periódico el 17 de febrero de 1994

Por Sam Marcy

¿Qué ha hecho única a la Revolución Cubana? ¿Por qué es un faro para las/os trabajadoras y las masas oprimidas, no solo de América Latina 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 de Batista hizo algo que ninguna lucha previa había logrado.

Rompió el viejo aparato estatal. La revolución no se limitó a cambiar los grupos de gobierno, como había sucedido tantas veces anteriormente. Destronó a la burguesía misma de su papel de clase dominante al demoler su instrumento de gobierno, el Estado burgués.

Una vez más demostró las monumentales palabras de Karl Marx en la Comuna de París: que una de las características fundamentales de un cambio de estructuras de clase es la destrucción del viejo aparato estatal y su reemplazo por un nuevo estado basado en el consentimiento popular de las masas.

Esto es lo que sucedió en París en 1871, cuando los comités revolucionarios populares asumieron las funciones del gobierno. Esos comités de las masas urbanas habían aparecido por primera vez en la Revolución francesa de 1789, cuando la burguesía tuvo que llamar a los obreros y artesanos para poder desarraigar completamente el antiguo orden feudal. En 1871, los comités populares o comunas aparecieron de nuevo, pero esta vez representaban la lucha revolucionaria del proletariado contra la burguesía.

En Cuba, los Comités en Defensa de la Revolución se convirtieron en los ojos y oídos del nuevo poder de clase y su línea de defensa más importante contra el sabotaje e invasión imperialista de los EUA. La burguesía especialmente desdén y calumnió a los CDR porque eran la prueba viviente de que un nuevo tipo de estado, basado en las/os trabajadoras, había tomado el poder en Cuba en 1959.

Revolución política en México

Es instructivo comparar esto con la Revolución Mexicana de 1910-1917 que, a pesar de sus grandes logros, no fue más allá de las reformas democráticas burguesas progresistas. Logró sin embargo, expropiar a los grandes terratenientes y distribuyó gran parte de la tierra. Esta es una gran medida revolucionaria en la lucha contra los grandes terratenientes, tanto feudales como capitalistas. Pero no es una medida socialista.

La historia de las rebeliones campesinas tanto en Europa como en América Latina demuestra que finalmente se deterioran. Los terratenientes finalmente vuelven a poner sus manos en las áreas mejores y más fértiles, y la lucha continúa hasta otra ronda de levantamientos campesinos revolucionarios.

Los levantamientos campesinos solos, incluso si tienen algún tipo de apoyo de la clase trabajadora, no eliminan la base de la

explotación capitalista y del terrateniente.

La Revolución Mexicana fue una revolución política que reformó el estado. Esto explica por qué México hoy, a pesar de todas sus grandes reformas históricamente importantes, es un país burgués. Diferentes agrupaciones pueden mantener las posiciones de gobierno, incluso en las cumbres del poder, pero esto no cambia la estructura de clases de la sociedad.

Los propios imperialistas reconocen que tales reformas no alteran el carácter de su explotación. Cínicamente han descrito sus relaciones con México en su período revolucionario como “continuar haciendo negocios durante las alteraciones”. Incluso cuando México nacionalizó las tierras de las compañías petroleras extranjeras en la década de 1930, su relación con los EUA continuó más o menos como antes.

Por qué la revolución cubana fue más allá

La Revolución Cubana llegó a más de 40 años después de la Revolución Mexicana. Llegó después de la gran revolución socialista de octubre en Rusia y las revoluciones en China, Vietnam y Corea. El desarrollo industrial de Cuba estaba mucho más avanzado en comparación con algunas otras áreas de América Latina, a pesar de las restricciones impuestas por el control imperialista y la propiedad — y la pobreza y el subdesarrollo de gran parte del campo.

Si bien Cuba no había alcanzado el nivel de los estados capitalistas europeos, la base objetiva de la revolución socialista había madurado allí. Siempre se debe recordar que Cuba vive a la sombra del capital financiero de los EUA que hasta el advenimiento de la revolución, controlaba sus arterias económicas más importantes.

Los escritores liberales en los Estados Unidos, algunos de ellos muy bien intencionados, esparcieron la confusión sobre la revolución socialista en Cuba. Parte de ello fue impulsado por los deseos amistosos de no estampar a Cuba los colores revolucionarios comunistas, por temor de que esto ayudara al imperialismo.

Proyectar una imagen moderada de Cuba parecía necesario para resistir la vileza absolutamente sin precedentes de la prensa imperialista y los llamados cada vez más agudos de los elementos más extremos a una intervención. Esto continuó incluso ante una posible confrontación nuclear entre los EUA y Cuba debido a la alianza de Cuba con la URSS.

Muchos elementos liberales y socialistas en Estados Unidos estudiaron muy de cerca a la Revolución Cubana. Probablemente el mejor escrito fue por Leo Huberman y Paul Sweezy en el libro titulado Cuba: Anatomía de una Revolución, (Monthly Review Press 1960) Mientras que los líderes cubanos de esos tiempos hablaban sobre la revolución en términos de reformas específicas, Huberman y Sweezy no “titubearon” en concluir que “la nueva Cuba es una Cuba socialista.”

En los Estados Unidos, la discusión sobre el carácter de clase de la Revolución cubana llegó a un abrupto final cuando el camarada Fidel Castro, en un discurso hecho justo cuando los aviones de la CIA

bombardeaban Cuba durante la invasión de Playa Girón en abril de 1961, por primera vez lo dijo de manera bastante explícita: “Lo que los imperialistas yanquis no perdonarán es que hemos hecho una revolución socialista directamente bajo sus narices”.

Sindicatos fuertes y Partido Comunista

Es importante notar que antes del surgimiento del Movimiento 26 de Julio que lanzó la lucha revolucionaria por el poder, Cuba había tenido por muchos años un Partido Comunista fuerte y sindicatos que sobrevivieron años de represión. La literatura liberal y progresista temprana en los Estados Unidos sobre la Revolución cubana a menudo lo pasó por alto. Pero las condiciones objetivas y subjetivas en Cuba habían madurado hasta el punto en que era posible un Partido Comunista fuerte.

México en 1910 no tenía las condiciones para la existencia de un partido obrero revolucionario. No había partidos comunistas todavía en existencia en ninguna parte. Ni las condiciones estaban maduras para tal partido. El partido que salió de la Revolución Mexicana fue el Partido Revolucionario Institucional, un partido burgués que ha gobernado hasta nuestros días.

Aislamiento de estados socialistas

Después de la Revolución Rusa de 1917, el primer estado obrero se enfrentó a una intervención imperialista, guerra civil y aislamiento. Una razón básica por la que fue capaz de superar todo esto, incluso después del fracaso de las revoluciones en Europa, fue el enorme tamaño del país.

La revolución china estaba menos aislada debido a la existencia de la URSS. Sin embargo, tan pronto como los comunistas chinos entraron en Beijing en 1949, los imperialistas estadounidenses abrieron un ataque justo al lado, en Corea.

Los franceses, mientras tanto, abrieron una ofensiva en su antigua colonia de Vietnam. Y los británicos estaban peleando contra un movimiento insurgente en Malaya. Durante muchos años, parecía que China sería el blanco de una guerra imperialista abierta en Asia liderada por los EUA.

Hasta el 1971, los EUA y sus aliados imperialistas en el Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas impidieron que la China Popular tomara su legítimo asiento en la ONU y bloquearon el reconocimiento diplomático de China por parte de otros países capitalistas.

Así que, cuando la Revolución Cubana comenzó a romper los lazos del imperialismo, los Estados Unidos rápidamente se movieron para aislar a esta isla de 10 millones de personas. Washington pensó que el gobierno revolucionario no sobreviviría por mucho tiempo a un bloqueo económico junto con la intervención militar.

Es un hecho incontestable que sin el apoyo material, político y diplomático tan importante que la Unión Soviética extendió a Cuba, la posición de Cuba en ese momento hubiera sido casi imposible. Fue necesaria una confrontación nuclear para llevar al coloso militar de Estados

Unidos a un punto muerto temporal y racional en su lucha por derrocar al gobierno socialista cubano. Los corazones y las mentes de la mayor parte de la humanidad durante todo el curso de la crisis de los misiles estuvieron casi totalmente del lado de Cuba y la URSS.

Independientemente de las exigencias adicionales de la relación, es probable que esa experiencia histórica no se olvide, ni en el campo de los amigos de Cuba ni en el de sus enemigos.

Fallan intentos de aislar a Cuba

El hecho de que el intento de los Estados Unidos de aislar a Cuba haya fracasado se confirmó una vez más en noviembre [1994] cuando la Asamblea General de la ONU votó 88 a 4 para poner fin al embargo. Los tres países que votaron con los EUA fueron Paraguay, Israel y Albania. Los imperialistas estadounidenses ni siquiera pudieron tener a uno de sus propios aliados imperialistas a bordo, ni un país de tamaño considerable.

A pesar de los intentos de aislamiento, Cuba es un lugar muy cosmopolita. Constantemente organiza conferencias y exhibiciones internacionales sobre ciencia, tecnología y arte. Tiene contactos con todos los movimientos progresistas en América Latina y el Caribe, que abarcan un amplio espectro político. En todo el mundo, Cuba conserva su posición diplomática y política.

Cuando el presidente Fidel Castro viaja a cualquier lugar de América Latina, el pueblo sale a saludarlo.

Cuba está siendo perjudicada económicamente debido a la gran variedad de fuerzas estadounidenses en su contra. Pero no se puede aislar políticamente.

Rompiendo el hielo aquí

Finalmente, la resistencia a la guerra del imperialismo contra Cuba está aumentando dentro de los EUA como nunca antes. Las viejas campañas de odio contra Cuba se están desintegrando, desde Miami a Nueva York y San Francisco.

El hielo se rompió por primera vez en enero de 1992, cuando un mitin para Cuba en el espacioso Centro de Convenciones Jacob Javits de Nueva York se llenó completamente. La espléndida participación burló las amenazas de los cubanos contrarrevolucionarios de interrumpir el evento.

Para otra manifestación de Paz para Cuba, que tendrá lugar en Nueva York el 12 de febrero, las entradas ya están agotadas. Se están haciendo planes para una segunda manifestación para la multitud que no puede entrar. ¿Qué muestra eso sino que el hielo se está agrietando?

Como dijimos en una ocasión anterior, la necesidad actual no es solo desafiar el bloqueo de los EUA, sino cambiar el clima político en este país hacia Cuba. Ahora estamos empezando a ver los resultados de una campaña de ese tipo.

A pesar del esfuerzo por 30 años de Estados Unidos para aislar a Cuba diplomática, económica y políticamente, la Revolución cubana se erige como una fortaleza inconquistable de la revolución mundial. Y ninguna fuerza sobre la faz de la tierra la derribará. □