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**CUBA, VENEZUELA**

**Revolutionary leaders embraced at int'l rally**

By Lallan Schoenstein  
 New York

Sept. 26 — Miguel Díaz-Canel, the new president of Cuba, in town for the United Nations General Assembly, began his speech at a rally here by saying that it was a "solidarity meeting."

Entitled "Cuba Speaks for Itself!" the event was organized by the September 25th Welcoming Committee, consisting of various New York and New Jersey solidarity organizations.

The evening began as thousands, predominantly Brown and Black, gathered outside historic Riverside Church, a few blocks from 125th Street in Harlem. Some had traveled to the rally from distant cities. Spanish was heard as often as English. It was a broad swath of the movement, embracing the opportunity to greet old and new comrades.

Anticipation of hearing President Miguel Díaz-Canel speak was heightened when a rumor traveled through the waiting line to "expect a surprise."

That surprise was revealed early in the evening's program when Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Moros appeared alongside Díaz-Canel, welcomed by thunderous applause and cries of "Long live Venezuela!"

"I came to New York, to the United Nations, to bring the truth of the Venezuelan people. I also reiterate our love and commitment, and share this moment with our brother Miguel Díaz-Canel and the people of Cuba," Maduro stated.

After standing ovations, Maduro brought everyone to their feet again when he concluded: "We have been victims of immense imperialist aggression, but today I can say that the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela is still standing, alive and victorious."

**President Díaz-Canel on Cuba's internationalism**

President Miguel Díaz-Canel began his speech by reiterating the common struggle of Cuba and Venezuela.

"Today at the United Nations, two sister peoples raised their voices. Venezuela denounced all the aggression to which it has been subjected and also ratified its decision to continue the Bolivarian Revolution, as a legacy faithful to Comandante Hugo Chávez.

"Cuba also raised its voice with Venezuela, to support Venezuela, to support Nicaragua, to support Puerto Rico, to support Latin America, to support the Palestinian and Saharan people, and to support all the just causes of the world.

"Fidel taught us that to cooperate with other exploited and poor peoples was always a political principle of the Revolution and a duty to humanity," Díaz-Canel explained.

**History of solidarity with oppressed communities**

Díaz-Canel said that on their way to Riverside Church, the delegation drove through the Harlem community, past Hotel Theresa, where, in 1960, Cuban President Fidel Castro Ruz had stayed with the Cuban delegation to the U.N. General Assembly.

Díaz-Canel reminded everyone that Fidel had said: "I'm

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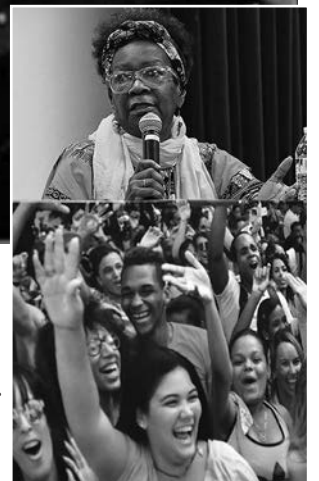
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Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez shares a drum with cultural activist Sister Indigo, at Riverside Church. 'A better world is necessary,' Díaz-Canel said in closing, 'and it is indeed possible.' Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Moros seen clapping in the center.

On the right, Days of Action demand end to blockade of Cuba. Page 2.

PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL



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**DECOLONIZE PUERTO RICO**



Put the U.S. on trial OCT 27



# Days of Action demand end to blockade of Cuba

By Cheryl LaBash  
Washington, D.C.

The 2018 Days of Action to End the U.S. Blockade of Cuba concluded here on Sept. 28. The week's program included an afterschool discussion in a Washington, D.C., high school; meetings at two local universities; visits to congressional offices; discussions on two popular, progressive radio programs; and two documentary films at a downtown multiplex cinema, which drew a full house.

One film was a timely new production, "¡Lucha Sí!," about the struggle for public education in Puerto Rico. The other was "Maestra," the story of Cuba's 1961 literacy campaign. These movies, viewed side-by-side, zero in on an essential difference between capitalist and socialist economic systems through the lens of education.

Jinnette Morales Díaz, one of the three women directors of "¡Lucha Sí!," traveled from Puerto Rico for the discussion. Her daughter attends a special-needs program that was at risk of closing after Hurricane María struck, but was saved when Morales took the extreme measure of going on a hunger strike to demand the school reopen.

Tears came to Morales' eyes when she learned about Cuba's enormous campaign and struggle to teach people to read and write in the early years of the revolution. Now, in the 21st century, Puerto Rico is fighting to keep schools open. Meanwhile, the powerful U.S. tries to make education a business.

Jennifer Wager, another director of "¡Lucha Sí!," spoke also as a teacher whose New Jersey school had been threatened with closing. Wager also directed last year's "Dare to Dream," about U.S. students at Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine. She called for international solidarity to help Puerto Ricans defend their education system.

The audience received a special treat when Norma Guillard, who was in town visiting friends, joined the after-film question-and-answer period. Guillard is one of the women in the film "Maestra," who shares her experiences as a 15-year-old during the 1961 literacy campaign and discusses the campaign's impact on her later life.

Guillard's careers included teaching mathematics, learning the Russian language and becoming a psychologist — all through Cuba's education system.

Guillard commented on the shared colonial history of Puerto Rico and Cuba, saying that in the Caribbean those islands are regarded as two wings of the same bird. In the case of education, one wing is broken, while the other — the Cuban wing — is strong and soaring high. In 1959, the Cuban revolution broke the island free from U.S. imperialism.

Catherine Murphy, writer and director of "Maestra," moderated the panel. Murphy participated in many of the week's community engagements, sharing knowledge she'd gained from more than a decade of work on the film.

The literacy campaign shown in "Maestra" developed into an adult literacy teaching model "Yo Sí Puedo" (Yes I Can). It's now used in 30 countries to teach how to read in many languages, including Indigenous languages and English. The late Dr. Leonela Relys Díaz, who was a 14-year-old brigadista during the 1961 campaign, led the development of a radio literacy program in Haiti. Then, at the request of historic Cuban leader Fidel Castro, she worked to adapt this program for television.

Two doctors from the U.S. who are graduates of Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine contributed to the week's theme. "In Cuba, education is a national priority. In the U.S., education is under attack," stated Dr. Elizabeth Arnold and Dr. Eduardo Alvarado. Instead of learning in the competitive system practiced in the U.S., they learned medicine through the Cuban teaching model, where the goal is for everyone to succeed.

The International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity initiated the 2018 Days of Action, its fourth such effort in Washington, D.C. This work was spearheaded in the U.S. by Alicia Jrapko. The committee aims, first of all, to reach out to new audiences about Cuba's contributions and the need to end the U.S. genocidal blockade. Short summaries and photos of the 2018 events are posted on its website: [tinyurl.com/y7nj5ljd](http://tinyurl.com/y7nj5ljd).

The movie "Maestra" is now available with your library card through the free streaming service Kanopy.com. □

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

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending 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

## Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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# Buffalo community demands Justice for Pito!

Three Black and Brown men have been shot to death by Buffalo police since last year, and the community is outraged. A rally to demand #JusticeForPito was held in front of Buffalo's City Hall on Sept. 28. The family of Rafael "Pito" Rivera, the latest victim of killer cops, gathered supporters from community and activist groups and called for a continuing campaign — #cantstopwontstop — to force the police department to hold murdering cops accountable.

A video of the shooting clearly shows: "Pito was running away from police, who were running behind him," the family's

attorney, Steve Cohen, told Investigative Post. "They shot him in the back once. He fell and got up. They shot him in the back a second time. He fell down dead. ... There could be no interpretation of that video that [concludes] Mr. Rivera was pointing a gun at the police when he was shot [or that] ... he posed any danger to the police." (investigativepost.org, Sept. 14)

Family, community members and activists alike agree with Cohen's argument that "if the Buffalo police consider this a righteous shoot, then no one is safe." On Sept. 28, they affirmed that if there is no justice for Pito, there will be no peace!



— Report and photo by Ellie Dorritie

## 'Justice for Dre': Security kills Black student

By Takiyah Thompson  
Durham, N.C.

DeAndre Marquise Ballard, a 23-year-old North Carolina Central University student scheduled to graduate in May, went missing on the night of Sept. 17.

Friends and family began questioning his whereabouts when he didn't show up for class the next day. They began posting on social media, asking if the NCCU community had seen DeAndre.

It was not until Sept. 21 that NCCU's Chancellor Johnson O. Akinleye released an email saying DeAndre had "passed due to an incident." The announcement left the entire student body in shock, wondering what had happened to DeAndre.

His mother, Ernisha Ballard, remembers him as someone who "loved God. He loved his friends, and he loved his fam-

ily." (heraldsun.com, Sept. 24) A "young visionary." DeAndre was a member of Bon Vivant, a fashion society on campus. He was also an active member of 100 Black Men. He was an athlete and he loved football.

It wasn't until Sept. 24, six days after he was killed that local news revealed DeAndre's cause of death: He was shot to death by an armed guard at an off-campus housing complex, Campus Crossing.

Though Campus Crossing has no official contractual ties to NCCU, the connection is clear. Campus Crossing benefits from the continuing overflow of NCCU students. Due to growing neoliberal policies in public education, the NCCU administration has increasingly diverted its student body from public and campus resources to multiple private firms whose sole concern is profit — not valuing the

lives of Black students.

Campus Crossing is an apartment complex located less than three miles from NCCU. A majority of residents at the complex attend NCCU, and NCCU even contracts for a transportation company to bus students to and from the housing complex. In the United States, higher education is run as a business and NCCU is no exception.

In an era of rising tuition rates, debilitating loan debt and hidden costs built into students earning degrees, NCCU administrators run their campus like a profit-making business. In their cost-benefit analysis, it seems they have chosen to conceal the facts of DeAndre Ballard's death. The truth is bad for NCCU's bottom line; it is bad for Campus Crossing's bottom line.

DeAndre's family has still received

no answers from police and no support from NCCU. On Sept. 27, NCCU issued a second statement, this time labeling DeAndre's homicide a "tragic" incident, refusing to even acknowledge his cause of death.

Instead of offering support, NCCU is opting instead to try to distance itself from and skirt its responsibility to DeAndre Ballard, his family and the entire Black community. Instead of placing DeAndre Ballard's killing within the larger context of police violence, NCCU is attempting to decontextualize and depoliticize it.

Activists from Workers World Party and a broader coalition of organizations have organized in support of DeAndre, in support of the truth and against the neoliberalization of higher education that treats Black lives as just another expense to be itemized. □

## Bosses' greed cited in Mass. gas disaster

By Workers World Boston bureau

Oct. 1 — An explosion violently shook a Lawrence, Mass., home off its concrete foundation on the evening on Sep. 13. The blast destroyed the structure, badly injured the people inside and killed 18-year-old Leonel Rondon of Lawrence when bricks landed on his car just outside the demolished home.

Simultaneously, one mile away, the upper floor of an apartment building burst into flames, destroying multiple homes and exposing residents to harmful smoke and burns.

Seconds later, another explosion rocked a building in North Andover, one town over. Then another a few miles to the south. Then yet another.

The cascade of fire and destruction stemmed from natural gas lines operated by Columbia Gas of Massachusetts.

Hundreds of disaster responders battled 10-alarm blazes and dozens of smaller fires and explosions. Local officials ordered an evacuation, and the power utility, National Grid in Massachusetts, which is unaffiliated with Columbia Gas, cut power to 18,000 homes and structures, fearing any spark might ignite more leaked gas.

Overnight at shelters, people congregated to find emergency food and beds, charge their phones and share information about who was counted safe, who was missing and who might be injured.

By dawn on Sept. 14, an estimated 85 fires, gas leaks and explosions were reported. About two dozen people were admitted to hospitals for injuries. Thousands of now-homeless Merrimack Valley residents were told they could not return home until their address was listed as safe on their city or town's website.

Initially, authorities reported that this would take only hours or days. However, now after two weeks, it seems more likely that the process of inspecting homes may take several more weeks to complete.

Once home, residents must contact their utility company to request restored service, which for many will mean no heat until well into the coldest months.

### Bosses put profit before prevention

Many area residents reported the unmistakable odor of mercaptan, a natural gas additive, in the air during the disaster.

Earlier in the morning of Sept. 13, Columbia Gas had issued a service notice announcing repairs and "upgrades." This included overdue gas pipe replacements at nine locations in the same communities hit by gas leaks and explosions later that day.

Though an investigation has yet to report precise findings about the cause of the explosions, community groups, organized utility workers, environmental and Indigenous rights activists and other experts alike voiced outrage that this problem was likely rooted in preventable overpressurization of many miles of outdated gas lines owned and maintained by Columbia Gas. This was confirmed when the federal agency handling the investigation announced its inquiry will focus on overpressurized gas lines, pressure sensors and pipe inspections protocols.

### USW utility workers locked out

Among community members angry about the preventable disaster are more than 1,100 Greater Boston Area gas utility workers in United Steelworkers Locals 12003 and 12012, who have been locked out by National Grid in Massachusetts since late June. National Grid PLC, head-

quartered in London, is a transnational utility company, among the 300 largest publicly traded companies in the world, and the largest gas utility in Massachusetts. Rather than dedicate its vast resources to improve safety, the company wields its record profits to further investment in pipelines and fracked gas and to push an agenda of union busting that reverberates across the industry to smaller companies like Columbia Gas.

During the National Grid lockout, now entering its fourth month, company managers, supervisors and scab contractors hired by National Grid — dubbed "National Greed" by the labor movement — are conducting repairs at an unsafe, unprecedented breakneck pace, while trained union workers hold pickets and other actions to draw support to end the lockout.

Over the summer, locked-out USW teams monitored work sites where strikebreakers were assigned to repair work under dangerous conditions. Video footage shared on social media calls public attention to incidents in which workers are seen in gas line trenches as powerful excavator machine shovels dig perilously close around them. In another captured video, chemical runoff is seen contaminating a coastal area, the direct result of failure of a repair crew to set a haybale barrier around their gas repairs in a heavy storm.

At least one company supplying strike-breaking labor to National Grid during this lockout has been linked to the Merrimack Valley catastrophe. It provided contract labor to a Columbia Gas service site leading up to the Sept. 13 gas disaster.

Organized utility workers want these unsafe contractors removed and union

workers restored to the job, where they can provide a positive solution to this crisis. But utility companies and their venture capitalist investors are more than willing to disregard safety in order to generate profit. They would rather hire more costly strikebreakers and pay out lawsuit settlements than prevent a disaster and the suffering it brings to communities.

### Workers' solution: solidarity, community control

In a powerful joint expression of solidarity with the people of the Merrimack Valley, gas workers from USW Locals 12003 and 12012 wrote: "Our 1,200 veteran natural gas workers are ready now to offer our experience and technical expertise during this crisis and to help safely restore service to the region."

Many supporters of the "end the lockout" campaign recognize the just fight of Local 12003 and 12012 against National Grid bosses for fair pay and benefits and the right to maintain and improve safety on the job and for the public.

USW Local 8751, the Boston Bus Drivers Union, issued a Sept. 15 statement connecting the offer made by locked-out workers to the Merrimack Valley community's demands for justice and accountability: "Honor USW's offer to provide disaster relief in the Merrimack Valley, now," the statement read.

"Corporate utility CEOs and their scab non-union contractors responsible for blowing up Lawrence and Andover should be arrested and jailed for negligent homicide, mass destruction of property, endangerment of communities, price-gouging, profiteering, and illegal unfair labor practices," the Local 8751 statement concluded. □



# Airport workers win!

By G. Dunkel  
New York

“We did this together, we fought for so long and we won!” Gertrudes Lopez-Ortiz, a cabin cleaner at Newark Liberty International Airport told the Local 32BJ news service. “Now it is a dream come true for me and my co-workers! I was here when the Port originally promised this in 2014. Our hard work, and the support of our brothers and sisters in 32BJ is paying off.” (seiu32bj.org, Sept. 27)

What the 14,000 workers organized by 32BJ at New York City’s airports — LaGuardia, JFK and Newark, three of the busiest airports in the U.S. — won is a minimum wage of \$19 an hour by 2023. Their current contract establishes medical insurance, days off, fair scheduling, but not minimum wages.

This wage will be reached in stages. On Nov. 1, the minimum will be \$13.60 an hour for workers in New York, up from \$13, and \$12.45 an hour at New Jersey’s Newark Liberty, up from \$10.45. The Port Authority (PANYNJ) used its power to impose the new schedule on the sub-contractors that supply services like baggage handling, aircraft cleaning, wheelchair pushing and terminal cleaning.

The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union President Stuart Appelbaum, UNITE HERE Local 100 President Bill Granfield and RWDSU Local 1102 President Alvin Ramnarain responded in a joint statement: “We enthusiastically support the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey’s new wage resolution. ... Service workers at La Guardia, JFK and Newark Liberty are key to the success and security of our region’s airports.”



PHOTO: 32BJ

32BJ President Hector Figueroa said airport workers deserve everything they’ve worked and fought for. His union conducted a series of one-day strikes and protests at the three airports.

“Airport workers are on the front lines of ensuring safety and improving services at our airports. They greet passengers, clean the terminals and airplanes,

and load bags into planes,” said Figueroa in a statement.

This victory shows that the fight for \$15 and a union is still strong. The PANYNJ had to extend higher wages to all the workers to keep nonunionized workers from joining a union, which would give them an \$8/hour raise. □



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

## Education workers march on Wall St.

By G. Dunkel  
New York

More than 500 workers marched from the Stock Exchange to 100 Wall Street on Sept. 27 to demand a fair contract for the 30,000 workers the Professional Staff Congress, American Federation of Teachers Local 2334, represents at the City University of New York (CUNY). Most of the marchers were members of the PSC, but there were contingents from Service Employees Local 32BJ, the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, the New York Public Interest Research Group and the Fast Food Workers Organizing Committee.

It was a militant march, with a brass marching band and chants of “Education is a right! Fight, fight, fight!” “Education is a right! Strike, strike, strike!” and “No contract! No peace!”

The PSC’s main demand is to increase

the pay for adjuncts from \$3,200 a course to \$7,000, which will give them a living wage in the New York area. It is also demanding a fully funded 5 percent raise for the other CUNY workers it represents.

The march went to the offices of Bill Thompson, chair of CUNY’s Board of Trustees and chief administrative officer at Siebert Cisneros Shank & Co., an investment bank located at 100 Wall Street.

At the rally, held in front of Thompson’s office as the workers in the area streamed past, PSC officers pointed out that while Wall Street made \$25 billion in profits last year, CUNY’s budget was \$3 billion — to educate 275,000 enrolled students. The money is there on Wall Street; more of it should be spent on social needs, like public higher education.

Close to 40 percent of CUNY’s students were born outside the mainland U.S. Fifty-four percent have household incomes of less than \$30,000, and 38 percent

have incomes less than \$20,000. They deserve the same quality of education as New York City’s Columbia University students, whose median family income is \$151,000. Only 3 percent of Columbia students come from poor families that make less than \$40,000 a year.

The PSC’s 30,000 members are ready to fight for the raises and investment needed to ensure an intellectually rich college education for CUNY students.

“By failing to invest adequately in CUNY,” said PSC President Barbara Bowen, “New York is making a policy decision not to invest in the future of hundreds of thousands of working-class, poor and middle-class students. This rich city, in this rich state, must do better. CUNY needs competitive salaries that would allow the university to keep the talented, committed faculty and staff students need. And CUNY’s underpaid adjuncts need wage justice.” □

## CUBA, VENEZUELA Leaders embraced at int’l rally

Continued from page 1

going to Harlem because that’s where my best friends are.” At the Hotel Theresa, President Castro held meetings with Malcolm X, among others.

When Fidel Castro again traveled to the U.N. General Assembly in 2000, he spoke to a huge rally at Riverside Church. There, he announced the opening of a medical school in Havana, Cuba — the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM).

This Cuban medical school offers scholarships to those of limited means. Its only stipulation is that the graduates should return to their home countries to practice in underserved communities. Since then, the school has trained 28,500 physicians from 103 countries.

Special mention was made of Fidel’s friend, the late Rev. Lucius Walker, who initiated the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization. This U.S. organization receives applications to attend the medical school in Cuba. His daughter, Gail Walker, continues that work as executive director of IFCO.

At the beginning of the program, a large contingent of U.S. graduates from ELAM welcomed the new Cuban president to the Riverside meeting. Two young doctors — Joaquín Morante, a pulmonary care physician practicing at Montefiore hospital, and Sitembile Sales, an internist



Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel.

at a local health clinic serving the building and janitorial union Service Employees, Local 32BJ — thanked Cuba for its commitment to train young people for the benefit of those most in need.

Dr. Sitembile Sales provided a brief account of their endeavors, including “to improve birthing outcome; expand health care for the homeless; develop and improve primary services to transgender or gender non-conforming communities.”

Dr. Joaquín Morante talked about Cuba’s international campaign of medical care. He said that doctors trained in Cuba were able to do relief work in Puerto Rico after Hurricane María.

Among the audience was a delegation from a nurses’ union whose t-shirts were emblazoned with demands for solidarity with Puerto Rico.

‘¡Cuba sí, bloqueo no!’

President Díaz-Canel denounced “the unjust blockade that the U.S. has imposed



Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Moros

on us for almost 60 years,” a blockade that constitutes an obstacle to the development of the Cuban people and has caused huge deprivation to Cuban families. There were ongoing chants of “¡Cuba sí! ¡Bloqueo no!” throughout the program.

He said that Cuba is “a small country not rich in financial resources. ... We are sharing what we have — not giving away our leftovers.”

Above all, “our efforts of sharing and sacrifice over several decades have had an impact in several continents.” Since the revolution, 42,000 Cuban doctors, engineers, agronomists and sports professionals have provided training in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The “Yo Sí Puedo” teaching method has been used in 30 countries and has taught 10 million people to read.

He said Cuba’s greatest contribution was to support “African liberation movements, safeguarding Angola sovereignty, fighting for the independence of Namibia and providing a demolishing blow to



PHOTOS: LETICIA MARTINEZ

Drs. Joaquín Morante and Sitembile Sales, who both trained at Cuba’s School of Medicine (ELAM).

apartheid South Africa’s war machine.

“Cuba comes to the U.N. General Assembly to promote cooperation and solidarity as opposed to threats, competition, racism and selfishness — with the authority of a country which turns words into concrete actions.

“Those keeping peace in suspense by expanding arsenals with increasingly sophisticated weapons, promoting conflicts, threatening invasions” are increasing the suffering of those who bear the cost of wars.

Cuba’s position is “total disarmament and international solidarity to cooperate with poor and exploited peoples.”

Díaz-Canel expressed gratitude to people in the U.S., especially in the Cuban community, for their support of the Cuban 5 and Elián González.

“Chávez and Fidel are present. Long live the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela! Long live the Cuban Revolution! Long live the friendship between our peoples! Hasta victoria siempre!” □





## Solidarity with Dr. Blasey Ford

As the hearing on Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh ignited a firestorm of righteous anger, Western New York Resistance Revival Chorus, a community group promoting women's rights activism, put out a call for a speakout in solidarity with Dr. Christine

Blasey Ford and all victims/survivors of sexual assault. It was held in a busy Buffalo shopping area in the early evening on Sept. 27, right after the hearing. Songs and speakers quickly pulled in a large crowd.

— Report and photo by Ellie Dorritie

# Kavanaugh nomination exposes ruling-class crisis

By Sue Davis

Oct. 1 — The Sept. 27 Senate Judiciary Committee hearing about the current nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court could not have been more polarized. Calm, deliberate, earnest, cooperative, though admittedly terrified, Dr. Christine Blasey Ford testified in the morning. In contrast, during the afternoon, there was high drama as Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh alternated between entitled “angry-white-man” shouting about sectarian victimization — “revenge on behalf of the Clintons” — and tearfully pouting, obviously fearful of losing his upper-class power.

It was a TV reality show on steroids. The outcome is essentially a ruling-class struggle with deep ramifications for the 327 million people currently living in the U.S.

Will Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court by billionaire “predator in chief” Trump proceed after allegations by Dr. Blasey of a sexual assault by Kavanaugh during high school in 1982?

By the time of the hearing, many working and oppressed people had already lined up against Kavanaugh because of his anti-worker, anti-accessible health care and anti-reproductive justice stance. And hundreds of angry people, many women survivors of rape and sexual assault, marched around the halls of Congress and over to the Supreme Court to voice their anger and assert their rights against the white-male, ruling-class power structure that runs the U.S.

This class also prides itself on its social capital — its private schools; elite colleges and universities, with their closed fraternities and select drinking clubs that promote rape culture; and exclusive hunting, fishing, golf and country clubs that reek of the special advantages enjoyed by the white, moneyed 1% — as they exploit and oppress the other 99%.

Twenty-seven years ago, Anita Hill, a brilliant and brave Black woman, persisted with strong and powerful testimony against condescending, racist-sexist abuse when she reported on sexual harassment during the Clarence Thomas hearing conducted by all white male senators. The Sept. 29 New York Times quoted Hill on Kavanaugh's rage: “No female candidate for a Supreme Court position would ever have the license to speak with such irritation and fury, she said. ‘We still don't allow women to cry or be angry.’”

“Many of us are going to feel betrayed,” she added, if the Senate ultimately confirms Kavanaugh for a lifetime appointment to the highest court in the land.

### In-your-face confrontation stems the tide

Although many magazine, newspaper and other media reports have framed the hearing as “she said, he said,” the ramifications of the hearing range far beyond that sexist phrase, in ways that connect to the entire social, cultural, economic and class system in the U.S. What surfaced during that hearing is a split in

the ruling class, reflected in the different roles played by Senate Republicans and Democrats.

The Republicans have done everything in their power to ram through Kavanaugh's appointment to the court before the midterm elections. They have tried at every turn to limit the hearing and control the outcome by putting up roadblocks to expanding the testimony as more women have come forward to name Kavanaugh as an abuser and as Kavanaugh's drinking and gang-rape buddies have been identified. As such, the Republicans on the Senate committee are doing the bidding of the white supremacist, warmongering, male-dominated, anti-LGBTQ, Trump-aligned wing of the ruling class.

The Democrats, though just as wedded to patriarchal, imperialist, elitist capitalism, have played a more moderating role in their obvious support for Dr. Blasey. Looking for a way to reap victory in the November congressional elections, they have commended her courage and bravery in coming forward to “do her civic duty.” They have insistently called for an FBI investigation to delve into Kavanaugh's behavior and character.

What ultimately made the Republicans cave and call on Trump to order an FBI investigation was an incident involving Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.). He had announced the morning of Sept. 28 that he would support the Kavanaugh nomination to get it out of committee and onto the Senate floor for the final vote. But then this politician, who is not running for office in the midterm election, was backed into the corner of an elevator by two women rape survivors, Ana Maria Archila and Maria Gallagher. A video of their confrontation of Flake went viral.

First Archila chastised him for supporting Kavanaugh: “What are you doing, sir?”

Then Gallagher asserted: “You are telling all women that they don't matter, that they should just stay quiet because if they tell you what happened to them, you are going to ignore them. That's what happened to me.”

Furious that Flake was avoiding eye contact with her, Gallagher demanded: “Look at me when I'm talking to you.”

Shortly after that angry educational reprimand, Flake announced he would not vote to confirm Judge Kavanaugh without an FBI investigation. Trump reluctantly authorized a week-long supplemental, superficial background check of four people. For the moment, the Republicans have backed off, as did Trump, despite having attacked the FBI many times over the last two years.

### ‘Pretending to look for the truth’

A number of corporate media sources have questioned how this FBI investigation — limited by time and number of interviewees — will expose any additional information about Kavanaugh's sexual abuse, blatant misogyny and flagrantly sexist behavior.

In a Sept. 30 New York Times column, Maureen Dowd wrote: “The hope that the FBI will save the day may be misplaced. In the case of Anita Hill, agents were deployed by Republicans to help smear her. ... But at least we have a few more days to pretend to look for the truth.”

But working and oppressed people need to know the truth about the FBI. The FBI is a ruthless tool that the ruling class uses to enforce state power.

Referring to both the FBI and the CIA in a July 25 WW article, Fred Goldstein wrote: “These agencies are two of the greatest enemies of the workers and oppressed at home and abroad. The FBI has infiltrated and framed up generations of communists, socialists, African-American civil rights organizations and liberation groups. It has hunted them down on their jobs and in their homes, imprisoned and even killed them.”

Since the hearing and the announcement of the FBI investigation, big business media have been speculating about their impact on the midterm elections. Will the Republicans' begrudging, last-minute call for the FBI help or hinder voting by Trump's misogynist base or by women? Did the Republicans effectively hoodwink women voters by hiring an experienced sex crimes prosecutor to interrogate Dr. Blasey? That was a ploy to save the all-male Republicans from exposing the blatant sexist-racist bias they showed during their ruthless examination of Anita Hill.

Yet another question posed by the ruling-class media is: Will Kavanaugh's temper tantrum and tears — a display of “white-male-victim” behavior often voiced by Trump — disqualify him from the judicial arm of the federal government — the one out of three branches of the state that is supposedly sacrosanct and above all “impartial”?

Supreme Court justices must present themselves as nonpartisan and above reproach. Yale law professor Judith Resnik speculated that Kavanaugh's antics at the hearing “could leave the Supreme Court ‘under a cloud of politics and scandal from which it would not recover for decades.’” (NY Times, Sept. 29)

It's possible Kavanaugh's nomination may be a bust, even by capitalist “democratic” standards.

### Watershed moment in fighting sexist-racist patriarchy

Reactions to the hearing and its aftermath are showing how pivotal these may be in the ensuing struggle against sexual abuse.

The Sept. 9 Sacramento Bee observed: Kavanaugh “looked like an entitled, privileged white male, whining because he's unaccustomed to losing anything — much less a lifetime appointment to the nation's highest court that he always expected to get.”

Later the article opined: “That Republicans probably will confirm Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court despite what hap-

pened on Thursday [Sept. 27] says something about this country, namely that white male privilege still means a lot. But it also says something that so many Americans saw through his act.”

Hundreds of people reached out during the hearing to Planned Parenthood and the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network in record numbers. The former reported “more traffic on Thursday than all year,” while calls to RAINN jumped by 201 percent. (The Guardian, Sept. 30) An obvious conclusion is that there are many, many survivors — who are desperately in need of help and support.

How will this particular ruling-class crisis be resolved? Don't look for predictions here. It's too close to call. Will Trump triumph or will he be forced to pick another nominee? It's possible that squeaky-clean Judge Amy Barrett could be next in line. Her racist, sexist, anti-LGBTQ, anti-worker, pro-ruling-class credentials are equally conservative. A Catholic, Barrett is on record as being anti-abortion.

Corporate media are speculating non-stop on the midterm elections. But the question of what that reflects goes much deeper than the impact of this congressional hearing. To begin with, millions of people of color, those living in rural areas, the incarcerated and the formerly incarcerated, as well as undocumented immigrants, have been closed out of all elections by right-wing, anti-voter initiatives. They are not allowed to vote or have lost that right. That's proof the continued racist repression of voting rights invalidates the legitimacy of “democratic elections” in the U.S.

But one thing is certain: The violent crime of sexual assault has been dramatically revealed, and it is now firmly planted in the public arena. There is no going back. Ford's narrative has brought stark attention to the existence of sexual abuse and violence against women in all realms of life.

Women survivors can only move forward on all fronts, their arms linked with comrades of other genders in united resistance with all those who have suffered the brutal violence of patriarchy, racism and capitalist oppression. This is the path of solidarity needed to smash the capitalist state to smithereens and create a new socialist society.

Kathy Durkin contributed research to this article. Davis wrote three previous WW articles on Kavanaugh: “Kavanaugh is no friend to workers,” Aug. 9; “Trump nominated Kavanaugh to overturn legal abortion,” Aug. 16; and “Liar Kavanaugh has got to go!,” Sept. 27.



EVERY STRUGGLE IS A WOMAN'S STRUGGLE

From the pages of Workers World newspaper workers.org/books



## WORKERS WORLD editorial

### PUERTO RICO

# Strengthen the struggle Oct. 27

Every struggle against injustice grows stronger when we join with others to fight it.

On Oct. 27 there will be a historic chance to strengthen the struggle for Puerto Rico by attending — in person or by livestream — the International Tribunal on U.S. Colonial Crimes in Puerto Rico. ([puertoricotribunal.org](http://puertoricotribunal.org))

Since 1898, when it first invaded Puerto Rico during the war with Spain, U.S. imperialism has occupied, colonized and economically exploited the island of Puerto Rico and its people. Washington has blocked Puerto Rico's people from deciding their own path. Most recently, U.S. banks and financial exploitation companies, through the U.S.-imposed PROMESA act, have used the 2017 catastrophe of Hurricane Maria to loot what remains of the island's resources.

The Tribunal's role exposing this 120-year-long struggle is important for all workers and oppressed peoples in the U.S. This is especially true because so much of the capitalist assault on Puerto Rico parallels the assault on workers in the U.S. Supporting the people of Puerto Rico means supporting your own struggles. It involves the same enemy.

For instance, North Carolina activists highlighted the recent devastation there during Hurricane Florence as Duke Power's coal-ash landfill flooded communities with poison and pollution. In Puerto Rico, activists have been battling coal ash since 2004, including during Hurricane Maria. Applied Energy Systems and its affiliates have dumped more than 4 million tons of coal ash on the island. ([tinyurl.com/y9h5z6me](http://tinyurl.com/y9h5z6me))

What an opportunity for environmentalists to unite in breaking the hold of power companies that poison the environment!

Puerto Rico's teachers have been fighting to stop the U.S.-imposed Fiscal Control Board — whose goal is paying off bank loans — from attacking teacher seniority, privatizing public community schools and failing to repair schools damaged by last year's hurricanes.

Rank-and-file teachers in the U.S. who have led historic #Red4Ed strikes and walkouts of students, schools and communities have much in common with Puerto Rican teachers. Uniting with the struggle on the island would amplify the power of all education workers.

Other shared struggles include the fight in many cities in the U.S., like Detroit, against the takeover of local autonomy by financial “boards” whose goal is to strip city services to repay bank loans.

Among the many distinguished supporters of the Tribunal is 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.

His support highlights the issue that is most central to the Tribunal — how to build a people's campaign in solidarity with the Puerto Rican people to end their colonial status and achieve self-determination and justice.

The Tribunal gives all activists a chance to gather our strength and strategize for justice. Right now those reading these lines can endorse and donate in support at [puertoricotribunal.org](http://puertoricotribunal.org).

On Oct. 27, let's show up at the Tribunal — against racist arrogance, inhumane depredation, and colonizing, imperialist U.S. domination. Let's show up for Puerto Rico! □

## South Koreans press for peace treaty



WW PHOTO: INTERNATIONAL ACTION CENTER

Members of South Korean Peace Delegation with International Action Center supporters.

By Deirdre Griswold  
New York

The Trump administration continues to evade the biggest question looming over Korean-U.S. relations: When will Washington sign a peace treaty to end the Korean War?

Any talk of normalization of relations between the U.S. and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is meaningless when Washington won't even agree to discuss an end to a war that killed millions of Koreans and has lasted since 1950, despite an armistice agreement signed 65 years ago.

It is the continuation of this formal state of war and the U.S. military occupation of South Korea, along with annual war exercises that simulate an attack on the north, that have forced the DPRK to bolster its defense capabilities.

While Trump himself publicly blows hot and cold on the question of the DPRK, he has appointed some of the most vicious war hawks to top positions in his government.

John Bolton, who in February wrote a piece for the Wall Street Journal titled “The Legal Case for Striking North Korea First,” was named Trump's national security adviser in April.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who handles relations with the DPRK, recently spoke at the United Nations advocating harsher economic sanctions on that far-north country, which would deprive it of

fuel this winter. Many such attempts in the past by the U.S. to starve and freeze the Korean people into submission have failed.

But the Cold War attitudes at the top don't reflect the realities on the ground. The Korean people, divided since 1945, have been working toward peace and reunification for decades. This was made spectacularly clear to the world at this year's winter Olympic games in South Korea, when athletes from the north received an ecstatic welcome as they joined their southern compatriots in a joint parade under one flag.

### South Korean Peace Delegation in N.Y.

Representing this strong movement, a South Korean Peace Delegation recently visited New York City to attend the opening of the United Nations General Assembly. They called on the U.N. to help build permanent peace on the Korean peninsula by declaring an end to the Korean War and suspending the sanctions against the DPRK.

During their stay, members of the delegation spoke on Sept. 25 to a special forum at the city's Solidarity Center. It was chaired by Sara Flounders of the International Action Center, who welcomed the delegation as representing “the hopes and aspirations of 60 million Korean people for peace and reunification.” She then explained that they spoke for “many groups who have united to end the war and sanctions, and sign the peace treaty.”

*Continued on the next page*

## Indigenous leader exposes U.S.-backed attacks in Philippines

The following testimony was presented at the International Peoples' Tribunal on economic, political and social crimes against the people of the Philippines. The tribunal took place Sept. 18-19 in Brussels, Belgium. To read about the tribunal, go to [tinyurl.com/y9jn8mxq/](http://tinyurl.com/y9jn8mxq/). For the full testimony, go to [workers.org](http://workers.org).

I am Pya Macliing Malayao, a member of the council of leaders of SANDUGO, the Movement of the Moro and Indigenous Peoples for Self-Determination. I am also secretary general of Katribu Kalipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas, or Katribu. Katribu is the national alliance of indigenous peoples' organizations in the Philippines. It was founded in 1987 in response to escalating violation of our collective rights to our ancestral lands and self-determination.

I am an Igorot from the Bontok tribe in Mt. Province. Under the U.S.-Duterte regime, I was a victim of a frustrated killing [attempted murder] and illegal arrest during the violent dispersal of a protest action by Moro and indigenous peoples in front of the U.S. Embassy in Manila demanding an independent foreign policy.

The indigenous peoples comprise approximately 15 percent of the country's

total population. They are composed of more than 100 major groups, a majority of which are in Mindanao, collectively called Lumad; the rest are in different parts of Luzon and the Visayas. The Moro people are 13 ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines, most of whom embraced Islam and fiercely resisted Spanish and U.S. colonialism. They comprise five percent of the Philippine population and are found mainly in Central Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

The Moro and indigenous peoples face the distinct problem of national oppression, the systematic and institutionalized denial and violation of our right to self-determination — to freely pursue our social, economic and cultural development and determine our political status.

National oppression instigated by the state and the ruling elite includes the historical denial of our territorial rights; misrepresentation and subversion of our socio-political systems; institutionalized discrimination; Christian chauvinism and Islamophobia; commercialization of culture; social neglect or denial of basic services; and fascist attacks and militarization.

We have launched legal mass struggles for self-determination and national democ-

racy, as well as armed struggle. We use our traditional defense systems and participate in the armed resistance for self-determination waged by the Communist Party of the Philippines, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Moro National Liberation Front, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement and even rising extremist groups.

Under the prevailing neoliberal economic policies, the territories of Moro and indigenous peoples are encroached by big foreign corporations, bureaucrats, local businesses, and the government itself. This has led to further destruction of our sacred ancestral sites, poverty, displacement and loss of our ancestral territories.

To ensure full control over these ancestral territories and their resources, President Rodrigo Duterte continued implementing the U.S. war on “terror” against the Bangsamoro and indigenous peoples. He expanded the counterinsurgency programs of past regimes through Operation Plan Kapayapaan, a program patterned after the U.S. Counterinsurgency Guide.

### Duterte, Trump work hand in hand

Following the dictates of the U.S. imperialists, the Duterte regime has committed to support Operation Pacific Eagle



Monica Moorehead, a juror at the Tribunal, with Pya Macliing Malayao, a witness representing the Indigenous Bontok People.

Philippines, a U.S. counterinsurgency program that also targets the Bangsamoro. The Duterte regime further intensified its repression of the Moro and Lumad by its all-out war and martial law in Mindanao.

The Duterte regime continued the National Internal Security Program Application on Indigenous Peoples and the Indigenous Peoples Centric Approach in its counterinsurgency program. These focus in particular on the role of indigenous communities in neutralizing insurgency in the countryside.

By “neutralizing” our communities, the Armed Forces of the Philippines hopes to cripple the expansion and mobility of

*Continued on the next page*



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Members of the delegation, who ranged from young workers to veteran fighters against South Korean military dictatorships, have been key organizers of the massive movement, called the Candlelight Revolution, that swept the corrupt Park Geun-hye dictatorship out of power last year. They stressed that it was this mass, disciplined and militant resistance that had encouraged the current government of Moon Jae-in to move toward better relations with the north.

Moon's efforts are very popular in the south. The delegation members pointed out that while his approval rating dipped somewhat because of the economy, "it rose again after the joint North-South declaration," and that "Moon's new economic policy is based on improving relations" with the DPRK.

The Korean War and the ongoing U.S. military occupation of South Korea have taken place in the name of the United Nations. But as one Peace Delegation speaker said: "The United Nations has no right to intervene in North-South issues. The U.N. is actually the U.S. in a different mask. The U.N. Command should be dissolved."

Another member said the so-called U.N. command "is not a U.N. authority. It's really a U.S. authority."

When people in the audience congratulated the speakers' courage in standing up to much repression over the years, one of the seasoned fighters replied: "It's not important how much repression. What's important is how much we can do to achieve peace and reunification." □

*Continued from page 6*

the New People's Army in remote areas. Duterte takes an interagency approach by actively involving government agencies in the counterinsurgency program in specific regions and on the national level, including agencies on the indigenous peoples, social welfare, education, justice and others.

The communities and territories targeted for counterinsurgency and economic programs are severely affected by militarization. Among the strategies employed is the recruitment of indigenous peoples into paramilitary groups, especially in the Lumad communities in Mindanao.

These paramilitary groups sow terror, divisiveness and disintegration of traditional socio-political structures in our communities. Other manifestations of the counterinsurgency program focused on indigenous peoples are the filing of trumped-up charges against indigenous community leaders; destruction of community livelihood and facilities; and forcible closure of Lumad community schools, which express our right to self-determination.

Threats and harassment are made against teachers, parents and students. On Sept. 5, 2017, Obello Bay-ao, a Manobo youth leader and grade-7 student at the Salugpongan Lumad community school, was killed by paramilitary group members who were recruited, armed and trained by state forces.

When we organized an action demanding an independent foreign policy in front of the U.S. Embassy in October 2016, the police dispersed our protest because they didn't want to be embarrassed before U.S. embassy officials.

Duterte's all-out war, war on "terror" and imposition of martial law in Mindanao have resulted in massive violations of the Moro and indigenous peoples' rights and international humanitarian law.

The siege of the city of Marawi has resulted in the devastation of the principal center of the Moro people, causing their diaspora into other regions and loss of their cultural heritage. Other Moro communities are consistently militarized under the Duterte regime. From July 2016 up to the end of May 2018, at least 15,757

# Capitalist vultures rip off Puerto Rico

By Deirdre Griswold

Capitalist vultures see the wounded country of Puerto Rico as a cash cow and are planning to exploit the awful damages to its people and property from Hurricane Maria for as much profit as they can squeeze out.

A case in point is the Wall Street consulting firm of McKinsey & Co., which has a contract to "advise" the government of Puerto Rico on a financial overhaul of its debts.

According to an article in the Sept. 26 New York Times, this process "will determine how much money the bankrupt territory's creditors recoup on their

investments. The giant consulting firm has millions of dollars riding on the outcome. The reason: McKinsey owns bonds issued by Puerto Rico.

"That creates a potential conflict of interest between McKinsey's client, which wants to save as much money as possible, and McKinsey itself, which wants to make as much money as possible on the bonds."

Such a relationship during bankruptcy is unethical and illegal. But the U.S. Congress, which for the most part does the bidding of Wall Street, set up a special legal framework in the case of Puerto Rico's debt. It left out the rules that normally would compel disclosure of a conflict of interest.

McKinsey has so far received \$50 million in fees for its "advice." It owns millions more in bonds issued by Puerto Rico, and will press for their payment.

Puerto Rico has been a colony of the United States since it was grabbed from Spain in 1898. Countries are taken over and turned into colonies in order to be exploited. Puerto Rico is no exception. It has been exploited by U.S. capitalists — including the banks — for more than a century.

Puerto Rico owes the U.S. bankers nothing — not one cent. Especially at such a crucial time for the Puerto Rican people, progressives must demand: Cancel the debts and pay reparations for more than a century of exploitation! □

## GUATEMALA

# Indigenous-led protests rock Morales regime

By Sam Ordóñez

Sept. 23 — Big protests have rocked Guatemala in recent weeks against the decision of the Jimmy Morales government to suspend the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) and to bar the Colombian head of the commission, Iván Velásquez, from re-entering the country.

Popular mobilizations culminated in

evacuees have been reported in the province of Maguindanao alone.

U.S. imperialism under President Donald Trump actively supports the fascist Duterte regime by providing orientation, training, funds, arms and intelligence information to state forces. It also provides direct military intervention under the cover of one-sided treaties with the Philippine government. The U.S. government has extensive economic and geopolitical interests in the territories of the Moro and indigenous peoples. These areas host U.S. military camps, multinational oil exploration in the Sulu Sea and Liguasan Marsh, and foreign energy projects, mining and agribusiness plantations.

Trump said during his visit in November 2017 that the Philippines is "the most prime piece of real estate from the military standpoint." On August 31, the U.S. reaffirmed its support for Duterte's war on "terror," martial law and Oplan Kapayapaan by saying that the "U.S. Special Operations Forces will continue to assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Mindanao through support that helps AFP commanders in their fight against militants." U.S. support is to "increase intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities" of the AFP. Over the past three years the Philippines has been the biggest recipient of U.S. military aid in the Indo-Pacific region.

A recent 10-day series of airstrikes and indiscriminate bombings by the AFP in Maguindanao that was directed by U.S. Special Forces on the ground killed one civilian, severely wounded three and displaced over 7000 Moro people, including 400 children and 50 pregnant women. On Sept. 14, seven Tausug Moro youth farmers were tortured and massacred by the military in Sulu. In addition, Trump's Muslim Ban in the U.S. subjected our co-chairperson, Jerome Succor Aba, to torture by U.S. state forces in California.

The U.S.-Duterte regime is hell-bent on crushing any forms of resistance. Faced with these ethnocidal attacks, the Moro and indigenous peoples are even more determined to heighten our struggle for our collective and democratic rights. □

protests in several municipalities and universities, at celebrations of national independence and in a general strike on Sept. 20.

The Constitutional Court, the country's highest legal authority, declared unconstitutional the government's attempt to pass legislation granting Morales immunity from prosecution for electoral campaign finance fraud.

The CC blocked Morales' attack on the CICIG, holding decisively that the CICIG as an international institution could not be unilaterally suspended.

The so-called "Pacto de Corruptos" — the corrupt gang in Congress who represent reactionary oligarchs and the military — has morphed into a "Pacto de Golpistas" — coup plotters. Morales announced that he will not obey illegal orders, declaring that he will govern according to his own concept of legality.

### The CICIG and Latifundismo (the rule of the landlords)

Following its independence in 1821, Guatemala became part of Mexico until 1823. Like other Latin American nations developing in the shadow of the dominant U.S. and European powers, Guatemala has been governed by dictators, "caudillos," who were creoles of Spanish descent or mestizos of mixed origin.

The United States has intervened in Guatemalan politics since the days of the Monroe Doctrine in the early 1800s. Washington trained and funded the right-wing military which committed genocide against hundreds of thousands of Mayan Indigenous people, who, with the peasant movement, supported the left during the Civil War between 1960 and 1996.

For centuries creole oligarchs had stolen the lands of the Mayans to create huge plantations where the Indigenous peoples were virtually enslaved, producing sugar, coffee and bananas for the international market.

Military dictatorships protected the great landlords (latifundistas) who used the public treasury as their bank account.

The CICIG was installed by the United Nations in 2007 to combat corruption. Since its inception, the CICIG has been promoted by foreign powers, including the United States. The commission fights corruption primarily to create "stability," which imperialism now requires in the region. The imperialist powers demand a favorable environment for capitalism and want to stop migration to U.S. border states.

To fight corruption, the CICIG must confront the worst elements of Guatemala's ruling class: the military and politicians who commit genocide against the Mayan peoples.

The CICIG is not empowered to solve the country's fundamental social problems, such as latifundismo (the rule of the landlords), racism or assassinations of Indigenous leaders. Rejecting the alternative of a return to military dictatorship, the popular movement has stood up to defend the existing weak institutional system.

### Class differences in the fight against corruption

International communications media compare the mobilizations of recent weeks to those of 2015 that ended the government of Otto Pérez-Molina, the former corrupt servant of the oligarchy and the transnational corporations. The urban middle classes, fed up with the shameless theft of public funds, were the driving force in the 2015 movement.

Today it's the peasants, mainly Indigenous peoples, students and urban workers, who are in motion. Indigenous groups took the initiative. The Sept. 10 mobilization was called by the Mayan Kaqchikel population of Sololá; that of Sept. 11 by the Mayan K'iché people; and one on Sept. 12 by the Committee for Peasant Development. The various Mayan peoples and CODECA (Campesino Development Committee) filled the streets during the general strike and the protests on Sept. 15, which is Guatemala's Independence Day.

The 2015 movement aimed at removing a corrupt president, but did not seek fundamental change in Guatemalan society. This resulted in replacing one corrupt president with another. This movement did, however, create an opportunity for popular resistance to grow and continue the fight for basic human rights: land for peasants, better wages and social services.

CODECA and others are calling for a Popular and Plurinational National Constitutional Assembly as a way to advance the demands of the Guatemalan people.

This assembly would make five fundamental changes to the Constitution and the Electoral Law. The most important are setting limits on salaries of public officials in relation to the overall minimum wage, requiring consultations at the community level for approval of laws — and what most threatens the power of the oligarchy — political power with democratic representation for the 22 nationalities within Guatemala.

Before it goes into operation, it won't be known whether the Popular and Plurinational National Constituent Assembly is the solution to the challenges faced by the peoples of Guatemala. But what's certain is that in order to overcome the conditions that the country is now suffering, it is necessary to break the monopoly of power exercised by the oligarchy. □





## Pueblos originarios sacuden gobierno de Morales

By: Sam Ordóñez

23 de septiembre - En las últimas semanas se han visto grandes movilizaciones populares en Guatemala, provocadas por la decisión del gobierno de Jimmy Morales de suspender la Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (CICIG) y de negar acceso al país a Iván Velásquez, jefe de dicha comisión.

La decisión del gobierno viene mientras el partido de Morales, como también su hijo y su hermano, están bajo investigación por financiamiento electoral ilegal. La Corte de Constitucionalidad (CC), la más alta autoridad jurídica del país declaró inconstitucional un intento de pasar control de los antejuicios al Congreso.

Esto provocó la evolución del Pacto de Corruptos, compuesto por disputados, militares y oligarcas, en un Pacto de Golpistas. Morales declaró que no acatará ordenes ilegales, declarando su decisión de gobernar según su propio concepto de legalidad.

Poco después Morales tomó las decisiones en contra de la CICIG. La CC respondió claramente: siendo la CICIG cuestión internacional, no se podía suspender unilateralmente.

La movilización popular culminó en varios municipios y universidades declarando a Jimmy Morales como persona non-grata, en protestas de las celebraciones de independencia, y en un paro nacional el día 20 de septiembre.

### ¿Qué es la CICIG?

Desde su guerra de independencia, Guatemala, como muchos países latinoamericanos, ha sido gobernada por una

alianza de militares y una oligarquía descendiente de los colonos españoles.

Con el fin de enriquecerse vendiendo el azúcar, el café, los plátanos, y las otras "monarcas agrícolas" en los mercados internacionales, robaron las tierras que les quedaban a los pueblos indígenas y se introdujo el latifundismo; establecieron dictaduras militares, y usaron el tesoro público como cuenta bancaria para sus negocios.

La CICIG vino a Guatemala en 2007, impulsada por las Naciones Unidas supeuestamente para combatir la corrupción que ha infectado el país por siglos, con una breve interrupción a mediados del siglo pasado con los gobiernos de Juan José Arévalo y Jacobo Arbenz.

Desde sus inicios, la CICIG ha sido pagada por los poderes extranjeros, incluyendo a los Estados Unidos. Está claro que la comisión ha servido principalmente los intereses de estos países, combatiendo la corrupción para principalmente crear un clima de "estabilidad."

### ¿Qué significa la 'estabilidad' que desea la CICIG?

No significa un cambio de base en el país, mucho menos una revolución popular. Lo que buscaban los poderes imperialistas que crearon la CICIG es muy simple: un ambiente favorable para sus negocios, y de alguna forma frenar la migración hacia el norte en donde vemos los crímenes contra la humanidad que ocurren en los estados fronterizos de los Estados Unidos.

Pero para esto la comisión ha tenido que intentar realmente combatir la corrupción de la oligarquía, y ha tenido que enfrentarse a los peores elementos de la clase gobernante de Guatemala, los mil-

itares y políticos que en tiempos de la guerra civil llegaron al genocidio contra los pueblos maya. Hay que destacar sin embargo, el papel preponderante de los Estados Unidos en la guerra en Guatemala. Fueron los EUA quienes entrenaron los más brutales militares en tácticas contrainsurgentes en su famosa Escuela de las Américas.

La CICIG no puede, ni tiene intención de resolver los problemas sociales de base del país, como el latifundismo, el racismo o el asesinato de líderes indígenas. Pero dada la alternativa de una vuelta a las dictaduras militares del siglo pasado, no sorprende que el movimiento popular haya salido en defensa de la débil institucionalidad que existe.

### Cambio fundamental en la lucha contra la corrupción

En los medios de comunicación internacionales las movilizaciones de estas semanas se han comparado con las de 2015 que sacaron al gobierno de Otto Pérez-Molina, otro sirviente corrupto de la oligarquía y las transnacionales. Pero la diferencia es más profunda que simplemente buscar echar al presidente.

El movimiento de 2015 fue impulsado principalmente por las clases medias urbanas, hartas del robo descarado de los fondos públicos. Hoy las movilizaciones vienen de los pueblos indígenas, de las/os estudiantes, y de las/os trabajadores urbanos.

Una cosa queda clara: han sido las/os campesinos, principalmente indígenas, quienes han tomado la iniciativa en estas movilizaciones. La movilización del 10 de septiembre fue convocada por la

población maya kaqchikel de Sololá, el 11 por el pueblo maya k'iché, el 12 por el Comité de Desarrollo Campesino (CODECA). También CODECA y los varios pueblos mayas han estado presente en el paro nacional y en las protestas del 15 de septiembre (día de la independencia).

El movimiento de 2015 buscó la salida de un presidente corrupto, pero no buscaba un cambio de base en la sociedad guatemalteca, y por falta de cambio de base llegó al poder otro presidente corrupto. Pero también creó oportunidad para la resistencia popular en el país, que en los años siguientes pudo crecer y seguir luchando por los derechos básicos: tierra para los campesinos, mejores salarios, servicios sociales, etc.

CODECA y otros también alzan la demanda de una Asamblea Nacional Constituyente Popular y Plurinacional, como camino para avanzar las otras demandas de los pueblos guatemaltecos.

Esta Asamblea consiste en cinco cambios fundamentales en la Constitución y la Ley Electoral. Los principales entre ellos está el limitar los salarios públicos en relación con el salario mínimo, tomar en cuenta consultas comunitarias para la aprobación de leyes, y lo que más amenaza el poder de la oligarquía: representación participativa en la política de los 22 pueblos de Guatemala.

Si la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente Popular y Plurinacional es la solución a los retos que enfrentan los pueblos de Guatemala no se podrá saber sin antes ponerla en práctica. Pero lo que queda claro es que para salir de las condiciones que sufre hoy el país, hay que romper con el monopolio del poder que ejerce la oligarquía. □

## En una semana de acciones, crece el 'Tribunal de Descolonización de Puerto Rico'

Por Cheryl LaBash

A medida que el actual residente de la Casa Blanca aviva la ira al minimizar el creciente número de muertes en Puerto Rico por los huracanes María e Irma, la organización crece para llevar a los Estados Unidos a juicio por 120 años de delitos coloniales en Puerto Rico. El Tribunal Internacional para este propósito se reúne en la Iglesia Holyrood/Iglesia Santa Cruz en la ciudad de Nueva York el 27 de octubre.

Una semana nacional de acciones sobre Descolonizar Puerto Rico apoya los objetivos del Tribunal mediante la organización de eventos solidarios con las/os puertorriqueños que conmemoraron el primer aniversario del huracán María el 20 de septiembre y el primer levantamiento puertorriqueño por la independencia, el Grito de Lares, el 23 de septiembre.

Un día para defender la educación pública puertorriqueña se dio el 21 de septiembre, con un llamado masivo a la Secretaría de Educación de Puerto Rico, Julia Keleher (787) 759-2000 o tuiteando: @educacionPR, @SecEducacionPR.

Se exhortó a que apoyen al Tribunal durante la semana del 20 de septiembre, y luego continúen al Tribunal el 27 de oc-

tubre. Se insta a las/os partidarios a firmar y compartir la petición Descolonizar y pagar reparaciones a Puerto Rico ahora en bit.ly/PRSolidarity.

El pueblo de Puerto Rico ha luchado por su independencia desde el levantamiento del Grito de Lares el 23 de septiembre de 1868, hace 150 años. Los EUA marcaron al pueblo puertorriqueño con una ciudadanía oficial que oculta el estado colonial real del pueblo boricua. Esto les aleja de la solidaridad con los pueblos en lucha de América Latina y el Caribe, y les separa de las luchas de las comunidades inmigrantes en los EUA porque en la superficie las/os puertorriqueños "tienen documentos". Los huracanes Irma y María hace un año, retiraron esta falsedad y abrieron el camino a la solidaridad organizada con el pueblo de Puerto Rico.

Las/os convocantes del Tribunal incluyen a Rafael Cancel Miranda, un héroe puertorriqueño que, el 1 de marzo de 1954, junto con Lolita Lebrón, Irving Flores y Andrés Figueroa Cordero, dispararon contra el Congreso de los Estados Unidos para llamar la atención sobre el estatus colonial de Puerto Rico, que acababa de disfrazarse bajo el estatus de "Estado Libre Asociado"; Augusto Zamora, profesor

de derecho internacional y ex abogado de Nicaragua en la Corte Internacional de Justicia; Alejandro Torres Rivera, abogado laboral de Boricua y ex presidente del Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico 2016-2018; el activista viquense Ismael Guadalupe; Esperanza Martell, educadora, organizadora y artista de la paz y los derechos humanos; Padre Luis Barrios; Déborah Berman Santana, Ph.D.; Iris Colón Dipini, activista por la independencia de Puerto Rico, ciudad de Nueva York; Call to Action in Puerto Rico; Comités de la Resistencia Boricua; Colectivo Se Acabaron las Promesas; Comité Boricua Filadelfia-Camden; y el Centro de Acción Internacional.

Estas/os convocantes están respaldadas/os por una creciente lista de endosantes y colaboradores que se detallan en el sitio web PuertoRicoTribunal.org. Una pegatina descargable para el Tribunal también está disponible allí. □

### Enjuiciemos a EUA por crímenes coloniales contra PUERTO RICO

#DescolonizarPuertoRico

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