

After hurricane destruction

'Cancel Puerto Rico's unjust debt!'

By J. White  
Orlando, Fla.

Dozens of Puerto Ricans in Orlando, whose families are suffering on the island after Hurricane Maria, gathered on Oct. 4 with community allies in front of Merrill Lynch, one of the island's debt holders, to demand immediate and sufficient aid to relieve and rebuild Puerto Rico. They also called on Congress to cancel the island's \$72 billion debt burden so that Puerto Ricans can focus on rebuilding their communities instead of having to first pay the vulture funds.

The protest, which included a moment of silence for the people lost due to the hurricane, was part of a national day of action in 13 U.S. cities: Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, Seattle; Hartford, Conn.; Newark, N.J.; Oakland, Calif.; Orlando, Fla.; and Washington, D.C.

"While families are struggling to survive, the hedge fund vultures have continued to go to the courts to make sure they get paid," said Ruben Sanchez, a Service Employees Union retiree. "Puerto Ricans have already been suffering for decades, first from a long recession and then from the public service cuts that came with the debt crisis. That left the island especially vulnerable to a storm like Maria. It's time to recognize that the debt is unpayable."

The demonstration was initiated by Vamos4PR, a network of stateside organizations including SEIU and others supporting the struggle for a "fair economy for all Puerto Ricans." (vamos4pr.org)

This crisis is sparking a resurgence of the movement for independence from the U.S., with demands not only for canceling the debt, but for reparations for the damage and exploitation done to the people and the island.

Solidarity spurs action

Across the country and around the world, the devastation in Puerto Rico and lack of government response is sparking working people to take relief into their own hands. Unions are collecting funds and sending members to help. The Teamsters and AFL-CIO are working together to recruit truck drivers to travel to Puerto

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U.S. banks and financial institutions have strangled Puerto Rico's economy. Here, protest outside Merrill Lynch in Orlando, Fla.

WW PHOTO: J. WHITE

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WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM  
Narragansett Two-Spirit WWP member Nat Heathman 'decorated' Columbus statue.

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U.S. members of Che Brigade assist in Cuba after hurricane.

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

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

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

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# Women’s rights and health care Battlegrounds in the class struggle

By Kathy Durkin

While the very rich may be experiencing an “era of good feeling,” the multinational working class is facing attacks at every turn.

From the first day of his presidency, the benefit-cutter-in-chief and his cabal in the White House, Cabinet and Congress have moved to dismantle gains and benefits won over decades by workers and labor unions, the Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements, immigrants, women’s rights’ organizations, environmentalists, the LGBTQ community, disability rights groups, students, seniors and children’s advocates.

The political agents of the ruling class — while claiming to defend jobs! — have waged an overt and covert war to overturn any social progress won through the class struggle and people’s movements. If they can’t pressure and finagle Congress to roll back these gains, they do it stealthily through government agencies, official decrees or executive orders.

These reactionaries have been hellbent on overturning the Affordable Care Act since Congress enacted it in 2010. While this law fell far short of socialized medicine, it nevertheless enabled over 20 million working-class individuals to obtain health insurance. Many low-income workers accessed coverage through the ACA’s provisions for Medicaid expansion and federal subsidies, which the right wing is now trying to sabotage.

Since attempts to “repeal and/or replace” Obamacare lost in Congress, the misogynist Republican right has now targeted women’s health care benefits. In June, a gang of white male senators secretly tried to eliminate coverage for maternal care, mammograms, birth control

and other women’s medical benefits and also defund Planned Parenthood. That scheme backfired when it became public and women around the country organized against it.

One popular section of the ACA that corporate heads and right-wing politicians have continually attacked is the mandate that companies include free contraceptive coverage in their employee insurance policies. Some 62.4 million women have insurance covering contraception with no out-of-pocket costs, says the National Women’s Law Center. Safe and reliable prevention of unwanted pregnancies can be costly, ranging from \$50 a month to \$1,000 for certain devices — a price too high for many women.

In collaboration with the Christian right, some companies claimed providing contraceptive coverage violated their “religious freedom.” The chorus of business owners opposing the contraceptive mandate under that guise swelled and was the crux of the Hobby Lobby case. The Supreme Court ruled in 2014 that closely held for-profit companies could eliminate this benefit from their insurance plans based on the owners’ religious objections. However, the Obama administration arranged an alternative: Women could bypass their employers and get this coverage directly from insurers.

Corporate pressure continued. So on Oct. 6, Trump obliged his right-wing millionaire cronies by issuing an executive order effective immediately that allows any employer to opt out of the contraceptive mandate if they claim “religious or moral objections” to it. Moreover, the edict will make it harder for women workers to obtain contraceptive coverage directly from insurers.

This directive circumvented public discussion and even Congressional debate about a benefit that 68 percent of the population supports. The White House alleges that low-income women can obtain contraceptives through community health centers and government programs, but right-wing politicians are also determined to take a scalpel to funds for these services.

Not mentioned in most liberal critiques of the Trump administration is this fact: These attacks on women are part of big capital’s war on the working class. Bosses the world over have one main goal: to maximize profits and decrease labor costs, meaning wages and benefits.

**Build working-class unity!**

The White House suspended on Aug. 29 an Obama-administration regulation aimed at narrowing the gender pay gap. Women earn 80 percent of what men make, and even less for women of color, who are doubly exploited by employers’ racist and sexist wage policies. African-American women and Latinas are paid only 63 cents and 54 cents, respectively, on each dollar white men make.

Ever since 1966 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has required firms with more than 100 workers to fill out an EEO-1 form indicating the employees’ gender, race and type of work. In an attempt to detect pay discrimination, the Obama regulation added a new category: wage levels for all workers. Now Trump’s order has eliminated the revised form so new data proving discrimination cannot be collected. A National Women’s Law Center statement noted that the ruling tells businesses “This administration has your back.”

There is federal backsliding on an-

other important issue affecting women — campus sexual assaults. The previous administration posted studies about this anti-woman violence at the White House website, with the goal of reducing it, but this information has disappeared without explanation. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos has outrageously stated that federal policies are unfair to the perpetrators and will be rewritten.

These government attacks on women’s rights have not happened in a vacuum. They are part of a widespread offensive by the capitalist class to maximize profits. Workers’ safety and health measures, benefits for workers with disabilities and retirees, and rights for transgender employees are being rolled back, while minimum wage, overtime and collective bargaining rights are endangered.

Essential federal programs that aid workers, low-income and oppressed communities are on the chopping block, while the wealthiest 1% plot to get enormous tax cuts to increase their riches.

Racism, sexism, xenophobia and anti-LGBTQ attitudes permeate the White House and congressional right wing. The war on undocumented immigrant workers is escalating with more roundups and deportations. The Department of (In) justice, headed by archracist Attorney General Jeff Sessions, is denying rights to prisoners, disproportionately Black and Latinx, and enabling racist police violence. Voting rights of oppressed communities are under attack. And the Democratic Party, the other party of imperialism, puts up no real fight against all this.

The answer to this ruling-class offensive is to build working-class unity and strengthen the class struggle. That means recognizing the leading role played by the most oppressed sections of our class. □

## #SinkingColumbus Boston march demands Indigenous Peoples’ Day

By Workers World Boston bureau

A fired-up crowd gathered outside Boston’s Park Street Station Oct. 7 to demand Indigenous Peoples’ Day be observed on the second Monday in October by Boston and other Massachusetts cities and towns. The group also decried practices in schools and workplaces that glorified Columbus with the annual holiday, parades and rehashing the myth of “the discovery of America” instead of exposing him as a genocidal slave trader and murderer.

Led by Indigenous people, the event was part of a coast-to-coast movement fighting to end Columbus Day and to build momentum for Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

The mobilization brought out participants and supporters from a broad range of local communities that have considerable first-hand experience dealing with the man-made catastrophes of colonialism and white supremacy.

Mahtowin Munro, of United American Indians of New England and lead organizer for Indigenous Peoples’ Day in Massachusetts, opened the rally by clarifying: “First, we are here to tell the truth about Columbus ... who didn’t discover anything. He invaded! You can’t discover a place where people were already living!”

Alberto Barreto spoke on behalf of the Taino people of Borinquen (Puerto Rico) and its diaspora: “We are all relatives, Native people.” He reminded listeners,



March through downtown Boston demands “Indigenous Peoples’ Day Now!”

“And as relatives, we are creating a bloc of resistance — from Patagonia to Standing Rock to the Caribbean — to say no to Columbus and to celebrate our life, Indigenous life!”

Barreto continued, “Hundreds of years of colonialism have stifled the Puerto Rican economy ... and the profits they have taken will never re-enter the island. Now, the white supremacist is throwing paper towels at us. So now is the time! I don’t want to see that statue of Christopher Columbus; I want him down!”

In addition to Black and Palestinian speakers, other Indigenous speakers were Narragansett, Wampanoag, Mi’kmaq, Mexico, and Tunica-Biloxi/Choctaw.

Nat Heathman, a young Narragansett Two-Spirit activist and member of Workers World Party, spoke about the isolation many generations of Indigenous

people in the U.S. have faced growing up: “[F]eeling the sorrow, longing and anger born of catching a glimpse of such a vibrant, beautiful, fascinating, precious world, of everything that used to be and could have been, but knowing that it isn’t anymore.”

One way to heal from the pain of this isolation, Heathman suggested, is collective action to tear down racist statues and all of white supremacy.

After the inspiring rally, the group marched through Boston’s Downtown Crossing neighborhood. There it swelled to over 200 strong, stirring interest from tourists and passersby. Heathman and other young militants led the growing crowd in chanting, “Indigenous people say: No more Columbus Day!” and “This land is stolen land! Blood is on Columbus’ hands!”

The march arrived at Boston’s waterfront-area Columbus statue, privately owned and maintained by the “Sons of Italy,” a U.S.-based Italian fraternal organization widely criticized over its reverence for fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

As the crowd chanted, “The statue, let’s face it, this shit is fucking racist!” Heathman ascended the base of the statue and “decorated” it with placards reading, “Christopher Columbus was a genocidal slave trader — #TearDown-WhiteSupremacy” and “Columbus: time to bring him down.”

Finally, a rally concluded the day with several additional speakers, including local labor activists who voiced support for the demand to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

“Indigenous Peoples’ Day is a workers’ issue,” said Ed Childs of UNITE-HERE Local 26, Hotel and Restaurant Employees.

“It’s not just about getting a day off,” Childs told Workers World. “It’s about who is celebrated and who is put to the side. Why do some workers get a day off to glorify white supremacy and not a day for solidarity with oppressed people?”

Led by Indigenous people, the crowd then turned toward the Boston Harbor and together honored the powerful ocean beyond it, acknowledging the crucial role of Indigenous people in safeguarding the water and the earth. □



# Farmworkers get Ben & Jerry’s to sign

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

In a dramatic development on Oct. 3, Migrant Justice/Justicia Migrante announced cancellation of a national dairy worker day of action — because of a resounding victory. The ice cream empire of Ben & Jerry’s was signing a historic agreement guaranteeing improvements in wages, work schedules, housing, and health and safety protections for all dairy farms in the corporation’s supply chain. (migrantjustice.net)

After a militant, seven-year campaign by Vermont farmworkers, the corporation finally buckled. Farmworker leaders X, Y and Z, along with Ben & Jerry’s CEO Jostein Solheim, signed the “Milk with Dignity/Leche con Dignidad” agreement Oct. 3 in front of the company’s flagship store in Burlington, Vt.

Though the traditionally “liberal” corporation is getting media credit for being

the first dairy industry company to sign on, the real groundbreaking news is that all standards of the Milk with Dignity plan were worker-developed and worker-driven, and that the legally binding agreement mandates Ben & Jerry’s to acquire its milk solely from farms adhering to those standards. The agreement will impact 1,200 to 1,500 workers, many undocumented immigrants, at 90 farms.

Lead Migrant Justice organizer, Enrique Balcazar, a former dairy worker, noted at the signing: “One of the biggest issues was housing conditions, the need for workers to be provided with basic amenities, like electricity, water, and housing that is free from pest infestation.” (New York Times, Oct. 3)

The terms of the agreement disclose how brutal working conditions have been. Milk with Dignity guarantees that workers under the protection of the agreement will have the right to one day off a week; earn

Farmworkers sign “Milk with Dignity/Leche con Dignidad” agreement.



at least the state minimum wage, presently \$10 an hour; be guaranteed at least eight consecutive hours to rest between shifts; and receive housing that includes a bed, access to electricity and clean running water. In the agreement are prohibitions against sexual assault, forced labor and physical violence toward workers.

The Milk with Dignity campaign, which began in 2010, included national actions in 2015 in front of Ben & Jerry’s popular “scoop shops.” Though the company at that time publicly committed to signing on, nothing happened. This spring, hundreds of farmworkers relaunched the campaign with a 13-mile march to Ben & Jerry’s most visible Vermont shop. When

still no CEO signed the agreement, another national action was called for October — and the company finally caved.

Milk with Dignity was modeled on the groundbreaking Coalition of Immokalee Workers’ Campaign for Fair Food, begun in 2001, which forced Florida tomato farm owners and agribusiness to stop placing Black and Brown farmworkers under conditions of virtual peonage and sometimes actual captivity.

For more on the conditions and organizing of farmworkers, read the informative narratives gathered by the Workers’ Center of Central New York: “Milked: Immigrant Dairy Farmworkers in New York State.” (milkedny.files.wordpress.com) □



PHOTOS: MIGRANT JUSTICE/JUSTICIAMIGRANTE

## Auto parts workers say ‘UNION YES!’

By Martha Grevatt  
Detroit

A majority of workers at a Magna auto parts facility in Warren, Mich., voted Oct. 5-6 in favor of union representation. The election, conducted by the National Labor Relations Board, allows United Auto Workers Local 155 to represent the 200-plus workers who build dashboard components for the auto industry. Local 155 currently has over 50 small shops in Metro Detroit under its umbrella.

The workers’ biggest complaints centered on the complete lack of seniority rights, high out-of-pocket expenses for health insurance and an unfair point system that routinely leads to unfair discipline.

Workers can receive points for refusing to work overtime, even when they are asked right before quitting time. Discrimination against Hmong immigrants, who

constitute about 25 percent of the workforce, was another issue that led workers to seek unionization.

Magna, self-described as “a leading global automotive supplier with 327 manufacturing operations and 100 product development, engineering and sales centers in 29 countries” with “161,000 employees,” can well afford to cover the cost of workers’ health insurance. The company made over \$1.5 billion in the first half of this year.

At one time, the UAW represented the majority of independent parts suppliers, companies that provided a wide range of components to the Big Three automakers. Over the years, outsourcing to nonunion firms has increased to 70 percent of all outsourced parts companies.

The UAW election win was the second in Metro Detroit in the past month, the first being at a Penske Logistics warehouse on Sept. 13. □

By Jim McMahan  
Seattle

Seattle workers won a boost in the minimum wage three years ago, from \$9.47 to \$15 an hour for most workers at companies with 500 or more employees. This came as part of the movement that has led to minimum wage increases in dozens of cities across the country. Many are now earning the \$15 per hour, with more to come, due to the national struggle.

Since July, however, a new study by University of Washington (UW) researchers has brought the opponents of a \$15 minimum wage out of the woodwork. The study actually claims that low-wage workers were hurt by the higher wage! The study says the minimum wage increase caused bosses to reduce the hours of minimum wage workers by 9 percent — and that the new minimum wage only raised their wages by 3 percent. But how could this be?

This UW study has been grabbing headlines across the country.

Another study, however, this one by the University of California Labor Cen-

ter, came out around the same time as the UW study. It points out that the UW study excludes workers at businesses that have more than one location. In other words, only stand-alone small companies show up in its results.

Workers at Starbucks, McDonalds and the other big chains aren’t included! The UC Labor Center says the UW report leaves “48 percent of Seattle’s low-paid workforce out of the study.” Workers at small companies are also covered by the new minimum wage law, but their raise to \$15 an hour is more gradual.

There’s another problem with the UW “study.” Its lead researcher, Jacob Vigdor, is an opponent of the minimum wage who wrote in a post in 2014: “The minimum wage is a lousy anti-poverty program.”

Seattle’s unemployment rate is now 2.6 percent. Big business opponents of minimum wage increases had long warned it would result in restaurant closings, layoffs and other significant problems. None of these outcomes have come to pass, as the bosses scramble to come up with “alternative facts.” □

## FIGHT THE POWER! BUILD WORKERS WORLD

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

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

That’s why we’re devoting so much coverage to the rising mobilization against white supremacy that exploded in Charlottesville and is now sweeping the country. The thousands who flooded Boston in defense of Black Lives Matter and against virulent racism is a really welcome development, especially given the city’s racist history.

And bringing down the statue in Durham, N.C., is having a domino effect, with statues being immediately removed in many other cities, as they were in Baltimore and Los Angeles.

But the action in Durham has special meaning to WW because it was our comrades who planned and executed that dramatic, watershed action. It’s an example of having our fingers on the anti-racist pulse, just as we have on so many anti-imperialist struggles, over the past 58 years. Most recently we’ve championed the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela and defended the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

It’s essential for Workers World not to be a bystander, but to take action in defense of our Marxist-Leninist principles and beliefs. If you agree with us, then it’s

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# 100th anniversary of October Revolution,

## PART 1

# From Marx's view of social evolution to Lenin's 'Imperialism'

By Deirdre Griswold

Enthusiasm for revolutionary change that can bring down capitalism and replace it with socialism is energizing a new generation in the United States. It's no secret why this should be happening.

A thousand fault lines are becoming not just visible but dangerously threatening in the existing economic and political system. Every day brings a new catastrophe or tragedy as the class in power — that small group of multibillionaires who have concentrated half the world's wealth in their hands — revels in its riches, even as misery and fear of what the future will bring seize more and more of the population.

Moreover, this supposedly “democratic” political system has put in the top office an erratic and self-absorbed racist billionaire whose outlandish behavior makes him a danger to the people of the world and a liability even to many in his own class.

At one time, beginning more than a century ago, many workers in Europe and even the United States understood that capitalism meant exploitation, robbing them of much of the product of their labor. They also understood that the bosses had a conscious strategy to split the working class into pieces, divided by race, national origin, language, religion, gender, and any other differences that could be inflamed by constant propaganda and pressure.

Many workers resisted all this, and political parties that put socialism on their banner and called for solidarity were strong among the working class and provided leaders of many organizing struggles.

But it's been a long time since those early reds, radicals, revolutionaries were hounded out of the labor movement, the schools, the arts and so on in the United States. They were pilloried by the powerful capitalist media. The perception that there could be revolutionary change, especially in the U.S., was ridiculed and condemned by the whole stable of bourgeois intellectuals and politicians, who preached then — as they do now — that there would be gradual improvement in the conditions of the masses, but only if they worked within the system.

The focus of most of these attacks on socialism and communism was the Soviet Union. As soon as the Bolshevik Revolution took power in 1917, the bourgeoisie mustered all its resources to demonize and ridicule the new workers' state. And while the USSR no longer exists, that hasn't stopped them. Quite the contrary. It has given them even more ammunition to proclaim that socialism will never work and capitalism is the only system that can innovate and provide people with what they want and need.

So it's very important that anyone who wants to resist this system of wage slavery and fight for socialism should be able to explain both the amazing successes of the USSR and also the enormous difficulties that the first workers' state had to deal with in its more than 70 years of existence.

### Looking back 100 years

It's now exactly 100 years since that revolution, and that is a long time for in-

dividuals. A whole new generation has grown up just since the collapse of the USSR in 1991. This new generation needs to know what was achieved despite all the obstacles, as well as what brought the USSR down.

This series of articles will focus not so much on the subjective problems of leadership. Those problems were very intense and affected the world communist movement very deeply, particularly after the death of the acknowledged leader of the Bolshevik Revolution, V.I. Lenin.

Rather, the series intends to examine the Russian Revolution within the framework of the Marxist view of social evolution. It will also look at some of the theoretical contributions made by Lenin, who analyzed the profound impact on the working-class movement that came with the transformation of capitalism into its highest and final stage, imperialism. This transformation deeply affected the consciousness of the workers in both oppressor and oppressed countries, but in opposite ways.

Lenin, it should be remembered, wrote his classic work on imperialism during World War I. It was published just one year before the Bolshevik Revolution. It was key to understanding why in underdeveloped Russia, where so many could not even read, the workers and peasants of many different nationalities would become the most revolutionary fighters against class oppression.

### Marx on material basis of social evolution

Marx had formulated his revolutionary views on the transition from capitalism to socialism in an earlier period. He had shown how the development of the means of production in the long run determines social relations.

When early human societies struggled to provide food, clothing and shelter with the simple tools they had, it took cooperation and sharing to ensure that the group survived. There was no surplus to fall back on — or to fight over.

But as survival techniques and tools gradually improved, there came a time when there were surpluses, and eventually the emergence of a leisure class that did not have to work but could appropriate to itself, usually by force, the fruits of others' labors.

As surpluses grew and human societies became more stratified, slavery emerged, then feudalism and finally capitalism — all different forms of class oppression made possible by the growing productivity of labor.

Capitalism in Europe was revolutionary in relation to feudalism. It unleashed science and technology from the fetters of mysticism. As a result, productivity improved by leaps and bounds. By the time Marx developed his dialectical materialist view of social development, it was already clear that poverty and ignorance could be abolished completely if the rulers were overthrown and the social product shared equitably among the working people. The idea of such a society was no longer utopian; it could be realized given the high level of productivity.

Most assumed that the revolutionary change to make this possible would come first in the countries of Europe and North America, where scientific-technological

development in the means of production was the highest.

But what we have seen since then is something very different.

### Revolutionary energy shifts to oppressed countries

Beginning with the Bolshevik Revolution, and continuing with the Mongolian, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese revolutions in Asia, the liberation movements in Africa and the Cuban Revolution in Latin America, it was the masses of people in oppressed countries who avidly responded to the ideas of socialism and communism. They rose up by the millions behind Marxist-Leninist leadership to effect revolutionary change and begin to liberate themselves from class oppression.

Life is full of contradictions. It is the development of the means of production that makes socialism possible. But the consciousness needed to actually fight for socialism has so far been greatest in those countries where the means of production have been stunted and even obliterated by the imperialists.

This is where Lenin's deep understanding of imperialism has so much to offer us. He demonstrated quite meticulously how at a certain stage of monopoly capitalism, the accumulation of surplus capital in the hands of the ruling class drove them to find new areas for investment. This was not just the old colonial expansion of the commercial and industrial capitalists looking for new sources of raw materials or, in the case of the United States, for people to enslave who then had to toil in cotton fields tied to the world capitalist market.

Imperialism was an even more compelling, expand-or-die stage of capitalist expansion, one that has led to two enormously destructive world wars and the unimaginable growth of the military-industrial-banking complex.

World War I was a horrible expression of the new imperialist era. From 1914-18, some 65 million troops were mobilized. By the war's end, more than half of them — 37 million — had been killed, wounded, were missing or taken as prisoners of war. Millions more civilians died of war-imposed famine or disease.

### Lenin's 'Imperialism' a breakthrough

Lenin's book “Imperialism” was not just about economics. It was also about class consciousness and the effect that imperialism had on the thinking of workers in both the oppressed and the oppressor countries.

Remember, he wrote this book when what was then the world's most destructive war had been raging for two years. Germany had a dynamic capitalist economy but relatively few colonies compared to Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and the U.S. To survive in the dog-eat-dog world of global capitalism, Germany had to become aggressive and try to grab territories that were already being exploited by the older colonial powers. It was a recipe for world war.

The Bolsheviks of Russia had opposed the war long before it even started. Other European parties in the powerful Socialist International also passed resolutions calling for solidarity of the workers of

Life is full of contradictions. It is the development of the means of production that makes socialism possible. But the consciousness needed to actually fight for socialism has so far been greatest in those countries where the means of production have been stunted and even obliterated by the imperialists.

all countries against their exploiters and the coming war. But once the shooting started, the leaders of these parties capitulated to the ruling class inside “their” countries under the intense war frenzy. Members of these parties in their parliaments, with only a few exceptions, voted for war credits — the funds to wage war. That was the end of the Socialist International, as workers from the belligerent countries followed the ruling classes' orders to shoot each other. And millions died.

In response to this assault on working-class internationalism, Lenin and a few dozen co-thinkers from other countries met in the Swiss town of Zimmerwald in September 1915 to denounce the war. Lenin called for a class war against the rulers who were taking a whole continent into the slaughter.

When, during the first part of 1916, he wrote “Imperialism,” it was partly to show the material basis for the disastrous collapse of the social democratic parties that had occurred in western Europe. The imperialists, rolling in the super-profits they had extracted from their colonies, could afford to make concessions to the workers at home in order to buy their loyalty. A privileged “labor aristocracy” arose within the working class. This development drained the revolutionary energy from their struggles.

Imperial Russia was not imperialist in the same sense. It had only recently emerged from outright feudalism, and its economy was still overwhelmingly agrarian. It had no overseas colonies. But in a few key cities, tens of thousands of workers toiled under the most oppressive conditions — the men in heavy industry, the women in garment factories.

Once the war came, these workers rubbed shoulders in the trenches with impoverished peasants who hated the landlords as much as the workers hated the bosses. Other workers became forced laborers on the czar's warships. All of them hated the ruling class that had forced them into the bloody war, and they were ready to turn their guns around given an opportunity to get rid of their tormentors.

Out of this mix came the most profound revolution that the world had yet seen. It validated the Marxist view of social evolution and the role of the proletariat as the class that could lead the struggle to abolish class divisions. But it also validated Lenin's view on the role of imperialism in holding back — for a time — the revolutionary potential of the working class in the developed capitalist countries.

Next: *Isolated and poor, the young USSR nevertheless surpassed the West in many areas of social development.*



# NFL protests and FBI attack on Black Lives Matter

By Monica Moorehead

*Bulletin: Jemele Hill, the African-American ESPN Sports Center reporter who rightfully labeled Donald Trump a white supremacist on Sept. 11, has been suspended for two weeks for a “second violation of our social media guidelines,” according to espn.com on Oct. 9. The suspension occurred after Hill asked Dallas Cowboys fans to boycott the team’s advertisers in light of Cowboys owner Jerry Jones’s threat to bench players if they protest during the anthem. In response to her suspension, Hill posted on Twitter: “Just so we’re clear: I’m not advocating a NFL boycott. But an unfair burden has been put on players in Dallas & Miami w/ anthem directives.”*

Oct. 8 — Prior to the kickoff of week five of the National Football League season, the billionaire team owners, including notorious Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones, threw down the political gauntlet by issuing an ultimatum to players who sit or kneel during the national anthem: stand or risk not playing or being fired.

These are the same owners who locked arms with players in a phony public display of solidarity on Sept. 24 in response to Donald Trump’s calling protesting players “SOBs” two days before.

Vice President Mike Pence left in protest prior to the Oct. 8 game between the San Francisco 49ers and the Indianapolis Colts, after witnessing over 20 San Francisco players take a knee during the national anthem. Many saw Pence’s brief appearance as a publicity stunt by him and Trump to try to change the narrative of the protests.

Pence stated on his Twitter feed: “@POTUS [Donald Trump] and I will not dignify any event that disrespects our soldiers, our Flag, or our National Anthem.” It is no surprise that Pence and Trump were silent when neo-Nazi terrorists rallied in front of the Robert E. Lee statue in Charlottesville, Va., on Oct. 7.

The 49ers are former teammates of Black quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who ignited a sportswide protest in 2016 against police brutality by taking a knee during the anthem.

Kaepernick, a free agent, has not been signed by another team since the end of the 2016 season, even though he has let it be known that he is ready to play.

Eric Reid, a 49ers safety who has protested alongside Kaepernick since last season, responded to Pence’s tweet: “This is what systemic oppression looks like. A man with power comes to the game, tweets a couple of things out and leaves the game with an attempt to thwart our efforts.” (politico.com, Oct. 8)

Terrelle Pryor, a Washington receiver, was called the N-word by a white Kansas City fan after an Oct. 2 game. He responded that what happened to him is “the exact reason why guys are kneeling during the anthem.”

These NFL players and others have made clear that they will not remain silent about institutionalized racial inequality. This fundamental issue is reflected in the owners’ attempt to place their quest for profits above the fight for racial equality.

These players have evolved as integral components of the overall Black Lives Matter movement. That movement began as a Twitter hashtag by three Black women activists, including one transwoman, following the vigilante murder of 17-year-old Black youth Trayvon Martin in 2012.

### BLM is latest COINTELPRO target

In the midst of this political backdrop, the Federal Bureau of Investigation issued a report, released by foreignpolicy.com on Oct. 6, dubbing the BLM movement a “terrorist threat.”

The report states in part: “The FBI assesses it is very likely Black Identity Extremist (BIE) perceptions of police brutality against African Americans spurred an increase in premeditated, retaliatory lethal violence against law enforcement and will very likely serve as justification for such violence.”

This report harkens back to the days when this same FBI, run by J. Edgar Hoover, targeted Black Liberation groups like the Black Panther Party for extinction with its Counter Intelligence Program or COINTELPRO.

The report was released 11 days before the official opening of the 2017-18



ESPN’s Jemele Hill suspended for defending players’ right to protest.

National Basketball Association season. Star players such as Steph Curry, LeBron James and others have expressed solidarity with Kaepernick and the struggle that has caused him to be unemployed so far this season.

A day after his attack on NFL players, Sept. 23, Trump disinvited Curry’s team, the defending NBA champion Golden State Warriors, from visiting the White House this coming February. He did so after Curry and other teammates stated that they weren’t interested in such a visit as long as Trump is in office. Unlike NFL players who are not contractually obligated to stand during the anthem, the opposite is true of NBA players.

In fact, NBA players are required to stand in a straight line on court during the anthem. J.R. Smith of the Cleveland Cavaliers recently stood a few steps behind this line during the anthem before a preseason game. So far, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver has not responded with a fine or warning.

Players in the Women’s National Basketball Association have actually taken a more progressive and visible stand against police violence than their NBA counterparts. However, due to the still-prevailing male dominance in U.S. sports, reflected in the huge gender-bias gap in salaries and TV revenue, WNBA

## Protests and mass arrests continue in St. Louis

By Lyn Neeley

Protests against racism and police murders are continuing in St. Louis nearly a month after the first outpouring of the Black community and its supporters in mid-September.

Hundreds of people blocked four lanes of heavy traffic on Interstate 64 on Oct. 3 as part of a “100 Days for Justice” campaign. Police “kettled” (surrounded) the crowd, ordered them to back up, forced them to the ground and then indiscriminately arrested 143 people, including reporters, legal observers, clergy and at least one elected official.

These massive arrests received little national media attention.

More than 300 people have been arrested in nonstop protests since Sept. 15 when a not-guilty verdict was announced for Jason Stockley, a white cop who had fatally shot 24-year-old Anthony Lamar Smith in 2011. A white judge acquitted Stockley, who had rejected a trial by jury.



Outrage following the racist verdict on Sept. 15.

Human rights groups and community activists have criticized the brutal force and indiscriminate arrests by St. Louis police. Missouri state Rep. Bruce Franks,

who represents St. Louis, has challenged the police, asking how they expected demonstrators to back up, since they were surrounded and had nowhere to go.

The American Civil Liberties Union is suing St. Louis police for “unlawful and unconstitutional actions” against demonstrators. The suit charges cops with overusing chemicals on the crowd without warning and preventing people from filming the cops while they are kettling and violating people’s rights. □



# #Do It Like Durham

### WORKERS WORLD PARTY FORUM

features Takiyah Thompson & Loan Tran

**OCT 14** Saturday 4 pm – 8 pm

Please note special location:

135 West 23rd St. Between 6th and 7th Aves. in Manhattan

Thompson is a North Carolina Central University student who climbed the Confederate statue in Durham on Aug. 14 to begin the act of taking it down, two days after white supremacists in Charlottesville, Virginia attacked anti-racist activists. Thompson was subsequently arrested for the action, along with Loan Tran and 12 others, who face felony and misdemeanor charges.

Come hear and meet these two heroic freedom fighters, both members of Workers World Party. Discussion will include how to continue to support the Durham arrestees and carrying on the struggle against all forms of white supremacy, including police repression.

#DoltLikeDurham #DefendDurham

Program will include solidarity greetings and cultural performances.

Dinner to follow meeting for small donation.



protests have been given comparatively scant attention by the mainstream media.

Repression breeds resistance

The FBI report should be viewed as a ploy to weaken sectors of the multinational working class who identify with BLM, including Black athletes who refuse to be silenced by racism, Trump or team owners who view them as mere commodities.

Not only is this FBI report outrageous and bogus, but it comes at a crucial time in the BLM struggle. In addition to the growing number of outspoken athletes taking center stage, there have been ongoing shut-down actions by BLM activists. Most notable is the weeks-long uprising in St. Louis to protest the Sept. 15 racist acquittal of white cop Jason Stockley, who shot and killed a young Black man, Anthony Lamar Smith, in December 2011.

Clearly, the FBI along with NFL and NBA hierarchies, which represent the interests of the team owners, want these protests to go away. At the same time they don't want to ignite more activism in either of these leagues, where 70 percent and 75 percent of the players are of African descent, respectively.

The FBI claims that the BLM movement has a "false perception" or an overblown view of police killings of people of color. What do statistics say about this "perception"? A Washington Post database states that since Oct. 8, 750 people have been shot and killed by the police so far in 2017, and that number is growing day by day. This particular database also shows that mental illness played a role in one out of every five killings.

The last U.S. census showed whites making up 63 percent of the general population and African Americans 13 percent. That's almost five whites for every African American. But the 750 people killed by the cops this year include 335 whites and 168 African Americans. What this boils down to is that the police are killing Black people at more than twice the rate they kill whites. Substantial numbers of Latinx, Asian and Indigenous peoples also have been killed by police this year, reflected in the 750 total.

According to [newsweek.com](#), fewer than 30 cops have been shot and killed in 2017. (Aug. 7) Statistics don't lie when it comes to showing the police carrying out a racist war against Black and Brown people and people with disabilities.

This FBI report is the latest attempt to divert attention from the war on the oppressed while white supremacist terrorists are being shielded under the guise of "free speech." The righteous anger that this report is creating, far from suppressing resistance to racism, will instead intensify resistance in the streets and on the playing field. □



WHY COLIN KAEPERNICK IS RIGHT

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

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

Available at major online book sellers.

Struggle wins change of high school's racist name

By Eddie Barrera  
San Antonio

San Antonio residents have finally won after nearly three years petitioning and beseeching the local school board of San Antonio North East Independent School District (NEISD) to change the name of Robert E. Lee High School. They are asking for a name that reflects values and history that don't celebrate two centuries of racism and racial prejudice.

The arduous undertaking began with a single brave and determined student, Kayla Wilson, now an alumna of the school.

In 2015, Wilson, then a senior, began a petition requesting a name change for the school. She was prompted by comments made by former San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro after Kentucky's removal of a Confederate memorial to Jefferson Davis from the state Capitol.

Early on, Wilson's requests for a name change to the school were shot down by residents, mostly white and Latinx, saying that this move was a lone student's vendetta and that there is no reason to change the city's history because of a single student being offended by the name. They ignored, however, the nearly 11,000 signatures on two petitions over two years and the fact that the high school has had a lower Black student population than most other schools in the district.

Other opponents have gone so far as to claim that the request for a name change is a purposefully divisive endeavor to increase racial tensions in the school and district. They say the school has always been a "safe place" for people of all ethnic backgrounds. They claim that there haven't been racial tensions in the school historically, though that conveniently overlooks that the majority of the students at Robert E. Lee High School are white.

For Black students, the name is a constant reminder of the more than 200 years of slavery and Jim Crow treatment of their ancestors. There is speculation that this is the reason for the low rate of African-American students going to the school, in comparison with other schools in the district.

Other residents showed support. Some said that as long as 30 years ago they wondered why the district was glorifying a Confederate general instead of a person or theme that celebrated more progres-

sive and inclusive values. Some called out NEISD board member Edd White, who is African American, on his silence about the multiple name-change requests made over a three-year period.

Slow progress against racial injustice

Progress in the Southern states has been slow but nonetheless inexorable. This Sept. 1 saw the removal of another Confederate statue in San Antonio: Travis Park's memorial to the "Confederate dead." Often cited as the first memorial statue in San Antonio, it was erected in 1900 and paid for by the Daughters of the Confederacy. In a recent statement, Patricia M. Bryson, president general of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, said:

"We are saddened that some people find anything connected with the Confederacy to be offensive. Our Confederate ancestors were and are Americans. We as an Organization do not sit in judgment of them nor do we impose the standards of the 21st century on these Americans of the 19th century."

Do residents of 21st century Germany feel that way about their heritage of Nazis' fascist and racially motivated atrocities? Should Nazi flags and statues of Adolf Hitler

or Heinrich Himmler retain prominent places of public life because it's their heritage and history?

Some San Antonio residents may feel that the removal of these monuments and name changes is an attack on their heritage and history. It is an easy thing to overlook when your heritage is that of the oppressor and not that of the oppressed.

The NEISD Board of Trustees finally agreed on Aug. 29 to change the name in the wake of the racially motivated violence that broke out in Charlottesville, Va. That incident prompted a nationwide awareness about the presence of Confederate monuments in many states.

Submissions for the school's new name were accepted through Sept. 25. The school board has requested that "the name should reflect an idea, not a person."

It also stated that it would prefer a name that is "whole-some" and "welcoming and identifiable to the general public."

We applaud Kayla Wilson and her fellow residents on their resolve not to allow these monuments to racial prejudice to retain their prominence, and we gladly stand in solidarity with their struggle against more than 200 years of racial injustice. □



Protester in Travis Park, San Antonio, Aug. 12.

STOP  
the  
MURDER  
OF  
MUMIA

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Teach In  
&  
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11am - December 9

Gather at Frank Rizzo Statue  
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MYANMAR

# Why U.S. and Saudi Arabia back Rohingya

By Sara Flounders

Demonstrations, protests and on-line petitions have appeared worldwide to defend the struggle of the Rohingya people who have been driven from Myanmar into exile. What is of concern is that political forces with no history of or interest in defending the rights of these oppressed people, including the U.S. and Saudi regimes, have joined this effort.

While he was threatening People’s Korea, Iran and Venezuela in his United Nations speech, U.S. President Donald Trump also demanded that the U.N. Security Council take “strong and swift action” to end violence against Myanmar’s Rohingya population.

U.S. government officials, including U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Vice President Mike Pence, have called for immediate action and delivery of humanitarian aid to the Rohingya.

Since Washington and Riyadh are inflicting a murderous war on millions of people in Yemen, not to mention in other parts of the world, working-class movements and anti-imperialist forces around the globe are asking what is behind their sudden concern for a small ethnic group in Southeast Asia. Could it have something to do with geopolitical maneuvering in Myanmar between China and the U.S.?

As a huge developing economy with central planning, significant state ownership and cash reserves, China is in a position to offer extensive infrastructure development. China’s One Belt One Road project and other economic plans are attracting great interest.

U.S. policy is increasingly geared toward disrupting these development plans with vastly expanded militarization and regional wars. This is the strategy behind the Pentagon’s “Pivot to Asia.” A Western network of nongovernmental organizations and Saudi-backed extremists are part of the disruption.

### Myanmar and the Rohingya

Myanmar, earlier called Burma, is a formerly colonized, underdeveloped and extremely diverse nation of 51 million people. It has 135 distinct ethnic groups among its eight nationalities.

Myanmar is a resource-rich, strategically important country bordering China, Bangladesh, India, Thailand and Laos. It’s important to Wall Street banks and U.S. policy makers as a major exporter of natural gas, and there are plans to make it a conduit for oil.

Within Myanmar, the Rohingya people are an oppressed ethnic group of approximately 1 million people. A majority of Rohingya are Muslim, though they make up less than half of Myanmar’s Muslim population, which is scattered throughout the mostly Buddhist country.

The Rohingya are considered stateless. They live in the state of Rakhine, on the Bay of Bengal, and share a long border with Bangladesh.



British colonial forces in Myanmar, which they called Burma.

In articles on Myanmar and the Rohingya, Reuters News ([tinyurl.com/y7euzhbe](https://tinyurl.com/y7euzhbe), Dec. 16, 2016), Chicago Tribune ([tinyurl.com/ya469nrx](https://tinyurl.com/ya469nrx), Aug. 31), Wall Street Journal ([tinyurl.com/yaw8fsa8](https://tinyurl.com/yaw8fsa8), Sept. 13) and the think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies ([tinyurl.com/y8khtzns](https://tinyurl.com/y8khtzns), Sept. 7), all reported Saudi support for the Rohingya struggle.

The group carrying out armed resistance in Myanmar, known as Harakah al-Yaqin (HaY, Faith Movement in Arabic) and now called the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, is headquartered in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Ataullah abu Ammar Junjuni, a Pakistani national who lived in Saudi Arabia, is the leader of ARSA. This group led a coordinated attack on 30 Myanmar military posts on Aug. 25.

The Myanmar military responded with a wave of repressive attacks on the Rohingya that drove tens of thousands of people over the border.

### U.S./Saudi crimes in Yemen

Meanwhile, the Saudi kingdom is carrying out a genocidal war on Yemen, enforcing a blockade of food and aid against the poorest country in Southwest Asia. This war is only possible using U.S.-made jet aircraft and bombs. The Saudi military cannot fly its own jet aircraft or carry out bombing runs without direct U.S. assistance and in-air refueling. In addition, the Pentagon is now carrying out at least one covert strike every two days in Yemen.

Yemen is caught in “the world’s largest hunger crisis,” which is “man-made” and is starving “an entire generation.” (Washington Post, May 19) According to U.N. figures, more than 7 million Yemenis are close to famine.

The World Health Organization has warned of “the worst cholera outbreak in

the world” in Yemen. (CNN, Oct. 4) The U.N. counted 777,229 cholera cases as of Oct. 2, many of them in children.

Saudi bombing of sanitation and sewage infrastructure in this impoverished country is a major cause of the deadly epidemic. Yet this desperate crisis was not on the U.N.’s agenda, and is barely mentioned in the media as world leaders met in New York in September. The media focus was on Trump’s talk of aiding the Rohingya.

The U.S. State Department has pledged to provide “emergency shelter, food security, nutritional assistance, health assistance, psychosocial support, water, sanitation and hygiene, livelihoods, social inclusion, non-food items, disaster and crisis risk reduction, restoring family links, and protection to over 400,000 displaced persons in Burma and in Bangladesh.” ([tinyurl.com/y9l5jzjk](https://tinyurl.com/y9l5jzjk))

Remember that the U.S. military is engaged in bombing, drone attacks, targeted assassinations and starvation sanctions against at least eight Muslim countries on any given day: Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia provides no rights for any of the peoples living within its borders. Minority religious communities and millions of immigrant workers, even after living there for generations, are not counted as citizens. Its vast oil wealth is owned by one family: the House of Saud.

Saudi Arabia has played its reactionary role by funding extremist groups, often with the quiet support of the U.S., in Afghanistan, Syria and across the Middle East. Increasingly in South Asia, Saudi-influenced political and religious extremism is having an impact.

Saudi Arabia spends over \$1 billion to fund 560 Wahhabi mosques and Islamic centers in Bangladesh, which borders Myanmar. This means a new center of reaction in almost every village and town in Bangladesh. Similar funding has been long underway in India and Pakistan.

### U.S. pivot to Asia

U.S. and Saudi support for the Muslim Rohingya is based on the U.S. declared

“pivot to Asia.” For U.S. strategists, it is a way to block Chinese influence in a strategic region.

Eighty percent of China’s needed oil and much of its trade passes through the Malacca Straits — a narrow choke-point between Indonesia and Singapore — and into the increasingly tense South China Sea. U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups stationed there could easily blockade this movement of needed resources.

To counter U.S. aggressive moves, China’s development programs are aimed at diversifying and finding ways around a direct confrontation with U.S. military power.

China is building a deep-sea port, industrial park, and gas and oil pipelines at Kyauk Pyu in Myanmar on the Bay of Bengal. This would provide China with an alternative route for energy imports from the Middle East that avoids the Malacca Straits. The multibillion-dollar construction project is also enormously beneficial to Myanmar’s economy, aiding development of its gas fields. U.S. and Saudi intervention in the escalating Rohingya struggle threatens this development project.

There is no region in the developing world, whether in Asia, Africa or Latin America, where U.S. imperialism, in its present stage of decay, plans to assist desperately needed economic development. The U.S. economy is geared to super-profits through war, weapons sales and onerous debt. U.S. imperialism can only continue its domination by disrupting the development of any potential competitors or economic bloc of competitors.

### Divide-and-rule tactics

By consciously supporting and inflaming both sides of a national struggle, the cynical Western imperialist powers are employing a longtime divide-and-rule tactic meant to dominate a whole region by becoming the outside arbiter.

U.S. imperialists have done this in many international crises. In Iraq, the U.S. built bases in the Kurdish region while claiming to support the unity of the Iraqi state. Playing on this division has strengthened the ruinous involvement of the Pentagon in the region.

In the Philippines a sudden insurgency of a minority Muslim population on the island of Mindanao has become the latest excuse for the U.S. to offer joint training and stationing of its troops there.

Myanmar refugee camps in Bangladesh may become recruitment areas for the Islamic State group (ISIS) and staging grounds for future interventions, said Forbes, a magazine about corporate finance, last July 11.

Pentagon plans for expanded intervention, coordinated with Saudi organization and funding, can be seen in this warning by the Center for Strategic and International Studies: “There is legitimate concern that the violence will attract outside forces. Now that thousands of battle-hardened, ISIS-affiliated foreign fighters are seeking new missions beyond a shrinking Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, new opportunities to defend Muslims will inevitably appeal to them.” ([tinyurl.com/y8khtzns](https://tinyurl.com/y8khtzns), Sept. 7)

All the countries of the region, including Bangladesh, Myanmar and China, have every interest in a peaceful reconciliation for the Rohingya people. The region needs coordinated development, not the enormous disruption of war. □



## WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

[PentagonAchillesHeel.com](https://PentagonAchillesHeel.com)

*“By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”*

– Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009; Foreign Minister of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

Available at online booksellers.



# More oil imperialism as U.S. warships threaten Iran

By Kathy Durkin

The imperialist-in-chief in the White House is ramping up hostility against Iran. He is threatening to pull the U.S. out of a 2015 nuclear deal made between that sovereign country and the P5+1 countries — members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action requires Iran to roll back its nuclear program in exchange for ending some, but not all, U.S./ U.N.-imposed sanctions.

According to rules made by Congress, the Trump administration has to recertify on Oct. 15 that Iran is complying with the JCPOA. But because that was a U.N.-sponsored deal, it actually does not require congressional ratification. The International Atomic Energy Agency has the sole responsibility for validating Iran's compliance.

The IAEA has certified eight times that Iran is fulfilling its obligations under the

agreement. The other signatories to the pact have concurred.

But Trump has repeatedly denounced the agreement, and in August imposed new sanctions against Iran. If he does not recertify that Iran is meeting the pact's requirements, then Washington can levy more horrific economic sanctions on Iran's 80 million people.

Now, U.S. hard-liners are seeking to stop Iran from developing even conventional missiles, an issue not covered in the nuclear capability-related JCPOA. Gholamali Khoshroo, Iran's ambassador to the U.N., wrote in the New York Times on Oct. 8: "My country is not seeking to develop or acquire nuclear weapons." He stresses the JCPOA, which prohibits Iran from making ballistic missiles to deliver nuclear weapons, "does not restrain us from developing conventional military deterrence technology that so many other countries possess."

**Solidarity with Iran needed**

Where should anti-war activists and other progressive forces stand on Iran's right to develop defensive weapons? At the crux of the matter lies the oil-rich nation's right to sovereignty and to protect its people from imperialist aggression, whether economic sanctions, political at-

tacks or military actions.

As right-wing hawks in Washington sound ever more bellicose and target specific countries, including Iran, with increasing threats, such as military action, a brief look at U.S. intervention in Iran shows why the country's right to defend itself should be supported.

The U.S. CIA, along with British intelligence, overthrew Iran's democratically elected prime minister, Mohammed Mossadegh, in 1953. He had nationalized the country's oil industry, an intolerable act to U.S. and European capitalists.

Then the imperialists installed the notorious tyrant Shah Reza Pahlevi. He denationalized the oil industry, with 60 percent of proceeds enriching U.S. companies. U.S. and European governments remained mum about the shah's orchestrated murders of thousands of Iranians opposing his regime.

Following a 1979 revolution in which the Iranian people overthrew the hated shah, the U.S. government imposed, and later intensified, economic sanctions against Iran — allegedly due to the country's nuclear development program. In 2006, the U.N. levied further sanctions and later strengthened the economic war against Iran.

Meanwhile, former President George

W. Bush, who called Iran part of an "axis of evil," threatened to use military force against the country.

The U.S. Navy's Bahrain-based Fifth Fleet has stationed two naval battle groups in the Persian Gulf off Iran's west coast. Led by two carriers loaded with millions of pounds of missiles and bombs, these include 20 ships, 130 strike aircraft and 20,000 marines and sailors. U.S. warships frequently fire warning shots at Iranian ships in the Gulf and in the Strait of Hormuz, through which passes one-third of the world's sea-transported oil.

After a U.S. Navy ship fired flares at Iranian ships in April, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif tweeted, "Breaking: Our navy operates in — yes, correct — the Persian Gulf, not the Gulf of Mexico. Question is what the U.S. Navy was doing 7,500 miles from home." (Guardian, April 26)

Given how the U.S. has installed military might off Iran's coast, and given the warmongering from the White House, Iran's right to defend its people must be strongly supported.

Today, as Washington's far-right hostility escalates against Iran, progressive forces in the U.S. and worldwide need to unite in saying: "U.S. hands off Iran!" □



## Por qué FEMA no puede protegernos

Continúa de página 12

vez que un desastre ocurre aquí: hay miles de voluntarias/os que quieren ayudar a sus vecinas/os. Salen en pequeños botes durante las inundaciones, o ayudan a las personas a encontrar refugio durante los vientos intensos. Buscan a aquellas/os que pueden quedar atrapados en sus hogares o son arrastrados por una inundación.

En vez de ayudar a estas organizaciones auto-convocadas con ayuda material, las autoridades locales y nacionales se centran en proteger a los "peces gordos" y las propiedades de los ricos, tanto personales como corporativos.

### El cambio social debe venir

Los sistemas meteorológicos de nuestro planeta han sido profundamente afectados por el desarrollo capitalista, que pone a las ganancias antes que cualquier otra cosa.

Al mismo tiempo, los grandes avances de la ciencia y la tecnología nos han proporcionado el conocimiento y los medios para planificar nuestra economía sobre una base racional y poner las necesidades de las personas en sintonía con nuestro medio ambiente.

Y sin embargo, estamos atascados con un sistema social y político que puede planear evacuar a los "líderes" como Trump y sus semejantes, pero no puede obtener agua y electricidad para las personas trabajadoras que lo necesitan.

A medida que crecen las severas amenazas del clima, los fracasos de FEMA subrayan la necesidad de construir un movimiento revolucionario de la clase obrera y todas/os los oprimidos contra la clase millonaria de explotadores. Debemos liberar la riqueza que nuestro trabajo ha creado y utilizarla para el beneficio de la humanidad, no para rescatar a los especuladores belicistas. □

## Rally unites struggles against racism & war



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Co-chairs Danica Pagulayan and Taryn Fivek at Herald Square rally.

### Special to Workers World New York

Hundreds of antiwar militants gathered in busy midtown Manhattan on Oct. 11, the 16th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, for a speak-out demanding an end to U.S. imperialism both at home and abroad.

A variety of speakers from different organizations blasted U.S. aggression around the world, from Newark, N.J., to Yemen, Puerto Rico and Palestine. The Saturday crowds at Herald Square gathered to learn about the struggle for

unification in Korea, international solidarity with political prisoners and the connections between anti-imperialism and the uprisings against killer cops in Ferguson, Mo.

The rally was a step forward in linking the struggles against war abroad and oppression at home. Many activists focused on the slogan of "No to racism & white supremacy! Black Lives Matter!"

The devastation in Puerto Rico was on everyone's mind and was reflected in the slogans: "We need massive relief for Puerto Rico & the Caribbean — not wars from Afghanistan to Korea!" A press

release and joint statement demanded "Cancel the debt! Open the warehouses! Humanitarian relief — not military occupation!"

The main organizations initiating the rally were United National Antiwar Coalition, International Action Center, International League of Peoples Struggles and Right to Resist War and Empire. The rally was co-chaired by Danica Pagulayan of Anakbayan NY, Nerdeen Kiswani of New York City Students for Justice in Palestine and Taryn Fivek of Workers World Party. □



# WORKERS WORLD editorial

## On the 50th anniversary of his death: *Che lives!*

Ernesto “Che” Guevara — the great internationalist and revolutionary leader — died 50 years ago on Oct. 9, 1967, at the hands of Bolivian soldiers who were trained, equipped and put in motion by U.S. Green Beret and CIA operatives.

His killers posed with his body to boast and prove his death. But Che’s last words proved their defeat and his victory: “Shoot, cowards. You are only going to kill a man.”

Because Che still lives.

Immediately after his death, protests against Che’s murder at the behest of the U.S. erupted worldwide, from Mexico to Algeria, from Cairo to Calcutta. In France, those demonstrations built toward the 1968 general strike and student uprising that brought the country’s economy to a virtual standstill.

In Cuba, 1968 was declared the Year of the Heroic Guerilla, beginning the still ongoing travel by Cubans to Africa and Latin America to complete internationalist missions originating in Che’s example.

Fifty years later, murals of Che and his words still inspire people in the U.S., from Los Angeles to Chicago to an obscure side street garden in Syracuse, N.Y.

Bourgeois writers argue that the millions who wear Che T-shirts, or engrave his name on their bodies with tattoos, are doing so as a fashion fad or a romantic fantasy. They say people do not really know what Che represents.

A stone-cold answer to that came, amazingly, at a 2016 graduation ceremony at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. Documented later in social media, a cadet pulled aside his formal uniform vest — and revealed Che’s implacable face underneath. Anticipating comments that this was only an ironic gesture, the cadet then flipped his regulation hat over to reveal a scrawled, defiant message: “Communism will win.”

Che still lives. How and why?

Che was an Argentine physician with a lifelong asthma disability, a husband and father, a guerilla warfare and military tactical genius, an economist and minister of industries in revolutionary Cuba — and a Marxist-Leninist communist to his dying breath.

When he said at his end, “You will only kill a man,” those words were imbued with his absolute understanding of the interconnectedness of the worldwide struggle against imperialism and capitalism, which he knew would continue after his death, without fail.

Imprinted on the hearts and minds of those who have come after is Che’s passionate devotion to the world’s oppressed, best known perhaps in his words: “At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality. ... We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity will be transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.” (“Socialism and

Man in Cuba,” 1965)

But Che’s unrelenting commitment to internationalism, rooted in Marxist materialist analysis, is equally crucial to understanding his continuing vitality into the 21st century. In 1965 remarks to the Afro-Asian Conference in Algeria, Che said: “There are no borders in this struggle to the death. We cannot be indifferent to what happens anywhere in the world, because a victory by any country over imperialism is our victory.”

From his guerilla camp in Bolivia, the April before his assassination, Che sent a strong internationalist message to the Tricontinental Solidarity organization in Havana: “We must bear in mind that imperialism is a world system, the last stage of capitalism — and it must be defeated in a world confrontation. The strategic end of this struggle should be the destruction of imperialism. Our share, the responsibility of the exploited and underdeveloped of the world, is to eliminate the foundations of imperialism.”

Che lives on in Bolivia. There Manuel Cortez, farming next door to the schoolhouse where Che was assassinated, said: “It’s like he is alive and with us, like a friend. We say, ‘Che, help us with our work or with this planting,’ and it always goes well.” (Knight-Ridder News, Aug. 17, 2004)

Che lives on throughout Africa. There Thomas Sankara, a Marxist revolutionary, pan-Africanist and president of Burkina Faso, said: “Che Guevara taught us we could dare to have confidence in ourselves, confidence in our abilities. He instilled in us the conviction that struggle is our only recourse. ... That is why we say that Che Guevara is also African and Burkinabè.” (Akinyemi Adeseye, “We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions: Lessons from Thomas Sankara,” 2010)

The oppressed of the world continue to embrace Che — because Che embraced them in the struggle.

Fidel Castro said on the 40th anniversary of Che’s death: “Why did they think that by killing him, he would cease to exist as a fighter? ... Today he is in every place, wherever there is a just cause to defend.”

Che lives. In the words of the great Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, as quoted in Granma on Oct. 8:

*We want ...  
to live like you have died,  
to live like you live,  
Che Comandante.*



Che mural in Belfast, northern Ireland. His father, Ernesto Guevara Lynch, said in 1969: “In my son’s veins flowed the blood of the Irish rebels.”

## Another outrageous lie from Washington: ‘Sonic attack’

By Chris Fry

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson ordered the removal of two-thirds of the Cuban Embassy staff in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 3. Fifteen Cuban staff members were given seven days to leave the country.

This comes after the State Department in September ordered 60 percent of its embassy staff in Havana to return to the U.S. At the same time, it issued a “travel advisory” stating that U.S. tourists should not visit Cuba for “safety reasons.”

These measures are all designed by the Trump regime to damage the Cuban economy and hurt its people. Visa applications for Cubans living in both the U.S. and Cuba will not be processed, preventing family visits. The gang in Washington obviously hopes to stop U.S. tourists from visiting Cuba, reducing much-needed revenue to a country severely damaged by devastating Hurricane Irma in September.

As an excuse for this outrage, the U.S. government claims that 22 of its diplomats, nearly all “intelligence officers” — spies — began suffering from a mysterious illness just after Trump’s election victory. The supposed symptoms included dizziness, hearing loss and “cognitive issues.” Providing no material evidence, the U.S. proclaimed that its diplomats were victims of some kind of “sonic attack” from an unknown device used to generate inaudible sound waves into their homes and hotel rooms.

The Cuban government immediately denied there had been any attacks on U.S. personnel.

It sharply increased security around the U.S. diplomats’ homes and called for a joint U.S.-Cuban investigation, after launching one of its own. It even invited the FBI to enter Cuba to investigate. The Nation of Oct. 5 reported that a Senate staffer whose office had received classified briefings on the investigation said the FBI had “nothing that points to anyone.” In Tillerson’s Sept. 29 statement, the secretary of state conceded that “investigators have been unable to determine who is responsible or what is causing these attacks.”

The Nation article continues: “Doctors and psychoacoustics experts consulted on the case have stated that the wide variety of symptoms is unlikely to have been caused by any known sonic or surveillance device. ‘No one has a device that could do this. Because no such device exists,’ says Fulton Armstrong, a retired CIA officer who worked on Cuba policy in the Clinton White House. The idea that agents of a third country, like Russia or North Korea, could ‘lug special ray-gun technology around Havana, aim it at diplomats’ homes and tourist hotels undetected and unfettered, and get away with it all,’ according to Armstrong, appears equally implausible.”

Even the U.S. government admits that, based on “intelligence intercepts” — wiretaps — Cuban officials had no involvement at all with these supposed sonic attacks. In fact, it is the U.S. military and police who have researched and created an array of sonic weapons. Some were used on protesters after the murder of Michael Brown by a racist cop in Ferguson, Mo. “The ones used in Ferguson are called LRAD sound cannons, or Long Range Acoustic Devices, and they allow for very serious crowd control.” (slate.com, Aug. 14, 2014)

U.S. imperialism has a long and sordid history of spouting lies to enable wars and other attacks on countries and people, from Lyndon Johnson’s Gulf of Tonkin “attack” on U.S. warships in Vietnam that never happened to George W. Bush’s “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq that were never there. Fernando Ravsberg, a leading Cuban columnist, has accused the CIA of creating “an acoustic Maine.” The explosion and sinking of the battleship USS Maine in Havana harbor in 1898 was the excuse used by the U.S. to launch a war of colonial expansion and take over Spain’s former colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines.

For nearly 60 years, U.S. imperialism has sought to overturn the socialist government of Cuba. The CIA organized more than 600 assassination attempts against Fidel Castro. Devastating sab-

*Continued on the next page*

## U.S. delegation condemns expulsion of Cuban diplomats

*A 62-member U.S. delegation in Cuba as part of the “In the Footsteps of Che” International Brigade issued the following statement on Oct. 4:*

We strongly condemn the decision of the United States government to expel 15 Cuban diplomats from the United States in response to alleged “sonic attacks” against U.S. diplomats in Cuba. These allegations are unfounded and part of Washington’s campaign to discourage the people of the U.S. from traveling to Cuba to witness the accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution. Our delegation stands in solidarity with Cuba against all U.S. attempts to intervene in Cuban affairs.

We reject the travel advisory issued by the U.S. State Department. We came to Cuba and will stay for the duration of the Brigade to fulfill our mission to support the Cuban Revolution, bring the truth about Cuba back to the U.S. and encourage others to visit.

In the past year, over 500,000 people

have traveled from the United States to Cuba. They have seen the real Cuba, not the misrepresentations portrayed in the imperialist media.

We demand that Washington end the blockade, get out of Guantánamo now and normalize relations with Cuba. These demands are overwhelmingly supported by the people of the United States.

The U.S. government’s abandonment of the people of Puerto Rico after the hurricanes stands in stark contrast to the preparation, evacuation and vigorous recovery organized by revolutionary Cuba. The U.S. government has rejected Cuban assistance to Puerto Rico, their sister island. Cuba offered to send 41 doctors and brigades of electricians, but has received no reply from the U.S. government. We know that the Cuban Revolution will not sacrifice its principles or its sovereignty during this most recent attempt at U.S. intervention or future ones.

¡Hasta la victoria siempre! □



# Rally blasts FEMA, demands zero debt for Puerto Rico

By Workers World Boston bureau

A lunchtime crowd gathered outside the JFK Federal Building in Boston's Government Center Oct. 4 to express strong solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico and outrage over the inadequate — and downright deadly — federal relief efforts by the Federal Emergency Management Agency following the two devastating hurricanes that hit the island in September.

Rally-goers also raised high the demand to permanently end the Jones Act and cancel all Puerto Rican debt. The Jones Act of 1920 keeps activity in Puerto Rico's ports under tight U.S. economic control, limiting maritime traffic and especially strangling the inflow of international relief in times of disaster. The debt crisis, as many who rallied nationwide in coordinated actions could attest to, has been growing more and more critical over the last decade.

On the picket line, organizers chanted into bullhorns, "Puerto Rico, no se vende!" The crowd responded, "Puerto Rico, se defiende!" ("Puerto Rico, not for sale. Defend Puerto Rico!")

The rally was organized by Vamos4PR, a national coalition of labor and community groups dedicated to stateside efforts that address the needs and struggles of those living in Puerto Rico.

Union locals sent representatives to the rally, including Service Employees Union Local 32BJ, Building and Janitorial Workers; UNITE-HERE Local 26, Hotel and Restaurant Employees; United Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston School Bus Drivers; among others.

Labor activist Otoniel Figueroa-Duran held his Puerto Rican national baseball team hat proudly in the air as he spoke to the crowd: "The vultures have been circling Puerto Rico for decades, and in 2006 the country went into a downward spiral of economic depression. They de-

stroyed the Puerto Rican economy. They forced the island government to sell its schools and close hospitals — people have been dying before Hurricane Maria because of the big banks and the vulture funds."

Individuals and community groups from the Puerto Rican diaspora in New England, which goes beyond Boston, turned out as well. Many expressed spirited anger toward the federal government for its neglect of their families and loved ones back home and vowed to continue struggling to defend Puerto Rican safety and sovereignty. □



WW PHOTO: EROC ARROYO-MONTANO

Francois Andre, president of Boston school bus drivers union, speaks to solidarity rally.

## After hurricane destruction 'Cancel Puerto Rico's unjust debt!'

*Continued from page 1*

Rico to help distribute a stockpile of relief supplies. (cnn.com, Sept. 30)

The AFL-CIO sent a group of 300 members to Puerto Rico, with over 17 tons of relief supplies, on a chartered plane Oct. 4 to assist in the recovery efforts. The group — each of whom has volunteered two weeks of their own time — includes nurses, other health care professionals, transportation and construction workers, electricians, heavy equipment operators and other skilled workers, representing 20 unions from 17 states. The labor federation stated: "Our Union brothers and sisters remain in crisis in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. So many working families have lost their homes, their workplaces and are struggling to survive. In the labor movement, solidarity is our strength." (alfcio.org, Oct. 4)

Cuba, devastated by Hurricane Irma, has offered medical help, but it is unclear if Cuban health care professionals have been able to get to the island.

### A pompous, racist Trump finally visits

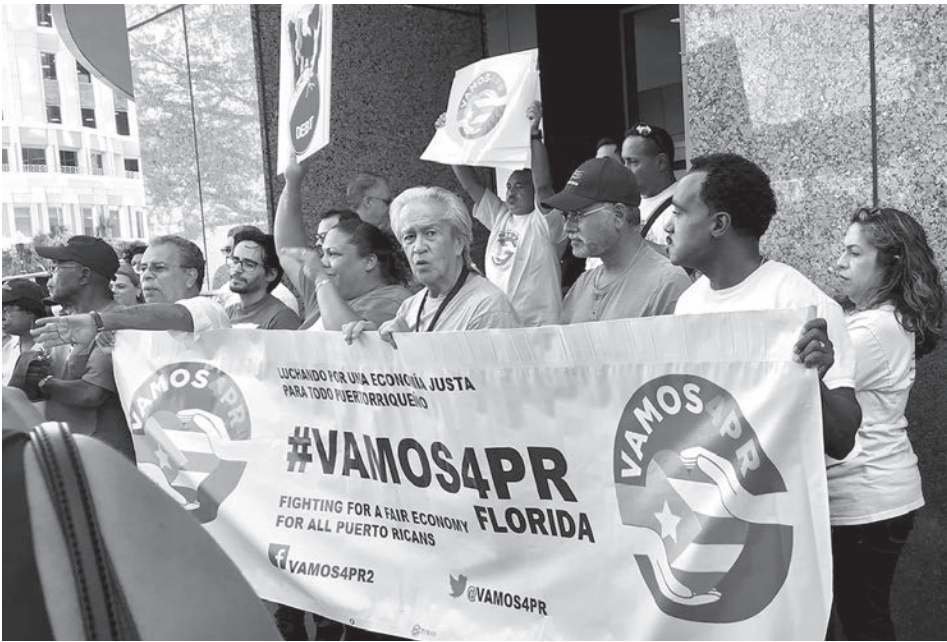
Puerto Rico is a modern-day colony of the United States, whose 3.4 million residents, though U.S. citizens, daily experience the most virulent racism and economic injustice. This was apparent during Trump's visit to the hurricane-ravaged island on Oct. 3.

Speaking to reporters during a belated visit after two straight weekends spent golfing, Donald Trump offered these words: "I hate to tell you, Puerto Rico, but you've thrown our budget a little out of whack."

Further unmasking his contempt for the Puerto Rican people, he was seen on television around the world throwing rolls of paper towels to those who had been selected to greet him, mocking the dire need for a major relief effort by the U.S. government. He ludicrously praised his efforts as "successful."

Carmen Yulín Cruz, mayor of San Juan, pushed back against acting Homeland Security Secretary Elaine Duke's outrageous assertion that relief work in Puerto Rico was a "good news story." Yulín Cruz told CNN: "Damn it, this is not a good news story. This is a 'people-are-dying' story. This is a 'life-or-death' story. This is a 'there's a truckload of stuff that cannot be taken to people' story." (Sept. 29)

Trump used Twitter to criticize her leadership and make racist claims about the Puerto Rican people. Cruz then wore a T-shirt that read "NASTY" in response



WW PHOTO: J. WHITE

Protest outside Merrill Lynch in Orlando, Fla., on Oct. 4.

to his racist and sexist comments.

### Death toll undocumented and rising

Omayra Sosa Pascual, a reporter with the Center for Investigative Journalism in San Juan, was doubtful about the government's official death-toll figure of 16. She spoke to dozens of doctors, administrators, morgue directors and funeral directors and, after going public, finally got Puerto Rico's public safety secretary to confirm that there have been dozens more deaths than the official statistic reflects.

Sosa Pascual was told: "[T]he dead are at the hospital morgues, which are at capacity, and in remote places where the government has yet to go. In many cases, families are unaware of the deaths." (vox.com, Oct. 3) The brother of a friend of this writer flew to the island to search in the mountains for their parents, who have not been heard from.

Initially power was knocked out of almost all hospitals, leading to life-threatening emergencies. Those facilities that are now running on generators have serious issues due to lack of fuel distribution. These days, just about every interaction within health care systems involves electricity, including hemodialysis machines and ventilators.

No electricity means no power to pump water into homes, no water to bathe or flush toilets. On Sept. 30, FEMA reported that only 45 percent of people have access to clean, potable water in their homes.

### Stranglehold of U.S. banks

In May, Puerto Rico, which has a \$103 billion economy, declared bankruptcy. It has since been trying to restructure more

than \$70 billion in debt. The island's finances are currently controlled by a federal board, which has made just \$1 billion available for relief.

Just before Maria struck, a horrific austerity plan for Puerto Rico, which would plunge many more people into poverty, was imposed on the people. Part of it includes the privatization of state entities such as the PR Electric Power Authority, especially its electricity-generating capacity, which produces the most profits. (Workers World, Oct. 4)

Certain U.S. policies have contributed to Puerto Rico's economic deterioration. One of them is the Jones Act, an antiquated law that forces Puerto Ricans to pay nearly double for U.S. goods through various tariffs, fees and taxes. The act stipulates that any goods shipped from one U.S. port to another must be on U.S.-made-and-operated ships.

Other Caribbean islands are going through similar crises after being hit by hurricanes Maria and Irma. The island of Barbuda has been completely abandoned, and residents still can't return home. Twenty-seven people died in Dominica. (vox.com, Oct. 3)

Ninety percent of the 100,000 residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands are without power and drinkable water. The airport and only hospital were badly damaged.

In Puerto Rico, Gov. Ricardo Rossello issued a blanket moratorium on public rent payments until January 2018. A spokeswoman for the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency, however, said no such arrangement was in place there. (theguardian.com, Oct. 8) □

## Sonic pretext vs. Cuba

*Continued from page 10*

otage attacks were made against the Cuban people by counterrevolutionary Cubans allied to the U.S., including the in-flight bombing of Cubana Flight 455 in 1976, which killed 73 people, among them 24 teenage members of the Cuban fencing team.

Trump is obviously trying to reverse the modest improvement in U.S.-Cuban relations made during the Obama administration.

The revolutionary Cuban government has condemned the Trump regime's expulsion of its diplomats. "MINREX [Cuba's Foreign Ministry] strongly protests and denounces this unfounded and unacceptable ... eminently political decision," Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez told a press conference.

"The foreign minister raised doubts about the attacks and said that the Cuban investigation team concluded that 'there is no evidence of the occurrence of the alleged incidents or the causes or origin of the health conditions reported by U.S. diplomats and their families.' Later, Rodríguez unleashed strong criticism of the State Department and the statements made by the U.S. official who spoke to reporters on Tuesday, calling them 'science fiction' and 'empty rhetoric.'" (miamiherald.com, Oct. 3) □



# Por qué FEMA no puede protegernos

Por Deirdre Griswold

Primero vino la devastación de los huracanes Harvey en Houston e Irma en Florida. Ahora, un desastre aún más terrible se está desarrollando después del huracán María en Puerto Rico e Islas Vírgenes, territorios de los Estados Unidos. Y todo en poco más de un mes.

Y estas son sólo las áreas gobernadas por Estados Unidos. Muchas otras naciones del Caribe han sido golpeadas con igual dureza.

Estados Unidos tiene el aparato estatal más grande y caro del mundo. Hay un organismo gubernamental preparado supuestamente para manejar desastres — la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias. Fracásó en 2005 después de que el huracán Katrina golpeará Nueva Orleans. Ha tenido 12 años más para aprender.

¿Por qué no lo ha hecho?

La verdad es que FEMA nunca fue establecida para mitigar los efectos de los desastres naturales. Originalmente fue una agencia súper secreta encargada de proporcionar un lugar seguro para la evacuación del gobierno de Estados Unidos en caso de una guerra nuclear.

Y eso es todavía una gran parte del presupuesto de FEMA, según una exposición muy detallada de la agencia, “The Secret History of FEMA” (“La historia secreta de FEMA”), de Garrett M. Graffe. (Wired, 3 de septiembre)

## Herramienta de la Guerra Fría

Creada originalmente bajo la presidencia de Harry Truman como la Administración Federal de Defensa Civil, fue renombrada en 1979 y eventualmente terminó como parte del Departamento de Seguridad Nacional en 2003. Sus planes secretos para la “continuidad del gobierno” debían ser minimizados una vez que se convirtió en responsable de hacer frente a los desastres naturales.

Sin embargo, “la mayoría de su financiación y un tercio de su fuerza de trabajo de hecho estaba escondida en el presupuesto negro clasificado de la nación. El enfoque real de la agencia y su presupuesto real era conocido por sólo 20 miembros del Congreso”.

FEMA todavía mantiene “un bunker en las Montañas Blue Ridge de Virginia que ha servido como refugio de emergencia primario del gobierno civil desde la década de 1950”. Un bunker podría sonar como una pequeña cosa. Este no.

Una pequeña ciudad fue construida dentro del Monte Weather, que había sido ahuecado para ese propósito. Se establecieron elaborados planes para la evacuación de altos funcionarios del gobierno en

caso de una guerra nuclear. Además de proporcionar refugio a políticos, burócratas y oficiales militares, se utilizó como un centro para desarrollar la informática avanzada.

## Cómo gastan su dinero

El Proyecto 908 de FEMA, elaborado en la década de los ochenta, trazó la forma de evacuar las principales ciudades de los Estados Unidos. Estimó que el 65 por ciento de las personas en estas ciudades podrían ser evacuadas en un día y el 95 por ciento en tres días. La agencia distribuyó películas para convencer a la gente de que estarían protegidas si se iniciaba una guerra nuclear.

Si bien los supuestos hechos eran absurdos, estaban respaldados por elaborados documentos, uno de ellos era un plan de 152 páginas para evacuar Nueva York. “Cada uno de los cinco condados dependería de diferentes modos de tránsito para evacuar en el transcurso de exactamente 3,3 días”.

Las/os neoyorquinos que ahora están pasando por crisis diarias tratando sólo de llegar a su trabajo y a su casa por medio de anticuados subterráneos y autobuses hacinados, podrían sonreír irónicamente.

Con el final de la Guerra Fría, FEMA comenzó a perder parte de su financiamiento. Pero los ataques del 11 de septiembre proporcionaron la razón para agruparlo de nuevo como parte del Departamento de Seguridad Nacional. Su énfasis estaba en “preparación para el terrorismo”, no en desastres naturales.

En diciembre de 2003, llevó a cabo un ejercicio denominado QUIET STRENGTH (Fuerza tranquila), en el que evacuó a 300 de sus propios empleados al Monte Weather.

En mayo de 2004 “un ejercicio mucho más grande dirigido por FEMA, conocido como FORWARD CHALLENGE (Desafío de avance), reunió a más de 2.500 funcionarios federales de 45 diferentes departamentos y agencias para poner a prueba los procedimientos de preparación para emergencias. El ejercicio comenzó con un imaginario atentado suicida en el Metro de Washington DC, seguido de la muerte de tres secretarios del Gabinete que salían de un evento en el Club Nacional de Prensa. Luego, los hackers comenzaron un ataque contra los sistemas informáticos del gobierno, las redes de control de tráfico aéreo e incluso la red eléctrica del país. Esa noche, una persona actuando como presidente activó la continuidad de las medidas del gobierno”.



Los amigos reconstruyen después del huracán María en Puerto Rico.

Ni mencionar cuánto cuesta todo esto. Ese presupuesto, por supuesto, es secreto.

El próximo año, el huracán Katrina golpeó Nueva Orleans, y el gobierno federal demostró que estaba enteramente desprevenido para responder a este catastrófico desastre.

## ‘Continuidad’ de la opresión de clase

Graffe escribe que “hoy, FEMA aún gasta decenas de millones en sus programas de continuidad - la parte no secreta de ese presupuesto es de alrededor \$50 millones al año. El Monte Weather, cuyos costos anuales de operación son más de \$30 millones al año, está en medio de lo que FEMA llama “una importante actualización de infraestructura para reemplazar la vieja infraestructura, corregir los elementos de vida/seguridad, mejorar la TI y desarrollar una instalación más resistente capaz de apoyar la tecnología del siglo XXI y los actuales requisitos de los departamentos y agencias federales””.

Los “programas de continuidad” están destinados a proteger a los políticos en la Casa Blanca y el Congreso, así como a los principales jefes militares en cualquier situación en que su capacidad para gobernar se vea amenazada.

FEMA es una agencia cuasi-civil, pero está totalmente integrada con el ejército. Cuando ocurre un desastre, no existe una verdadera infraestructura civil para hacer frente a las consecuencias mortales.

En cambio, en un país socialista como Cuba, el pueblo se organiza bloque por bloque para ayudarse mutuamente cuando un huracán golpea y el gobierno provee transporte para evacuar a quienes están a lo largo de la costa.

Pero las/os trabajadoras y las/os pobres en las zonas afectadas de los Estados Unidos están por su cuenta para evacuar o sobrellevar una tormenta feroz. Los gobernadores estatales pueden decirle a la gente que deje sus hogares, como ocurrió recientemente en Florida. ¿Pero cómo? No hay ningún mecanismo en su lugar para hacer que suceda, sin formación ni dirección del transporte público. Los caminos se atascan con los coches. Si no tienes uno, te quedaste.

Una cosa surge claramente cada

## EDITORIAL 4 de octubre de 2017

# Las Vegas y Puerto Rico: Lo que sabemos

La horrenda matanza que tuvo lugar en Las Vegas durante un festival de música en la noche del 1 de octubre ha causado la muerte de 59 personas y 527 heridas. Es la masacre más letal en términos de números que ha ocurrido en suelo estadounidense en la historia reciente.

Tardará días, semanas y -quien sabe- quizás incluso meses para que una investigación completa responda ciertas preguntas que conducen al motivo del supuesto perpetrador, Stephen Paddock. Una pregunta obvia es cómo fue capaz de traer 10 maletas llenas de 18 a 20 rifles automáticos, muchos de ellos completamente cargados, a su habitación del hotel de 32 pisos con vista al festival, sin despertar ningún tipo de sospecha.

Otra pregunta obvia es: ¿Por qué este acto atroz no se consideró terrorismo doméstico tan pronto como Paddock, que es blanco, fue identificado? Por lo general, el gobierno y la prensa corporativa son rápidos en caracterizar a los musulmanes como “terroristas”, pero no en este caso. La policía sólo declaró que Paddock era un atacante “solitario”.

Esto no debería sorprendernos, ya que los ataques de la supremacía blanca en Charlottesville, Virginia, el 12 de agosto, que resultaron en la muerte de la activista antifascista Heather Heyer, no fueron caracterizados por el presidente Donald Trump ni por la prensa como terrorismo doméstico.

Hay algunos hechos políticos relacionados con Las Vegas que sabemos. Por ejemplo, para citar una cita popular de béisbol, “los tiroteos masivos son tan americanos como el pastel de manzana”. Una gráfica, compilada por el Guardian Británico, indica que ha habido 1.516 tiroteos masivos en los Estados Unidos durante los últimos 1.735 días – la tasa más alta de cualquier país desarrollado registrado desde 2012. Un tiroteo en masa es definido por el Archivo de Violencia Armada como cuatro o más personas disparadas en un incidente, ya sea muertas o heridas.

También sabemos que el racismo juega un papel prominente en determinar cuales vidas reciben más prioridad que otras. El movimiento de Las Vidas Negras Importan refleja el hecho de que cuando se trata de discriminación racial por parte de la policía o vigilantes, las vidas negras y marrones son deshumanizadas diariamente.

Cuando dos huracanes golpearon Puerto Rico en un período de dos semanas, devastando virtualmente toda la isla y dejando a las/os residentes con poca o ninguna agua potable, electricidad, comida o suministros sanitarios, Trump acusó a la alcaldesa de San Juan, Carmen Yulín Cruz, de tener un “pobre liderazgo”. Esto fue después de que ella amonestó a su administración por no responder inmediatamente a la crisis de 3,4 millones de ciudadanas/os estadounidenses. Cerca de 60 vidas se han perdido hasta la fecha en Puerto Rico y probablemente muchas, muchas más se perderán debido a la falta de medicamentos y otros tipos de carencias.

Diez días después de que el huracán María azotara Puerto Rico, Trump visitó la isla por un día, el 3 de octubre. Después de afirmar que visitaría otro territorio estadounidense destruido por el huracán, las Islas Vírgenes que tiene población predominantemente negra, decidió no visitarlas.

En contraste, Trump estaba programado para visitar Las Vegas, donde las víctimas de la masacre eran en su mayoría blancas, el 4 de octubre, apenas tres días después de la carnicería. El pasado fin de semana, Trump estuvo en un torneo de golf en Jersey City, N.J., donde dedicó el trofeo a la gente de Puerto Rico. ¡iii¿Qué?!!!!!!!

La respuesta de Trump muestra como el pueblo puertorriqueño, debido a la opresión nacional, es tratado como menos que humano. Un artículo del Washington Post del 3 de octubre (“Trump dice que los funcionarios de Puerto Rico deberían estar “orgullosos” de que no hayan muerto más como en Katrina), informa que durante su visita a Puerto Rico, condescendentemente les dijo a los funcionarios: “Odio decirles, Puerto Rico, ustedes ha lanzado nuestro presupuesto fuera de onda”.

Muchos dicen que las armas son un problema social cuando en realidad, el capitalismo -un sistema que depende de la violencia de clase y sobre todo de la supremacía blanca para sobrevivir- es el VERDADERO problema que debe erradicarse. □



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