

Hotel workers unite in national strike

By Genevieve Lechat
Boston

Following the successful September strike of UNITE HERE hotel workers in Chicago, workers in ten cities with unionized hotel locations have taken near unanimous strike votes. These sites have recently been acquired by anti-union mega-chain Marriott International. Five thousand workers in Boston, Detroit, Oakland, San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose walked off the job the week of Oct. 3. Strikes in Hawaii, Seattle, Toronto and Vancouver are imminent. This is an unprecedented national coordination by the union and for the whole working class against a behemoth that has obtained a new property every 18 hours by buying out dozens of hospitality companies around the world — from big chains like Sheraton and Westin to smaller brands and independent operations. Since the purchase of Starwood and Protea, Marriott now owns 136 hotels in Africa and is constructing 65 more, for a total of holdings in 27 countries on the continent. Stateside, Marriott is out to bust the union and, like the Trump Organization, is the face of a complicated network of financiers and corporate interests that are mostly unknown to the public.

Workers take on behemoth Marriott

When housekeepers, cooks, bartenders and bellhops hit the picket line on Oct. 3, they knew there was much at stake. Marriott wants to outsource food service. Its deceptive “Green Choice” housekeeping program encourages guests to decline services, meaning fewer hours for workers. But in the end, they are cleaning dirtier rooms and getting more injuries, on top of seasonal layoffs during nonpeak months when their health insurance can be cut off.

And as the union’s campaign slogan, “One Job Should Be Enough,” suggests, the pay for workers isn’t enough as it is. According to Business Insider, the U.S. Labor Department reported in July 2017 that 7.6 million workers had to hold multiple jobs the month before. Hotel workers are barely able to pay for rent, food, daycare and health care, and often cannot make ends meet.

Meanwhile, Marriott International’s income more than doubled to \$1.37 billion between 2013 and 2017.

Ed Childs, chief shop steward for UNITE HERE Local 26 at Harvard University, told Workers World: “UNITE HERE’s national intervention against this accelerating acquisition machine has required a decade of organizing to align contract negotiations and prepare workers for the historic struggle of ten locals striking at once. Marriott wants to take [its] scheme to the world, making it a problem for the whole working class, but the union is also making international alliances.”

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Childs continued: “UNITE HERE has to win this struggle. The loss of this battle would be another blow to the union movement following several others. Janus v. AFSCME, the Supreme Court decision over the summer that effectively defunded the largest union in the U.S; right-to-work laws passed in former labor strong-

holds like Wisconsin and Michigan in the last few years that Wall Street and Washington want to see nationalized; and the attacks on immigrant union members through the termination of temporary protected status — these are a few of the weakening blows that have been aimed at our movement. UNITE HERE realizes unions
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Boston says, ‘Indigenous Peoples Day now!’

WW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

By Workers World Boston bureau

About 150 people participated in an Oct. 6 Boston rally and march demanding the city government end its celebration of Columbus Day and instead fully recognize the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day.

After a rally near Boston Common featuring Indigenous and Black speakers, the protesters marched to the nearby Ritz-Carlton, Boston, one of seven Marriott-owned hotels in Boston where UNITE HERE Local 26 workers are on strike. The Indigenous Peoples Day protesters joined the picket line to show solidarity and were met with great enthusiasm by the striking workers.

Chanting “City by city, town by town, We’re gonna tear Columbus Day down,” the marchers continued to a Christopher Columbus statue



Indigenous Peoples Day, Boston, Oct. 6.

guarded by Boston cops. Later that afternoon, signs were hung on the statue stating that Columbus was a genocidal slave trader who should not be honored.

After speakers bore witness to the destructive and painful settler colonialism experienced since 1492, demonstrators turned their backs

on the statue and faced Boston Harbor. They spoke about how “Water Is Life” for everyone and called out blessings to the water, each in their own language.

The Indigenous Peoples Day action was called by United American Indians of New England and IndigenousPeoplesDayMA.org. □

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San Diego

Historian honors C.L.R. James

By Gloria Verdieu
San Diego, Calif.

Professor Mychal Odom gave a historical talk marking the 80th anniversary of the publishing of C.L.R. (Cyril Lionel Robert) James’ book, “The Black Jacobins,” at the Central Library in downtown San Diego on Oct.1. “The Black Jacobins,” printed by the British publishing house Seckel Warburg in 1938, is a classic account of the Haitian rebellion of 1791-1803, the only successful slave revolt in modern world history.

After welcoming everyone, Marc Chery, former manager of the Malcolm X Library and current supervisor of the Literature, Language and History section of the Central Library, introduced Odom.

Odom began his talk by displaying an image of C.L.R. James taken in 1972 in San Diego at a Congress of African Peoples Conference. James’ presence in San Diego underscores the international reach of his work. He was a communist who participated in and supported all forms of Black Liberation struggles not only as a scholar but in the streets.

Odom began his presentation, speaking on incidents in the life of C.L.R. James that many may not know about; for example, James was a cricketer and an accomplished track and field athlete, who set a Trinidadian record in the high jump while at Queens Royal College from 1918 to 1922.

Odom spoke of other works of literature by James that chronicle the Haitian Revolution and led to the first printing of “The Black Jacobins.” James produced a play on the life of Toussaint L’Ouverture starring Paul Robeson. He wrote a pamphlet, “A history of Negro Revolt,” later retitled “A History of Pan-African Revolt,” followed by his masterpiece, “The Black Jacobins.”

Odom had a stack of books that he referenced as he spoke about the role of literature studies in producing C.L.R. James’ political ideology; one of the books he picked up was “What Is to Be Done” by Vladimir Lenin, the leader



WW PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU

Mychal Odom holding Lenin’s ‘What Is to Be Done?’ The book below is: ‘The Black Jacobins’ by C.L.R. James.

of the Russian Revolution, explaining that “What Is to Be Done” is also the title of a 19th century Russian novel about political and ideological struggle.

Everyone listened intently as Odom gave a historical, well-researched, thorough perspective of the continuous radical resistance of the enslaved Africans in Haiti and their continued fight for freedom, which resulted in Haiti declaring independence in 1804 after defeating what was the most powerful army of the day: the Grand Army of France.

Odom acknowledged all the organizations that supported this event, including Pillars of the Community, Unión del Barrio, the Friends of Malcolm X Library, Workers World Party, the Committee Against Police Brutality, and students and community members who took the time to come on a Monday evening to participate in this important discussion.

Odom asked everyone to take a moment of silence for Paul Pablo Aceves, a longtime member of Unión del Barrio, who dedicated his life to the many struggles in San Diego. Pablo Aceves had joined the ancestors the previous weekend.

The last 45 minutes of the meeting were open for questions and comments.

Professor Odom’s research emphasis is in the history of Pan-African and Black internationalist social movements. He is currently working on a book manuscript titled “From Southern California to Southern Africa: Trans-local Black Internationalism in Los Angeles and San Diego from Civil Rights to Anti-apartheid, 1960 to 1994.”

MUNDO OBRERO
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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

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

National Office
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
PO Box 18123
Atlanta, GA 30316
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
c/o Solidarity Center
2011 N. Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
443.221.3775
baltimore@workers.org

Bay Area
bayarea@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.286.6574
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
335 Richmond Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14222
716.883.2534
Buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
1105 N. Ashland Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60622
312.630.2305
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
detroit@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9970
durham@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Indiana
Indiana@workers.org

Madison
Madison@workers.org

Los Angeles
5278 W Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90019
la@workers.org
323.306.6240

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Pittsburgh
pittsburgh@workers.org

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
585.436.6458
rochester@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
SLC@workers.org

San Antonio, Texas
SanAntonioWWP@workers.org

San Diego
P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92163
sandiego@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org

Virginia
Virginia@workers.org

Washington, D.C.
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Washington, DC 20037
dc@workers.org

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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.

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Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
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Web: www.workers.org
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold

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Alberto García, Teresa Gutierrez, Carlos Vargas

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Portland, Ore., cops kill another Black man

By Lyn Neeley
Portland, Ore.

Police here shot another young Black man, Patrick Kimmons, about 10 times in the back on Sept. 30, killing him.

A witness, Ayan Aden, was parked at the scene with her boyfriend. They saw Kimmons run by and drop his gun. They heard the police yell “Stop!” and then immediately open fire as Kimmons continued running away from the cops. At an Oct. 1 vigil, Aden said, “The shooting was excessive. He was clearly running away and threw the gun away.” (oregonlive.com, Oct. 2)

Within days after the shooting, hundreds of people blocked traffic at the site of the killing and set up a memorial with signs, pictures of Kimmons, candles and flowers that line the block. All week, people have held a vigil for Kimmons. They have been chanting “Say his name! Patrick Kimmons!” and “Black lives matter!”

On Oct. 5, 200 angry protesters and

members of Kimmons’ family gathered near the memorial with signs reading “Police violence is white supremacy,” “Stop racist police terror” and “Resistance is happening now.” They marched through downtown Portland to condemn the killing.

Kimmons’ family spoke from the steps of the Justice Center demanding police accountability for the killing. Charles Kimmons, Patrick’s uncle, said, “We need to fight this all the way to the end. These cops need to be locked up.”

“How in the hell is it fair to shoot a man that is no longer a threat to you?” said another family member. “This brother was killed in cold blood by the spineless cop that pulled the trigger. How are you a threat when your back is turned? They have racism and hatred in their hearts.”

Teressa Raiford from Don’t Shoot Portland said of Kimmons, “He was a child, he was a father, he was a brother and he was a son.”



The family of Patrick Kimmons, Oct. 6.



PHOTO: JENELLE BARAJAS

At one point, a driver plowed through the march into a protester, pushing him around a park block. The protester was not injured. Protesters chased the car, screaming furiously at the driver.

Kimmons’ death was the third police shooting of an African-American man in Portland this year, and the second fatal shooting. Portland, with a population that is 6 percent African-American, has a history of racial profiling.

In contrast, a white man in Florence, S.C., after killing a Black cop and seriously injuring six other policemen, was not shot and killed by police. He and his son were brought in after a two-hour standoff in which he opened fire on cops with a rifle.

Protesters are angry that police have

not yet released forensic analysis or coronary reports on Kimmons’ death. They are demanding the truth from the two cops, Sgt. Garry Britt and Officer Jeffrey Livingston, who said they saw muzzle flashes and fired multiple times at a man who they say turned toward them holding a gun. The two cops are on paid administrative leave as police continue to investigate the shooting.

Kimmons’ mother, Letha Winston, asked why police had to shoot her son instead of arresting him. She has launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise money for his funeral and other expenses. □

Framed-up rapper released from prison

By M. Matsemela-Ali Odom

Anerae Brown, a 44-year-old rapper from Sacramento, Calif., was finally granted parole in September after 26 years behind bars. Brown is better known by his stage name, X-Raided. In 1992, at the age of 17, Brown and four other defendants were convicted for a gang-related shooting that left one woman dead.

In the early 1990s, at the dawn of Pete Wilson’s governorship, Sacramento, the capital of the state of California, was the home of a burgeoning gang epidemic. There was arguably nowhere with more gang activity than the South Sacramento neighborhood of Meadowview, where the local Crips and Bloods gangs battled each other.

It was during this moment that draconian “tough on crime” measures became common. Gang enhancements, mandatory sentencing and even municipal dress codes regulated gang participation.

Brown was prosecuted amidst this political culture.

Charged as an accomplice to murder, Brown was tried as an adult, allowed to testify in court. His lyrics were used as state’s evidence, despite being recorded likely a year before the deadly encounter. Sacramento County prosecutor Pete Harned presented a passage from the track “Still Shooting” on Brown’s inaugural album, “Psychoactive,” as a forecasting of the March 1992 killing. The judge and jury accepted Harned’s argument, and Brown received a 31-years-to-life sentence. Harned eventually vacated his position as a prosecutor in disgrace amidst a child pornography indictment, but he still practices law in Northern California.

While shocking, Brown’s case is not unique. It is emblematic of the many Black underground and independent rappers that became casualties of the “war on crime.” Since the early 1990s, California has led the trend in what professor of

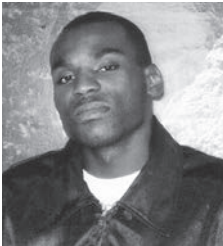
criminology Charis Kubrin of the University of California at Irvine has labeled “rap trials.” Also in 1992, the late Vallejo, Calif., rapper Andre “Mac Dre” Hicks was convicted and sentenced to five years in federal prison on conspiracy to commit robbery, in a case where his lyrics were used against him.

In 1998, Shawn “C-Bo” Thomas, another Sacramento rapper and childhood friend of Brown’s, had his parole revoked for his music. In the song “Deadly Game,” Thomas focused on the opportunistic actions of Gov. Pete Wilson, the Sacramento district attorney and his parole officer as he condemned the recently passed “Three Strikes and You’re Out” legislation. This law imposed mandatory life sentences on individuals after they receive three convictions for certain crimes.

Kubrin argues that the root of these rap trials is the codification of old and persistent racial stereotypes about Black male deviancy. When presented with

cultural products that support their ingrained biases, judges accept the lyrics as evidence and juries use the lyrics to convict. As Kubrin has shown, when lyrics are submitted as evidence of white crime, they are deemed unbelievable.

Recently, in San Diego, local rapper Brandon “Tiny Doo” Duncan faced life in prison for his rap songs. Yet, unlike the other cases, it was admitted, even by the prosecutors, that Duncan was not present at the time of the crime. Nevertheless, Duncan was charged with benefiting from the admission of the crime by way of his fame and record sales, in a landmark case that involved 32 other defendants. Thanks to their persistent assertion of their innocence and the support of family, friends and other community members, the charges against Duncan were overturned.



Anerae Brown

Continued on page 11

Black activists say: ‘Shut Down AFRICOM!’

The following press release was issued on Oct. 1, 2018, by the Black Alliance for Peace, a group of Black anti-imperialist activists.

The Black Alliance for Peace (BAP) has launched U.S. Out of Africa!: Shut Down AFRICOM, a campaign designed to end the U.S. invasion and occupation of Africa.

Today marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of AFRICOM, short for U.S. Africa Command. Although U.S. leaders say AFRICOM is “fighting terrorism” on the continent, we believe geopolitical competition with China is the real reason behind AFRICOM’s existence. AFRICOM is a dangerous structure that has only increased militarism.

When AFRICOM was established in the months before Barack Obama assumed office as the first Black president of the United States, a majority of African nations — led by the Pan-Africanist government of Libya — rejected AFRICOM, forcing the new command to instead work out of Europe.

But with the U.S. and NATO attack on Libya that led to the destruction of that country and the murder of its leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, corrupt African leaders began to allow AFRICOM forces to operate in their countries and establish military-to-military relations with the United States.

Today, those efforts have resulted in 46 various forms of U.S. bases as well as military-to-military relations

between 53 out of the 54 African countries and the United States.

U.S. Special Forces troops now operate in more than a dozen African nations.

Vice Adm. Robert Moeller, first and former deputy of AFRICOM, declared in 2008, “Protecting the free flow of natural resources from Africa to the global market is one of AFRICOM’s guiding principles.” (www.pambazuka.org, Nov. 16, 2011)

We say AFRICOM is the flip side of the domestic war being waged by the same repressive state structure against Black and poor people in the United States.

In the U.S. Out of Africa!: Shut Down AFRICOM campaign, we link police violence and the domestic war waged on Black people to U.S. interventionism and militarism abroad.

“Not only does there need to be a mass movement in the U.S. to shut down AFRICOM, this mass movement needs to become inseparably bound with the movement that has swept this country to end murderous police brutality against Black and Brown people,” says Netfa Freeman, of Pan-African Community Action (PACA) and the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS).

Freeman represents PACA, a BAP member organization, on BAP’s Coordinating Committee. “The whole world must begin to see AFRICOM and the militarization of police departments as counterparts.”

It costs \$267 million to fund AFRICOM in 2018, according to Vanessa Beck, BAP research team lead and Coordinating Committee member.

“That money is stolen from Africans/Black people in the U.S. to terrorize and steal resources from our sisters and brothers on the African continent,” Beck said. “Instead, that money should be put toward meeting our human needs in the U.S. and toward reparations for people in every African nation affected by U.S. imperialism.”

BAP makes the following demands:

- the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces from Africa, the demilitarization of the African continent, the closure of U.S. bases throughout the world, and the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) must oppose AFRICOM and conduct hearings on AFRICOM’s impact on the African continent.

We ask the public to join us in demanding an end to the U.S. invasion and occupation of the continent of our ancestors by signing this petition that we will deliver to CBC leaders.

This campaign is BAP’s effort to help shut down all U.S. foreign military bases as well as NATO bases. BAP is a founding member of the Coalition Against U.S Foreign Military Bases.

Visit blackallianceforpeace.com/USoutofAfrica for resources.

Media Contact: info@blackallianceforpeace.com □

Michigan labor on the move

By Martha Grevatt

Almost six years ago, Michigan became a “right-to-work” state. The bill, passed by the state legislature and signed by Gov. Rick Snyder in 2012, was a big setback for organized labor in a state historically a union stronghold. However, a number of recent battles show that unions and worker advocates are stepping up the resistance in Michigan.

Road construction projects, brought to a standstill in September when the Michigan Industrial and Transportation Association forced members of Operating Engineers Local 324 out on layoff, are back on the road for completion. This is a huge relief to the driving public.

MITA, to which hundreds of contractors are affiliated, imposed the layoffs after OE members had worked without a contract for months. The bosses were hoping to pressure Local 324, which represents all unionized heavy equipment operators in Michigan, to accept a master contract with all of its unionized affiliates.

This contract offered sizable pay increases but did not address job security issues, allowing the contractors to subcontract work out to nonunion firms. Because of MITA’s intransigence on the job security issue, the union severed its bargaining relationship with MITA when the contract expired in June.

Gov. Snyder offered to bring in the Michigan National Guard to run the equipment. Next, the plan was to bring in nonunion operators to scab. Both Snyder and MITA reneged on a back-to-work agreement agreed to by the union.

“Both MITA and the state of Michigan have the ability to get the projects started again immediately,” Local 324 Communications Director Dan McKernan said at the time. “The state, through MDOT [the Michigan Department of Transportation], can levy fines and penalties to the contractors for stopping the work. The state of Michigan needs to protect the drivers and taxpayers of the state and levy these penalties immediately.” (oe324.org)

The union did not back down. In the end, the governor, MITA and the union agreed to bring the OE members back to work and continue working without a contract while both parties undergo state-supervised mediation.

Nurses win contract

At the same time that union members were returning to work on the roads, University of Michigan nurses also were claiming victory. Over 5,700 nurses, members of the Michigan Nurses Association, were

working without a contract since June.

The MNA-affiliated University of Michigan Professional Nurses Council held a number of solidarity rallies. UMPNC held a protest in August at a ceremony marking Michigan Medicine’s ranking by U.S. News & World Report as the fifth best health care system in the country. Michigan Medicine operates the University of Michigan hospitals.

On Sept. 17, the union voted overwhelmingly in favor of a strike. The prime issue of contention was the need to maintain safe staffing levels. Other concerns include a two-tier pay structure based on which facility a nurse works at and cuts to pension plan contributions.

On Sept. 29, UMPNC announced a tentative agreement with Michigan Medicine. Details of the agreement have not been made public, but the bargaining team unanimously recommended ratification. Voting will be completed by October 10.

Fight for \$15 bravely strikes, blocks roads

Over 1,000 fast food workers struck McDonald’s and other chains in the Michigan cities of Flint and Detroit on Oct. 2. The bravery of these vulnerable low-paid workers was demonstrated by their willingness to risk firings as well as injury or arrest during their protest.

Early in the morning, at least six strikers in Flint were rushed to the hospital after being hit by a truck. Fortunately, there were no life-threatening injuries and so far it appears the strikers were not targeted intentionally.

In Detroit, 18 people were arrested when D15 — the Detroit chapter of Fight for \$15 — took to the streets to demand union recognition, \$15 an hour, and safe and better working conditions.

Supporters arrested included congressional candidate Rashida Tlaib, who may become the first Palestinian woman elected to Congress, and unsuccessful gubernatorial candidate Abdul El-Sayed.

Gretchen Whitmer, front-runner in the race for governor, attended the action in Flint as well as a meeting of the Operating Engineers that took place before the lockout ended.

Clearly, Democratic Party politicians feel compelled to be seen supporting workers in struggle. Resistance to exploitation is rising despite the political climate of hostility and the many anti-labor bills and court rulings coming out of state legislatures and Washington.

The writer is a 30-year UAW Chrysler worker.

UPS rank-and-file overrule leaders, reject two-tier pay

By Martha Grevatt

The Teamsters union announced on Oct. 5 that a majority of members voting on a new contract at United Parcel Service had rejected the contract. The voting had been taking place across the country for several weeks. The union leadership, under the direction of President James Hoffa Jr., had been pushing hard for a “yes” vote.

The main issues leading to the contract’s rejection were the current low wages for part-time workers and new language to create a lower-paid “hybrid” driver status. An organized movement defied the hard sell by the union leadership and the company.

Two organizations — Teamsters for a Democratic Union, founded in the 1970s, and Teamsters United, whose slate nearly defeated Hoffa’s in 2016 union elections — built an organized opposition.

Overall, the vote was 54 percent “no.” The opposition had strong majorities in its urban center and among drivers.

Initially, it looked like the Hoffa administration would use language in the union constitution to impose the contract over rank-and-file objections. They could legally have taken that step, because less than two-thirds of the membership, when those who did

not vote are counted, actually rejected the contract. However, negotiator Denis Taylor was feeling the mass pressure when he announced that the bargaining team would go back to the table and try to get a better deal.

Two-tier and multi-tier pay structures are widely unpopular among rank-and-file union members, because they divide the membership by paying different wages for the same or similar work. “Equal pay for equal work” has, historically, been a basic union principle. In 2015, UAW members at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles rejected a contract that failed to bring second-tier workers up to the top of the pay scale.

As UPS Teamsters United points out on its website, “UPS is making record profits. The economy is strong and there is a nationwide shortage of truck drivers. Just this week, Amazon raised its minimum wage to \$15 an hour, putting pressure on UPS to raise part-time pay.”

There is no excuse for a union leader to try to sell a contract that pays some workers less than the \$15-an-hour minimum wage that the labor movement is advocating for all workers. This vote is sending a message to the class collaborationist “labor lieutenants of capitalism.” As Teamsters United puts it, “Step up or step out of the way.” □



By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

APWU counters Trump plan to privatize U.S. Postal Service

The U.S. Postal Service is once again under attack. In August, the White House Office of Management and Budget proposed totally privatizing the public postal service. The American Postal Workers Union moved quickly at its national convention Aug. 20-23 to counter this attack, which would seize \$70 billion in USPS public revenue for private profit. This would eliminate services and kill thousands of well-paid union jobs, many of which are filled by African Americans and women.

This is not the first time an attack has been launched on the USPS. A move to cut jobs by shifting postal services to Staples was started in 2013, but the struggle by postal unions stopped it.”

Anti-worker Trump has called USPS’ current business plan “unsustainable,” pointing to debt caused by \$5.6 billion yearly prepayment of future retirees’ health care costs imposed by Congress in 2006. Without that mandate, unique to USPS, the Postal Service runs in the black. The APWU stresses that the system does not receive taxpayer funds, employs more than 500,000 workers, plays a critical role in the growing e-commerce industry and enjoys high favorability ratings. In addition to eliminating the prepayment mandate, one solution APWU and two other postal workers’ unions offer is to have the USPS resume postal banking, available during World War II.

APWU President Mark Dimondstein noted that “privatization threats are not new. But we have never faced outright plans to sell the entire Post Office. ... Postal privatization is about the profits of a few at the expense of the many — period!”

FLOC beats back racist N.C. law

A North Carolina federal court ruled Sept. 8 that a 2017 law Gov. Roy Cooper signed, which stripped the Farm Labor Organizing Committee of the right to automatically collect dues from farmworkers’ paychecks, was illegal.

FLOC, in unity with the Southern Poverty Law Center, the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as two individual farmworkers charged that the North Carolina Farm Act of 2017 discriminated racially since it targeted Latinx workers, who make up 90 percent of North Carolina farmworkers. (Payday Report, Sept. 20)

This is a paramount victory. Because North Carolina is a “right-to-work” (for less!) state, only individual workers can choose to have dues deducted. Because many FLOC members are guest workers who lack access to bank accounts, credit cards and other means of paying union dues regularly, they rely on dues transfer arrangements.

“We’re happy that the federal court saw clearly that this racist law was an effort to stop farmworkers from having the resources to fund their own institution and fight for a more fair workplace,” said FLOC President Baldemar Velásquez. (ACLU of NC, Sept. 20)

Chicago hotel workers’ strike wins year-round health care coverage

After nearly a month on strike, hotel workers at 17 out of 26 hotels in Chicago had ratified contracts by late September. In addition to higher wages and healthy working conditions, the primary issue, which galvanized more than 6,000 service workers represented by UNITE HERE Local 1, was having year-round health care coverage. It’s lifesaving during winter months when the tourist season is slow and workers are often laid off. As one worker told ThinkProgress: “One of the reasons the strike is so broad is because access to health care is an issue everyone can rally behind.” (Oct. 3)

This hotel strike is the first in decades in Chicago’s history and the first to hit all hotels with unionized workers in all service jobs — cooks, dishwashers, housekeepers and door attendants — at the same time. The workers held a number of joint actions during the strike, with hundreds marching down Michigan Avenue’s “Magnificent Mile” on Sept. 13 and rallying at the Hyatt Regency Chicago on Oct. 1.

Local 1 has repeatedly pointed out that Chicago hotels have been doing well financially, with a record number of visitors and \$2.3 billion in revenue last year. As of Oct. 8, workers at only two hotels still have not ratified contracts. (chicago.curbed.com) □

Black activists demand justice in aftermath of Hurricane Florence

By Zachary Richardson
Raleigh, N.C.

As the North Carolina General Assembly met Oct. 2 in the Capitol in Raleigh to debate official responses to the devastation wrought upon the eastern part of the state by Hurricane Florence, a coalition of Black activists convened only a few miles away, holding a press conference at the Anchorlight art space to explain why they are uniting to fight for racial, economic and environmental justice in recovery efforts.

Under the aegis of A Just Florence Recovery, representatives of organizations and communities from all across Eastern North Carolina called upon state legislators to release resources — including a \$2 billion “rainy day fund” — to help those most affected by the historic storm, and to ensure that the corporate powers responsible for decades of environmental degradation in Eastern North Carolina aren’t let off the hook for their role in the disaster.

Activists promulgated a set of political demands, including a legislative override of restrictions on the full use of the rainy day fund; that companies such as Smithfield Foods, Duke Energy and others pay into North Carolina’s disaster relief fund; that toxic sites in Eastern North Carolina created by these companies be moved

away from vulnerable populations; that large corporate tax cuts scheduled to go into effect in 2019 be rolled back; and for the defeat of six North Carolina constitutional amendments (which are widely seen as attacks on voting rights and economic equality) on the ballot in November.

Activists speak truth to power

“I am a survivor of Florence,” said activist Resea Willis. “Where I was, it rained almost 30 inches on us. So if there is a rainy day fund, I’m here to tell you that it’s already raining. We need your help.”

“We need a recovery, people. ... We don’t need to put a Band-Aid on this. We need a long term recovery,” echoed the Rev. Tyrone Watson, the president of the Unified Robeson County NAACP. “What do they define as a rainy day? Because it’s been raining on Robeson County and Columbus County for a long time. ... The hurricane is gone but the storm has just begun for a lot of individuals. We need housing. We need environmental changes.”

While later that day the state General Assembly authorized \$50 million in emergency funding, that sum accounts for only a miniscule fraction of available monies. Disbursements from the fund, established in 2016 after the state was hit by Hurricane Matthew, cannot amount to more than 7.5 percent of the previous

year’s state operating budget. As several speakers pointed out, however, the damage inflicted by hurricanes does not honor such restrictions.

When Hurricane Florence made landfall in mid-September, it brought unprecedented rainfall and unleashed destructive forces on the people and communities of Eastern North and South Carolina that are just beginning to be understood. Following the storm and subsequent flooding inland, 48 individuals have been confirmed dead, 37 of them in North Carolina. Many still remain in shelters; up to 21,000 residents will need to permanently relocate; millions of livestock animals have drowned; and overall damage is estimated in the tens of billions of dollars.

Impact of climate change, racism

Often overlooked in mainstream, sensationalistic media coverage, with its hyperventilating over looting and exploitative presentations of human misery, is the inherently political nature of “natural” disasters. As climate change continues to worsen, storms such as Florence are expected to increase in frequency and severity, and as they hit the United States with greater regularity, Black, Indigenous, Latinx and economically marginalized communities will bear the brunt of their impact.

“It’s clear to see that communities that are most impacted by this destruction are disproportionately low-income communities and communities of color, which are already burdened by decades of pollution,” said Friends of the Earth’s La'Meshia Whittington-Kaminski.

In Eastern North Carolina, predominantly Black towns are often clustered along low-lying, flood-prone land — the only kind historically available to them following the end of slavery — a racist legacy whose effects are felt anew with every major storm. Black communities are also far more likely to be located near and damaged by North Carolina’s hog farming industry, whose numerous concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) create massive “lagoons” of animal waste.

These lagoons, whose contents are



WW PHOTO: ZACHARY RICHARDSON
Oct. 2 press conference
in Raleigh.

often sprayed onto nearby land, already overflow during heavy rains. The amount of water brought by a weather event like Florence can spill out their contents over vast tracts. Thirteen lagoons breached due to Florence, with an additional nine flooded.

Farmworker communities, primarily Latinx, face a dual danger. The storm itself, of course, posed a direct threat to life and limb, but once it passed came a new complication: accounting for work that’s no longer there to be done. Florence’s floodwaters will likely ruin the 2018 sweet potato crop, whose harvest brought thousands of workers to North Carolina under the H-2A work visa program.

H-2A visas lock workers into contracts with specific employers and legally prohibit them from searching for alternate arrangements. If a farmer/corporation decides to file an insurance claim rather than harvest a crop, workers must take a loss on a season’s work and instead use their limited resources to get home.

Undocumented workers are in an even more tenuous position, as reports of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents circulating through damaged communities, and even standing guard over emergency shelters, have filtered out of affected areas.

Federal and national disaster relief organizations like the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Red Cross have a poor track record when it comes to effectively providing aid to intentionally marginalized populations, leaving a gap to be filled by local partners and nontraditional actors.

While the Just Florence Recovery network has made efforts to direct resources to those who need them most, it is clear that a real recovery will require sustained efforts and tremendous funding — and that state actors will need to grapple with obstacles, both manmade and natural, to develop effective solutions. □

‘McStrike’: Low-wage workers walkout in Britain

By Kathy Durkin

Low-wage workers at four companies in the retail and hospitality industry, sick and tired of being exploited on the job, staged a coordinated one-day work stoppage on Oct. 4 in six cities in England; Cardiff, Wales; and Glasgow, Scotland.

They struck McDonald’s, TGI Fridays and JD Wetherspoon, demanding a \$13.12 hourly minimum wage, union recognition and an end to precarious contracts. UberEats drivers joined, insisting on payments of \$6.55 per delivery and another \$1.31 for each additional mile they must travel per assignment.

The strikers were backed by the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, labeling the fast food action a “McStrike,” and calling the walkout at JD Wetherspoon pubs a “Spoon’s strike.” Unite the Union, known as “Unite,” which has 1.2 million members, and War on Want helped build the work stoppage. Momentum, a Labor Party organization, set up picket lines at McDonald’s eateries.

This is a youth-led movement, and it was inspired, in part, by the Fight for \$15 an hour movement of low-wage workers in the U.S. Many strikers are young workers and students; many are members of immigrant communities. They are challenging the exploitative conditions of their employment — low-wage jobs lacking benefits are their only options. Only 8 percent of workers under 25 are unionized. Their weekly wages are abominable, while company executives roll in luxury, with exorbitant salaries and bonuses. The strikers were challenging the essence of capitalist profitmaking on employees’ backs.

Boni Adeliyi, age 21, works days and nights at three jobs, including one at TGI Fridays. She explained that she was striking because the higher minimum wage would allow her to “focus on one job.” Her Unite membership gave her a “sense of safety and confidence [she] never had before,” reported the Oct. 4 Guardian newspaper.

This is the eighth 24-hour walkout by Unite members employed by TGI Fridays against a change in its tip policy. Strikers say the company is pocketing their tips and ignoring their complaints.

Show of solidarity

Trade Union Congress General Secretary Frances O’Grady spoke at the London rally at Leicester Square. She told the media that the actions are “growing and spreading,” adding, “What I find really touching is that these are workers from different companies coming out to support each other.” (Guardian)

A key struggle is over zero-hour contracts, where companies refuse to guarantee workers a minimum number of working hours, making it impossible for them to pay bills. O’Grady stressed that wealthy transnational companies “have deliberately put their workers on contracts that keep them scared. If you are on a zero-hours contract, they don’t have to sack you; they can just stop offering you shifts.”

But many workers flouted their employers and walked out of their workplaces despite the risks, joining other strikers in a show of solidarity. This collective action boosted the morale of these workers and reinforced their determination to keep up the struggle for their rights and those of other workers. □

Hotel workers strike

UNITE HERE Local 26 president, Brian Lang, welcomes to the picket line, Mahtowin Munro, co-chair of United American Indians of New England and other Indigenous Peoples Day marchers.



WW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

Continued from page 1

face a national struggle for survival in addition to the fight to protect the standard of living for hotel workers.”

Childs added: “The spirited picket lines in front of Boston’s seven striking hotels are very militant, confrontational and loud. Boston’s Local 26 hotel workers are possibly the most diverse constituency in the entire city. The mostly immigrant women-of-color members chant in dozens of languages and represent nearly 80 nationalities.”

Solidarity from other unions has been extremely strong. Boston’s Teamsters have refused deliveries to striking hotels, and that will have a huge impact. Everything from food and alcohol to laundry and garbage depends on truck drivers.

When the New York Yankees crossed Boston hotel picket lines this week and then lost to the Red Sox, their bitterest

rivals, the mood at the baseball games and in the press exposed increasing class consciousness. The Yankees were publicly denounced as scabs.

Then on Oct. 6, the annual march of Boston’s Indigenous People’s Day brought a crowd of 150 to triple the size of the hotel workers’ picket at the Ritz Carlton.

Childs emphasized: “This struggle shows the necessity of unity at this time. While the ruling class makes it difficult to see who is funding these attacks, how companies like Marriott are able to get so powerful, people are recognizing the danger. And unions, youth and community movements are uniting.”

With optimism, he added: “The life or death fight against Marriott has brought big, needed advancements to class consciousness in this country that could lead to victory for UNITE HERE and the whole working class.” □

No to Brett Kavanaugh

Widespread resistance to continue despite Senate OK

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

At the vote confirming Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court on Oct. 6, woman after woman screamed out in protest from the Senate gallery and was carried away by guards. Reactionary presiding Vice President Mike Pence hammered for “order,” while at one point there were so many disruptions the voting had to be paused. People were pounding in outrage on the closed entrance to the Senate floor.

U.S. Capitol Police said a total of 164 people were arrested that day for “crowding, obstructing, or incommoding.” (Washington Post, Oct. 6)

The main focus of protest was Kavanaugh’s denial, under oath during the Senate confirmation hearings, that he had sexually assaulted three women, including Dr. Christine Blasey Ford. Dr. Ford testified extensively to the Senate Judiciary Committee about Kavanaugh assaulting her when she was 15.

Hundreds arrested in D.C. protests

Protests of Kavanaugh have ranged from coast-to-coast and into the U.S. heartland — Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver; Kalamazoo, Mich.; Austin, Texas; Topeka, Kan.; and New York City.

The depth of opposition to Kavanaugh was revealed when on Oct. 4 over a thousand people from throughout the country, mostly women, demonstrated on Capitol Hill. A hundred people even flew in from Alaska.

Someone had rented a truck with a movie screen in order to play and denounce President Trump’s infamous “Access Hollywood” tape in which he boasted of sexually assaulting women.

At the Senate Hart Office Building, crowds saying “NO” to sexual assault and to the reactionary agenda that Kavanaugh

represents flooded the atrium and every floor. Over 300 chanting, militant protesters were arrested that day.

Hundreds of people organized by Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women marched through downtown Seattle Oct. 4 to remind those watching of the centuries of U.S. colonizer rape and violence toward Indigenous women and peoples.

On the same day, in upstate New York, students walked out of classes in protest at Syracuse University, built on the land stolen from the Onondaga Nation. One student asserted: “Brett Kavanaugh’s don’t come out of nowhere — that the culture develops abusers. Another student, reading from a letter to her sexual abuser, said, “This has been going on for forever,” and signed it “an unapologetic Brown girl.” (Syracuse Post-Standard, Oct. 4)

There were too many acts of indignation and outrage at Kavanaugh’s nomination to list them all.

The ultra-right ruling class represented by President Trump have swept aside even the possibility of Kavanaugh’s sexual assaults and endorsed him wholeheartedly for his proven judicial record, which is racist, anti-woman, anti-worker, anti-civil rights and thoroughly reactionary.

Trump tried to discredit the women who brought forward their assaults by tweeting they must have been “paid” for their testimony. Trump viciously parallels a defamation used against justice seekers over and over in U.S. history — the lie that anyone fighting for change must either be an “outside agitator” or have been “put up to it” for money. The NAACP even had to fight this smear in 1957 against the nine Black children seeking to integrate the public schools in Little Rock, Ark.

Energizing fightback to continue

Outrage against Kavanaugh broke out initially on July 9 at the Supreme Court



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

An Oct. 6 protest in New York City against the confirmation of reactionary Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court.

on Capitol Hill, the very night Trump announced the nomination.

Hundreds continued to demonstrate throughout the month.

During Senate Judiciary Committee hearings the first week in September, over 227 demonstrators were arrested. (NPR, Sept. 8) Protests intensified during the week of struggle leading up to Kavanaugh’s confirmation by the Senate.

Hundreds were trained in a technique called “bird-dogging” — how to persistently follow and confront U.S. senators and representatives on crucial issues. The most dramatic example was caught on CNN video Sept. 28 when Ana Maria Archila, co-executive director for the Center for Popular Democracy, and Maria Gallagher, both sexual assault survivors, confronted Sen. Jeff Flake of the Judiciary Committee in an elevator.

To cover himself, Flake then called for an additional FBI “investigation” of some assault claims against Kavanaugh, which unsurprisingly failed to back the women up — a reminder that the FBI is first and foremost an arm of state power.

The reactionary impact of Kavanaugh’s

confirmation is acknowledged widely at the national level. “The stakes could not be higher,” said Sherrilyn Ifill, Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. She named in particular his threat to voting rights, fair housing, affirmative action, the right to health care and the right to “equal justice under the law.” (Essence, July 12)

An AFL-CIO statement on the occasion of Kavanaugh’s nomination was clear: “Judge Kavanaugh has a dangerous track record of protecting the privileges of the wealthy and powerful at the expense of working people.” (July 9)

All progressive U.S. organizations are calling for the energized fight to continue. Without doubt, there will be many more protests to come, as the people mobilize and organize to stop the woman-hating, racist, anti-LGBTQ prejudice and the anti-worker agenda of those in seats of power. As the struggles of the past have taught, the people cannot depend on the courts or on capitalist elections to bring justice. The people must depend on solidarity and the power they win arm-in-arm with each other. □

Durham Pride Revolutionary queerness

By Enzo Moretti

Durham, N.C. — The struggle for LGBTQ liberation in the South has its roots in strong resistance to the constant onslaught from reactionaries. The queer community in North Carolina has fought to return LGBTQ Pride to its roots by being outspoken and political — which is sorely needed to defend our communities.

North Carolina is among 16 states that still have anti-sodomy laws on the books, despite those laws having been declared unconstitutional at the national level. In addition, North Carolina joined with several other states in passing anti-trans “bathroom bills” in 2016. The law, which excludes trans people from legal protection, was only half repealed in 2017.

Any celebration of Pride in North Carolina should be a fight against these reactionary attacks and a fight for LGBTQ liberation — not based on pinkwashing white supremacy.

That is why Workers World Party’s Durham branch organized an anti-capitalist contingent to march in the Sept. 29 Durham Pride parade — and focused its chants and placards on the fight for queer liberation.

But for a while this year, it wasn’t clear that Pride would even take place. In June, NC Pride, the organization previously in charge of Pride in Durham, announced

that the event — set to happen in three months — was cancelled.

Quickly, the local queer community, including the LGBTQ Center of Durham, rose to the challenge of reclaiming Pride and hosted the event on Sept. 29. The former leaders in NC Pride had been mostly white cis gay men. The new leadership was centered around queer trans people of color, including the House of Coxx, a prominent Durham drag family. One grand marshall was a founder of North Carolina’s original Pride in 1981, and two were co-founders of Southerners on New Ground (SONG).

The shift in leadership at Durham’s Pride opened up opportunities to reclaim the day from corporations and white supremacy. The most notable win was a ban on uniformed police officers marching in the parade.

While this was a win, uniformed cops were still present, providing “security” for the event, so it is clear that many struggles still need to be opened. Wells Fargo was still a sponsor, and lots of businesses sought to capitalize and co-opt our community. Pride was still held on Duke University’s campus and marched through an area that has contributed to the gentrification of the neighboring Black community, Walltown. According to an event organizer, the event was only held there because the space was already reserved

‘Man power’

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

It has been over a generation since the U.S. Senate hearings on the sexual harassment charges of a law professor, Anita Hill, against then judge, now Supreme Court justice, Clarence Thomas.

A lot has changed since then. Or has it?

The French have a saying, “Plus ça change,” or “The more things change, the more they stay the same.”

The charges now poised against a sitting judge, and possible justice, Brett Kavanaugh, by a psychology professor, Dr. Christine B. Ford, of sexual assault over 30 years ago, show us that things have changed very little.

For power remains a mostly male pre-

Taken from a Sept. 23 audio recording on prisonradio.org.

rogative, and women, unless they act as man-like as possible, are, more often than not, treated like children: seen and not heard.

For at the nexus between law and power lies the courts, one of the last, mighty bastions of male power.

The remarkable #Me Too movement may have enormous power in the realm of culture (think Hollywood), but law remains a largely (white) male preserve. Still.

Women, the majority of the U.S. population, are not the majority of political leaders, don’t earn the highest incomes and aren’t paid wages equal to men.

In other words, their power is quite limited.

They are, however, the highest number of law students in the country, so that day is coming when they will dominate the field.

But not today. Man power still reigns in politics and law, and unless I miss my guess, in the next few days, we shall see Brett Kavanaugh don the dark robe of a junior justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. □



Duterte’s violations of women’s rights in the Philippines

The following testimony was presented by Joan May Salvador at the Sept. 18-19 International Peoples’ Tribunal in Brussels, Belgium, on the violations of women’s rights and misogyny in the Philippines. Salvador is Secretary General of GABRIELA Philippines, a mass women’s organization.

As a Filipino woman activist and human rights defender, I recognize the oppression and injustice against the many in our society — the marginalized, voiceless, nameless, underserved sectors, the farmers, workers, rural and urban poor, Indigenous people and women. My work constantly seeks to contribute toward the elimination of oppression and injustice against our people.

For many Filipino women like myself, every day under the presidency of Rodrigo Roa Duterte is a day of fierce resistance amidst waves upon waves of attacks on our rights.

I cannot stand idly by while President Rodrigo Duterte, the highest elected official in our land, serially violates women’s rights with his sexist and misogynistic statements and deeds. I cannot stand idly by while the most powerful man in the country — whose words are easily translated into policy directives — contributes heavily to reinforcing a feudal and patriarchal culture that treats women as inferior, as sex objects, as properties, which includes a whole range of sexist customs, practices and ideas.

President Duterte has disrespected, demeaned and abused women of the Philippines. This is not, and will never be, acceptable to me and to the many fierce and fearless women of the Philippines.

By way of presenting evidence of President Duterte’s serial sexism and misogyny, I will show this Honorable Court

a short video clip of some of the most abominable displays of his misogyny from the time he was campaigning for the presidency up until today as the president of the Republic of the Philippines.

Ladies and gentlemen of this International People’s Tribunal, President Duterte has repeatedly displayed ingrained prejudice against women. He has contributed immensely to reinforcing inequality, not simply between men and women, but in a larger context between the powerful and the powerless.

Duterte: ‘Misogyny personified’

President Duterte has spewed rhetoric that pushes women to conform to certain standards and to make them feel inadequate. He has promoted discrimination and violence against women in its various forms. Indeed, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte is misogyny personified.

Filipino women continue to be treated as sources of cheap labor, as commodities, as mere properties. Against a backdrop of a feudal and patriarchal culture systemic within Philippine society, President Duterte’s blatant display of misogyny correlates well with the troubling persistence of violence against Filipino women and children.

President Duterte often tells rape jokes, despite constant insistence by women’s rights activists that rape is no laughing matter — especially so because during the first year of Duterte’s presidency in 2016,



Joan May Salvador, Sept. 19.

the number of reported cases of rape totaled 9,943. There were 3,463 more rape cases that year than the annual average of 6,480 for the prior decade. This was an increase of 53 percent!

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police’s Bantay Krimen Web-Based Monitoring System showed 8,461 rape cases were reported in different police stations in the country in 2017. That total is still a lot higher than the average annual number of reported rape cases prior to Duterte’s presidency.

Meanwhile, about 15 cases of rape nationwide have been reported every day during the current year. Ironically, Duterte’s hometown of Davao City — where he served as mayor — is ranked as the city with the highest number of reported cases of rape.

Similarly, reported cases of other forms of violence against women and children — including domestic and partner abuse, sexual harassment, prostitution and sex trafficking — are also on the rise. Poor women are consistently more vulnerable to abuse. For example, the Philippine Statistics Authority reports that the rate of spousal or partner violence committed against women is 31.6 percent in lower-income households, as compared to 18.3 percent in highest-income households.

It is important to bear in mind that these are conservative numbers. In the Philippines — and globally — only one in every three women who are victims of violence report the abuse to authorities (U.N. National Demographic and Health Survey data). This is particularly true when their own family members are the perpetrators, as in cases of incest, and they are powerful men. It is also due to the prevalent culture of victim blaming, as police officers, media personalities and even President Duterte himself exemplify.

Police abuse of women

Alarming, Duterte’s drug war against the poor and his continued imposition of martial law in Mindanao have provided more fertile ground for rampant abuses by state security forces. On several occasions, the president addressed them with his own misogynist and sexist orders.

Since 2017 — or since the start of the Philippine National Police’s campaign against illegal drugs — 13 policemen have been involved in eight rape cases, 13 acts of lasciviousness, and one case of sexual harassment and physical assault against women.

It is contemptible that while the police try to justify the war on drugs as a way to curb the prevalence of rape in the country, members of the PNP are raping women and committing other forms of sexual abuse under a regime that blatantly dis-

regards women’s rights and promotes a culture of impunity for perpetrators and abuse of authority.

In his words and deeds, President Duterte has committed — and by extension through the actions of Philippine state security forces — grave violations of the Philippines’ obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Philippine laws, such as the Magna Carta of Women, the Women Development Code of Davao and about 20 other national laws. This is demonstrated by the growing number of cases of violence against Filipino women and girls, and in a host of other social practices that normalize and trivialize rape and violence against women.

The Philippines is a signatory to CEDAW, which is also called the International Bill of Rights of Women, and is obligated to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to respect, protect and fulfill women’s human rights.

In line with its above-mentioned commitments and obligations under CEDAW, the Philippines 1987 Constitution enshrined a state policy that recognizes the role of women in nation-building and the fundamental equality of women and men before the law.

Women activists fight back!

Women activists, feminists and women’s organizations, myself and GABRIELA included, have also played a crucial role in the adoption by various local governmental units of gender and development codes, such as the Women Development Code of Davao City, which was approved on Oct. 14, 1997, by President Duterte, then the mayor of that city.

The law supposedly affords special protection to women, particularly in regard to the following concerns: ensuring that women are treated equally in law and in fact; that women enjoy the same rights and privileges as men; and that women are not treated as objects but as human beings whose dignity the state values and whose human rights are guaranteed and afforded full respect and protection. Also, that all forms of violence and discrimination against women are eliminated; that women are treated as equal partners of men in development; and that they are provided the same spaces in governance and public service.

Thus, any violation of women’s rights — and worse, when wantonly and repeatedly committed by the highest official in the land — must be seen not only as an attack against women, but as a grave and therefore punishable violation of existing laws.

Therefore misogyny is no longer seen as a simple case of one’s personal dislike of, contempt for or ingrained prejudice against women. Rather it must be seen as a violation of particular laws that protect women. It is a crime that, like any other, must be punished.

President Duterte’s public statements promote, rather than discourage or prevent, discrimination against women. They are offensive to women. They are tantamount to verbal abuse of women. They harass women. They degrade women. They harm and endanger the lives of women.

Honorable members of this International People’s Tribunal: It is about time that President Duterte is held accountable for his grave violations of the rights of Filipino women. □



WWP anti-capitalist contingent at Durham, N.C. Pride, Sept. 29.

by the previous organizers and may change next year.

Durham WWP branch’s anti-capitalist contingent raised the issue of police brutality by wearing shirts reading, “Queer as in fuck the police.” Signs also raised the murder of North Carolina Central University student Deandre Ballard by a private security guard days before. NCCU is a historically Black university.

The struggle for queer liberation is necessarily a struggle against police brutality and for the connection between Black and queer liberation, as well as with other liberation movements. Many people watching the parade cheered as WWP Durham marched by, calling for cops to be kicked out of Pride and chanting, “Be loud! Don’t be silent! The first Pride was a riot!”

In addition to the strong anti-capitalist WWP presence, white liberals were also there, with many groups waving pink-washed U.S. flags. Work still needs to be done to orient the community away from the dangerous rainbow capitalism and

white supremacy that have taken over in other major cities across the country.

In North Carolina, Charlotte Pride has been named the “Bank of America Pride Parade” for six years. It’s been thoroughly co-opted by the same corporations that threw queer workers out of foreclosed homes in 2008, and are engaging in the violent gentrification of oppressed communities.

The strong and militant WWP presence in the march was a hopeful reinvigoration of Durham Pride with revolutionary queerness. Next year, 2019, the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion, offers the Durham queer community another opportunity to gather together militantly against police brutality and rainbow capitalism.

Cops out of Pride! End the murders of Black and Brown trans women! Pride is a riot!

Minnie Bruce Pratt and several members of the WW Durham branch contributed to this article.

Round two of Brazil elections

Ultra-rightist takes lead in face-off with Workers Party

By John Catalinotto

Oct. 8 — The first round of elections in Brazil took place yesterday and, as expected, left the ultra-rightist Jair Bolsonaro facing the Workers Party (PT) candidate, Fernando Haddad, in the run-off election on Oct. 28.

What was less expected from polling during the last week of the campaign was that Bolsonaro would come as close as he did to the 50 percent needed to win on the first round. He got 46 percent. Haddad, with 29.3 percent, finished a strong second, but was still far behind Bolsonaro.

In terms of electoral politics, this leaves the Workers Party and their allies in an uphill battle in the three weeks before the second round. The PT needs to hold on to their votes and win nearly all the votes of the center, center-right and leftist parties. The other possibility is that the ultra-rightist candidate exposes his weaknesses on how his economic program will hurt workers and poor people who may have voted for him as a sign of protest.

Brazil's class struggle goes beyond electoral politics, so the Brazilian left must organize in the streets as well as for the voting booth.

Left-wing coalition

For the left, Haddad, a university teacher of Lebanese ancestry who was once mayor of São Paulo, is representing the PT. 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.

The first to bring the struggle to the streets were a half million to a million women and their supporters, who demonstrated in Brazilian cities large and small on Sept. 29, marching under the slogan #EleNão (not him, meaning not Bolsonaro).

Ciro Gomes, candidate of the Democratic Labor Party (PDT), has already thrown his support to the #EleNão movement for the second turn.

Guilherme Boulos, the leader of the Homeless Movement and candidate for the leftist Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL), wrote, "Now we will be in the

streets to defeat fascism and elect the candidate who represents democracy on the second round: Fernando Haddad. #EleNão." (Vermelho, Oct. 8)

Cops, the political section of the military and many members of the evangelical churches — about a quarter of Brazil's population — support Bolsonaro's candidacy. Winning the election for the PT is an important goal, but it is only the first step to defending the Brazilian working class and all the oppressed. It is only the first step in defending democratic rights.

Who is Bolsonaro?

The ultra-right candidate, a former army captain who served seven terms in the National Assembly with little accomplishment, has said he supported Brazil's 1964-85 military dictatorship. He openly rants against women, LGBTQ people, Indigenous people, Venezuelans and other immigrants, and calls for more open cop and army violence against alleged criminals in the poor neighborhoods, the favelas, in the big cities like Rio de Janeiro.

Bolsonaro runs for the newly formed Social Liberal Party. His vice presidential candidate is Gen. Antônio Mourão, a former general in the Brazilian Army. As could be expected, he too is pro-militarist. While Bolsonaro was not the favorite candidate of Brazil's big bourgeoisie, they hate the Workers Party more.

Brazil's super-rich ruling class tolerated the first PT governments under Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva (2003-11) in a period of unprecedented prosperity. At that time the PT passed laws aiding tens of millions of Brazil's very poor. Once the price of raw materials collapsed, and the economy shrunk, this ruling class has waged a vicious austerity offensive against all of Brazil's working people.

The right wing first impeached and removed PT President Dilma Rousseff from office with a parliamentary coup in 2016. The succeeding government of current President Michel Temer started rolling back the social security programs.

They have especially attacked Brazilians of African descent — 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, even before Bolsonaro's rhetoric took it a few steps further.

When it became apparent earlier this year that Lula was the leading candidate in the presidential election and might well win, the judiciary framed him to keep him in jail and off the ballot. The media giant O Globo kept up a continual campaign against the PT and its leaders and railed against "delinquency" in the poor neighborhoods, while it attacked "corruption" of all politicians.

U.S. imperialism has been lined up with those in Brazil who want to remove the PT from office and keep them out.

While O Globo did not support Bolsonaro — his supporters even attacked O Glo-

bo reporters for alleged "fake news" — its attacks on the PT fertilized the ground for his fascist-type campaign. He has been compared to Donald Trump or Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines. There was a report that ultra-rightist publicist Steve Bannon aided his election campaign.

Bolsonaro was stabbed while campaigning on Sept. 6 and apparently barely escaped with his life. This may have actually helped his campaign as he avoided all debates where he might expose his own weaknesses. Instead he played the outsider and wound up in first place. The struggle continues. □

Brazil's women say: No to Bolsonaro

According to reports on Sept. 30 in the Brazilian web newspaper, Vermelho, about a half-million women and their supporters demonstrated in cities large and small in Brazil on Sept. 29, marching under the slogan #EleNão (not him). This was a solid rejection of the ultra-rightist presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro, an ex-military captain who has campaigned on a misogynist, racist and anti-poor platform disguised as anti-corruption. Bolsonaro is considered to be the Brazilian military version of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Vermelho reported that there were demonstrations of 200,000 people in both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, with smaller but still significant demonstrations in dozens of other cities.

The latest polls show Bolsonaro neck-and-neck with Fernando Haddad for the



first round of the election, set for Oct. 7. Haddad is the candidate of a coalition supported by the Workers Party and the Communist Party of Brazil. Each has about a quarter of the votes in the polls, and they are expected to face each other in the Oct. 28 run-off election. There are also elections for the National Congress and the State Assemblies.

The massive mobilization of women, led by Women United Against Bolsonaro, indicates growing hostility to the ultra-rightist Bolsonaro.

— Report by John Catalinotto

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- If you're angry at Congress after confirming liar, racist, sexist, anti-worker, anti-LGBTQ, elitist Brett Kavanaugh so he can rubberstamp the ruling-class's reactionary agenda via the Supreme Court.
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Stop U.S. wars across the globe



WW PHOTO: RAFAEL JUSTO

On the 17th anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan, activists gathered in Herald Square in New York City to oppose U.S. military occupations, violence and imperialism across the world. Groups representing anti-imperialist struggles in Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Iran, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, the Philippines, Korea, Okinawa

and Japan spoke to a growing audience before marching to the U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station in Times Square. The action ended with a Yemeni child speaking out against the U.S.-funded Saudi war on the Yemeni people.

— Kayla Popuchet and Cosmia Bohannan-Blumke

TRIBUNAL ON U.S. CRIMES AGAINST PUERTO RICO, OCT. 27

Anti-colonial notables to get a hearing in NYC

The *Emergency International Tribunal on U.S. Colonial Crimes in Puerto Rico* will take place Oct. 27 in New York City. Workers World reporter Cheryl LaBash interviewed Berta Joubert-Ceci, a proud Boricua and central organizer for this historic event, for an update.

Workers World: What is the reaction in Puerto Rico to the Tribunal?

Berta Joubert-Ceci: The reaction has been tremendous. People feel this is very important. They have been silenced for so long. They want to have their voices heard on an international level when so many lies and misconceptions have been put out on what is really happening there. Participants from many parts of Puerto Rico are coming to New York to testify. The Tribunal is seen as a vehicle to denounce the crimes of colonialism — whether by the military, the pharmaceutical companies or the AES energy company. When we talk about U.S. crimes in Puerto Rico, we are talking about crimes being committed right now.

A much longer tribunal would be needed to detail all 120 years of U.S. colonial crimes. The people in Puerto Rico are viewing this as an emergency tribunal to expose the tip of the iceberg. Puerto Rican radio stations have requested interviews about the Tribunal.

WW: Who are some of the people coming from the island to testify?

Joubert-Ceci: Ava Ayala, a teacher from the union EDUCAMOS, is speaking on the fight for public education. Mariana Nogales, the lawyer for Nina Droz, will speak on her case. Droz is a young person arrested on May Day 2017, accused of attempting to set fire to the concrete Banco Popular building with a match. It's a ridiculous charge, but she is in a U.S. federal prison as an example to intimidate the resistance in Puerto Rico. Also testifying about repression are

#SeAcabaronLasPromesas activists in the forefront of opposing the Fiscal Control Board. The government has made it a crime to resist, to fight back against imperialism and colonialism. Nina Droz's case is an example of the many Puerto Rican political prisoners jailed or killed for struggling for independence. The United States fought for independence, but this has been denied to us in Puerto Rico.

Representatives from several cities in the south of the island, like Guayama and Peñuelas, will testify on coal ash and the role of AES in environmental contamination now impacting 14 municipalities throughout the region. Salvador Tió will testify about the pollution of bioengineering companies, like notorious Monsanto. Ismael Guadalupe, a leader of the Vieques struggle, will testify on the consequences of the U.S. bombing of Vieques and illnesses that resulted. Carlos Zenón, whose family was the first to be evicted to build the U.S. military base in Vieques, will testify by video.

Researcher Ana María García, producer of a very well-known documentary on the forced sterilization of Puerto Rican women, “La Operación,” will also testify by video.

WW: Who are the prosecutor and jurors?

Joubert-Ceci: The charges against the United States will be leveled by prosecutor Dr. Augusto Zamora, an international lawyer from Nicaragua. He took a case on U.S. violations of Nicaraguan sovereignty to the International Court and won a judgment against the U.S.

A panel of jurors will examine the testimony and render a verdict: They include Nieves Moreno, a Chilean woman political exile who was tortured by the Pinochet dictatorship and testified in the prosecution of Augusto Pinochet, the U.S.-installed Chilean dictator; Bernadette Ellorin from the New York chapter of the Filipino organization BAYAN-USA, which is battling U.S. domination in the Philippines; Ajamu Baraka from Black Alliance for Peace and an internationally recognized leader of the U.S. human rights movement who has worked to apply the international human rights framework to social justice advocacy in the U.S.; Andre Francois, president of Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston School Bus Union and a leader in the local Haitian community.

Others include Deirdre Griswold, editor of Workers World newspaper, author of “Indonesia: The Second Greatest Crime of the Century,” chair of the 1966 Public Inquest on the Indonesian massacres, and an organizer of the 1967 Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal on the U.S. role in Vietnam; Gerardo Cajamarca, a Colombian union organizer now in exile after death threats; and the Rev. Luis Barrios, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and pastor of Holyrood Church/Iglesia Santa Cruz, which is the Tribunal venue and provides a sanctuary and organizing center for many New York communities.

WW: The governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, just announced he would allow the city of Ponce to be used as a staging area for a U.S.-backed Venezuelan opposition. Your comment?

Joubert-Ceci: Historically, the government of Puerto Rico facilitates the domination of PR by the United States. That is the role of a governor in a colony. The U.S. wants to reconquer Venezuela. First came the destabilization campaign. Then the Organization of American States zeroed in on Venezuela, the U.S. imposed sanctions and Trump declared that a military invasion is an option.

There are many theories. Some speculate on an agreement between Rosselló and Trump to advance a pro-statehood agenda. I think that is irrelevant. Rosselló is carrying out U.S. orders. He had the nerve to call a press conference with Antonio Ledezma, a Venezuelan terrorist, to announce this move. This is another example of Rosselló working against the people of Puerto Rico since day one.

The people are against what the governor is doing. Indignation against that press conference came first from the progressive movement, then others immediately took to social media opposing the statement and action of the governor. A demonstration took place in solidarity with Bolivarian Venezuela. Outrage continues to be expressed on radio shows, in conversations and on social media against putting U.S. interests above the needs of Puerto Rico.

Venezuela is not the enemy. These sisters and brothers offered hurricane relief that was rejected by the governor because of PR's condition as a U.S. colony. Venezuela offered a shipload of diesel fuel free of charge when generators needed fuel. Uruguay, Mexico and Cuba offered solidarity, which also was blocked.

Puerto Rico has always been a U.S. laboratory for many things: to experiment with birth control pills; a laboratory of militarization, like Vieques; invasions, like Santo Domingo, Grenada, Panama. What happens in Puerto Rico doesn't stay in Puerto Rico.

Right-wing governments now installed across Latin America are part of the environment in which the colonial government of Puerto Rico is being used against Venezuela. The U.S. views Puerto Rico as a laboratory, and will try to impose fiscal control boards, like the one they are trying out in Puerto Rico, in other places.

The Emergency Tribunal is a step in building solidarity to close down the imperialist laboratory.

For more information or to reserve space at the Oct. 27 Tribunal, go to PuertoRicoTribunal.org.

Judge rules expulsion is racist

By G. Dunkel

In a decision issued Oct. 3 in California, Judge Edward Chen called the Department of Homeland Security's “actions ... based on animus against non-white, non-European immigrants in violation of Equal Protection guaranteed by the Constitution.” He said politely, with a lot of wiggle room, what most people would simply call “racist” and protected the immigrants from expulsion. The DHS had decided that nearly 300,000 people who had temporary protected status (TPS), which allows them to live and work in the United States, would have to wrap up their lives and leave the U.S. Following Judge Chen's decision, citizens of Sudan, El Salvador, Haiti and Nicaragua who legally live and work in the U.S. will now have their status continued. Meanwhile, a lawsuit challenging the DHS attempt to eliminate their protections continues. TPS protects migrants in the U.S. who come from countries that have been hit by dire conditions, such as epidemics, war or natural disaster. Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-Fla.), whose Miami district includes a large community of Haitian-Americans, told the Miami Herald on Oct. 4 that she wasn't surprised that the judge found “direct evidence of animus.” From the beginning of Trump's administration, and especially “more recently with the inhumane treatment of migrant children,” President Donald

Trump has made it abundantly clear “that people with brown skin are unwelcome.” Wilson has visited Haiti and seen the extreme devastation, including damage from hurricanes, a 2010 earthquake and two outbreaks of cholera introduced by United Nations “peacekeepers.” According to Wilson, “There is a definite need to continue TPS for Haitian nationals.” According to the Center for Migration Studies, 51,700 TPS holders work in construction. Other industries also have thousands of TPS workers: 32,400 in restaurants and food services, 15,800 in landscaping services, 10,000 in child care and 9,200 in grocery stores. On the same day that Chen made his ruling, six tractor-trailers driven by immigrants with TPS surrounded the Los Angeles Detention Center. This action was part of three days of protests at the port by the Teamsters, demanding that drivers be given the status of workers, with benefits, not treated as independent contractors. Ron Herrera, vice president of the Western Region of the Teamsters, said that the action is part of a new era in the Teamsters union, where they intend to advocate on behalf of their immigrant members. “We're a little late and we were never at the front, but when the dynamics of our people changed, we had to change with it,” Herrera told BuzzFeed News on Oct. 3. “We realized a majority of workers we're trying to organize are TPS holders and immigrants. A lot of them were predominantly immigrant Hispanics.” □

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Struggle against Kavanaugh

A legacy of fightback

The confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court on Oct. 6 was undoubtedly a win — for the moment — for the U.S. capitalist class seeking to keep its grip on repressive state power. That he was voted in despite credible and powerful evidence that he sexually assaulted several women emphasizes the shameless brutality of this ruling class.

Millions experienced this reactionary victory as agony, as the hearings called up their own experiences of trauma — women, especially women of color, gender nonconforming women, young and older women, women with disabilities, trans people of all genders. And others also — women and men assaulted when they were children by those who held power over them.

And millions have been called to fury and renewed fightback, as the depth of sexual violence toward women and other genders was revealed.

As the struggle continues, those ready to act have powerful histories of organized resistance to draw on. The march of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Seattle on Oct. 4 is a reminder of how Native peoples have fought colonizing assaults, including rape, for centuries with women and two-spirit people in leadership.

For Black women in the U.S., the struggles against rape, sexual assault and many other crimes of racism — led by Ida B. Bells, Anna J. Cooper and others — are inextricably intertwined. Perhaps the earliest U.S. record of an organized anti-rape effort comes from 1866, when a group of African-American women testified before Congress that a white mob, including police, had perpetrated gang rape against them and their community during the Memphis Riot. (tinyurl.com/gny47ox)

This legacy of resistance remind us that a struggle against violence toward women must be simultaneously a struggle against racism and national oppression, and a struggle to overturn the system of private property relations that historically gave rise to the ideas and practices of male supremacy and white supremacy that permeate every aspect of class relations in the U.S. today.

In “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State,” Friedrich Engels wrote that the fall of matriarchal society in prehistory had been a “world defeat of women.” He referred to the partitioning of society into classes as ruling-class men asserted control over surplus resources, over the bodies of men who were workers and over the bodies of women, who were both workers and the only people who could produce more people.

Now, as anger has built again over women being abused and treated as property, there is the chance to build solidarity and intertwined struggles for justice. As Dorothy Ballan noted in “Feminism and Marxism,” Engels understood that patriarchy was not eternal. If patriarchy was established at the same time as class society, then it could also be dismantled along with class society.

We are inspired by the rising of the recent U.S. strike of low-wage McDonald’s workers. Led by women of color, they declared a Sept. 18 walkout against rampant sexual abuse at their jobs. Supported by male worker allies, the women demanded both their rights as workers and their liberation as women — to end their bodies being used as company property at the whim of owners, managers and customers.

Marx and Engels, in the Communist Manifesto, said the goal of communists was a world in which women were liberated from being “articles of commerce and instruments of labor.”

In Workers World Party, we are fighting for the liberation of all women from all forms of sexual violence and exploitation. We are fighting for a world in which all people of every gender, sexuality, age, nationality, ability and disability are free from abuse and exploitation, and free to develop brilliantly and beautifully in all their many aspects. We are fighting to build a socialist road to that world. We must be willing to meet every challenge to make that happen. □

Italy and USA

The political power of arms

The author is an Italian military analyst who first published this article in the Oct. 2 issue of Il Manifesto. Workers World Managing Editor John Catalinotto translated the article.

By Manlio Dinucci

When the Italian government announced that a financial maneuver by the government would result in a deficit of around 27 billion euros (\$31.3 billion), there was an immediate alarm in the markets and the European Union, the political opposition went on the attack and the president of the republic appealed to the constitution.

There was absolute silence, however, both in the government and in the opposition, about the fact that Italy spends a similar amount in one year for military purposes. The 2018 figure is around 25 billion euros; other military items bring it to over 27 billion. That’s more than 70 million euros (\$81 million) a day. Though that’s increasing as Italy has committed itself in NATO to bring it up to around 100 million euros (\$116 million) a day.

Why does no politician question the growing disbursement of public money for weapons, armed forces and military interventions? Because it would mean going against the United States, the “privileged ally” (i.e., the dominant imperialist state), which requires Italy to continuously increase military spending.

For the fiscal year 2019 (which began Oct. 1, 2018), the U.S. arms expenditure exceeds \$700 billion, plus other military items, including almost \$200 billion for retired soldiers. Total U.S. military spending thus rises to over \$1 trillion per year, or a quarter of federal spending [including Social Security and Medicare benefits].

A growing investment in war allows the U.S., according to the 2018 National Defense Strategy Summary, to meet its goal to “remain the pre-eminent military power in the world, ensure that the balance of power remains ... and advances in our favor an international order that is most conducive to our security and prosperity.”

However, military expenditure will

cause a deficit of almost \$1 trillion in the federal budget in fiscal year 2019. This will further increase the U.S. federal government’s debt, which has risen to around \$21.5 trillion.

This debt is countered domestically by cuts in social spending and abroad by printing dollars. The U.S. dollar is used as the main currency of the world’s currency reserves and commodity prices.

But there are those who grow wealthy from the growing military expenditures. They are the giants of the war industry. Among the world’s 10 largest arms manufacturers, six are based in the U.S.: Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon Company, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics and L3 Technologies. These are followed by the British BAE Systems, the French-Dutch Airbus, the Italian Leonardo (formerly Finmeccanica), which climbed to ninth place, and the French Thales.

These manufacturers are not just individual giant arms companies. They form the military-industrial complex, closely integrated with institutions and parties, in a wide and deep interweaving of interests. This creates a true arms establishment, whose profits and powers increase as tension and wars increase.

The Italian company Leonardo, which derives 85 percent of its revenues from the sale of arms, is integrated in the U.S. military-industrial complex. It supplies products and services not only to the armed forces and the companies of the Pentagon, but also to the intelligence agencies, while in Italy it manages the plant in Cameri making Lockheed Martin F-35 fighters.

In September, Leonardo was chosen by the Pentagon, with Boeing as the first contractor, to supply the U.S. Air Force with the AW139 attack helicopter.

In August, Fincantieri (controlled by the finance company of the Ministry of Economy and Finance) with Lockheed Martin delivered to the U.S. Navy two additional Coast Guard ships.

All this must be kept in mind when one wonders why, in Italian parliamentary and institutional bodies, there is an overwhelming consensus among many of the parties not to cut, but instead to increase military spending. □

Chicago forum highlights anti-colonial struggles

By Andy Shihadeh
Chicago

Dozens of Chicago activists gathered for a Sept. 30 public forum on current anti-colonial struggles in Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Palestine to discuss the upcoming International Tribunal on U.S. Colonial Crimes in Puerto Rico. These countries all share a common history of colonial oppression, and the people of each offer inspiring examples, both past and current, of struggles for liberation.

It has been 120 years since the U.S. invasion and colonization of Puerto Rico; 120 years since the people of the Philippines liberated themselves from Spanish rule; and 70 years since the Nakba — “the catastrophe” — the forced expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland by Zionist settlers.

Today, Puerto Rico is still a colony of the U.S.; the Philippines is nominally independent, but in reality is a neocolony of the United States; and Palestine is oc-

cupied by Israel. Representatives of the Puerto Rico Tribunal, Chicago Boricua Resistance, Anakbayan Chicago, Chicago Workers World Party, and a Palestinian scholar spoke on these interconnected struggles.

“As people living in the United States, we have a special duty to support these liberation struggles,” Kaitlyn Griffith, Chicago WWP member, said in introducing the panel. “It is the U.S. that provides military aid to Israel and the Philippines, bankrupted Puerto Rico and failed to provide real aid during Hurricane Maria.”

Berta Joubert-Ceci, a key organizer of the Tribunal, provided detailed background on U.S. policies and economic warfare that contributed to the unnatural disaster that came in the wake of Hurricane Maria. “The island and its people have been exploited for the benefit of the U.S. ruling class through low wages, high-interest debt and plunder of natural resources — all before Maria hit,” Joubert-Ceci pointed out. “The Tribunal

seeks to directly give voice to the people of Puerto Rico, to hear their testimony and to place the blame for these colonial crimes at the feet of the United States.”

The International Tribunal on U.S. Crimes in Puerto Rico is being held on Oct. 27 in New York City. For more information, visit PuertoRicoTribunal.org. To help contribute to cover the costs of the Tribunal, visit gofundme.com/Tribunal-PuertoRico.

Miguel Alvelo, an activist with Chicago Boricua Resistance, an organization of Puerto Ricans opposed to the Fiscal Control Board, highlighted actions that Puerto Ricans in the diaspora can take in solidarity with those living on the island. “Puerto Rico constitutes a people divided across an ocean by the forces of imperialism, colonialism and capitalism,” Alvelo said. “We always refer to the people on the ground in Puerto Rico to inform our actions. Using this as a guiding force, the diaspora can engage in advocacy, direct action, education, physical support,

financial support and solidarity network building, among many other things.”

Movement against Duterte dictatorship in the Philippines

Julian Ignacio, secretary general of Anakbayan Chicago, a comprehensive organization of Filipino youth working to support the national democratic struggle in the Philippines, spoke on the current movement against the dictatorship of President Rodrigo Duterte. “The so-called ‘war on drugs’ in the Philippines is a war on the poor, workers, Muslims and the people’s movements, and the U.S. provides millions in funds that support these policies,” Ignacio said. “But there is a strong movement against Duterte and bureaucrat-capitalism being led by the Communist Party of the Philippines and the National Democratic Movement.”

Ignacio also highlighted the struggle of Filipino NutriAsia workers, who became the target of anti-worker violence at the

Continued on the next page

Venezuela

20 years in the gunsights of U.S. imperialism

By Kayla Popuchet

The U.S. and its proxies in Latin America are gearing up for possible military intervention against the Bolivarian government of Venezuela. Last February, then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson toured Latin American countries, rallying support for such aggression. U.S. officials have met since then with dissident Venezuelan officers to discuss support for a coup. And President Donald Trump reportedly asked his administration to consider a U.S. intervention.

What has turned this country on the northern coast of South America, which possesses the single largest oil reserves in the world, into a prime target of U.S. imperialism?

Since the first victory of the late Hugo Chávez 20 years ago in Venezuela's presidential elections and the process of the Bolivarian Revolution, Venezuela's estab-

Framed-up rapper released from prison

Continued from page 3

Rappers have used their own recordings to defy mass incarceration. Brown recorded more than a dozen albums while imprisoned, and told the Los Angeles Times in 2002 that “the music takes me over these walls.” He used his songs to maintain his innocence, attack the inhumanity of mass incarceration and advance his developing political worldview.

Brown is not a politician and his works maintain many contradictions. Still, on his Instagram page, Brown has expressed joy at his early release and commitment to bettering his community. Brown has immediately begun working in the studio, but has also displayed his struggles with shifting to small responsibilities he had not prioritized as a teenager, such as washing his own clothes.

Though Brown is no activist, his persistence and cultural work undoubtedly played a role in advancing the current movement against mass incarceration. We should all remember that during a time in which liberals and Democratic Party officials both supported mandatory sentencing, rappers like Brown had already begun to sound the alarm. □

Chicago forum highlights anti-colonial struggles

Continued from page 10

hands of police when they went on strike against exploitative conditions. You can donate to support the NutriAsia campaign at tinyurl.com/supportNutriAsiaworkers.

Addressing the special connection between the Philippines and Puerto Rico, Alvelo said, “We share the same colonial masters — both Spain in the past and the United States now. We see solidarity as absolutely essential in our struggles; we are both islands!” One of the ways the Puerto Rican diaspora is organizing to support the island is through Solidarity Brigades, which you can support at redapoyomutuo.org/donaciones.

Samer Owaida, a Chicago-based Palestinian activist and scholar, presented a slideshow displaying original research that he helped conduct while in Palestine during the summer. He used both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the environmental effects of the Israeli occupation and its consequences on Palestinians. □

lishment as a sovereign state aiming to establish socialism has made it the target. The oil reserves make it a valuable target.

The U.S. has continued to follow the racist and chauvinistic 1823 Monroe Doctrine, when U.S. President James Monroe declared U.S. hegemony regarding all the land, resources and people of the Western Hemisphere. While the original declaration appeared to be aimed at European colonizers, the doctrine has been applied against any attempt of the Latin American and Caribbean countries to obtain real sovereignty.

When countries like Cuba — which established socialism — Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and earlier Chile have challenged U.S. control over the region simply by calling for self-determination, the U.S. has replied with economic sanctions, blockades, violent subversion and military intervention.

What Washington seeks to do in Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua is parallel to similar U.S. interventionism in 1914 Ukraine, in 1970-73 against the Chilean government led by Salvador Allende and against the Muammar Qaddafi government in 2011 in Libya, which all resulted in reactionary, fascist-like regimes.

Sanctions and violent subversion

Since 2015, the U.S. and its European allies have placed heavy sanctions on Bolivarian Venezuelan leaders while funding and allying with opposition leaders. The Venezuelan opposition comes from the bourgeois class that is mainly of European white heritage and that is racist, sexist, and seeks to oppress and exploit Black, Indigenous and working-class Venezuelans.

In 2015, the opposition in Venezuela adopted a new tactic to undermine the Bolivarian government by creating violence and fear against Chavistas. These rightists fabricated a narrative of humanitarian crisis in Venezuela that ultimately put the onus for all problems on Nicolás Maduro and the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) that governed the country.

Members of the opposition group Vente Venezuela, who the U.S. calls freedom fighters, shot and killed civilians. This opposition set on fire and killed Orlando Figueroa, a 17-year-old Afro-Venezuelan, for being a supporter of the Bolivarian Revolution. In 2017, the opposition set 40 tons of subsidized food on fire while at the same time claiming Venezuelans are dying of starvation through the fault of the government. Opposition leader Julio Borges has called for banks to freeze the accounts of Venezuelan leaders.

In New York City on Sept. 27, Jorge Arreaza, the minister of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, told supporters of the Bolivarian Revolution that sanctions the U.S. placed on members of the Venezuelan government ultimately prevent money from going to the state, which would then use the funds for the people.

Arreaza explained that Venezuela will send oil to European countries and when these countries try to pay for the oil, because of these sanctions, the bank holds the money. According to the Venezuela Analysis, Trump's sanctions against the country have cost the Bolivarian Republic \$6 billion. This one example can show how sanctions are causing economic crisis, not the Bolivarian system.

Last May 20, Nicolás Maduro was re-elected president of Venezuela with 68 percent of the vote. International observers and the Venezuelan National Electoral Commission confirmed the transparency of the election. Venezuela uses voting

machines which are 100 percent audit-able at each stage, unlike machines used in the U.S.

The Venezuelan opposition had publicly boycotted the elections despite Maduro urging them to participate and even agreeing to give the opposition an extra month to campaign. Despite this clear victory with no basis for claiming the election was questionable, the U.S. government placed additional sanctions on Maduro.

To counter the U.S.'s sanctions and their damage to the Venezuelan currency, the Bolívar Fuerte, the Maduro administration announced a series of economic reforms. The reforms included establishing a new currency called the Bolívar Soberano, which has five zeros less than the Bolívar Fuerte (1 Soberano = 10,000 Fuerte) and would be backed by Venezuela's oil reserves.

President Maduro announced these reforms on July 25. Less than two weeks later, an attempt was made on Maduro's life.

Assassination attempt

On Aug. 5, during an event commemorating the Bolivarian National Guard Forces, two small drones flew maliciously above while Maduro was speaking. Suddenly, one of the drones spun out of control and hit the side of a building while the other exploded midair and injured several people, including Venezuelan soldiers.

This failed drone attack was a clear attempt to kill Maduro only two months after his overwhelming re-election. Venezuelan authorities have identified 43 people involved in this assassination attempt, all linked to Julio Borges, a Venezuelan opposition leader who resides in and coordinates from Bogotá in neighboring Colombia.

Jorge Rodríguez, the minister for Communication and Information of Venezuela, has relayed that the Colombian government had trained the terrorist group aligned with Borges and allowed several members to cross the border into Venezuela.

Continued aggression

Every September in New York City at the United Nations headquarters, high-level delegates from all over the world attend the opening of the General Assembly. On Sept. 21, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told Fox News, “You'll see in the coming days a series of actions that continue to increase the pressure level against the Venezuelan leadership folks.”

On Sept. 25, as the debates in the U.N. began, the U.S. placed sanctions on Cilia Flores de Maduro, the president of the National Assembly and former attorney general of Venezuela, and on an additional two Venezuelan officials. Cilia Flores is also President Maduro's spouse.

Maduro made a last-minute decision to come to New York City and speak at the General Assembly. At Riverside Church in Harlem on Sept. 26, Maduro made a surprise appearance, giving a message from the Venezuelan people to counter imperialist propaganda to a crowd of over 2,000 people who had come to hear Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel speak.

The next day outside the U.N., right-wing Venezuelans protested the Maduro administration and called for military intervention in the country. U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley, known for her support for Israel and Saudi Arabia, not to mention the U.S. Confederacy, joined the protest. Haley reassured the “escuálidos” [the filthy, weak ones] that the Trump administration backs their agenda and will work to remove Maduro from office.

Thus, Washington blatantly intervened against a sovereign nation.

What this means for Latin Americans

Poverty in Venezuela has been reduced since the Bolivarian government started using revenue from the nationalized oil industry to invest in social programs, which have increased by 60 percent in the past ten years. Alliances with Cuba have made it possible for Cuban doctors, renowned for their skill and solidarity, to treat people in rural Venezuelan communities free of charge.

According to Gini Coefficient, inequality in Venezuela has been reduced by 54 percent and poverty by 44 percent. In 1996, 70.8 percent of Venezuelans lived in poverty. By 2010, this figure was reduced to 21 percent. During his 13 years in office, Chávez initiated a program called “Misiones,” an anti-poverty program which benefited 20 million people. Pre-Chávez, 387,000 elderly people received retirement pensions. Now, 2.1 million of Venezuela's 24 million people receive pensions.

Additionally, UNESCO has recognized that illiteracy in the Bolivarian Republic has been eliminated. Some 72 percent of children attend public daycare while 85 percent of school-age children are in public school. Venezuela is rated number 2 among Latin American nations with students in university while being number 5 in the world, proportionately.

To combat food shortages, President Maduro in early 2016 announced an initiative, Local Provision and Production Committees (CLAPS), which connects grassroots activists and the administration to provide direct food distribution and subsidies to communities which, up to the present, has been the most effective program for Venezuelans.

The vast majority of Venezuelans are Mestizx, Indigenous and Black, while the opposition and the bourgeois are white, of colonial Spanish descent, whose wealth was gained through landlordship and slave labor. María Emilia Durán, an Afro-Venezuelan activist, told TeleSUR, “It's a white, bourgeois, classist, racist and sexist elite that has no patriotism,” and that “they want a Venezuela where only they exist, not Black, Indigenous and poor people.” South America has a rich racial diversity, yet, due to colonialism, much racial discrimination and exploitation exist.

While Black, Mestizx and Indigenous people make up the continent, the ruling class of most of the nations is wealthy and white. In the summer of 2017, after much outcry from Black Latinx people, multiple Latin American nations such as Peru and Mexico finally recognized “Afrolatinidad” as a category.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela remains one of the few Latin American countries that actively works to deconstruct racism and discrimination, and celebrates the most oppressed in the country. It is this, too, that the Venezuelan opposition wants to turn back.

The Bolivarian Revolution, much like the Cuban Revolution, is symbolic to the working and oppressed that it is possible for the people to win. As Jorge Arreaza said in New York City on Sept. 27, “They [the U.S.] demonize us because we are socialists.”

These revolutions are integral to the Black Latin American Revolution, and it is important for those in the imperialist core to defend Bolivarian ideals from U.S. and fascist aggression.

Joe Emersberger - <https://venezuela-analysis.com/analysis/14073>



Detener ataques a pueblos indígenas Bangsamoro instigados por régimen Duterte/EUA

Por Monica Moorehead

El siguiente testimonio fue presentado en el Tribunal Internacional de los Pueblos sobre delitos económicos, políticos y sociales contra el pueblo filipino. El tribunal se llevó a cabo del 18 al 19 de septiembre en Bruselas, Bélgica. Para leer sobre el tribunal, vaya a tinyurl.com/y9jn8mxq/.

Soy Pya Macliing Malayao, miembro del consejo de líderes de SANDUGO, el Movimiento de los Pueblos Moro e Indígenas para la Autodeterminación. También soy secretaria general de Katribu Kalipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas, o Katribu. Katribu es la alianza nacional de organizaciones de pueblos indígenas en Filipinas. Fue fundada en 1987 en respuesta a la escalada en violaciones de nuestros derechos colectivos a nuestras tierras ancestrales y a nuestra autodeterminación.

Soy una Igorot de la tribu Bontok en Mt Province. Bajo el régimen de los EUA y Duterte, fui víctima de un intento de asesinato y arresto ilegal durante la violenta dispersión de una acción de protesta de los pueblos indígenas y Moro frente a la Embajada de los EUA en Manila exigiendo una política exterior independiente.

Solo para dar una breve introducción sobre los pueblos indígenas y moro en Filipinas: los pueblos indígenas representan aproximadamente el 15 por ciento de la población total del país. Están compuestos por más de 100 grupos principales, la mayoría de los cuales se encuentran en Mindanao, denominados colectivamente Lumad; el resto están en diferentes partes de Luzón y las Visayas. Los moros son 13 grupos etnolingüísticos en Filipinas, la mayoría de los cuales abrazaron el Islam y resistieron ferozmente el colonialismo español y estadounidense. Comprenden el cinco por ciento de la población filipina y se encuentran principalmente en Mindanao Central, Basilan, Sulu y Tawi-Tawi.

Los moros y los pueblos indígenas enfrentan el problema distintivo de la opresión nacional, la negación sistemática e institucionalizada y la violación de nuestro derecho a la autodeterminación para alcanzar libremente nuestro desarrollo social, económico y cultural y determinar nuestro estatus político.

La opresión nacional instigada por el estado y las elites gobernantes incluye la denegación de nuestros derechos territoriales, la falsa representación y subversión de nuestros sistemas sociales y políticos, la discriminación institucionalizada, el chauvinismo cristiano, la islamofobia, la comercialización de la cultura, la negligencia social o la negación de servicios básicos, y ataques fascistas y militarización.

Hemos estado afirmando nuestro derecho a la autodeterminación durante décadas mediante la defensa de nuestros territorios y el desarrollo continuo de nuestros sistemas económicos, políticos y culturales. Hemos lanzado una campaña legal para la autodeterminación y la democracia nacional, y también una lucha armada. Usamos nuestros sistemas tradicionales de defensa y participamos en la resistencia armada para la autodeterminación que está librando el Partido Comunista de las Filipinas, el Frente de Liberación Islámica Moro, Frente de Liberación Nacional Moro, Movimiento de Libertad Islámica Bangsamoro e incluso grupos crecientes extremistas.

Hemos sido criminalizados y atacados por nuestra resistencia y la afirmación de nuestros derechos colectivos en contra de las políticas del estado que invaden y



Monica Moorehead, una jurado, (izquierda) y Pya Macliing Malayao en el Tribunal Internacional del Pueblo en Bruselas, Bélgica.

saquean nuestros territorios ancestrales, las políticas contrainsurgente, y la “guerra contra el terror”.

Bajo las políticas neoliberales prevaletentes, los territorios de los pueblos moro e indígenas están invadidos por las grandes transnacionales, burócratas, empresas locales, y por el mismo gobierno. Entre los territorios ancestrales que ataca el régimen EUA-Duterte están el valle Andap, las sierras de Pantaron, Daguma, Zambales, Sierra Madre, Cordillera, y el pantano Liguassan, e incluso las tierras del pueblo Bangsamoro. Esto ha llevado a la destrucción de nuestros lugares sagrados ancestrales, a la pobreza, al desplazamiento y a la pérdida de territorios ancestrales.

Para asegurar el control completo sobre estos territorios ancestrales y sus recursos, el presidente Rodrigo Duterte ha continuado implementando la guerra contra el “terror” impulsada por EUA contra los pueblos indígenas y bangsamoro. Ha expandido los programas de contrainsurgencia de las previas administraciones mediante la Operación Kapayapaan, un programa modelado en la Guía de Contrainsurgencia de EUA.

Duterte y Trump trabajan mano a mano

Siguiendo las órdenes de los imperialistas estadounidenses, el régimen Duterte se ha comprometido a apoyar la Operación “Pacific Eagle Philippines” (Águila Pacífica de las Filipinas), un programa estadounidense de contrainsurgencia que también afecta a los bangsamoro. El régimen Duterte intensificó aún más su represión de los moro y lumad con su guerra descontrolada y la ley marcial en Mindanao.

El régimen Duterte continuó la Aplicación del Programa Nacional de Seguridad Interna sobre Pueblos Indígenas y el Enfoque Centrado en Pueblos Indígenas en sus programas de contrainsurgencia. Estos se enfocan particularmente en el papel que tienen los pueblos indígenas en neutralizar la insurgencia en las zonas rurales.

Mediante la “neutralización” de nuestras comunidades, las Fuerzas Armadas de las Filipinas esperan contener la expansión y la movilidad del Nuevo Ejército Popular en las áreas remotas. Duterte usa una estrategia inter-agencial, involucrando activamente a las agencias gubernamentales en los programas de contrainsurgencia tanto a nivel regional como nacional, incluyendo las agencias de los pueblos indígenas, el seguro social, la educación, la justicia, y otras. Duterte aprovecha el sistema tradicional de cultura y defensa para aumentar las fuerzas del estado y sus operaciones de contrainsurgencia.

Las comunidades y los territorios atacados por la contrainsurgencia y los programas económicos están severamente afectadas por la militarización. Entre las estrategias que usan son el reclutamiento

de pueblos indígenas a los grupos paramilitares, especialmente en las comunidades lumad de Mindanao.

Estos grupos paramilitares siembran el terror, la división y la desintegración de estructuras sociopolíticas tradicionales en nuestras comunidades. Otras manifestaciones del programa de contrainsurgencia enfocado en los pueblos indígenas son la presentación de cargos exagerados contra líderes comunitarios indígenas; destrucción de las facilidades y el sustento comunitario; el cierre forzado de escuelas lumad, que expresan nuestro derecho a la autodeterminación.

Maestras/os, madres, padres e hijas/os reciben amenazas de muerte y son acosadas/os. El 5 de septiembre de 2017, Obello Bay-ao, un joven líder manobo y estudiante del 7º grado en la escuela comunitaria Lumad Salugpongan, fue asesinado por miembros de un grupo paramilitar que fueron reclutados, armados, y entrenados por fuerzas del estado.

Cuando organizamos una manifestación exigiendo una política exterior independiente en frente de la embajada de EUA, la policía nos dispersó para no avergonzarse ante los oficiales de la embajada estadounidense.

Al igual que una unidad móvil de la policía mató a decenas de personas moro e indígenas, el régimen Duterte pisotea sin piedad los derechos de los pueblos moro e indígena.

La guerra desatada de Duterte, la guerra contra el “terror” y la imposición de la ley marcial en Mindanao han resultado en violaciones masivas de los derechos de los pueblos Moro e indígenas, tanto sus derechos como pueblo, como sus derechos bajo la ley humanitaria internacional.

Entre los casos reportados hay 67 víctimas de asesinatos extrajudiciales, 27 incidencias de bombardeos que afectaron a 353.988 personas; 58 incidencias de evacuación forzada afectando a 401.582 personas; 140 incidencias de ataques contra escuelas comunitarias lumad; el cierre forzado de 70 escuelas lumad afectando a más de 2.600 estudiantes, y cientos de víctimas de detención ilegal y cargos exageradas.

El asedio de la ciudad de Marawi ha resultado en la devastación del principal centro del pueblo moro, causando su diáspora a otras regiones y la pérdida de su patrimonio cultural.

Otras comunidades moro son consistentemente militarizadas bajo el régimen Duterte. De julio 2016 a finales de mayo 2018, por lo menos 15.757 personas se han reportado evacuadas solo en la provincia de Maguindanao.

El imperialismo estadounidense bajo Donald Trump apoya activamente al fascista Duterte, proporcionando orientación, entrenamiento, fondos, armas, e información de inteligencia a las fuerzas del estado. También proporciona intervención militar directa bajo la cobertura de tratados unilaterales con el gobierno Filipino. El gobierno estadounidense tiene extensos intereses económicos y geopolíticos en los territorios de los pueblos moro e indígenas. Estas regiones alojan bases militares de los Estados Unidos, exploraciones petroleras multinacionales en el mar Sulu y el pantano Liguasan y proyectos

extranjeros de energía, minería y plantaciones.

Trump dijo durante su visita en noviembre 2017 que las Filipinas son “el más valioso inmueble desde el punto de vista militar.” El 31 de agosto, EUA afirmó su apoyo a la guerra contra el “terror,” la ley marcial y Oplan Kanayapaan diciendo que “las fuerzas de operaciones especiales de EUA continuarán asistiendo a las Fuerzas Armadas de las Filipinas (AFP) en Mindanao mediante apoyo que ayuda a los comandantes de AFP en su lucha contra los militantes”. El apoyo estadounidense es para “aumentar capacidades de inteligencia, vigilancia, y reconocimiento” de las AFP. En los últimos años las Filipinas han sido el mayor receptor de ayuda militar en la región Indo-Pacífica.

Una serie reciente de ataques aéreos y bombardeos indiscriminados por el AFP en Maguindanao, que duró 10 días, y que fue dirigido por las Fuerzas Especiales de EUA mató a un civil, hirió severamente a tres y desplazó a más de 7.000 personas moro, incluyendo 400 niños y 50 mujeres embarazadas. El 14 de septiembre, siete campesinos jóvenes Tausug Moro fueron torturados y masacrados por el ejército en Sulu. Además, la prohibición de Trump contra los musulmanes en EUA causó que nuestro co-lider, Jerome Succor Aba, fuera torturado por fuerzas estadounidenses en California.

El desplazamiento de comunidades moro e indígenas – resultado de los llamados programas de desarrollo y los ataques fascistas contra nuestra lucha por los derechos colectivos a los territorios ancestrales y la autodeterminación – llevarían finalmente al etnocidio, la muerte y la extinción de nuestras vidas, cultura e identidad.

El régimen EUA-Duterte ha decidido destruir cualquier forma de resistencia.

Enfrentándose a estos ataques de etnocidio, los pueblos moro e indígenas están aún más determinados a elevar nuestra lucha por nuestros derechos colectivos y democráticos. Los crímenes contra los pueblos moro e indígenas tienen que cesar, y Duterte y el gobierno estadounidense tiene que ser obligados a asumir responsabilidad. □

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