

PUERTO RICO faces genocide

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

What is happening now in Puerto Rico can only be described as genocide — plain and simple! Hurricanes Irma and Maria have uncovered Puerto Rican reality for the world to see: the murderous and obscene cruelty of naked capitalism mirrored in the subordination of a populated territory, a colony of the United States, where without mercy the bloodiest system oppresses a desperate population devoid of material resources.

Just as X-rays discover what soft tissues hide, the hurricanes have shown the terrible conditions of thousands of families, who live in poverty and survive in unsafe housing that lines the stunning mountain sides, all covered by the luscious greenery of this tropical region. Now, with the vegetation blown down, the forgotten and desperate have surfaced, giving evidence that the system has failed to protect its people.

And if Maria flattened the vegetation, it has been the “recovery” plans from both the U.S. government and its subservient Puerto Rican administration that have inflicted the most devastation. The motto “Actions speak louder than words” surely summarizes the situation.

One might even think that this is a well-executed plan to destroy Puerto Rico as we know it, decimate its population and impose a foreign agenda to benefit capital, while disregarding the voices of the residents. The plan “dismantles” and restructures Puerto Rico for the benefit of a few — capitalists.

Let’s take a look at one of the areas to illustrate this.

Energy sector up for grabs

Of all the sectors, electricity is the most crucial. In this tropical island where ventilation and refrigeration play a determinant role in keeping food and medicines at a safe temperature, the loss of electricity affects everybody. No industries can function without it and no hospitals. Already, many people have died for lack of electricity to power life-saving devices. Lack of electricity also diminishes the capacity for maintenance and delivery of potable water.

Although some electric power has been restored by using generators, there are too few to sustain needed power and not everyone has access. They run mostly on diesel, which in turn is more expensive and depends on shipping from the U.S.

After the storm, the damage from fallen power towers and wires was prevalent. But not only that.

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Puerto Rico,
October 2017

PHOTO: LOST AT E MINOR

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This year, the movement has seen everything from the inauguration of arch-bigot Donald Trump to the toppling of racist Confederate statues. It has responded in militant action to the attacks on migrants, the LGBTQ community, Black lives, and to U.S. imperialism abroad. We have watched colonized Puerto Rico and other oppressed nations suffer from global warming and genocidal policies, the murder of anti-racist activists and state repression of freedom fighters with horror.

As the centennial of the Russian Revolution approaches, we are faced with an urgent need to unite and fight for our lives. The 50-year anniversary of the martyrdom of Che Guevara and the Newark Uprising offer critical lessons for going forward. Our comrades in the streets risking their lives to topple white supremacy need our support, need an army to back them up.

Workers World Party invites you to attend our 2017 conference in the heart of Newark, NJ — one of the largest and most impoverished cities in the Northeast, as well as a historic site of resistance. We will be gathering hundreds of activists and freedom fighters from across the country to meet and discuss where our movement goes from here. As the battle against white supremacy and capitalism continues to intensify, we are strategizing our way forward in the fight for socialism.

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‘Real Detroiters Speak Out’ to World Conference of Mayors

By Kris Balderas Hamel
Detroit

The World Conference of Mayors is convening its 33rd anniversary conference in Detroit from Oct. 23 to Oct. 26. Was Detroit picked to host this event because of its dramatic population loss, record poverty and unemployment, mass home foreclosures and water shutoffs? Because of the racism and devastating austerity visited upon this majority African-American city?

Not at all. Detroit was chosen for this international conference because of the alleged “exemplary leadership of Mayor Mike Duggan and his administration,” which “transformed Detroit into a city of extraordinary opportunities and possibilities,” according to wcmdetroit2017.com.

The Moratorium Now Coalition says the city was picked to host the WCM’s International Trade and Investment Conference because of a development resurgence in which “public revenues generated through ... taxation are being funneled to the capitalist corporations” and banks.

Downtown Detroit has been gentrified. Sports arenas and commercial venues have proliferated at city taxpayers’ expense, while the neighborhoods and residents are forgotten and left to fend for themselves.

Once the hub of the world’s automobile industry, with a population over 1.8 million, Detroit now has fewer than 673,000 residents. The population was decimated after two capitalist tsunamis flooded the city. The first occurred in the late 1970s and 1980s when the auto industry restructured by deliberately targeting the Black autoworkers and closing virtually every plant in the city.

The second crisis hit in the early 2000s and accelerated the population loss and leveling of the neighborhoods. This was the racist, predatory subprime mortgage scheme and subsequent bankrupting of the city caused by the banks and financial institutions with the collusion of all levels of government.

According to Moratorium Now, more than 1 in 3 Detroit homes were foreclosed between 2005 and 2015. Since 2005, 139,699 of Detroit’s 384,672 homes have been foreclosed because of home mortgage defaults or unpaid property taxes. The city has approximately one-



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

third fewer occupied homes than it did just a decade ago. Detroiters once had the highest rate of homeownership in the U.S., but now, abandoned and vandalized homes and other structures are the norm.

To bring to light the real situation facing the city and its residents, a “Real Detroiters Speak Out” event is being organized by an array of activists under the leadership of the Moratorium Now Coalition. They are inviting mayors from around the world to attend and hear directly from the people of Detroit. They are also planning tours of the neighborhoods so the invitees can see the corporate disaster imposed on the people of Detroit and “what the future holds for every major city if the banks get their way.”

The call by organizers says their alternative event “will fully expose the role of the banks, multinational corporations, the business media and political comprador elites in perpetuating the superexploitation of the people of Detroit. ...The People’s Summit will discuss a real agenda for the rebirth and rebuilding of our neighborhoods and communities. Real development in Detroit would focus on the rehabilitation of neighborhoods, and the guaranteeing of jobs, housing, water services, heating and quality education for all. The banks that are responsible for the destruction of our neighborhoods must be held accountable through criminal prosecution and the payment of reparations.”

The Real Detroiters Speak-Out will take place Thursday, Oct. 26, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church, 8850 Woodward Ave., in Detroit. See the Facebook event page at tinyurl.com/yarcevtk or call 313-319-0870 for more information. □

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

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Join us in the fight for socialism!

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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Vol. 59, No. 40 • Oct 19, 2017
Closing date: Oct. 17, 2017
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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011.

California wildfires

Who gets hurt when the world burns

By Chris Fry

At least 40 people have died from some 16 wildfires ripping through California, as of Oct. 16. This is the highest death toll from wildfires in the state’s history. More than 200 people are missing, and the death toll is expected to rise. More than 5,700 homes and other buildings have been destroyed, with more than 214,000 acres burned.

Nearly all of those who died were elderly and asleep in their homes. The fires in the worst hit areas, the Sonoma and Napa valleys in northern California, began in the middle of the night on Oct. 8.

Many of the victims were disabled, often needing wheelchairs or unable in other ways to flee. Some of the victims were identified only by the serial numbers on their hip replacement hardware; even their teeth and bones were burned to ash.

When asked why people in the communities were not notified sooner of the approaching firestorms, authorities said they did not want to create panic that might clog the highways.

One can only contrast this response with the measures taken by socialist Cuba, where emergency evacuation routes and buildings are carefully prepared and announced beforehand, and where neighborhood committees take responsibility to evacuate the people, particularly those who need special assistance.

More than 90,000 Californians have been forced from their homes. In the city of Santa Rosa in the Sonoma Valley, 3,000 homes have been destroyed, with more than \$1.2 billion in damage so far. The fire has created a homeless crisis where housing was already limited.

The heavy, choking stench of smoke has reached all the way to San Francisco, more than 50 miles away.

Of the 10,000 workers battling the fires in California, some 3,800 are prisoner “volunteers,” more than 200 of whom are women. In return for performing the extremely strenuous task of clearing brush to create fire lines, the inmates receive the paltry sum of a dollar an hour, plus an extra day of “good time,” reducing their sentences for each day they work.

“It’s been quite a while since I can remember that we have had this many fires moving this fast,” said Bill Sessa, spokesperson for the Department of Corrections. “Crews often work 24 straight hours and then get 24 hours of rest. This firestorm — we had crews that worked 72 straight hours.” (cnn.com, Oct. 13)

‘The world is currently on fire’

The California fires come just after some 1,903 fires burned in Oregon in September, destroying 1,060 square miles, an area the size of Rhode Island. At least \$340 million was spent battling those blazes. (statesmanjournal.com, Sept. 23)

These terrible fires are not an anomaly. An Aug. 4 article in Popular Science, published before the latest California blazes, states: “The world is currently on fire. Massive blazes burn in the United States, Canada, Russia, South America, and across Europe.

“Here in the United States the Forest Service is reporting that 2017 is shaping up to be a worse than average fire year based on acres of federal, private and state land burned. So far, 5.6 million acres of land has burned this year, or 1.8 million acres more than the ten-year average of 3.8 million acres burned by this time,” the article continued.

Wildfires are a force of nature, like the powerful hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria that devastated Caribbean islands like Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and



Prisoners from California Dept. of Corrections starting a shift to fight recent wildfires.

Cuba, as well as parts of Texas and Florida. But the scientific community agrees that the extent and ferocity of wildfires, just like hurricanes, have recently increased greatly because of global warming.

California underwent a winter and spring of record snowfall and rainfall, generating a huge growth of grasses and brush. Then it endured the hottest summer on record, turning the underbrush into a vast tinderbox.

California has a large number of environmental activists, many of whom have waged powerful campaigns against industries that are huge sources of

carbon emissions.

But those same companies, in their insatiable thirst for profits, have given the reins of political power to the Trump regime, which aims to overturn every bit of progress the environmental movement has won, both inside and outside the U.S.

Only the combined force of the workers and oppressed communities can stop these corporate parasites from turning the planet into a wasteland and threatening the lives and livelihoods of the people. Only by converting to a system based on planning and human benefit, rather than profit, can this threat be overcome. □

‘Street speakout against U.S. war & racism’



WW PHOTO: SCOTT SCHEFFER

At a “Street Speakout Against U.S. War & Racism,” organizations representing struggles against U.S. imperialism on the Korean peninsula, the Philippines, Iran, and Central and South America, as well as here in the U.S., gathered on the United National Antiwar Coalition’s national days of action. These marked the 16th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan on Oct. 7.

Organizers from the International Action Center, BAYAN-USA and Anakbayan — all members of the International League of Peoples’ Struggle and UNAC — initiated this rally at a metro stop at Vermont and Wilshire. They gathered names for petitions and invited rail riders to join the fight to end all U.S. wars feeding racism, poverty and repression both here and abroad.

—Report by John Parker

‘No Muslim Ban Ever’

By Terri Kay
San Francisco



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

Several hundred people gathered here on Oct. 9 at the Civic Center Plaza to demand “No Muslim ban ever!” The rally was held on the eve of the originally scheduled U.S. Supreme Court hearing on Trump’s Muslim ban. After #45 changed the travel ban a few weeks ago to include north Korea, Venezuela and Chad, while removing Sudan from the list, the Supreme Court removed oral arguments from the calendar, requesting additional briefings from the parties.

The initiators of the rally, Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus, the Arab Resource & Organizing Center, the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the National Iranian-American Council, held that “the addition of non-Muslim majority countries to the ban, namely north Korea and Venezuela, does not negate its inherent anti-Muslim intent.” There were at least 30 other organizations who joined in as sponsors of the rally.

Emceed by Shareef Ali from AROC, the rally included dozens of speakers from impacted communities, including representatives from Hella Organized Bay Area Koreans, GABRIELA USA and the Islamic Cultural Center, as well as a Venezuelan community activist.

In their call to action, the organizers stated: “With our communities continuously under attack, with the cancellation of DACA, the building of the wall, the massive increase of deportations, the bolstering of policing and militarization, the looming deadline of TPS, the re-expansion of wars abroad, and now Trump’s newest ban and the lowering of the refugee cap, we must continue to stand up and speak out against this administration’s violence.” □

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On the picket line

By Sue Davis and Alex Bolchi

Michigan nurses outmobilize ‘right to work’

More than 1,000 registered nurses at the Munson Medical Center in Traverse City, Mich., triumphed on Aug. 9-10. They not only organized the biggest union victory in a right-to-work (for-less) state, but succeeded where they’d failed 15 years earlier. What changed?

Since they won that earlier battle, the bosses ramped up anti-worker maneuvers — heaping on mandatory overtime, cutting benefits, shuttering professional development opportunities and pushing RNs around different departments with no cross-training. So the nurses decided to unionize with the Michigan Nurses Association, employing traditional, battle-tested methods. They held a day-long drop-in session at a coffee shop, as well as face-to-face lunchtime meetings, and organized meetings to accommodate workers’ schedules.

Organizers also used modern methods, such as team-based group chats in a texting application, which allowed them to drop in on management’s captive audience meetings and call out anti-union consultants. The entire process is documented in a Sept. 20 Labor Notes article. To communicate the benefit of the nurses’ winning tactics, it deserves a full read at tinyurl.com/mnwu1/. Workers may need to adjust their approach to win a victory. But when they win a union contract in a RTW state, you know it paid off!

Oppose the Guestworker Act! Residency and citizenship for migrant workers!

A proposed farm bill might become a law threatening workers industrywide. Chair of the House Judiciary Committee Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) introduced the Agricultural Guestworkers Act of 2017 on Oct. 4. It is designed to do three things: replace the existing H-2A visa program, call it instead the “H-2C” visa program and put it under the Department of Agriculture. If passed, the law, according to the National Guestworkers Alliance, a project of the New Orleans Workers’ Center for Racial Justice, would drive down wages of all workers in agriculture, dairy, forestry, seafood and meat processing.

The proposed law would also drive a wedge between workers, as NGA director Saket Soni noted in an Oct. 4 statement: “The bill purports to address flaws with current guestworker programs. In fact it would exacerbate the worst faults of current programs, while creating a host of new ones that would hurt both guestworkers and U.S.-born workers.” Though big agriculture and the meat business are salivating at the prospect of getting this measure signed into law, over 150 groups concerned with protecting workers’ rights are opposing it.

The United Farm Workers is demanding a path to stable citizenship and permanent residency. You can sign a petition supporting that just demand at tinyurl.com/yd54b3sf/. The planned vote on the act by the House Judiciary Committee was postponed Oct. 5. WW says: “Throw the bill in the trash. Workers deserve better!”

Media organize at Vice and LA Times

Two unions — Writers Guild of America, East, and Motion Picture Editors Guild/IATSE Local 700 — announced Sept. 22 that approximately 430 VICE Media employees have chosen to go union. Creative workers joined WGAE, while post-production workers joined MPEG. Organizing began on May Day. Over the past year, workers at Salon.com, Huffington Post, and People’s World have organized to bargain on wages, hours and working conditions. (Portside, Sept. 22)

Meanwhile, newsroom workers at the Los Angeles Times have been trying to form a union, setting up a clash with Tronc, the newspaper’s parent company. After months on the case, the organizing committee placed its demands — improved working conditions, higher pay and enhanced benefits, and protections for staff members against “unilateral change by Tronc” — on employees’ desks after work on Oct. 3.

The letter affirms that “a majority of the newsroom” at the LA Times has signed union cards supporting representation by the NewsGuild, which represents 25,000 reporters, editors, photojournalists and other media workers at news organizations across the United States. (NY Times, Oct. 4)

Oppose changes to Workers’ Comp in New York state

Every year benefits and care for injured and ill workers come under attack in New York state. Corporations and the Business Council of New York have been lobbying hard this year to gut workers’ compensation. The NYS Workers’ Compensation Board has proposed new rules and regulations that would reduce awards for workers who lose use of a body part and increase uncertainty, delay and litigation for injured workers. “This plan is an insult to all working men and women,” said NYS AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento. “Benefit cuts for injured workers are wholly unjustifiable.” To sign a petition opposing the changes, visit tinyurl.com/y7lu6lz8/. □

Unions ‘Come Out with Pride’ at Orlando march

By J. White
Orlando, Fla.

Thousands attended the “Come Out With Pride” march here on Oct. 14, an annual event that has become one of the largest Pride festivals in Florida, celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer lives. The date aligns with National Coming Out Day on Oct. 11 and the month of October as National LGBTQ History Month.

Organizers of the march included UNITE HERE Central Florida Locals 362 and 737. UNITE HERE has been a groundbreaker in securing equal protections for its LGBTQ members at work — union protections that exist in places where no state or federal laws afford LGBTQ people equal rights at work.

A UNITE HERE Central Florida statement rallied support: “March with us, Orlando, in our quest for fair and equal treatment of all individuals! We are stronger together than alone when combating wealthy individuals and corporations who stand in the way of us achieving full civil and economic equality.”

The march and parade through downtown Orlando and around Lake Eola were used to organize for an Oct. 19 “Rally for a Raise!” in support of workers at Walt Disney World Resort, who are in struggle for a living wage.

During the march, hundreds of flyers were



PHOTO: UNITE HERE CENTRAL FLORIDA



WW PHOTO: J. WHITE

distributed in support of anti-racist actions by people in Durham, N.C. Led by Queer People of Color, a group of people who succeeded in toppling a Confederate statue and protesting the Ku Klux Klan are now facing felony riot charges for their courageous actions. The flyer, titled “An injury to one is an injury to All — Defend the movement against white supremacy!” was enthusiastically received by marchers. □

ParaTransit drivers organize in Virginia



Drivers and supporters picket company headquarters, Roanoke, Va., Oct. 10.

By Workers World Roanoke bureau

Workers at RADAR ParaTransit and their supporters joined together Oct. 10 in Roanoke, Va., for an informational picket line at company headquarters. Transportation services provided by the workers are primarily for older people and people with disabilities.

The nonunion transit drivers at RADAR, a private company, are working to win union recognition with Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1493.

The RADAR drivers held their first all-day informational picket on Sept. 26. The second all-day picket on Oct. 10 grew to include supporters from all across southwestern and central Virginia, as well as Local 1493 mem-

bers from Greensboro, N.C.

Other supporters joining the lines at multiple locations outside the RADAR company headquarters included members and staff of the Communication Workers union, the Roanoke Peoples’ Power Network, the Virginia AFL-CIO and a variety of other labor and community supporters. □

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For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to www.LowWageCapitalism.com
Available at Amazon and other bookstores.

Colin Kaepernick files job grievance vs. NFL bosses

By Monica Moorehead

As the National Football League completed the sixth week of its 2017 season, Colin Kaepernick, the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback and Super Bowl star, still has not been signed to a new team. Kaepernick became a free agent in March.

Kaepernick ignited a wave of protest against police brutality and racist oppression during the 2016 season when he consistently took a knee during the national anthem before NFL games.

Before the new season began, Kaepernick expressed his hope of playing in 2017, but that has not happened yet. In his absence and in solidarity with his cause, many of his former teammates, including Eric Reid, and players from other teams continue to take a knee.

A number of teams have injured quarterbacks, such as Aaron Rodgers of the Green Bay Packers, who Kaepernick could replace. Rodgers has gone on record with supporting Kaepernick being on a team.

In response to his being whiteballed by the NFL bosses' hierarchy, Kaepernick announced on Oct. 14 that he is filing a grievance against NFL owners under the current collective bargaining agreement for collusion in denying him employment.

Kaepernick's lawyer, Mark Geragos, released the following statement on Twitter: "We can confirm that this morning we filed a grievance under the CBA on behalf of Colin Kaepernick. This was done only after pursuing every possible avenue with all NFL teams and their executives.

"If the NFL (as well as all professional sports leagues) is to remain a meritocracy, then principled and peaceful political protest — which the owners themselves made great theater imitating weeks ago [following Trump's Sept. 22 speech labeling the players as SOBS — WW] — should not be punished and athletes should not be denied employment based

on partisan political provocation by the Executive Branch of our government. Such a precedent threatens all patriotic Americans and harkens back to our darkest days as a nation. Protecting all athletes from such collusive conduct is what compelled Mr. Kaepernick to file his grievance.

"Colin Kaepernick's goal has always been, and remains, to simply be treated fairly by the league he performed at the highest level for and to return to the football playing field."

The National Football League Players Union issued this press release on Oct. 15: "Our union has a duty to assist Mr. Kaepernick as we do all players and we will support him. The NFLPA has been in regular contact with Mr. Kaepernick's representatives for the past year about his options and our union agreed to follow the direction of his advisors throughout that time. We first learned through media reports today that Mr. Kaepernick filed a grievance claiming collusion through our arbitration system and is represented by his own counsel. We learned that the NFL was informed of his intention to file this grievance before today. We are scheduling a call with his advisors for early this week."

Labor laws favor players' protests

There are 32 teams in the NFL. Fifteen owners of those teams are outright billionaires who made their fortunes long before buying a team. Some of these fortunes are rooted in real estate, oil, gas, energy and well-known monopolies like Home Depot and Microsoft.

Although NFL players, on average, are very well paid compared to the vast majority of workers, nonetheless compared to the billionaire and multimillionaire owners these players are grossly underpaid. They also have the shortest playing careers by comparison with other professional athletes in sports like basketball, baseball and hockey. In addition,

severe injuries, especially concussions, not only shorten football careers but also players' lives.

The NFL owners are no different from any other bosses who super-exploit the labor of their workers to make billions of dollars in lucrative profits. The NFL made \$13 billion in total revenues in 2016, more than any other sport. Out of that total, each of the 32 teams split \$7.8 billion. (marketwatch.com)

Because the NFL teams and their players have an employer-employer relationship, there are federal laws protecting the players' protests during the anthem. According to the Oct. 12 New York Times: "To be protected under federal labor law, an employee's action must be conducted in concert with co-workers, it must address an issue of relevance to their job, and it must be carried out using appropriate means. [E]xperts point to a 1978 case in which the Supreme Court ruled that workers have a right to engage in political advocacy as long as the political theme relates to their job. In 2008, the general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, which enforces federal labor law, issued a guidance making clear that work-

ers had a right to publicly demonstrate for or against immigration legislation pending in Congress, though they didn't have the right to skip work to do so."

After Jerry Jones threatened on Oct. 7 to bench Cowboys players for kneeling during the anthem, Local 100 of the United Labor Unions in Texas filed a complaint against Jones saying: "The employer, evidenced by repeated public statements, is attempting to threaten, coerce and intimidate all Dallas Cowboys players on the roster in order to prevent them from exercising concerted activity protected under the act by saying that he will fire any players involved in such concerted activity." (salon.com, Oct. 11)

Stephen Ross, owner of the Miami Dolphins, is also threatening to bench players. What's more, the NFL owners say they are "considering" a change in the league's collective bargaining agreement that would add a clause to force players to stand during the anthem. (Sports Illustrated, Oct. 10)

The owners, however, will meet continued resistance. The players not only have a political movement on their side, but also the labor laws to back them up. □



WHY COLIN KAEPERNICK IS RIGHT

Articles from Workers World/Mundo Obrero Newspaper www.workers.org/books

400,000 workers hit the streets

By G. Dunkel

"Badly paid, scorned, our jobs in jeopardy, layoffs, cuts in sick pay, tax hikes, increased required deductions for teachers' pensions, salary freezes" are some of the reasons the Federation of United Unions (FSU), one of the major unions representing teachers in France, gave for a one-day walkout Oct. 10.

There are 5.4 million public service workers in France, in areas such as the railroads and subways, air traffic controllers, teachers and health care workers from doctors to porters. Even in privatized sectors like the post office and the telephone system, there are still pockets of public workers.

These public workers all have similar grievances to the teachers and at least 400,000 of them walked out Oct. 10 to challenge the government of President Emmanuel Macron and its big-business allies. The latter explicitly have told public service workers that they have to do more with less. They plan to cut 120,000 jobs in the next 5 years.

According to the General Confederation of Workers (CGT), marches and protests took place in 90 communities throughout France: 45,000 marched



French workers flood streets to protest capitalist austerity measures.

PHOTO: CGT

in Paris; between 6,400 and 12,000 in Lyons; more than 10,000 in Bordeaux; 9,000 in Rouen; and 3,000 in Saint-Denis on the French-owned island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean.

For the first time in more than a decade, all the French union confederations participated. It's true that Workers Force (FO) was allied with the CGT in 2016 to militate against the "Socialist" government's attack on French labor. Lately, however, only the CGT and some smaller

confederations, like Solidaires, have resisted the attacks from Macron's Forward the Republic Party (LREM).

The leadership of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), the labor confederation vying with the CGT to become the largest, most influential in France, has been under increasing pressure from its base to actively oppose the new labor law imposed by the LREM government. The CFDT has also seen its allies in the French "Socialist" Party, a

party which has often run France's bourgeois imperialism, crushed in the last election.

All of the major progressive parties on the French left had contingents in the Paris march — the French Communist Party (PCF), the New Anticapitalist Party (NPA) and Unbowed France (FI) were the most prominent, but even the Socialist Party had a presence.

Unbowed France has been particularly active. François Raffin, one of its deputies, a prominent leader of Nuits Debout and a well-known movie director, took the floor in Parliament on Oct. 11 to accuse Macron, his prime minister Edouard Philippe and some other top government ministers of personally attempting to cover up a scandal in Sanofi. Sanofi, a giant French pharmaceutical company, has been charged with selling a dangerous drug called Dékapine. (FranceSoir, Oct. 12)

Macron has also been forced to defend himself over his characterization of workers in France as "slackers," more interested in "going to brothels" than going to work.

The CGT has called for another strike and demonstration Oct. 19, and there will be an all-union meeting to plan further actions in early November. □

SMASHING WHITE SUPREMACY

#DoltLikeDurham in smashing white supremacy

By Deirdre Griswold
New York

A public meeting on Oct. 14 on the theme “Do It Like Durham” lived up to its promise of bringing the revolutionary spirit of the struggle against white supremacy to New York City. The two main speakers — Takiyah Thompson and Loan Tran — had come from North Carolina

with other activists to explain the significance of the movement there that is shaking the foundations of racism implanted in this country through the capture and enslavement of millions of African people to be super-exploited by rich Southern plantation owners.

Thompson is the iconic figure in videos viewed around the world. She climbed up a tall ladder on Aug. 14 and placed a rope

around a statue of a Confederate soldier that stood in front of the old Durham County courthouse.

A crowd of anti-racists then toppled this symbol of the Confederacy and the war to preserve slavery — the bloodiest war in U.S. history. Thompson and 14 others were arrested within days and given serious charges, including felonies.

Thompson received a standing ovation as she explained how talking about the struggle is therapeutic and enhanced her “desire to learn and understand the pathways to freedom — and the pitfalls.”

“I always fall back on friends and comrades,” said Thompson. “Revolutionary love is for the liberation of others and oneself. It’s all the same.” Her modesty in not talking about her own courageous conduct was deeply felt by the audience.

Loan Tran, another person arrested after the symbolic act against slavery and its virulent heritage in the U.S., empha-

sized that those arrested are proud of this struggle and “have done nothing wrong.”

Tran, who had been asked by many journalists why so many of those arrested are queer and/or trans people of color, said: “What I know, as a queer and gender nonconforming person of color, is that many of us fight because, materially, we have much to lose if we don’t fight — our safety, our jobs, our homes, our lives because of capitalist oppression. On the other hand, many of us fight because, materially, we don’t have much to lose — our safety, our jobs, our homes, our lives are already in jeopardy or stolen from us because of capitalist exploitation.”

Tran added: “Another key lesson from Durham that I’ve been sitting with is that while we must never underestimate the power of state repression, the answer is not paranoia or fear but to get organized. During the first week following the statue toppling, as organizers were targeted, arrested, getting their homes raided — not to mention being followed, doxed and threatened by white supremacists while the state turned its back on us — we had to make sure we were getting organized broader and deeper.

“One strong example of this was an action on Aug. 17, which called for anti-racist fighters in our city to show up at the jail to turn themselves in, to say: ‘If you target some of us for tearing down white supremacy, then arrest us, too!’

“Hundreds showed up for this action, with over 70 people turning themselves in. One after another, they were turned away by the sheriffs.” Tran’s entire talk is online at workers.org.

The meeting blended in reports from New York on related struggles. Imani Henry spoke about the struggle in Brooklyn for affordable housing led by Equality for Flatbush. Teresa Gutierrez announced efforts underway to send a brigade to Puerto Rico to support the people there battling the Trump administration’s criminal neglect and insults after the devastation of Hurricane Irma.

William Camacaro gave a brief update on the new threats by the U.S. against Venezuela. John Steffin reported on a struggle at Columbia University to cancel speaking invitations to far-right ideologists.

The program was further enlivened by a powerful rap and hip-hop number delivered by Vijou Bryant of GABRIELA N.Y., a Filipina women’s group. Bryant is also co-coordinator of the International Working Women’s Coalition and is of both Philippine and African-American heritage. □



There was an enthusiastic reception in New York City to the revolutionary spirit of struggle against white supremacy in Durham, N.C. Speakers Loan Tran (back row) and Takiyah Thompson (front row, second from right) are wearing #DoltLikeDurham baseball caps.

Fight for justice for Abdul Burnette and all Durham County Jail inmates

By Workers World Durham bureau

In another racist act of injustice in the Durham County police and court system, Abdul Burnette, 20 years old, was arrested Sept. 23 for three misdemeanor charges — but was given a \$10,000 bond, typical of felony charges. His father, also named Abdul, a fast food worker and leader in the local Fight For \$15 movement, was not allowed to bond him out.

Before Burnette was convicted of any crime, a judge sentenced him to a 60-day drug rehab program in the jail. According to his family, Burnette has mild autism and is not competent to stand trial. Due to his medical condition, he is required to take medication, though his family is not allowed to provide it. Instead, the Durham County Jail is now charging him \$20 per pill, a serious financial burden on Abdul and his family.

Recently, young Abdul was attacked by another inmate. In self-defense he fought back. He is now placed on “lock-back” soli-

tary confinement for the next 30 days, and all family visitations have been cut off.

Earlier this year, on April 24, young Abdul was also assaulted by a Durham police officer. His father has filed a complaint with Internal Affairs of the Durham Police Department and that is still under investigation. “The Durham County Jail is violating my son’s constitutional rights. We are going to keep fighting until we get justice!” stated Abdul Burnette, the father.

The case of Abdul Burnette is happening amid many local struggles against events at the Durham County Jail, including five deaths of inmates in recent years and, on March 23, that of 17-year-old Niecey “Niecey” Fennel.

Starting the week of Oct. 15, the Durham County Jail plans to deny all family and friends the basic right to in-person visits with their loved ones. Instead, the jail will begin “video visitation” only, forcing all communication through a screen in a “service” run by a private corporation.

An organizing leaflet distributed by the Inside-Outside Alliance as part of the struggle for Burnette and against the Durham County Jail lists these demands:

- **“Free Abdul Burnette now!**
- **Abolish bond!**
- **End criminalization of marijuana possession!**
- **Full access to affordable health care for all inmates!**
- **End the contracts with the abusive, exploitative corporations!**
- **End racial profiling and police brutality!**
- **Full in-person jail visitation!**
- **No more jail deaths!”**

The Inside-Outside Alliance also issued a call to action for weekly demonstrations at the Durham County Jail, 219 S. Mangum St., 6 p.m., every Friday.

To donate to the Fight for Justice for Abdul Burnette and All Durham County Jail Inmates, go to www.youcaring.com/abdulburnette-978498.

Longshore unionist: ‘Why workers must fight white supremacy’

By Monica Moorehead
New York

Clarence Thomas, a retired rank-and-file member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 in the Bay Area, Calif., spoke at an Oct. 10 Workers World Party political discussion here on “Why workers must fight white supremacy.” Thomas was a founding member of the Million Worker March, a coalition of Black trade unionists from around the country who called for workers to speak in “our own name” and not as an appendage to the Democratic and Republican parties during the 2004 presidential election.

The MWM public call to action stated: “The time has come to mobilize working people for our own agenda. Let us end subservience to the power of the privileged few and their monopoly of the political process in America.”

At the Oct. 10 meeting, Thomas’ presentation focused on the struggle against white supremacy during the Great Depression of the 1930s, especially the heroic efforts made to bring Black workers into the ILWU, led by Harry Bridges, an Australian immigrant unionist. This was a revolutionary act since at the time most Black workers were forced to scab during strikes or else languish in low-wage jobs

while locked out of all-white, closed-shop, skilled crafts unions.

Thomas also spoke about the heroic shutting down of West Coast docks since the 1980s, mainly on May Day, International Workers Day, in political solidarity with oppressed peoples’ struggles around the world. These work stoppages were aimed against the apartheid regime of South Africa, the Zionist regime of Israel, police brutality and for the freedom of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Thomas stated that global capitalism exploits all workers, be they dockworkers, prisoners, migrants or NFL players.



PHOTO: PEOPLES VIDEO NETWORK

That is precisely why, he emphasized, all workers must unite and resist a system that relies on white supremacy for its very existence.

To hear Thomas’ talk, go to youtu.be/fpKmxpYhKw8/. □

THE SUPREMACY

Indigenous Peoples Day: ‘Debunking Columbus’

By Johnnie Stevens and Sara Catalinotto

Indigenous Peoples Day in New York City this year featured a two-day cultural festival, a museum tour and a rally of 1,000 people to demand removal of colonial statues, along with other actions and declarations.

Redhawk Native American Arts Council hosted the Indigenous Peoples Celebration on Randall’s Island in the Harlem River on Oct. 8 and 9, with the theme “Rethinking Columbus Day and Honoring Water Protectors.”

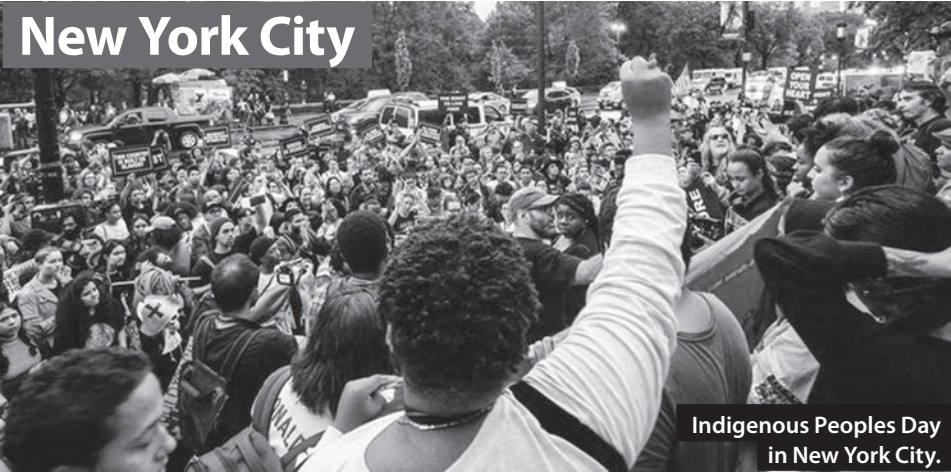
Decolonize This Place held its second annual anti-Columbus Day tour at the American Museum of Natural History on Central Park West, where another offensive statue disgraces the front steps: U.S. President Teddy Roosevelt in uniform on a horse, with a half-naked African man and an Indigenous man below and behind on either side of the horse. Roosevelt was instrumental in the military colonization of Puerto Rico, currently continued in U.S. efforts at economic recolonization combined with the aftermath of devastating hurricane damage on the island.

In the afternoon museum action, hun-

dreds went inside, lined up for tickets and then conducted a tour using the “people’s mike” technique. (Video at tinyurl.com/y7yk6edz.) While singing, drumming and explaining how the artifacts were acquired, participants also passed out a brochure to museumgoers titled “Debunking Christopher Columbus: #NotMyHero.” (RemoveColumbus.com)

By the time the tour left the museum, the crowd had grown to a thousand strong. The rally outside reflected the growing struggle against colonialism and racism, which also includes the movement to take down Confederate symbols. Indigenous activists were joined by activists in Black Lives Matter of Greater NY, the Puerto Rican diaspora and from Palestine and many other cultures. Solidarity groups, veterans and community groups such as Brooklyn’s Movement to Protect the People and city-wide Parents to Improve School Transportation were there, too.

Various speakers noted that there must be some better way to honor working-class Italian immigrants and their descendants than to associate them with the horrific aftermath of Columbus’ expedition that perpetrated genocide on peo-



ples of the Americas and of Africa.

In the buildup to the anti-Columbus Day action, the corporate media and police spread false rumors that opponents of local Columbus statues 1) are anti-Italian, 2) might knock down a 125-foot statue in the middle of a major traffic circle or 3) would disrupt the Fifth Avenue Columbus Day parade. But the movement itself expressed solidarity with Italian-American pride as well as Indigenous pride.

A call-in campaign by Remove Columbus is focusing on two leaders of the city’s new

Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers, seeking removal of five local Columbus statues. The commission — which also includes civil rights activist Harry Belafonte and president of historically Black Spelman College Mary Schmidt Campbell — is tasked with advising Mayor De Blasio by December 2017 “on issues surrounding public art and historic monuments and markers on city-owned property,” according to a brochure about the commission.

A concerted effort to change the city’s

Continued on page 8

Protesters block ICE deportation bus

By Zac Fraser and Misha Litvak
Portland, Ore.

Scores of courageous protesters assembled outside the offices of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in southwestern Portland on Oct. 11. They then went into motion to stop a bus taking a group of immigrants to a detention facility in Tacoma, Wash., for deportation.

Five protesters chained themselves together and blocked the doors of the building. Cops arrived on the scene around 5:30 p.m. and began making arrests after ordering the protesters to disperse. When the pigs got to the protesters who had chained themselves together, they placed hoods and earmuffs



over the heads of the protesters. The cops claimed that this was to “protect” the protesters from power tools being used to sever their bonds. But witnesses say that

they did not see or hear any power tools and that the pigs used box cutters to cut the protesters apart.

The protesters’ tactic succeeded in significantly delaying ICE’s ghoulish work. As for the Abu-Ghraib-like hooding of protesters, it’s irrelevant whether the pigs were just trying to keep from getting sued, or it was an intimidation tactic on their part. While the protesters’ bonds were being ripped apart outside the ICE offices, families and lives were being torn apart inside the building.

All five of the protesters have been released. In a statement from the protesters, they correctly state that their “gentle”

treatment at the hands of the authorities stands in stark contrast to the torturous conditions endured by those people facing deportation.

The Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Wash., where the bus was heading, is privately owned by the GEO company and is the fourth largest immigrant prison in the U.S. Opened in 2004, the center faced allegations of human rights abuse in 2008 when an investigation published through Seattle University’s School of Law confirmed that the facility “violate(d) international human rights law.” Since then, the detention center’s capacity has more than tripled from an initial 1,575 detainees. □

Mumia Abu-Jamal ‘An Abolitionist Life’

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

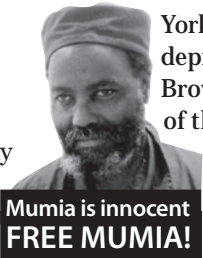
What does it mean to call oneself an abolitionist?

The word doesn’t mean today what it meant 150 years ago. Then, it meant an end to what some have called “America’s Original Sin” — Slavery.

Today? Well, it’s not a common term today, but it should be. Abolition was the nation’s first biracial movement, built by both Blacks and whites, to oppose the evils of Slavery.

But it’s important for us today to recognize that when abolitionists were active, during the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s, they were portrayed in the press, and spoken about by prominent and powerful men, as madmen and crazy women, who dared to oppose something so fundamental to American wealth like Slavery.

Abraham Lincoln, speaking at New



York’s Cooper Union before his election, depicted the radical abolitionist, John Brown, as a madman and not a member of the Republican Party.

It was only after the U.S. Civil War that abolitionists were regarded as sane people — not before.

There is a lesson here for you all, people at the Abolitionist Forum.

That is, don’t worry about what people in power or media say about you.

Ask yourself if what you’re doing is right — then roll with it.

It’s right to oppose mass incarceration. It’s right to seek to abolish the racist death penalty.

It’s right to fight against state repression. And the right time to do that — is Now!

Mumia Abu-Jamal © 2017

This talk was originally delivered via recording to a Harlem Abolition Forum to counter police violence on Oct. 1. See Workers World coverage at tinyurl.com/yakt7jag. □

By Workers World
Boston bureau

A noontime crowd of immigrant rights organizations, community leaders and unions rallied on Oct. 13 in front of the Massachusetts State House to demand justice for Francisco Rodriguez on the three-month anniversary of his detention. The demonstrators also spoke out in solidarity with all 11 million undocumented workers in the U.S.

Groups representing immigrants and migrants and a broad array of union and community supporters are waging a campaign to pressure state officials to release Rodriguez from the Suffolk County House of Correction. They are also demanding a halt to Department of Homeland Security deportation proceedings against him and others languishing in detention.

Rodriguez is an active and vocal member of Service Employees (SEIU) Local 32BJ and a janitor at the Massachusetts



Boston rally in support of Francisco Rodriguez, Oct. 13.

Institute of Technology. He was detained by immigration officials during his check-in on July 13 at Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices in Burlington, Mass. While he was held in detention, his spouse gave birth to their baby, Josue Mateo. Rodriguez was not permitted to be present at the birth, nor has he yet held his newest child.

This kind of devastating separation from loved ones is a cruel reality for thousands of detainees. But fiercely determined people continue to fight to turn the tide and free Francisco Rodriguez and others. □

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE ROUNDUP

Abortion access now!

By Sue Davis

The state of Texas is holding hostage a 17-year-old unaccompanied immigrant minor who wants an abortion.

Held in a federally funded shelter in legal custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, she obtained a judicial bypass to have an abortion with the help of the pro-choice group, Jane’s Due Process. A bypass is allowed when it’s impossible to obtain the parental consent required in Texas. However, the director of ORR ordered the shelter not to take Jane Doe (so designated to protect her identity) to a clinic appointment or to allow her court-appointed guardian to do so.

Instead she was taken to a right-wing “crisis pregnancy center” where she was forced to undergo anti-abortion counseling. CPCs do not provide health care, nor are they regulated; they are infamous for promoting medically incorrect and biased information to dissuade women from having abortions.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed suit Oct. 5 for a temporary restraining order to immediately allow Jane to be transported to a clinic. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton countered with a friend-of-the-court brief supporting ORR, arguing that immigrants do not have constitutional rights.

The relief sought by ACLU includes stopping ORR officials from pressuring Jane to talk to her mother about wanting an abortion. She is refusing to do so because her parents beat her pregnant sister so badly that she miscarried. Fear of physical abuse is why she fled to the U.S.

The ACLU also wants Jane added to a June 2016 class action suit against ORR for denying abortion care to unaccompanied immigrant minors. Susan Hays, JDP legal director, says the government’s treatment of immigrant minors is “absolutely horrifying.” Such mistreatment is not surprising considering the loud-mouthed, anti-immigrant, anti-choice, misogynist-in-chief in the Oval Office.

To sign the petition demanding immediate abortion care for Jane Doe, visit tinyurl.com/y7ud5gmz.

Government ‘sanctioned classism and racism’

Reproductive justice groups and advocates issued calls for ending the Hyde Amendment, which forbids abortion coverage to millions of low-income Medicaid recipients, on Sept. 28, the 41st anniversary of Hyde’s passage. Prominent on the All* Above All website is a 1980 quote from Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall: “The Hyde Amendment

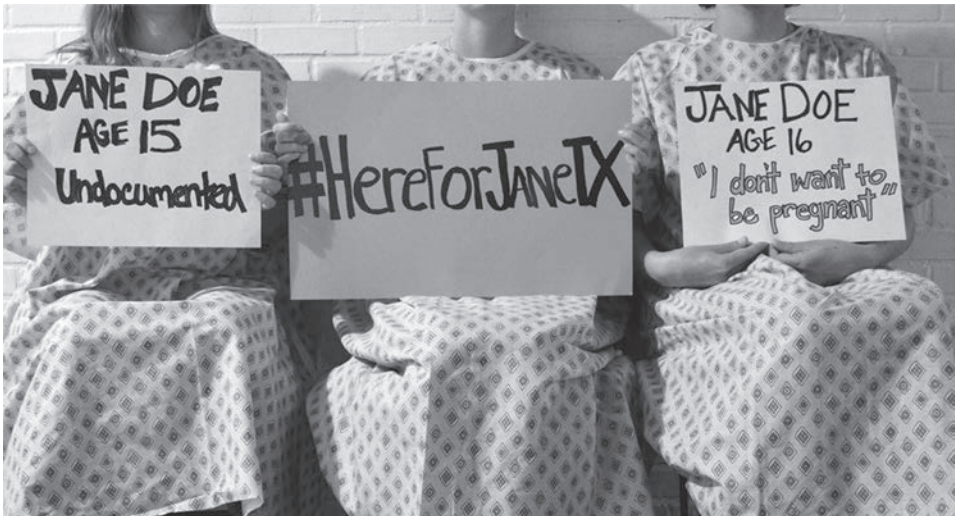


PHOTO: NUESTRO TEXAS

is designed to deprive poor and minority women of the constitutional right to choose abortion.”

Marshall’s words were statistically validated by a report in the Feb. 17 issue of Social Work in Health Care, titled “The Undue Burden of Paying for Abortion: An Exploration of Abortion Fund Cases.” This is the first study of women who need private financial aid to help pay for abortions — predominantly low-wage working women of color, youth, immigrants, rural residents, transpeople, women with disabilities and women subjected to domestic abuse. The study concludes that public funding restrictions, including economic, geographic and legal barriers to abortion, are “state and federally sanctioned classism and racism.” (Rewire, Feb. 27)

Dr. Gretchen E. Ely and co-authors at the University of Buffalo School of Social Work looked at 3,999 women requesting help for abortion care from the George Tiller Memorial Fund from 2010 to 2015. The fund, run by the 70-member groups in the National Network of Abortion Funds, honors Dr. George Tiller, the Kansas provider murdered in 2009 by an anti-abortion fanatic. The Tiller Fund gives priority to women seeking second trimester procedures, which account for 1.5 percent of abortions and are more costly than those in the first trimester.

About a third of NNAF fund recipients relied on public assistance like food stamps. The majority had children: 41 percent had one; 17.5 percent had three or more. The average distance recipients had to travel to clinics doubled from 97 miles in 2010 to nearly 200 miles in 2015 — reflecting 288 restrictions passed in those years. Most lived in states with many restrictions and few clinics, nearly half in the South and 27 percent in the Midwest. All were able to scrape together an average of \$500, but that was much less than the \$2,000 average

by legislators who appear to care more about defending lives of the “pre-born” than about caring for needy existing children!

Such blatant hypocrisy aligns with Trump’s cynical attempt on Oct. 13 to kill the Affordable Care Act. Saying it’s “time to negotiate health care that’s going to be good for everybody,” the liar-in-chief stopped payments, effective immediately, that keep health care coverage affordable for millions of low-to-middle-income families. (See article on p. 9.) That’s consistent with Trump’s abolition of free contraceptive coverage for 62.5 million women on Oct. 6. (See article in Oct. 12 WW.)

Positive strides promote abortion care

But the fight to expand access to abortion care recently advanced on two fronts.

The ACLU filed a federal lawsuit Oct. 3 challenging Food and Drug Act restrictions on where a woman may receive the medical abortion pill Mifeprex, which is a tested, safe and effective method of ending pregnancy up to 10 weeks. Currently, patients may not fill a prescription at a retail pharmacy, but must be handed one at a clinic, medical office or hospital from providers who pre-register with the drug maker and order and stock such medications at their facility.

The suit argues that FDA’s restrictions are medically unnecessary and that many qualified clinicians are unable to satisfy them, forcing patients to seek medical abortions elsewhere or resort to surgery. Such restrictions do not exist in other countries, are not medically mandated and are not supported by leading U.S. medical organizations. The suit asserts these “politically motivated regulations place needless burdens on women seeking this option.” That claim rests on a 2016 Supreme Court decision that regulations cannot impose an undue burden on abortion access without valid medical justification.

In another advance, two states — Oregon and Illinois — have passed legislation promoting access to abortion. Gov. Kate Brown signed an act Aug. 15 to ensure that Oregonians, regardless of income, citizenship status, gender identity or type of insurance, have access to the full range of preventive reproductive services including family planning, abortion and postpartum care.

Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner signed legislation Sept. 28 allowing state health insurance and Medicaid coverage for abortions. More than two dozen states provide Medicaid coverage for abortions only in cases of rape, incest or if the pregnant woman’s life is in danger, in line with Hyde Amendment exceptions to its ban. Seventeen states now use state-only funds for women seeking abortions for other reasons, 13 because of state court orders.

There is no stopping the fight for reproductive justice. It can only accelerate, led by women of color opposing blatant racism and austerity measures by state and federal governments. Women’s human rights and women’s liberation will win! □

20-week abortion ban, nonrenewal of children’s health care

Congress could care less about the hardships that abortion restrictions impose on the majority of working and oppressed women in the U.S.

By a vote of 237 to 189 along party lines, members of the House of Representatives approved a bill Oct. 5 to ban abortions 20 weeks after gestation. The supposed rationale is that anti-abortion zealots believe a fetus begins to feel pain at 20 weeks. However, all major medical groups in the U.S. and England assert a fetus cannot feel pain until the third trimester at 28 weeks. Legal experts contend this ban is unconstitutional because it violates a key provision of Roe v. Wade, which provides for a right to abortion until fetal viability, medically determined at about 24 weeks.

If enacted, which is doubtful because passage in the Senate requires 60 votes, the bill would impose enormous burdens on women whose test results late in the second trimester show fetal abnormalities, as well as on those who postpone the procedure due to fear stemming from rape, incest or domestic violence or those trying to scrape together funding.

Meanwhile, one of the House co-sponsors of the ban, Tim Murphy, was forced to resign Oct. 11 after reports that he had urged an extramarital lover to have an abortion in January. The text exchange occurred on Jan. 25, the day after Murphy had co-sponsored the Life at Conception Act. Caught-in-the-act of hypocrisy!

The House exposed the overall hypocrisy of the Republican majority’s so-called pro-family stance when it didn’t renew funding on Sept. 30 for the Children’s Health Insurance Program, which subsidizes health care for 9 million youngsters. That means children in some states will soon be unable to get routine checkups, immunizations, sick visits and other services. Talk about a cynical move

Indigenous Peoples Day: ‘Debunking Columbus’

Continued from page 7

Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day was announced at a Oct. 9 press conference by New York state Assemblyperson Charles Barron, who has introduced a bill to that effect, supported by New York City Councilmember Inez Barron. Both also suggested renaming the Columbus Day Parade as the Italian American Day Parade. (dnainfo.com)

In New Jersey, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka issued an executive order recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day on the sec-

ond Monday of October in the city, calling that “an opportunity to celebrate the thriving cultures and values of the Indigenous Peoples of our region.” (brickcitylive.com) Each of these three elected officials is a product of the 20th century Black Liberation Movement in this country.

Although the city of New York has yet to rename the October holiday, Teamsters Local 808 Secretary-Treasurer Chris Silvera told WW that the day has been listed as Indigenous Peoples Day in his local’s contract since 2015. □

TURN THE GUNS AROUND

Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions

By John Catalinotto

Weaving together GI letters, interviews and first-hand narratives with historical research, the author brings to life GI resistance in the Vietnam War era, shows its relation to capitalist state power and highlights why breaking the military chain of command is an essential step to ending oppression around the globe.

Available at online booksellers

Health care in peril

Boss Trump moves to destabilize ACA

By Gery Armsby

Surrounded by a cabal of smirking small business owners, President Donald Trump scrawled his signature onto another executive order on Oct. 12. This one outlined his administration's policy to weaken key sections of the Affordable Care Act passed under the Obama administration.

This latest executive order threatens to drastically loosen the ACA's requirements for the kinds of policies insurance companies are allowed to sell to both employers and individuals. It makes a push for expanding the use of employer-managed health savings accounts for paying medical costs.

For now, this order is only a threat. Experts say it would take the Trump administration months of a full-throttle effort to develop this policy in detail. In addition, it would likely entail a third major health care battle in Congress. Two previous attempts to repeal and replace the ACA were already defeated in the Senate this year, though only narrowly and only after tremendous fightback from grassroots movements, especially by people with disabilities.

Much more significant than the executive order, however, was Trump's announcement on Oct. 12 that he would end federal subsidies that help millions of people afford their insurance premiums. This announcement comes just two weeks before open enrollment begins for people who need those subsidies to purchase insurance on the 2018 Health Insurance Marketplace.

The executive order and the announced subsidy cuts signal a looming danger for all workers and oppressed people, with the sickest and most at-risk communities very likely to experience the brunt of this predatory attack.

Without these subsidies, monthly premiums for many people could cost as much as their rent. Initially, it is likely that insurance companies will absorb some of the increase to keep from losing captive markets, and spread much more significant increases out over time. But insurers have already planned to raise premiums in 2018 and 2019. Without subsidies, some insurers may withdraw from the marketplace altogether.

These subsidies, which total about \$7 billion annually, are a federal guarantee to the insurance industry that Obamacare won't infringe on their profits. The ACA requires Congress to appropriate the funds necessary to pay these subsidies. Trump argues that because Congress failed to renew the appropriation this year, his administration had no choice but to end the subsidies. Eighteen states and Washington, D.C., are suing his administration in an attempt to block cuts to the subsidies.

The debate over whether to find a way to pay these subsidies is likely to break out in Congress. Will Congress appropriate the funds necessary to keep insurance premiums from skyrocketing? This is just one immediate question. Another important issue is whether the far right will attach more of their reactionary anti-woman, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ agenda to any bills that reverse Trump's order and allocate funds for subsidies.

Why defend the ACA?

About 120 million people in the U.S. get health care coverage through social safety net programs — Medicare and Medicaid. Nine million of them are children previously covered under the Chil-

dren's Health Insurance Plan, which Congress allowed to expire Oct. 1.

Another 115 million people access health care using insurance plans they purchase through their workplaces or unions. Often-times, their employers pay some costs of the monthly premiums. Tens of millions more have historically been uninsured or significantly underinsured.

The ACA, which went into effect in 2014, was designed primarily to provide affordable health insurance coverage for the tens of millions of uninsured and underinsured people who could not afford to enroll in a workplace or individual plan and who did not qualify for social safety net programs. It did this by expanding Medicaid through the states to people earning lower incomes above the poverty line, and by creating subsidies for people to purchase regulated individual or family plans. However, 19 states refuse to expand Medicaid, and 11 million undocumented immigrants are ineligible for ACA coverage.

In order to subsidize these plans, the ACA required Congress to appropriate funds to pay the huge subsidies to insurance companies as an incentive for insurers to support the law, rather than lobby against it.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that during enrollment for the 2017 plan year, more than 20 million people enrolled in health plans through the ACA marketplaces and through expanded Medicaid in states where it was provided. The CBO reports that nearly 10 million of those who purchased plans on the marketplace qualified for subsidized pricing. The estimated premium subsidies bill that the federal government is paying in 2017 to insurance companies for those plans is \$7 billion. While the cost averages out to about \$700 per person, some receive a small subsidy, though the poorest receive subsidies higher than \$700.

Shifting that burden back onto low-income people — who often are barely able to afford their monthly rent and electricity — would threaten the health and lives of millions.

Defending the ACA, including these subsidies, is a life-and-death issue for many. It is the difference between a person being able to get a chest X-ray to diagnose pneumonia and get antibiotics, or someone staying home to battle out a terrible cold and passing it on to others. It is the difference between getting essential substance abuse services when a person is ready for help in quitting opioids, versus continuing to use and possibly overdosing.

The ACA is a big step in providing health care to millions, although it is a capitalist measure, largely tied to insurance companies. Universal coverage is needed for everyone, such as a single-payer system. Health care activists are calling for "Improved Medicare for all."

What is wrong with HSAs?

Throughout his election campaign, Trump touted the health savings account as a centerpiece in his goal of repealing and replacing Obamacare. Once again, he is eyeing the HSA as a potential instrument to appeal to people who will likely want an escape route from the soaring



PHOTO: ADAPT

costs of ACA-mandated insurance, as premium fees begin to skyrocket.

Currently, under the ACA, pre-tax HSA contributions are capped at around \$3,400 per year. This limits the function of HSAs to allow people a tax-free avenue to set aside a portion of their wages to cover costs of the average plan deductible.

To big capitalists like Trump, removing the HSA limit is appealing for two reasons. First, this would create yet another tax shelter for high-income earners. Second, for low-wage and middle-income workers, the HSA is yet another financial instrument, like the 401(k) retirement savings plan, designed to guarantee that a growing percentage of wages flow into the balance sheets of banks and financial institutions. There, they are turned into more profits before being paid out for people's necessities.

Health care for profit

Because health care and related industries, such as pharmaceuticals and medical technology, are big business in the U.S., produced to generate profit and economic growth first, and meet human

needs second, the larger crises faced by capitalism send shockwaves through the health care system. When patients cannot pay their bills because the economy is in recession and mass layoffs are on the rise, hospitals falter, merge, and some may close down. In hospitals that survive, emergency rooms are overcrowded, staff are stressed to the breaking point and collective bargaining units representing health workers are pressured to accept austerity contracts.

So plan premiums and the subsidies that help pay them aren't the only things to worry about with the current attacks on the ACA. Out-of-pocket costs for even the best plans available could keep rising as a way for insurance companies to reap more profits. These costs include deductibles, copays and other health-related expenses, such as mobility equipment and breathing aids, not fully covered under many plans.

In addition, many other ACA provisions are vulnerable, including appropriations that bolster Medicaid-based workforce development programs that train providers and nurses to address health problems that most effect oppressed urban and rural populations, and measures aimed at addressing health inequalities faced by African-American and Latinx communities, as well as women and LGBTQ people.

Make no mistake: The Trump administration's latest attack is an attempt to undermine and destroy the ACA. If workers and communities continue to fight back, that fight can eventually raise the broader demand that health care be set up to meet people's needs, not make profits. □

Puerto Rico faces genocide

Continued from page 1

The lack of materials in inventory exposed the failed plan that the U.S. firm Alix Partner proposed — a plan for which the national electric utility, PREPA, contracted to pay \$45 million.

This plan was to "restructure" the electric power agency in order to pay its share of the public debt, which is \$9 billion. This meant keeping a minimum of inventory — from fuel to posts — to keep the budget down. This "saving" proved to be not only a mistake, but a criminal action against the people of Puerto Rico.

The electrical workers' union, UTIER, had repeatedly criticized this move. UTIER said that since Puerto Rico is an island it could only obtain necessary materials through shipping, which storms could delay. Exactly.

Even before the enactment of the PROMESA law that imposed a Fiscal Control Board to make Puerto Ricans pay the illegitimate debt of \$74 billion, there were attempts to privatize PREPA. PROMESA then made it one of its goals.

Union workers oppose privatization

Now, after Maria hit the island, Gov. Ricardo Roselló, under the direction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — which was imposed on Puerto Rico to restore the energy sector — has contracted several U.S. firms to privatize PREPA de-

spite the UTIER workers' firm opposition.

The government refuses to turn on the Palo Seco plant on the north coast, near San Juan, hoping the people's desperation will force them to accept privatization. The Palo Seco plant could provide the necessary stabilization of the system in that area while the rest is repaired.

In this area is Rio Piedras Medical Center, the main medical center, where the most severe cases from all the archipelago are attended. Since electricity was first reconnected after Maria, the Medical Center has lost electric power four times due to instability.

Ricardo Santos, ex-president of UTIER, has exposed these interruptions in every TV, radio and even live Facebook program possible, and proposed a plan that could avoid the service interruptions. His and UTIER's solution is to turn on the Palo Seco plant, which was turned off before Irma and Maria with the phony excuse that it could not withstand a 40-mph wind.

The plant is standing and operational. According to Santos, the governor announced a contract with Weston Solutions to install a diesel generator for the Palo Seco region that would produce 50 megawatts at the cost of \$35 million in rent for six months. Instead, Santos stated, two units of the Palo Seco plant could

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WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Socialists win Venezuela elections

Washington, Wall Street, the CIA and the U.S. corporate media got — for them — an unpleasant blow on Oct. 15 in Venezuela. The Venezuelan workers and farmers who support the Socialist Party government of President Nicolás Maduro voted that party into governmental office in 17 of the 23 states — with one still too close to call.

In the total vote, Maduro’s PSUV (United Socialist Party of Venezuela) came up with 54 percent. This is a strong reversal from the December 2015 parliamentary vote that gave the opposition — the pro-imperialist opposition — the majority in the legislature. That result threatened Chavista rule in the country.

Since that vote, U.S. imperialism, with the support of the Spanish state and other NATO powers, has stepped up its efforts to strangle Venezuela economically while sabotaging it and supporting violence by the opposition.

The Chavista government hung on and has now come out on top in two elections. First was the success of the elections to the Participant Assembly on July 30, which connected the masses in the country with the opportunity to influence changes in the governmental system. Next were these regional elections, which saw over 61 percent participation and brought the Chavistas a clear majority.

Despite these good results for the revolutionary movement in Venezuela, there is still a threat from U.S. imperialism and its regional client regimes. Three of the Venezuelan states on the Colombian border were won by the opposition, known

as the MUD (Democratic Unity Roundtable). Colombia is the South American regime most tightly allied with imperialism and most determined to oust the Maduro government.

Here in the U.S., we have to assume that the corporate media will repeat the lies of the Republicans and Democrats maligning the legitimacy of the vote.

But there is an important difference in voting in Venezuela and voting in the U.S. The Venezuelan Chavista government encourages the participation of youth, women and poor voters and those from formerly oppressed sections of the population. The U.S. and its component states make it difficult for Black and Latinx people to register and vote, and don’t even give time off for workers to vote. All incarcerated people in the U.S. are kept away from voting, and many prisoners are denied the right to vote even after they are freed. Meanwhile, the U.S. electoral college and senatorial system biases voting toward rural and wealthier areas.

So any slander against Venezuelan voting from U.S. politicians is just that — hypocritical slander.

After two straight electoral triumphs for Chavism, Venezuelans can be encouraged. So can those of us in the U.S. who support sovereignty for that South American country and who look forward to progress toward socialism. But we must stay on guard, ready to mobilize to prevent further interference from the U.S. against the Venezuelan people and the government they choose. □

Puerto Rico faces genocide

Continued from page 9

provide three times as much power, 150 MW, at a much lower cost.

U.S. refuses aid from Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico

Another criminal action has been the refusal of the government to accept the services of the American Public Power Association based in Washington, D.C. An Oct. 6 article posted on eenews.net reports the APPA said: “Instead of activating a mutual aid arrangement that might have speeded up recovery time, the utility turned to Whitefish Energy Holdings, a small contractor based in Montana, to coordinate outside help. The utility has given no explanation for that decision.”

At the same time, the U.S. has refused aid offered by Cuba, Venezuela and Mexico. Mexico’s SME, the union of electrical workers who have fraternal ties to UTIER, had offered a brigade of workers. Cuba offered a mobile hospital staffed with 35 doctors and another brigade of electrical workers. Venezuela offered a ship loaded with much needed diesel. The colonial ruler rejected all these offers.

In the meantime, the “help” from the U.S., the infamous Federal Emergency Management Agency, the military, police and contractors, is not providing what is needed to the poorest people located at remote places in the islands.

Due to the lack of communication, in-

cluding TV, radio and internet, the majority of the people in Puerto Rico have no knowledge of what is happening beyond their neighborhood. Some suspect that the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments have purposely delayed any solution to improve communication so they can impose rule changes that otherwise would have been unacceptable and protested by the people and the progressive organizations.

One of these changes is that the governor issued an executive order suspending all collective bargaining contracts until Oct. 28. He gave no reason!

FEMA, ‘aid’ personnel play while Puerto Ricans suffer

Rosa Clemente, a Boricua community organizer, journalist and hip-hop performer living in New York City, went to Puerto Rico to cover the situation, to make sure that a progressive Boricua sent reports from the island.

On Oct. 15, Clemente went to the luxurious Sheraton Hotel across from the Convention Center where the government set up the Command Center, to record and transmit from the lobby what was happening.

What she showed was outrageous: Personnel from FEMA, the U.S. military and contractors were having the time of their lives, drinking, dancing, eating wonderful food and listening to a DJ play the

Unionists support Puerto Rico recovery

By John Parker
Los Angeles

The Latino Caucus of Service Employees Union (SEIU) Local 721 held a rally and “die-in” Oct. 5 to protest the genocidal-like neglect of the U.S. government against the people of Puerto Rico who are suffering from the effects of Hurricane Maria. The suffering is compounded by the Trump administration’s sabotage of relief efforts and denial of assistance offered by other countries such as Cuba.

Lawrence Reyes, an SEIU Latino Caucus member as well as a member of the Puerto Rican Alliance, was one of the key organizers of the event. Reyes told Workers World, “We know that the reason Puerto Ricans are being neglected in the USA is because most Puerto Ricans are Indigenous, Black or Brown and also because they are subjects of U.S. colonialism. So, as a result they are not respected, have no economic sovereignty and have been blocked by the Jones Act.”

Reyes pointed out the cost of U.S. citizenship: “Due to the Foraker Act the



PHOTO: SEIU LOCAL 72

Puerto Rican people had to fight in World War I and all the subsequent wars that the U.S. empire has started. In other words, that act allowed the Puerto Rican people to become citizens, then cannon fodder in their wars.”

Like many progressive people and organizations that have held protests and given aid in solidarity, SEIU and other unions were quick to respond to the recovery effort. “The SEIU Latino Caucus International Conference got together in New York City on Sept. 28,” said Reyes, “and representation from Puerto Rico was not there because of the disaster of Hurricane Maria. All the locals that were represented there raised \$100,000 in 15 minutes for disaster relief, with other unions donating as well. It was an international effort.” □

latest musical hits. While people starved in the mountains, died of thirst and lack of care, struggled to repair what little remained of their houses, the people allegedly sent to help them were instead frolicking in an air-conditioned hotel.

While this article has focused on electricity, we must at least mention the severity of other problems.

In terms of health, the possibility of water-borne and mosquito-borne illnesses is a reality. Already people have died from leptospirosis, an otherwise benign infection caused by mice and other animals’ urine. Massive flooding where animal carcasses abound, together with the lack of clean water for proper hygiene, has created this latest health concern.

The U.S. government sent a “floating hospital,” the USS Comfort, with 900 personnel and sophisticated health machinery and surgical facilities. It can see 1,000 patients a day. But since Oct. 3, when it arrived off the coast of San Juan, fewer than 100 patients have been seen.

Patients must first be seen in the Rio Piedras Medical Center, where they wait for hours — or days — to be referred to the ship and cared for there.

Bureaucracy also extends to the “aid” from FEMA. In a Spanish-speaking country, it is required that a person fill out a long application in English. FEMA says people can apply by internet or phone. Of course, both internet and phone are almost nonexistent!

Another crime we must mention is the toxic water lying in “superfund” sites, that is, heavily polluted water. According to a CNN report, this water is being distributed to the people.

It has been 119 years since the United States invasion of Puerto Rico. Its exploitation has destroyed the country’s means of self-sustainment, its economy. It has isolated Puerto Rico from the world, imposing a foreign monetary system and the most expensive shipping as its exclusive way of trading.

After poisoning the water, air and soil with military bombing tests and pharmaceutical and petrochemical factories, after the repression of the Puerto Rican independence movement, after the forced

sterilization of women, after the forced migration and separation of families — after these and many more crimes, the United States has an obligation to the Puerto Rican people. It is not charity, not even “aid.” It is payback! It is REPARATIONS!

Cancel the odious debt!

Open the borders to international solidarity!

Repeal the Jones and PROMESA laws!

Military and FEMA out of Puerto Rico!

Real help and assistance to the people of Puerto Rico!

Free Puerto Rico!

Power to the people!



‘¡A cancelar la injusta deuda!’

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sas, no hay agua para bañarse o descargar los inodoros. El 30 de septiembre, FEMA informó que solo el 45 por ciento de las personas tienen acceso a agua limpia y potable en sus hogares.

Estrangulamiento por bancos de EUA

En mayo, Puerto Rico, que tiene una economía de \$103 mil millones, se declaró en quiebra. Desde entonces ha tratado de reestructurar más de \$70 mil millones en deudas. Las finanzas de la isla actualmente están controladas por una junta federal, que ha dispuesto solo \$1 mil millones para alivio.

Justo antes de que María atacara, un terrible plan de austeridad para Puerto Rico, que hundiría a muchas más personas en la pobreza, fue impuesto al pueblo. Parte de esto incluye la privatización de entidades estatales como la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica de PR, especialmente su capacidad generatriz, que produce las mayores ganancias. (workers.org, 4 de octubre)

Ciertas políticas de EUA han contribuido al deterioro económico de Puer-

PART 2

100th anniversary of October Revolution

Social gains in early years of Soviet power

By Deirdre Griswold

As we described in the first article in this series, the workers' revolution that started in Russia in 1917 and spread to all the nationalities brutally oppressed by the czarist empire took place in one of the most underdeveloped countries of Europe, only recently emerged from feudalism. The majority of the people were impoverished peasants, and few could even read or write.

Nevertheless, it was a revolution that reflected the rise on a world scale of a working class capable of taking power into its own hands in order to socialize the means of production — to use them not for private profit but to liberate the people from want and oppression.

From its very beginnings, the revolutionary government initiated social advances far beyond anything achieved in the capitalist West.

Take the question of the status of women.

Just six weeks after the revolution, on Dec. 19, 1917, the church's control over marriage, rooted in the patriarchy, was replaced by civil marriage. Divorce was made very simple. If there was mutual consent by both spouses, a divorce was immediately granted. If just one spouse requested a divorce, there was a brief court hearing. No grounds were needed, no contest, no evidence or witnesses. Soviet Russia became the only country in the world with full freedom of divorce.

Within a year of the revolution, a marriage code was produced that asserted the complete equality of rights between spouses as well as between legitimate and "illegitimate" children.

When two people marry, which must change their last name? The Code of Oct. 17, 1918, stated: "Married persons use a common surname. ... On the registration of marriage they may choose whether they will adopt the husband's (bridegroom's) or wife's (bride's) surname or their joint surnames."

Lenin in 1919 famously summed up what the Bolsheviks had achieved and what still had to be done:

"We actually razed to the ground the infamous laws placing women in a position of inequality, restricting divorce and surrounding it with disgusting formalities, denying recognition to children born out of wedlock, enforcing a search for their fathers, etc., laws numerous survivors of which, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, are to be found in all civilized countries. We have a thousand times the right to be proud of what we have done in this field.

"But the more thoroughly we clear the ground of the lumber of the old bourgeois laws and institutions, the more we realize that we have only cleared to build on, but we are not yet building.

"Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating women, she continues to be a domestic slave, because petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery, and she wastes her labor on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real emancipation of women, real communism, will begin where and when an all-out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the state power) against this petty house-keeping, or rather when its wholesale transformation into a large-scale socialist economy begins."

What the revolutionaries envisioned was a proliferation of communal laundries, kitchens, nurseries, kindergartens and so on that would free women from household drudgery.

Now, a century later, all kinds of labor-saving devices exist in developed countries to lighten the burden of housework that was so onerous in Lenin's time. Nevertheless, women still have the major responsibility for this work — even when they have also become wage earners on a level close to that of men. In the United States, women make up 47 percent of the total workforce, yet most women workers with families are the primary caregivers in raising children and doing the housework.

First country to legalize abortion

In November 1920, Soviet Russia became the first country in the world to legalize abortion. Abortions were already being performed, of course, but in secret, often in unsanitary conditions and at a steep price. To protect the health of women, the decree stipulated that the operations "be performed freely and without any charge in Soviet hospitals, where conditions are assured of minimizing the harm of the operation."

Despite great medical advances, we in the U.S. are still fighting for the right to control when and if we have children. Capitalist politicians — most of them men — are constantly finding ways to restrict our access to contraception and abortion.

It took many years to build up the Soviet economy to a level where these services were available to all women. But then they suffered a terrible setback after Nazi Germany, on June 22, 1941, invaded the Soviet Union with 4.5 million soldiers



PHOTO: MARXISM.COM

In 1918, women joined the 'Red Sisters' militias to defend the new Soviet republic.

along an 1,800-mile front in Operation Barbarossa.

Yet despite the massive destruction and death at the hands of fascist-led German imperialism in World War II, followed by the staggering costs imposed by the Cold War, the social position of women in the USSR continued to outstrip that in the capitalist countries.

Dorothy Ballan, one of the founders of Workers World Party, wrote the book "Feminism and Marxism" in 1971. She cited reports in the New York Times and other U.S. papers showing that 79 percent of the doctors in the USSR at that time were women.

Wrote Ballan, "More than 30 percent of the engineers are women, 52 percent are head doctors or heads of health agencies; 33 percent of collective farm management jobs are held by women. All professions are open to her; women make up 47 percent of the scientists. Half the population of the universities are women. There are also women bus drivers, subway conductors, and women are in virtually every field of work. There is equal pay for equal work. In case of pregnancy, a woman receives two months paid vacation before delivery and another two months after delivery. Working women may take advantage of widespread nurseries and kindergartens and daycare centers. Abortion is legal at any age and virtually free of charge."

Abolition of anti-gay laws

The young Soviet Russia, which had established the most progressive laws and practices in the world regarding liberation of women, also took a stand against the oppression of lesbian and gay people.

Bob McCubbin, in his book "The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression" first published in 1976, wrote: "It took less than two months for the Bolshevik government in Russia to take action against lesbian and gay oppression. And it is important to note that they did so even though there was no gay movement in Russia as there was in Germany. In December of 1917 the czarist anti-homosexual law was removed from the Russian penal code.

"As paraphrased by Wilhelm Reich in 'The Sexual Revolution,' the Bolsheviks' position was that the problem of homosexuality was exclusively a scientific one. They believed that homosexuality harmed no one and that it was wrong to punish people for their sexual orientation. The Bolsheviks also expressed the idea that it was necessary to take down the walls that separated gay people from the rest of society. Such a revolutionary proposal was entirely in keeping with their defiant rejection of bourgeois atti-

tudes and practices in every area of social concern. ...

"A pamphlet called 'The Sexual Revolution in Russia' by the director of the Russian Institute of Social Hygiene, first published in 1923, stated: 'Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality — Soviet legislation treats these as exactly the same as so-called "natural" intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters. Only when there is use of force or duress, as in general when there

is an injury or encroachment upon the rights of another person, is there a question of a criminal prosecution.'"

McCubbin's book can be read online at workers.org/books.

Even as the Bolsheviks were making these great strides in defying bourgeois convention and eliminating the oppressive laws imposed under czarism, the material conditions for the people were devastating.

The first world war, in which so many had died, was followed by a civil war and an invasion by 14 imperialist countries, including the U.S., that tried to strangle the revolution in its infancy.

Over two years the imperialists poured some 200,000 soldiers into an attempt to destroy the revolution. But the newly organized Red Army, with support from many hastily organized local militias, was able to beat back the invaders and home-grown counter-revolutionaries.

Nevertheless, in 1920 the Soviet republics emerged from the civil war and imperialist intervention in a state of economic collapse unparalleled in history. Industrial production was about a fifth of the 1914 level and the population had shrunk. Between the end of 1918 and the end of 1920, war, epidemics, famine and cold killed 9 million people in Russia.

All this produced serious setbacks in the agenda for realizing social progress, including for women's liberation and on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights. For a more detailed look at these issues, see Leslie Feinberg's "Progress and regression: Sex and gender in 1930s USSR." (workers.org/lavender-red)

But despite the early hardships and setbacks, the first workers' state survived. It eventually was able to recover enough to begin a plan for economic growth.

By the 1930s, when world capitalism was in a spectacular decline after the stock market crash of 1929, the superiority of socialist planning over capitalist anarchy of production was obvious, and skilled workers from around the world were attracted to the USSR. In Western Europe and the U.S., factories closed down and farmers lost their land to the banks in the depths of the Great Depression. At the same time, the Soviet Union was able to industrialize at a speed never seen before.

When the USSR was finally overturned in 1991, all the old reactionary features of capitalism resurfaced. The counter-revolution devastated the working class, taking its greatest toll on women and LGBTQ people, as well as on the many nationalities that had been conquered by the Russian czarist regime and held as semicolonies before the revolution.

Next: Impact of dire material conditions on the party and state.

uda de Puerto Rico!

to Rico. Una de ellas es la Ley Jones, ley anticuada que obliga a PR pagar casi el doble de los bienes [llevados por barco] desde EUA a través de diversas tarifas e impuestos. La ley estipula que cualquier mercancía enviada de un puerto de EUA a otro debe ser en barcos operados y contruidos por EUA.

Otras islas del Caribe atraviesan crisis similares luego de ser azotadas por los huracanes María e Irma. La isla de Barbuda ha sido abandonada por completo, y los residentes aún no pueden regresar a casa. Veintisiete personas murieron en Dominica. (vox.com, 3 de octubre)

El noventa por ciento de las/os 100.000 residentes de las Islas Vírgenes de EUA carecen de electricidad y agua potable. El aeropuerto y el único hospital quedaron seriamente dañados.

En Puerto Rico, el gobernador Ricardo Rosselló emitió una moratoria sobre los pagos de alquiler de vivienda pública hasta enero de 2018. Sin embargo, una vocera de la Agencia Territorial de Manejo de Emergencias de las Islas Vírgenes dijo que no existía tal acuerdo allá. (theguardian.com, 8 de octubre) □



FOTO: HEDGECLIPPER

Después de destrucción por huracán: ‘¡A cancelar la injusta deuda de Puerto Rico!’

Por **Jill White**
Orlando, Fla.

Decenas de puertorriqueñas/os en Orlando, cuyas familias sufren en la isla después del huracán María, se reunieron el 4 de octubre con aliados comunitarios frente a Merrill Lynch, uno de los prestamistas de la isla, para exigir ayuda inmediata y suficiente para aliviar y reconstruir a Puerto Rico.

También pidieron al Congreso que cancele la deuda de la isla de \$72 mil millones para que las/os puertorriqueños puedan concentrarse en reconstruir sus comunidades en lugar de tener que pagar primero los fondos buitres.

La protesta, que incluyó un momento de silencio para las personas que perecieron por el huracán, fue parte de un día nacional de acción en 13 ciudades de EUA: Boston, Chicago, Los Ángeles, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Nueva York, Filadelfia, Seattle; Hartford, Conn. ; Newark, N.J. ; Oakland, California; Orlando, Fla. ; y Washington, D.C.

“Mientras las familias luchan por sobrevivir, los de los fondos buitres han seguido acudiendo a los tribunales para asegurarse de que les paguen”, dijo Rubén Sánchez, un trabajador jubilado del sindicato SEIU. “Las/os puertorriqueños ya han estado sufriendo durante décadas, primero por una larga recesión y luego por los recortes del servicio público que acompañaron a la crisis de la deuda. Eso dejó a la isla especialmente vulnerable a una tormenta como María. Es hora de reconocer que la deuda es impagable”.

La manifestación fue iniciada por Vamos4PR, una red de organizaciones

de EUA que incluye a SEIU y otros que apoyan la lucha por una “economía justa para todas/os los puertorriqueños”. (Vamos4pr.org)

Solidaridad estimula la acción

En todo el país y en todo el mundo, la devastación en Puerto Rico y la falta de respuesta del gobierno [de EUA] están provocando que las/os trabajadores [en EUA] tomen acción. Los sindicatos están recolectando fondos y enviando a miembros para que ayuden. Los Teamsters y AFL-CIO están trabajando juntos para reclutar camioneros que viajen a Puerto Rico para ayudar a distribuir una reserva de suministros de ayuda. (cnn.com, 30 de septiembre)

La AFL-CIO envió un grupo de 300 miembros a Puerto Rico, con más de 17 toneladas de suministros de ayuda, en un avión fletado el 4 de octubre para ayudar en los esfuerzos de recuperación. El grupo, que ha ofrecido voluntariamente dos semanas de su propio tiempo, incluye enfermeras, otros profesionales de la salud, trabajadores de transporte y construcción, electricistas, operadores de equipos pesados y otros trabajadores calificados, que representan a 20 sindicatos de 17 estados. La federación laboral declaró: “Nuestros hermanos y hermanas de la Unión permanecen en crisis en Puerto Rico y el Caribe. Tantas familias trabajadoras han perdido sus hogares, sus lugares de trabajo y están luchando por sobrevivir. En el movimiento laboral, la solidaridad es nuestra fuerza “. (Alfcio.org, 4 de octubre)

Cuba, devastada por el huracán Irma, ofreció ayuda médica, pero no está claro

si los profesionales de la salud cubana han podido llegar a la isla.

Un Trump pomposo y racista finalmente visita

Puerto Rico es una colonia moderna de EUA, cuyos 3,4 millones de residentes, a pesar de ser ciudadanas/os estadounidenses, experimentan diariamente el racismo más virulento y la injusticia económica. Esto fue evidente durante la visita de Trump a la isla devastada por el huracán el 3 de octubre.

En declaraciones a periodistas durante una visita tardía después de dos fines de semana consecutivos dedicados al golf, Donald Trump ofreció estas palabras: “Odio decirte, Puerto Rico, pero han dejado nuestro presupuesto un poco fuera de control”.

Desenmascarando aún más su desprecio por el pueblo puertorriqueño, fue visto en la televisión de todo el mundo tirando rollos de toallas de papel a las/os que habían sido seleccionados para saludarlo, burlándose de la grave necesidad de un importante esfuerzo de socorro por el gobierno de EUA. Él ridículamente elogió sus esfuerzos como “exitosos”.

Carmen Yulín Cruz, alcaldesa de San Juan, rechazó la escandalosa afirmación de la secretaria de Seguridad Nacional, Elaine Duke, de que el trabajo de socorro en Puerto Rico era una “buena noticia”. Yulín Cruz dijo a CNN: “Maldita sea, esta no es una buena noticia. Esta es una historia de “personas que están muriendo”. Esta es una historia de “vida o muerte”. Este es una historia de “hay un montón de cosas en camiones que no pueden llevarse a las personas””. (29 de septiembre)

Trump usó Twitter para criticar su liderazgo y hacer afirmaciones racistas sobre el pueblo puertorriqueño. Cruz usó una camiseta que decía “NASTY” [DESGRADABLE] en respuesta a sus comentarios racistas y sexistas.

Número de muertos en aumento

Omayra Sosa Pascual, reportera del Centro de Periodismo Investigativo en San Juan, dudaba de la cifra oficial de 16 muertos del gobierno. Habló con docenas de médicos, administradores, directores de morgue y directores de funerarias y, finalmente consiguió la secretaria de seguridad pública de Puerto Rico para confirmar que ha habido docenas más de muertes de las que refleja la estadística oficial.

A Sosa Pascual se le dijo: “[Los] muertos están en las morgues de hospitales, que están repletas, y en lugares remotos donde el gobierno todavía no ha ido. En muchos casos, las familias no están conscientes de las muertes”. (Vox.com, 3 de octubre) El hermano de un amigo de esta escritora voló a la isla para buscar en las montañas a sus padres, de quienes no se ha tenido noticias.

Inicialmente, casi todos los hospitales perdieron electricidad, lo que generó emergencias. Las instalaciones que ahora funcionan con generadores tienen serios problemas debido a la falta de distribución de combustible. En estos días, casi todas las interacciones dentro de los sistemas de salud incluyen electricidad, incluyendo máquinas de hemodiálisis y ventiladores.

Sin electricidad significa que no hay electricidad para bombear agua a las ca-

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Cárceles de Pensilvania prohíben WW-MO por apoyar lucha contra supremacía blanca

Por **Joseph Piette**

Una carta del Departamento de Correcciones de Pensilvania (DOC) recibida por WW Publishers el 11 de septiembre declaró: “El número del 31 de agosto del periódico Workers World ha sido denegado a todos los presos alojados en las prisiones de Pensilvania”. Su razón: el tema contiene artículos que “Llama a la gente a unirse a la lucha contra la supremacía blanca”.

Este es la cuarta edición de WW negada a los prisioneros de Pensilvania desde la elección de Donald Trump. A principios de 2017, el DOC censuró los números 7, 12 y 13 por abogar por una huelga general global el 1 de mayo.

La página 2 de la edición del 31 de agosto citada por el DOC presentó un artículo titulado “Trumka de AFL-CIO deja el consejo de Trump: ¡nunca debería haberse unido!” El DOC parece haberse ofendido con este párrafo: “La pregunta más grande para los sindicatos es, por supuesto, la conducta de Trumka. ¿Cómo podría justificarse tomar lugar en este horrible consejo, sabiendo todo sobre la

retórica intolerante de Trump y la presencia de supremacistas blancos en el gabinete”? (Workers.org, Aug. 29)

El artículo de la página 7 también citado era titulado “Una declaración de la rama Durham de Workers World Party: Sobre el derribo de la estatua confederada”. En la parte superior de la página 11 estaba “BULLETIN: Más arrestos de Durham - Llame al sheriff”. (workers.org, Aug. 29)

Cada periódico de EUA ha publicado artículos este verano pasado sobre la creciente lucha contra la supremacía blanca. Los prisioneros tienen tanto derecho a leer WW-MO como cualquier otro periódico o revista, especialmente porque los artículos de WW-MO son escritos por activistas que desempeñan papeles principales en ese dinámico movimiento.

DOC obligado a dar marcha atrás después de una campaña pública

WW Publishers presentó una apelación el 26 de septiembre, exigiendo que el DOC cese esta práctica inconstitucional para futuras ediciones; que se le dé a cada prisionera/o las copias que le fueron denegadas; y, para hacer que cada pri-

sionera/o cuyos derechos constitucionales fueron denegados reciba \$50 por cada edición ilegalmente denegada.

En lugar de limitar la respuesta a una carta de apelación, WW-MO compartió ampliamente esta carta del DOC en las redes sociales para que el público pudiera ver las actitudes de supremacía blanca de la administración de la prisión en sus propias palabras. Los seres queridos tras las rejas en Pensilvania y en cada estado están sujetos a esas actitudes y acciones racistas todos los días.

WW-MO instó a las/os lectores y activistas a enviar quejas al Departamento de Correcciones, 1920 Technology Parkway, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050; 717-728-2573. Reporteras/os de RT, el periódico The Guardian, Newsweek y otros medios contactaron a WW-MO para obtener confirmación y comentarios. Muchas/os expresaron su incredulidad inicial de que el USDOC fuera tan descarado en su apoyo a la supremacía blanca hasta que confirmaron que la carta era legítima.

El miembro del Partido WW-MO Mike Wilson, fue entrevistado en el programa “Radio Courtroom” de Michael Coard

en WURD 96.1-FM, una importante estación de radio popular en la comunidad negra de Filadelfia.

Para el 28 de septiembre, el DOC emitió una respuesta por escrito llamando a su propia carta del 11 de septiembre “una razón mal escrita para la negación”. Contrariamente a la carta anterior recibida por WW-MO, la nueva declaración afirmó que era “una negación de una institución correccional estatal a UN recluso”.

Después de criticar su propia razón por su negativa como “groseramente inexacta”, el DOC reaccionó ante una amplia condena pública, alegando que “no tolera el racismo en ninguna forma y apoya las políticas de igualdad”.

Workers World-MO aún no ha recibido una carta de respuesta oficial del DOC.

Cerca de 300 prisioneras/os en Pensilvania tienen suscripciones gratuitas a WW-MO, cuya cabecera en la portada contiene las palabras: “¡Trabajadores y pueblos oprimidos del mundo uníos!” Se alienta a las/os lectores que deseen apoyar más suscripciones gratuitas a prisioneros a donar a través de patreon.com/wwp. □