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Invigorating and historic victory

UChicago grad workers win union

By Workers World Chicago bureau

In a decisive and historic victory in the struggle for graduate workers at private universities across the United States, the graduate workers at the University of Chicago voted overwhelmingly on Oct. 17-18 to form a union. Cast were 1,103 yes ballots and 479 opposed.

In August 2016, the National Labor Relations Board overturned its 2004 ruling that graduate students at private universities are not statutory employees. In the previous decision, the petition of graduate workers at Brown University to affiliate with the United Auto Workers was rejected, thanks in large part to union-busting efforts of Brown's then-provost and current UChicago President Robert Zimmer.

Due to their victory, UChicago graduate employees will be represented by Graduate Students United, which is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Professors. Like their colleagues at New York University and Yale, the GSU had developed a longterm organizing presence on campus, even when the hope for official recognition as a union was dim.

GSU organizing for past decade

GSU was founded in 2007 after the university implemented a funding initiative that promised better financial support and working conditions to incoming students, without making any changes to that of existing students. Through extensive research, GSU organizers found that graduate student labor made up a third of teaching on campus — a substantially higher figure than the university boasted in its undergraduate recruitment literature.

GSU soon developed a democratic organizing structure and was a driving force in campus labor struggles, fighting for better financial support and wages, resources for graduate student parents and reductions in fees. In the absence of GSU's legal union recognition, the university administration itself has taken credit for many of these concessions that would have been impossible without grassroots organizing.

Solidarity work has also been an important part of GSU's campus presence, with members serving as key organizers in struggles against the university's private police force as well as in the successful fight to reopen the UChicago Hospital's Level 1 adult trauma center to serve the South Side of Chicago.

The UChicago administration deployed a largely legal strategy in their anti-union efforts. UChicago's legal counsel on Sept. 22 filed for both a stay of the election, in an attempt to prevent graduate workers from voting together, and a review of the election order. The review sought to overturn the regional labor director's decision for the election to proceed, by appealing to the NLRB where two Trump appointees have just been confirmed. The stay was not granted, and

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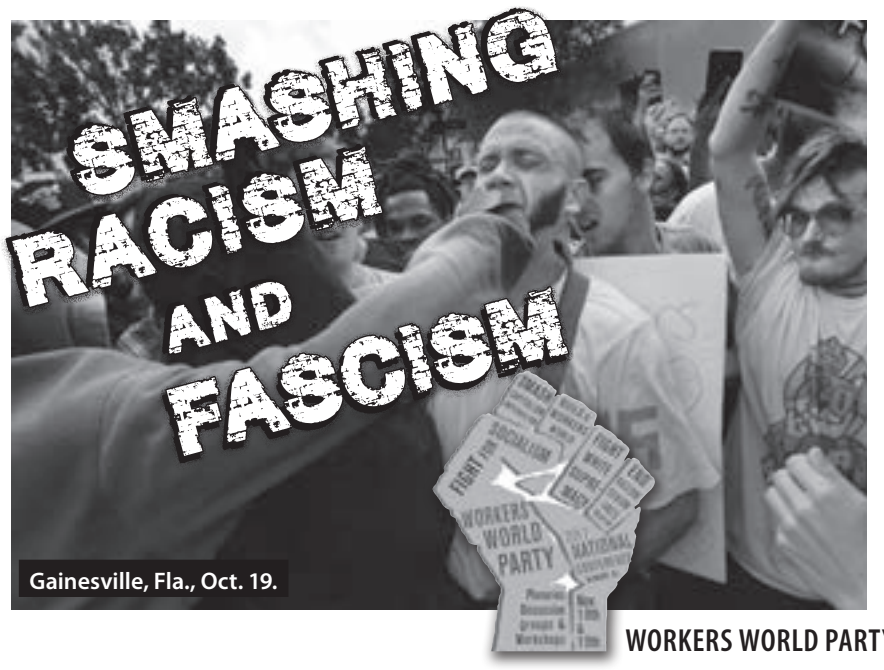
PHOTO: GRADUATE STUDENT UNION, UCHICAGO

UChicago graduate students as they began their victorious vote, Oct. 17.



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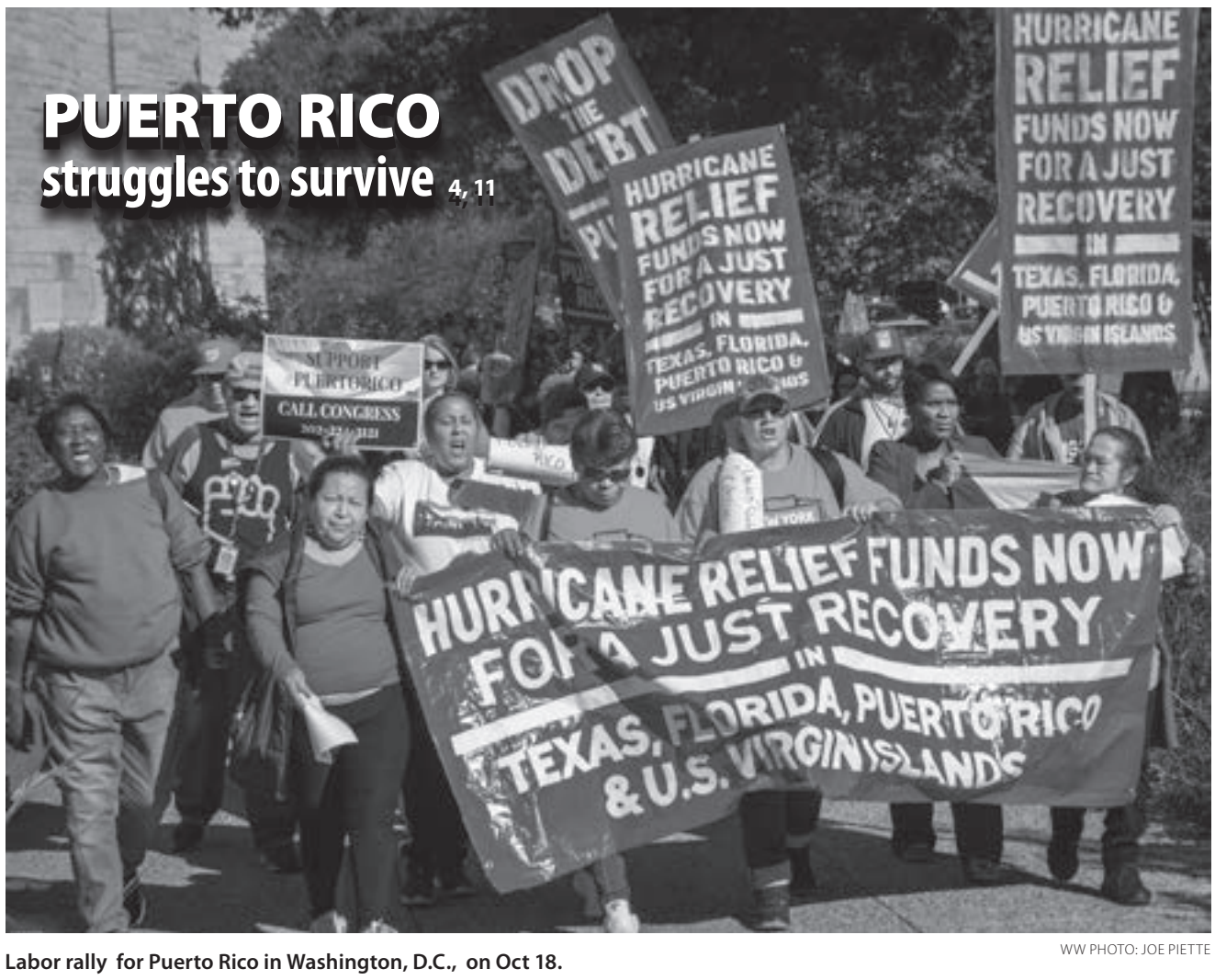

Labor rally for Puerto Rico in Washington, D.C., on Oct 18.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

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Worker exploitation and the mental health crisis

By Mike Kuhlenbeck

Workers are facing a mental health crisis stemming from exploitation at the hands of the capitalist system.

Working long hours for meager pay and mistreatment at the hands of bosses can lead to increased risks of anxiety, depression and high suicide rates for workers, according to recent mental health studies.

The study "Workplace Wellness Report: Mind the Workplace," published by Mental Health America (MHA), measured "workplace stress levels and overall mental health" for 17,000 workers surveyed over a two-year period. It concluded that workplace stress increases the risk of mental impairment.

According to the MHA report, workers who experience the heaviest toll on mental health are in the industries of manufacturing, retail, and food and beverage. These professions fall under the categories of workers who are underpaid, underappreciated and overworked.

The University of Michigan Comprehensive Depression Center highlights the following workplace stressors: job strain, work-life interference, workplace discrimination and harassment, and job insecurity.

Three Stanford University scholars concluded in a 2015 study that work injustice and worker-family conflict have the same impact on health as doing shift work and putting in long hours. Researchers Jeffrey Pfeffer, Stefanos Zenios and Joel Goh also concluded that "the stressor with the biggest impact overall is lack of health insurance. It ranks high in both increasing mortality and health care costs."

Additionally, "Another big driver of early death is economic insecurity, captured in part by unemployment, layoffs and low job control." (Stanford Graduate School of Business)

Job insecurity is one of the biggest stress factors for workers. The fear of unemployment keeps many people up at night, as they wonder how they will survive in today's cut-throat economy. As noted by the American Psychological Association, "Adding to the pressures that workers face are new bosses, computer surveillance of production, fewer health and retirement benefits, and the feeling they have to work longer and harder just to maintain their current economic status."

Reports such as the MHA report are useful, but they often suffer from a fatal flaw. Often the so-called "solutions" put forward boil down to encouraging employers to boost the self-esteem and confidence of the workers — rather than offer concrete security, such as higher wages or health insurance. These researchers overlook or ignore the exploitative nature of capitalism, for it is the nature of this system to force workers to sell their labor-power to the lowest bidder.

Employers maximize their profits by cutting labor costs. They achieve this by downsizing, offshoring and automation. Such concerns become a burden and mental health is put at risk.

As Workers World contributing editor Fred Goldstein writes in his important 2008 book "Low-Wage Capitalism": "Capitalism, the system of production for profit instead of human need, is incompatible with such notions as making the health and well-being of those who produce all the wealth and perform all the services the priority of social and economic organization."

Workers can benefit in many ways from the fight for a living wage and the right to a union, such as the Fight for $15 movement launched in recent years. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) has stated that if workers organize unions they can secure wage increases, access to health care, improved workplace safety and better hours. ("How today's unions help working people," Aug. 24)

Those who produce the wealth should not have to pay for it by sacrificing their mental and physical well-being. In order to confront this crisis, workers must confront the very system that is endangering their lives. ☐

CAPITALISM AT A DEAD END
Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

EL CAPITALISMO EN UN CALLENJON SIN SALIDA

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

Available at major online bookstores.

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

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Kris Balderas Hamel, Monica Moorehead, Minnie Bruce Pratt; Web Editor Gary Wilson

Production & Design Editors: Coordinator Lal Roohk; Andy Katz, Cheryl LaBash

Copyediting and Proofreading: Sue Davis, Bob McCubbin, Jeff Sorel

Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe, Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Fred Goldstein, Martha Grevatt, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Terri Kay, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, John Parker, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obero: Redactora Berta Joubert-Ceci; Andrea Bañuelos, Alberto García, Teresa Gutierrez, Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis

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Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, joblessness and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

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

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you: workers.org/wwp

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

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

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

Bay Area
1305 Franklin St. #411
Oakland, CA 94612
510.600.5800
bayarea@workers.org

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

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

Chicago
312.630.2305
chicago@workers.org

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

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
313.459.0777
detroit@workers.org

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

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

Huntington, W. Va.
huntingtonwv@workers.org

Indiana
Indiana@workers.org

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

Madison
Madison@Workers.org

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org

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

Pittsburgh
pittsburgh@workers.org

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

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

Rockford, Ill.
rockford@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
SLC@Workers.org

San Antonio, Texas
SanAntonioWWP@workers.org

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

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org

Virginia
Virginia@workers.org

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300
Washington, DC 20037
dc@workers.org

Veterans Administration workers demand: ‘Fill the job vacancies!’

By WW Staff

Members of the American Federation of Government Employees held a “Fully Staff The VA” informational picket at the Salem, Va., Veterans Administration hospital on Oct. 21. A rainbow of labor and community supporters, including members of the Roanoke Peoples’ Power Network, Southern Workers Assembly, Virginia AFL-CIO and Workers World Party, joined the picket line.

AFGE members across the United States are fighting back against the Trump administration’s union-busting austerity attacks on federal workers, like those who work at VA hospitals. Currently there are 49,000 job vacancies at VA hospitals in the U.S., many for doctors, nurses, mental health professionals and other essential caregivers. Meanwhile, with a $700 billion Pentagon budget recently passed by Congress, the banks continue to be bailed out by the federal government and corporations receive billions in tax breaks and receive sweetheart Pentagon contracts.

Speakers in Salem described how workers at the VA are confronting massive budget cuts, attrition, low wages and other austerity attacks — with the worst effects on workers of color and women. These conditions are having a horrendous effect on patient care at VA hospitals nationwide.

But AFGE members aren’t taking these attacks lying down. Numerous AFGE protests in a variety of forms are taking place in Washington, D.C., and across the country and both workers and patients are speaking out and taking action.

For more information on upcoming events: @AFGENational, afge.org and facebook.com/AFGEunion. The AFGE is also asking supporters to contact Congress at 1-833-480-1637 to demand that VA staff vacancies be filled. □

WW PHOTO

Invigorating and historic victory

UChicago grad workers win union

Continued from page 1

the review has yet to be heard.

UChicago administration and President Zimmer have made it clear that they will continue this legal route in an attempt to delegitimize and negate the election results. Provost Daniel Diermeier announced this plan in an email to graduate workers and faculty on Oct. 19. UChicago will join several other universities calling on the NLRB to reverse the August 2016 decision. The administration has further emphasized its legal strategy by hiring Proskauer Rose, the same legal team that fought graduate worker unionization at Cornell, Duke and Columbia universities.

Battling anti-union rhetoric

In a further attempt to undermine graduate workers, the administration has framed anti-union messaging as neutral intellectual debate. Their depiction of the union as a third-party entity, interested only in collecting dues at the expense of academic integrity, is a common thread in anti-union rhetoric throughout the U.S.

The administration has also leaned on faculty, many of whom are insecure in their own employment, to move graduate workers away from voting “yes” through one-on-one lobbying and department-wide emails. Representatives of the university have spoken at length in different forums about the unique and indispensable relationships between graduate workers and their faculty mentors. They depict a union as an interfering presence that would fundamentally change those relationships, while using faculty as their mouthpiece for this messaging.

The graduate workers’ win at UChicago is likely to have an invigorating effect on similar campaigns across the country. While the win is significant, so too will be the struggle to bring the administration to the bargaining table. No graduate workers on a private campus have bargained for or ratified their first contract yet, even though labor law requires administrations to come to the table in good faith. UChicago graduate workers have a fight ahead of them, but they also have considerable momentum from their victory. □

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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.

Linda Backiel, a lawyer living in San Juan who is a longtime advocate for Puerto Rican independence, is a guest contributor to WW.

From San Juan

Puerto Ricans organize themselves to revive

By Linda Backiel
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Damages caused by hurricanes Irma and Maria have already reached $90 billion — surpassing the $74 billion "debt" imposed on Puerto Rico by the rapacious banks.

Faced with this dire situation, the Fiscal Control Board has asked the federal judge in charge of the Puerto Rican government's bankruptcy process to prevent vulture funds and other bondholders from claiming for themselves the emergency funds that the U.S. government has authorized to alleviate the humanitarian disaster.

Puerto Rico is on the verge of a health crisis, with outbreaks of dengue fever, chikungunya, zika, leptospirosis, conjunctivitis, scabies and other diseases that spread due to rain, heat, lack of clean drinking water and water contaminated with debris and live and dead animals.

After almost a month since Maria hit the island, according to Puerto Rican government figures, barely 8 percent of its roads are open and only 17 percent of Electric Energy Authority (AEE) customers have power. This figure includes government agencies, hospitals and businesses. The truth is that very few houses have electricity, and less than 60 percent of the population has access to telecommunications.

The lack of relevant information and transparency is making people desperate. If the priority is to save lives, why, of the 79 open hospitals, do only 45 have power from the AEE with the others dependent on generators? Who determines the priorities? When ordinary people, waiting all day in the sun to receive a generator for their home, heard that AEE had given priority to energizing "The Mall of San Juan," a luxury mall built on the ruins of a demolished public residential building, they were on the edge of rebellion.

Puerto Rico is experiencing a massive exodus

Some 5,000 Puerto Ricans leave the country daily. No one knows how many will return or how long the exodus will last. Soon, the estimated figure of 5 million in the United States and 3.6 million in Puerto Rico will have to be revised.

Economists estimate that it will take 5 to 10 years to see any economic recovery.

The governor keeps announcing grandiose plans and astronomical amounts that he claims have been granted or expended by U.S. personnel and various so-called relief entities. But there is little progress to be seen on the ground.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Coast Guard and the federal departments of the Treasury, Transportation, Health and Human Services and the Food and Drug Administration and Internal Revenue Service make all decisions about containers arriving at ports, where victims are to be relocated and other essential matters. But deliveries of containers with aid supplies and goods to supply markets and shops are consistently delayed.

There is a severe scarcity of generators, batteries, candles, water, fresh fruits and vegetables, hot food and water to cook rice. The 21 municipalities where coffee is produced will not see any production for three years — the time it will take to plant thousands of trees and harvest the first crop.

Puerto Rico's Finance Department (Hacienda) was left without funds and without its computer system. The judicial branch, the least powerful branch of government, began to function partially this week. The cases scheduled for October will not be heard until December.

According to an Oct. 16 article in El Nuevo Día, a quarter-million homes were damaged and some 10 percent of the population was left homeless. Some families still live in the only room in their house that was not destroyed.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency offers financial help to rebuild homes, but only to those who have title of ownership or receive the government's permission. This disqualifies many who, driven by necessity and lack of affordable housing, occupied properties abandoned by the government or the prior owner.

There are 2,500 public housing units available, but by the time Maria arrived the waiting list was already 25,000 people.

Over 18,000 vacant homes that were repossessed by banks should be available. But only 6,000 are certifiably eligible, while 12,000 do not meet established requirements. There are also 2,000 unsold new homes that are not being used to house the homeless.

There are no cables left to repair the electricity, telephone, cable and internet lines that Maria collapsed. FEMA blames the mayors who send out cleaning brigades to clear the roads and collect debris. FEMA wants the workers to leave the cables aside and avoid breaking them so they can be fastened to others that are also broken.

But workers do not open roads or collect debris on foot; they ride machines that do not allow them to distinguish between thin cables and branches of fallen trees. It has been confirmed what AEE workers have denounced for years — that AEE's warehouses are empty. There are no cables, posts or other material needed to replace the system.

It is the lack of maintenance that led to the collapse of the electrical generating and transmission systems. FEMA awarded $240 million contracts to a U.S. company for repairs — one of many such contracts — but the recipients do little other than pay their employees and distribute profits in the U.S.

Still, the communities are standing strong, serving hot breakfasts and offering medical, dental and educational services to their children, thanks to volunteer community labor.

The unions have opened "regional centers of solidarity" for their members and families where they offer everything from medical services to help with requests for material assistance. Restaurant chefs are providing meals to refugees and others. Almost all musical institutions and many artists are contributing their "grains of sand" — offering concerts and serenades, including to people waiting in long lines at banks.

The past stage of a supposedly happy and satisfied Puerto Rico waiting to be exploited by tourists and speculators has collapsed. Behind the scenes there is a Puerto Rico that is organizing itself to revive, building on its native roots to develop new institutions that serve the Puerto Rican people. □

Labor unions rally for justice for Puerto Rico

Washington D.C.

Labor rallied for Puerto Rico in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 18, demanding Congress provide much-needed post-hurricane relief as well as cancellation of the island's debt incurred through Wall Street exploitation. Over 100 workers converged on the U.S. Capitol, representing Service Employees Union 32BJ, United Auto Workers, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and ACT UP Philadelphia.

After lobbying by union leaders, members with signs and banners massed inside the Dirksen Senate Office Building lobby for a group photograph. They followed up with a march to the headquarters of Housing and Urban Development and then on to the Federal Emergency Management Administration, calling for immediate hurricane relief funds for Puerto Rico as well as for Texas, Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

People-to-people aid for Puerto Rico

What follows is the text of an email from the International Action Center sent to activists around the United States.

The International Action Center is launching a people-to-people aid campaign for the ultra- devastated nation of Puerto Rico.

The IAC is collecting monetary donations to send to politically established grassroots organizations — specifically the Puerto Rico Teachers' Federation (FMPR), which is working with other unions and groups organizing working brigades throughout the island to help poor communities, teachers and students who lost everything.

Why is the IAC launching this campaign? The entire world has seen the utter destruction of the beautiful island of Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria hit the Caribbean on Sept. 20. Weeks after the hurricane hit, millions remain without food, water or shelter. Almost the entire island has no electricity. People are dying, hungry and desperate despite the fact that it is well-known that the U.S. could alleviate the situation if it really wanted to.

It will take years to repair Puerto Rico. But if the solidarity movement does not continue its work in the U.S. to demand genuine aid, the island could be rebuilt entirely for the needs of the banks and the corporations. The gentrification we see in our neighborhoods will take over the entire island.

Furthermore, the struggle against colonialism and for the independence of Puerto Rico could be completely derailed as a result of this catastrophe. We are confident, however, that the Puerto Rican people will not allow this to happen.

The IAC wants to do its part to help. We are carrying out people-to-people solidarity by sending money to organizations that have long been in the struggle to defend the people from U.S. imperialism.

Long after the news of Puerto Rico is off the front pages, solidarity actions with Puerto Rico and all the Caribbean will be urgent. The U.S. solidarity movement is now discussing people-to-people work brigades as well as continued protests to demand real aid, not military occupation for Puerto Rico. Furthermore, Trump's arrogant actions toward Puerto Rico cannot be used by the Democrats to overlook the real issues. It was under the Democratic administration of Barack Obama that the Promesa Act was passed, forcing Puerto Rico to pay the illegitimate debt of $74 billion!

Donate to the IAC at iacenter.org. One hundred percent of the money collected will go to the FMPR with a message of solidarity against U.S. imperialism.

We are calling for:

An end to PROMESA, repeal the Jones Act!
No privatization of the island!
Puerto Rico for the Puerto Ricans, not the banks!
Cancel the debt and pay reparations!
No militarization of Puerto Rico!
Solidarity with the Virgin Islands, Haiti and all the Caribbean!

No fascists in Florida!

PHOTO: WUFT

Anti-fascists in Gainesville, Fla., Oct. 19.

By Devin Cole
Pensacola, Fla.

Nazi and white supremacist leader Richard Spencer descended Oct. 19 on Gainesville, Fla., to the University of Florida, in his first campus appearance since he and other fascists participated in the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Va., back in August.

Their extreme-right bigotry led to violence against oppressed people, like the beating of DeAndre Harris, a Black man who is now being arrested and charged for trying to defend himself, and also to the death of Heather Heyer, an anti-fascist protester who was struck and killed by white supremacist James Alex Fields Jr., using his car as a weapon.

The anticipation behind Spencer speaking at UF has been building for months. The university had initially denied him permission to speak there, citing safety concerns after the Charlottesville gathering. But after facing legal threats, the school gave him permission to rent space. UF is a public university, meaning that anyone has the legal right to speak on the campus. But the UF administration attempted to distance itself from Spencer's politics and presence, even releasing a message from UF President W. Kent Fuchs, who denounced the speech as "abhorrent."

Spencer was scheduled to take the stage at 2:45 p.m. EDT, and was immediately met with hundreds of anti-fascist protesters who shouted him down repeatedly. These protesters inside were backed by thousands positioned outside who were going toe-to-toe with white supremacists who had shown up to support Spencer. One unidentified Nazi was punched in the face, and a few others sustained injuries.

Spencer at first said that he would "stay there all day" spewing his vile rhetoric, but at the end of it all, he cut his speech short, having barely gotten a chance to speak due to the consistent booing and chanting of the crowds inside. Though there were Spencer supporters there, they were in fewer numbers and easily overpowered. Eventually, the UF campus was taken back by anti-fascist protesters.

Neo-Nazis are planning a rally in middle Tennessee later in October, and seem to be shopping around for locations, especially in the South, where they feel the police will "keep counterprotesters back," according to one white supremacist quoted in USA Today. (Oct. 11)

We must look to the incident at the University of Florida as a reminder of how to handle Nazis and white supremacists who feel they deserve a platform. We must take away their platform and see that they do not get it back.

At police chiefs convention

Philly cops riot against protesters

WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE

Philadelphia cops attack, Oct. 21.

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

Protesters calling for the abolition of police rallied outside the International Chiefs of Police Convention in Philadelphia on Oct. 21 and then marched through Center City streets. At the end of the demonstration, as protesters were approaching the hated statue of former Philadelphia police chief Frank Rizzo, cops rioted. Six marchers were arrested, some injured.

March participants instituted jail support at the 9th Precinct, Hahnemann Hospital and finally the 15th Precinct until 3 a.m. in support of those brutalized by the state's thugs. Instead of the cops being charged with riot and assault with deadly weapons, six activists will have to go to court to defend themselves against false and outrageous charges ranging from disorderly conduct misdemeanors to assault on a cop, a felony.

Philly for Racial, Economic and Legal Justice organized the protest. During the rally and march, the group's members spoke on a sound system and handed out fliers explaining why police abolition is needed. Their leaflet begins with:

"Police abolition is a political position and community-based restorative process to self-governance in response to centuries old, sustained police terror and oppression of black, brown and poor communities.

"The process asks that:

- **The resources that the police state monopolize be transitioned back into heavily policed communities through housing, education, and healthcare policies.**
- **Jail time and harassment be replaced with counseling and restorative programs.**
- **We have and utilize the right to armed defense."**

Hundreds of bystanders took videos of the protest and many gave thumbs up gestures as demonstrators wound through busy streets. The cop violence at the end of the march only reinforced the growing awareness for many community activists that reforms are useless: This whole rotten system of policing must be abolished!□

Brown Berets demand end to cop violence

Organized by the Brown Berets de Tej-Aztlan, a rally and march to condemn police violence gathered victims' families and activists together on Oct. 22. Janie Torres, whose brother was viciously beaten and thrown into downtown Buffalo Bayou to drown on Cinco de Mayo in 1977, rallied the crowd, saying, "I was a child when my big brother was murdered 40 years ago and I will continue to protest killer cops for the next 40 years until they stop killing our people."

A special honored guest was Omar García, a survivor of the 43 students who were disappeared on Sept. 26, 2014, from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico. Respected Mayan elder, Teresa, urged everyone to continue their solidarity and unity with all victims of governments and police violence all around the world.

— Report and photo by Gloria Rubac

Players resist NFL owners

By Monica Moorehead

Bulletin: African-American reporter Jemele Hill was reinstated to her co-hosting job on ESPN's Sports Center 6 on Oct. 23 following a two-week suspension. Hill, who called Donald Trump a white supremacist in September, was suspended for asking fans to boycott advertisers of the Dallas Cowboys, whose owner Jerry Jones threatened to bench players if they didn't stand during the national anthem.

Howard University cheerleaders.

While Colin Kaepernick, the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback, continues his fight against being whiteballed by National Football League owners, his protest against police brutality and racist oppression by taking a knee during the playing of the national anthem in 2016 continues to impact sectors of society, not only in the U.S. but worldwide. Eleven Hertha Berlin soccer players from the German Premier League, for instance, took a knee on the playing field in solidarity with Black NFL players on Oct. 14.

Two members of the gold-winning U.S. fencing team at the Fie World Cup games in Cairo took a knee during the anthem ceremony on Oct. 22.

All of the cheerleaders at Howard University, a historically Black college in Washington, D.C., along with Kennesaw State University cheerleaders in Kennesaw, Ga., took a knee. Despite risking suspension, high school football players in Mississippi, Texas and elsewhere have also protested during the anthem.

When Nobel Peace laureate Jody Williams received a Human Rights Award on Oct. 15 in upstate New York, part of her acceptance speech was praising Kaepernick for taking a knee against racism. Williams received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 for her efforts to ban landmines.

When asked in an interview why Kaepernick and others were taking a knee, Williams, who is white, replied: "The seeming inability of this country to deal with racism in general, but in particular, the police brutality against primarily Black men. There certainly has been violence against Black women, but the killings of Black men have been very, very disturbing to many people. I think [they] helped spark the Black Lives Matter movement." (cbs.news.com, Oct. 19)

Players, owners meet

On Oct. 17 and 18, 13 NFL players and 11 team owners met at the offices of the NFL in New York City to discuss the protests that continue on a weekly basis during the anthem and flag ceremonies before the games. The players in attendance were Kelvin Beachum, Michael Bennett, Anquan Boldin, Demario Davis, Mark Herzlich, Malcolm Jenkins, Chris Long, Josh Norman, Russell Okung, Eric Reid, Kenny Stills, Julius Thomas and Michael Thomas. Representatives from the NFL Players Association were also present.

The players stated that their protests will continue until the NFL takes on a more pro-active role in providing resources to oppressed communities to help bring about equality. This is a just demand since the NFL is the richest professional sports league in the U.S., raking in billions of dollars in profits, especially from television revenues. These players have made it very clear that taking a knee during the anthem is a form of protesting the injustice suffered by Black and Brown people.

Only Jerry Jones, the billionaire owner of the Dallas Cowboys, echoed during this meeting the same sentiments as his buddy, Donald Trump, that a rule should be established that players will be benched if they don't stand for the anthem, because the league is "suffering." That rule was not voted on — resulting in a victory for the players — although Roger Goodell, the NFL commissioner, reiterated ad nauseum that the protests were "alienating" a majority of fans. He never mentioned that the vast majority of fans who are season ticket holders are white.

Player protests continue

Bennett, a defensive player with the Seattle Seahawks, also announced that no meaningful discussions between the players and owners could take place until the issue of Kaepernick is addressed. Bennett stated at a Oct. 19 press conference: "Before we even negotiate anything about whether we sit or whether we stand, (there) should be a negotiation about opening up the doors for Colin Kaepernick and giving him an opportunity again. For the guy who started everything not to be able to have a voice at this moment doesn't seem right to me."

When Bennett and his teammates sat during the anthem on Oct. 22, they were harassed by racist New York Giants fans. An estimated two dozen players took part in the protests before the Oct. 22 games.

Even though Kaepernick was invited by the players to attend the two-day meeting, no such invitation came from the NFL hierarchy, making him a no-show.

Kaepernick made it known in the spring that he was ready to sign with another team, either as a starting or backup quarterback, once he opted out of his 49ers contract. But going into the eighth week of the NFL season, he remains unemployed.

Kaepernick announced on Oct. 14 that he was filing a grievance against NFL bosses, charging them with collusion for denying him employment as punishment for igniting this protest. Whether Kaepernick wins or loses this legal battle, his grievance will be making a strong political argument for exposing these owners and the league, who care more about making profits than defending the rights of the players to fight for racial equality. □

Cheerleaders remain firm

Taking a knee against racism in Georgia

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Kennesaw University cheerleaders, Sept. 30.

Oct. 22 — Five young Black women, students at Kennesaw State University, have ignited a struggle here against white supremacy and racism that has spread beyond their campus.

They took a knee as the national anthem was played on Sept. 30 prior to the KSU Owls football game.They have said they were inspired by Colin Kaepernick and the many other professional and amateur athletes, including high school and middle school students, who have shown visible opposition to police violence and shootings of unarmed Black and Brown men and women.

Cobb County Sheriff Neil Warren, who has earned a reputation as a steadfast advocate of racist, anti-immigrant law enforcement, declared his outrage at the "unpatriotic" actions of these "ill-informed students." (Marietta Daily Journal, Oct. 16)

He and State Rep. Earl Ehrhart, an influential, conservative state legislator who chairs the committee allocating funds for public universities, took their complaints directly to KSU's recently appointed president, Sam Olens, former Republican state attorney general and two-term chair of the Cobb County Commission. According to Sheriff Warren, he was assured by Olens that it "would not happen again." (Inside Higher Education, Oct. 12)

Olens, who has no background in education, was chosen by the State Board of Regents, a body largely composed of appointed white, male, corporate leaders, who did not put up even the facade of a national search. Olens' appointment was met with protest and anger from students and faculty at the rapidly growing university of 35,000 students, who worried about the intentions of a career politician.

Immediately after Sept. 30, the cheerleaders were ordered to remain off the field until after the anthem was played. KSU claimed this was a way for the cheerleading squad and the band to make a better entrance at games and was an idea proposed and long planned by the athletics department.

Needless to say, the Kennesaw 5 didn't buy that explanation. Email exchanges among university officials and Olens, Warren and Ehrhardt, released by open records requests, revealed that Warren and Ehrhardt congratulated each other on pressuring the university president to remove the cheerleaders during the anthem, saying it was their idea.

The young women have held steadfast and have been taking a knee in the stadium tunnel. Students, faculty and community supporters have held several protests on campus, including Oct. 19, at Olens' swearing-in ceremony as KSU president.

Today, at a Stop Police Brutality protest in front of CNN headquarters in downtown Atlanta, the Kennesaw 5 were honored by families of victims of police shootings, including Felicia Thomas, the mother of Nick Thomas who was killed at his job by Cobb County police agencies. They were applauded for representing the growing resistance to all the forms of racism and repression experienced daily by oppressed people in the U.S., and were embraced with tears and smiles by mothers whose children have been killed by police agents. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

Anthology from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.
Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes
Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy
Black Youth: Repression & Resistance LeiLani Dowell
The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead
Domestic Workers Demand a Bill of Rights Imani Henry
Black & Brown Unity Saladin Muhammad
Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal
Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker
Available at all major online booksellers.

COVER GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

100th anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution

PART 3

'Whose state? Our state' – meaning all nationalities

By Deirdre Griswold

As we explained in Part 2 of this series, in the early years of the Bolshevik Revolution deep social advances were codified that made it the most enlightened country in the world regarding women's rights and the elimination of state suppression of lesbians and gays.

All this happened in a few years despite the wretched material conditions of the masses, who bore the brunt of the human and material costs of World War I and then the civil war that followed the revolution, in which domestic counter-revolutionaries — the "white terror" — were reinforced by the military intervention of 14 imperialist countries.

Yet despite all the material difficulties, another most important advance was made in this period. It was the building of a multinational state based on the Soviets — councils of workers, peasants and soldiers — that brought together all the peoples formerly oppressed and exploited by the czarist autocracy and the Russian bourgeoisie. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was established in 1922 and was able to unite 69 different nationalities, spread out over 11 time zones, under one Soviet government.

How could this be done equitably and with safeguards for the oppressed nations when the Russians were the majority and some of the nations brought under Russian rule by czarist conquest were not only poorer and even less developed, but quite small?

The answer, arrived at after lengthy discussion with all the peoples involved, was a bicameral government with two houses: the Soviet of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Deputies and the Soviet of Nationalities.

Sam Marcy on the Soviet state

Sam Marcy, the founding leader of Workers World Party, wrote an article titled "The Structure of the Soviet State" for publication in the Workers World dated Sept. 1, 1988. It is worth quoting extensively:

"The attitude of the ruling classes of the capitalist countries with regard to the national question in Russia underwent an extraordinary change when the Bolshevik Revolution triumphed in 1917. At first the international bourgeoisie attempted to malign the new republic by proclaiming that the revolutionary leaders, in particular the members of the Executive Committee of the Soviets, were not really representative of Russia. Dzerzhinsky was a Pole, Stalin was a Georgian, Trotsky was a Jew, other leaders were Ukrainian, Armenian and so on. It was the same tactic they used to bait communists in this country when the left movement had many members and leaders who were Jewish, Black or foreign-born.

"However, as the Revolution progressed, and as Soviet power took hold over larger and larger sections of the country, sweeping all the provinces and nationalities within its fold, it became clear that it was an all-national revolution. The international bourgeoisie thereafter took another tack and began to malign the USSR in a new way. Now it was said that the Great-Russians were oppressing all the other nationalities. ...

"If it is true that the construction of a socialist society is impossible without a planned economy, it is equally true that a planned economy is impossible in a multinational country without the equality of all the nations and their free, voluntary association within the framework of a union of all the socialist republics. It was precisely to this question that Lenin devoted the last days of his life.

"How could the interests of a planned economy be reconciled with the apparently contradictory need for the equality of all the nationalities in the USSR? What kind of a state structure should be developed to give full vent to the workers and peasants and conform to the revolutionary reconstitution of Soviet society as it emerged from the overthrow of the czarist autocracy and the sweeping away of the bourgeoisie and the landlords?

"At first, the Bolsheviks raised the slogan, 'All power to the Soviets!' And, indeed, power was fully taken by the First Congress of the Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Deputies. When the Congress of Soviets was not in session, the Executive Committee of the Soviets carried out the functions of the Congress.

"In 1918 this slogan was translated into the celebrated decree, the 'Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People,' which embodied the fundamental state program and structure of the USSR. The leading ideological and political role taken by the Communist Party was the central factor in making the Soviets a living reflection of the interests of the exploited and oppressed masses of Russia.

"While the Congress of Soviets was revolutionary in form as well as in content, it still had some inadequacies. The problem of how to perfect the state structure covered many weeks and months of discussion, both during the periods of relative peace as well as during the war of imperialist intervention and the civil war. It was not until 1922-23 that the new structure of the USSR was to emerge, after intense if not heated discussions. This structure was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and it differs from that of any capitalist government in two fundamental ways.

"In the first place, it is based not on the landlords and capitalists, not on the existence of private property in the means of production, not on wage labor employed by private enterprise, but on a new social system where the means of production are socially owned and the economy is planned. ...

"There is another feature of the state structure of the USSR which is just as fundamental, yet the bourgeois ideologues and their myriads of apologists and historians rarely refer to it. It is even neglected in much of the progressive and radical literature of the workers' movement. To understand this second feature, it would be helpful to first look at the innumerable capitalist state structures, whether their form be democratic, monarchical, military or even fascist.

"The most democratic form of the capitalist state may be unicameral, that is, having one body which enacts all legislation, plus an executive arm of the government. Or, as in the United States, it can have two legislative bodies, such as the House of Representatives and the Senate. However, not one of the capitalist governments, whatever its constitution may be, has an arm built into the framework of the state to deal with the national question and make sure that the nationalities within the country are represented in all important decisions.

"There may be references in the constitution to equal protection of the law, due process and so on. There may be special legislation regarding civil rights. There may be this or that agency dealing with complaints or enforcement. But there is no specific arm within the constitutional structure of any capitalist state which deals specifically with the question of nationalities. This differentiates the USSR from all the capitalist countries.

"From the point of view of its external characteristics, the USSR has this in common with some of the capitalist states: It has a bicameral system. In this sense, it seems like the U.S., but the two arms of its legislative structure are very different from the two houses of Congress here.

Soviet of Nationalities a revolutionary departure

"This bicameral system is found in the highest governing body, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which consists of the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities. The Soviet of the Union is chosen on the basis of proportional representation — each deputy represents an equal amount of people. In the Soviet of Nationalities, each nationality is guaranteed a set number of deputies.

"The members of both chambers serve equal terms, and no bill can become law unless adopted by a majority of both chambers. This all-important second arm is of extraordinary significance, particularly in the epoch of imperialism, in which national oppression is a characteristic feature. It is the kind of structure which, if incorporated into a bourgeois state, would tremendously assist the struggle of the oppressed nationalities against the dominant nationality.

"In constructing this mechanism for governing, the Soviet Union accorded recognition to the existence of nationalities in a revolutionary way which had never been done before. It created an equality between the two chambers, one based on representation according to the proportion of the population, the other on guaranteed representation for every nationality. In this way, not only the general interests of the working class are reflected, but also the very special and important interests of all nationalities."

When the Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991, what followed was a true disaster for the working class — and especially for those nationalities not Russian, who have not recovered to this day. The indices of social welfare — infant mortality, maternal deaths, life expectancy, alcoholism and drug abuse, prostitution, unemployment, spread of infectious diseases — all worsened dramatically in a few short years.

We said earlier that this series would examine the objective reasons for political regression in the Soviet Union, which ultimately led to its collapse without the workers being willing or able to mobilize significantly in its defense. There were, of course, tremendous struggles within the party that broke out after Lenin's death. Much has been written in support of one leader or another. Our focus here is not on who was right, but on why this struggle needed to happen in the first place.

For that, we need to understand the material conditions that undermined this great revolution and the party that led it, rather than putting it all down to the personalities of any of the Soviet leaders, be they Stalin, Trotsky, Khrushchev or Gorbachev and the rest of the crew that actually presided over the dissolution of the first workers' state.

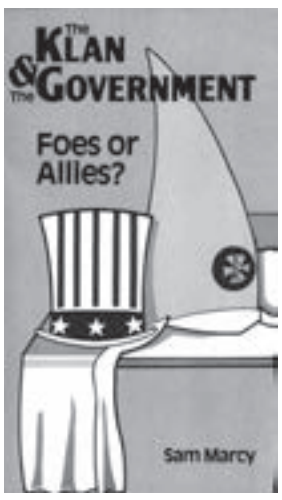
Next: Wolves in sheep's clothing.

The Klan & Government: Foes or Allies?

The capitalist government has covertly encouraged and promoted the Klan over decades. It is often overlooked in media reports that the durability of the Klan rests on long-term bonds to the state.

The capitalist government not only tolerates organizations like the Klan, but once the class struggle of the workers and oppressed people takes on the character of a mass upsurge, the capitalist government is more likely to encourage the Klan.

If the U.S. is resorting to naked armed force on a world scale, to threatening nuclear first-strikes, is it likely that the peace of the oppressor imposed on the oppressed will prevail?



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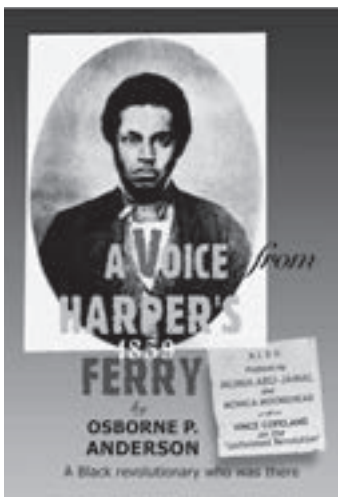
WHY COLIN KAEPERNICK IS RIGHT

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



A Voice from Harper's Ferry,
***written by* Osborne P. Anderson,**
a Black revolutionary who was there.
Essays by: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead and Vince Copeland on the "Unfinished Revolution."

Read the PDF online at tinyurl.com/yac2d28x
Available at online and other bookstores.

Showdown looms in Catalonia

By John Catalinotto

Oct. 23 — In response to the arrest of two Catalonian political leaders by the Spanish state and to Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's announcement that the central regime would depose Catalonia's regional government, 450,000 people took to the streets of Barcelona in protest on Oct. 21.

Rajoy, who leads the Popular Party (PP), the most right-wing of the parliamentary parties, said he would apply Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution. This means seizing control of Catalonia, including its economy, telecommunications, radio, television, police and infrastructure, and imposing new elections in Catalonia within six months.

The federal Senate, set to meet on Oct. 27, must authorize Article 155. The PP, along with the center-right Citizens party and the so-called Socialists (PSOE), are expected to join in authorizing Article 155. Since the PP in Catalonia won only 8.5 percent of the vote in the regional parliamentary elections, this would impose, in effect, a minority regime on the region's 7.5 million people.

Catalonia's regional leader Carles Puigdemont, the head of the major bourgeois party currently promoting independence for the region, called a meeting of Parliament for Oct. 26. He says the Catalan government will then call for independence.

Should this go forward, there could be a showdown on Oct. 27, which would involve the federal state using force against Catalonia's struggle for self-determination.

The last outpouring of state force against Catalans, when federal police tried to stop the Oct. 1 referendum on self-determination, led to a massive outpouring of Catalans, angry at the attempt to crush their rights. While the overall movement was led by bourgeois parties, leftists were active in broad-based Committees to Defend the Republic (CDRs) that organized and protected the voting places.

Of the 2.3 million who voted, 40 percent of total voters, more than 90 percent opted for independence from the Spanish state.

What does Spain consist of?

The Spanish state rules over different peoples, not all of whom consider themselves Spanish. In particular, the peoples of Galicia in the northwest, the Basque Country in the north and Catalonia in the northeast have their own languages and cultures. In each of these regions there have been significant independence movements.

After fascist Francisco Franco's military rebels won the civil war in 1940, his regime imposed a brutal rule on all these peoples, outlawing local languages and crushing by force the workers' movements throughout the Spanish state and any movement for self-determination.

Following Franco's death in 1975, a new regime was established in 1978 called the "Transition." Left-wing parties were legalized and allowed to run for Parliament. A certain amount of autonomy, which eventually included language rights, was allowed to the regions.

The rule of big capital remained. The old Falangist fascists remained in the police and army and in the judiciary, and its politicians formed the PP, which has alternated ruling the regime with the PSOE. A king was imposed on everyone.

In the Basque Country, where the independence movement was broad and revolutionary, the central regime used brutal force to repress it.

Currently, the Spanish state is part of the imperialist world, a member of NATO and the European Union. The EU and world imperialism in general, up to now, support the central government against the Catalans, despite the pro-capitalist leadership in Catalonia.

Following the 2008 worldwide capitalist crisis, all the regions of the Spanish state were hit by economic collapse. There is still more than 20 percent unemployment and nearly 50 percent youth unemployment. While Catalonia has recovered somewhat better than other regions, unemployment is still at 17 percent. The economic collapse accentuated tensions among the different nationalities as well as between the workers and bosses in each region.

Statement of Red Roja

Analyzing the seriousness of the current political crisis, Ángeles Maestro of Red Roja, a statewide revolutionary organization that supports self-determination, wrote:

"The massive mobilization of the Catalan people — as in other times and in other ways, that of the Basque people — despite its determination and involvement of hundreds of thousands of people, has been unable to achieve its objectives of self-determination, but it has served to make it impossible for the structures of the state, which were built on the backbone of Francoism, to be capable of responding to political demands with anything other than repression. Likewise, the Catalan process — like any major struggle against hegemony — has engendered a major process of popular organization, around the CDRs, which should remain in place."

That is, the CDRs could provide a structure for truly popular resistance in Catalonia and inspire struggle among the other peoples to the regime in Madrid that has been running the Spanish state since the Transition of 1978. □

#NoDAPL
Water protectors sent to jail

By Chris Fry

Following the directions of Big Oil's Dakota Access Pipeline company, North Dakota Judge Thomas Merrick on Oct. 19 convicted and sentenced two water protectors to jail for their role in the protest at Standing Rock last year. Even the prosecution had not recommended jail time. Neither activist has any prior criminal record.

Retired environmental biologist Mary Redway, 64, was sentenced to six days in jail for disorderly conduct, while school teacher Alexander Simon, 27, was sentenced to 18 days in jail for "physical obstruction" and disorderly conduct. The judge placed them in custody immediately, denying them time to make personal arrangements. They were the first Standing Rock activists sentenced to jail.

Three more water protectors — Red Fawn Fallis, Little Feather and Dion Ortiz — remain in jail awaiting trial on felony charges that could imprison them for 15 years to life. More than 850 people were arrested during the months of protests. Hundreds of activists await trial.

Not coincidentally, the Dakota Access LCC "gifted" the state of North Dakota $15 million, as well as another million to North Dakota, Iowa and Illinois police agencies, which, along with company goons, brutally suppressed the DAPL protesters with clubs, pepper spray, tear gas and fire hoses. (hpr1.com, Oct. 20)

The convictions of Redway and Simon stem from a peaceful protest of water protectors on Oct. 20, 2016, when 120 people were arrested while holding signs and praying in a pasture, protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline that threatens Native land and the water supply for millions of people in the region. Originally, the charges were dismissed, but with the company's check in hand, the state recharged these and other activists.

Judge Merrick tried to prevent out-of-state lawyers from assisting the Water Protector Legal Collective, the Indigenous-led legal team. In an Oct. 19 statement following the trial, the collective stated: "We see this decision as his attempt to send a message that people will face harsh sentences regardless of innocence or guilt as a means to put pressure on others with pending charges to take pleas or forgo trial. The prosecutorial discretion and conviction of some and not others has been arbitrary and targets what police and state's attorneys call agitators."

Despite these sentences, the water protectors remain committed to the struggle. A statement from the Indigenous-led Freshet Collective on Oct. 19 quoted Eddie Bad Hand, who was acquitted at the same trial: "These people were not guilty, regardless of what [the state] said. No one should be found guilty."

Bad Hand urged his fellow water protectors to "stay strong. Continue to stand and keep believing in what you stood for." □

48th NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING
Thursday, November 23, 2017 12 Noon
Cole's Hill (hill above Plymouth Rock)
Plymouth, Massachusetts

Unite with us in our struggle to create a true awareness of Native peoples and demonstrate the unity of Indigenous peoples internationally.

Help shatter the untrue glass image of the Pilgrims and the unjust system based on racism, sexism, homophobia and the profit-driven destruction of the Earth.

We will show up in solidarity with Indigenous struggles throughout the world, and especially our relations in Puerto Rico & the Caribbean and Mexico suffering from hurricane and earthquake devastation compounded by colonialism.

Special message from Leonard Peltier

For moreinformation/orientation: **United American Indians of New England**
info@uaine.org www.uaine.org
Facebook event: facebook.com/events/187901245087869

Coverup continues of U.S. role in Indonesian massacres

By Deirdre Griswold

Recently declassified documents from the U.S. Embassy in Indonesia show, according to major big business media outlets, that Washington was well informed about the horrible massacres carried out by the Indonesian military in 1965-66 that killed up to a million people and destroyed the large left movement in that country.

This sounds like a big exposure. But, in fact, it is really a continuation of the coverup of the U.S. role in the massacres. What the capitalist media are not saying now, and only hinted at then, is that the U.S. government was not just a spectator, but egged on and facilitated the military coup and the slaughter of Communists and progressives that followed. (A book on this subject, "Indonesia 1965: The Second Greatest Crime of the Century" by Deirdre Griswold, can be read online at workers.org.)

This U.S. crime was understood by many people on the left at the time. The Pentagon was already pouring troops into its war in Vietnam to prevent the liberation of the southern half of that country, which had become an occupied U.S. neocolony.

By 1965, the Chinese Revolution had removed hundreds of millions of people from the reach of imperialist super-exploitation. In Korea, the north had survived a monstrous U.S. war from 1950-53 that left millions of casualties but could not overturn the revolutionary government. All of Southeast Asia — Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia — was in ferment against the imperialist powers.

At the end of World War II, the resource-rich country of Indonesia gained its independence after more than 300 years of brutal colonial rule by both the Netherlands and, for a time, England. The nationalist government, headed by Sukarno, formed a bloc with the large Communist Party there and made several attempts to set up an alliance of developing countries independent of imperialism.

During the Sukarno years, the U.S., while professing friendship, made several clandestine attempts to break up the nation of Indonesia, which stretches across 3,000 islands in the southwestern Pacific. A CIA pilot, Allen Lawrence Pope, was actually captured when his plane crashed on one of these missions in 1958.

So when news about the Indonesian massacres first became public, it was clear to many that this was instigated by Washington as part of its wide-reaching efforts to roll back the revolutionary tide sweeping through Asia. One of the people who took a stand was the eminent British philosopher and mathematician, Bertrand Russell, who was also a strong opponent of the Vietnam War.

In the United States, the only organization to rally against the massacres was Youth Against War & Fascism, the youth arm of Workers World Party. YAWF held several demonstrations in New York, and on June 2, 1966, sponsored a "Public Inquest into the Indonesian Massacres" at Columbia University, which was attended by a thousand people.

The speeches were later published in a pamphlet entitled "The Silent Slaughter: The Role of the United States in the Indonesian Massacre." It included the remarks of Deirdre Griswold of YAWF, who chaired the Inquest; journalist Eric Norden; William Worthy, a correspondent for the Baltimore Afro-American who had visited Indonesia three times; Professor Andrew March of the East Asian Institute of Columbia University; and attorney Mark Lane, a former New York State Assemblyman.

Bertrand Russell wrote an introduction to the pamphlet titled "American Murder Uber Alles." We reprint excerpts below. (The full text of Russell's introduction can be found at tinyurl.com/ydfkvuek/.)

Bertrand Russell on the Indonesian massacres

When the events of October 1, 1965, were first reported in the Western press, events which suggested a momentous change in Indonesia, the accounts were uniform from Washington to Bonn. Hundreds of newspaper columns poured forth the story of an abortive "communist" coup which had been overcome by loyal army officers.

Indonesia had the largest Communist Party outside of the communist countries. The membership was over 3 million. Active supporters were estimated to number between 15 and 20 million people. The Western press would have had us believe that a disciplined party of such dimensions, with vast popular support, made a reckless bid for overt power without a street demonstration, a strike or a call to struggle by the leadership. ...

During October 1965 two representatives of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, close associates of mine, were in Jakarta on my behalf attending a conference. In Jakarta few had any doubt about what was taking place around them. The United States Seventh Fleet was in Javanese waters. The largest base in the area, feverishly constructed by the United States but a few months earlier on the southernmost point of the southernmost island of the Philippines, was ordered "on alert." General Nasution had a mission in Washington. ...

James Restin wrote in the New York Times on 19 June 1966:

"One of the most persistent complaints among officials in Washington is that our political troubles are not balanced adequately by reports in the press of the more hopeful political developments elsewhere in Asia.

"The savage transformation of Indonesia from a pro-Chinese policy under Sukarno to a defiantly anti-Communist policy under General Suharto is, of course, the most important of these developments. Washington is careful not to claim any credit for this change in the sixth most populous and one of the richest nations in the world, but this does not mean that Washington had nothing to do with it.

"There was a great deal more contact between the anti-Communist forces in that country and at least one very high official in Washington before and during the Indonesian massacre than is generally realized. General Suharto's forces, at times severely short of food and munitions, have been getting aid from here through various third countries, and it is doubtful if the coup would ever have been attempted without the American show of strength in Vietnam or been sustained without the clandestine aid it has received indirectly from here."

Through Reston, the New York Times tells us blandly six months after the event that the United States had direct responsibility for mass murder. ...

In short, the Indonesian generals made the coup, the right-wing initiated the bloody series of events and they did so because of U.S. strength. More than this, they succeeded in sustaining their counter-revolution and massacre because of American aid. ...

How cavalier are the words Reston uses to describe events which comprise the greatest act of mass murder since the gas chambers of Hitler. The Times in London estimated the dead at nearly one million in a period of four months. ...

The Reston story is headed "A Gleam of Light in Asia." He describes these events as "another indication that there may be some hope in Asia." ...

Max Frankel describes the Johnson administration's "delight with the news from Indonesia" and the private responses of "officials ... elated to find their expectations being realized." (New York Times, 12 March 1966)

The great industrial corporations and the Pentagon to which they are allied have brought the world to a point not previously reached since Hitler's advent. From Vietnam to the Dominican Republic — to Indonesia — the source of murder and misery stems from Washington. Only now is the truth coming to light despite the efforts of many, especially those whose contributions to this important volume are so clear, forceful and unanswerable. ...

No small part of the essential task before us in exposing the full dimension of the evil represented by the Johnson administration and those it serves, is the obligation to alert the left in America to its full responsibility. With the exception of the initiative taken by Youth Against War & Fascism in the United States, the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation in Britain and solitary individuals in other countries, the peace movement and the socialist movement have failed to stand out against the unimaginable slaughter which has swept a country of one hundred million people. ...

Bertrand Russell
28 July 1966

To read a PDF copy go to : tinyurl.com/yam9b47g

INDONESIA 1965: The Second Greatest Crime of the Century

By Deirdre Griswold

Before October 1965, Indonesia had the largest left movement outside the socialist countries, while the government of President Sukarno pursued a militantly anti-imperialist foreign policy.

This book tells of the massacres following the October 1, 1965, military takeover that decimated the Indonesian left.

It focuses on the role of Washington in providing essential clandestine support for the right-wing generals in that bloodbath.

This book was first published in 1970. It is being reprinted in 1998 as a new generation has emerged in Indonesia.

This new generation has no illusions about the generals and the state they represent. Nor can it be seduced by the kind of "development" promised under the "New Order"which is now in crisis. There are many, many murders and shattered lives to avenge. And it is young — and with youth comes new hope.

WORKERS WORLD editorial

The White House general's racism

The new administration never gives us a chance to forget that it is a vipers' nest of racists and militarists.

The president, as bigot-in-chief, insulted the widow of African-American soldier Sgt. La David T. Johnson, one of four U.S. soldiers killed on Oct. 4 in Niger. In the midst of giving her a "condolence call," the POTUS couldn't resist the opportunity to remind the widow, Myeshia Johnson, that "your guy ... knew what he signed up for."

We'll return to that phrase later. Despite its clashing with the whole idea of consoling someone who is grieving, it is revealing about the nature of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Myeshia Johnson and her mother-in-law, Cowanda Jones-Johnson, both heard Trump's disrespectful words as they drove to Miami to retrieve their deceased loved one. So did U.S. Rep. Frederica Wilson, an African-American Democrat of Florida and close family friend, who was in the vehicle and heard the call on speaker-phone. Wilson publicized the call between the president and Johnson. Trump, who insulted and attacked the family of a fallen Muslim officer during the election campaign, replied by insulting Wilson.

That the POTUS is not only racist but plays to racism among his base supporters is nothing new. That he responds to any criticism like a whiny child is nothing new. What was new was that on Oct. 20, Gen. John Kelly, the chief of staff — one of the generals who is supposed to be among the "adults" in the White House and who represents the Pentagon's immersion in the executive branch — fully supported the president against Rep. Wilson and, by extension, Ms. Johnson.

That Kelly, too, shares the racism that permeates this administration should not surprise us. He and Trump should both be condemned for their words. What is surprising is that a Marine general, who knows there are many African-American Marines, would openly reveal his attitude.

The crux of the matter for Kelly is in the phrase, "He knew what he signed up for." For Kelly, the U.S. working class should consider itself privileged to be cannon fodder, willing "to die for their country." In Kelly and Trump's opinion, Black troops should be doubly proud to die.

But while they are indoctrinated to believe that they must be ready "to die for their country," that's not what the troops of the now professional military really "sign up for." They kill and die, mostly kill with U.S. firepower, to protect the economic interests of the .01 percent that owns 90 percent of the wealth and exploits labor worldwide.

In reality, Sgt. Johnson signed up to participate in a professional military that serves the interest of the imperialist ruling class. The Pentagon indoctrinates U.S. youth in chauvinist "patriotism," but the interests they are made to fight for are strictly mercenary.

The U.S. ruling class wants the troops, and especially the Black troops, and civilians too, to refrain from asking the big questions that were raised by these outrageously insensitive and racist events: What is the Pentagon doing in Africa? Why are U.S. troops in Niger? And why are they dying for the gang of racists in Washington? □

Artist predators — No, thanks

Sue Davis, a longtime WW "On the picket line" columnist and frequent contributor, submitted a slightly longer version of the following letter to the editor at the New York Times on Oct. 19. Davis wrote in response to a letter headlined "Separating the Artist's Conduct and the Art." While this letter was initially accepted for consideration, it was not chosen to be printed. Find out why.

As a feminist and a Marxist, I have long struggled with the distinction between an artist who abuses women and his art. Harvey Weinstein's myriad transgressions are way too fresh, too calculated, too fiendish. I want him to be sentenced to the U.S. equivalent of the Robben Island jail (where our beloved Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for nearly three decades) for the rest of his natural life and several more reincarnations.

And I want Mumia Abu-Jamal to be exchanged for Weinstein, exonerated for his totally unjust conviction, outrageous death sentence and brutal incarceration, and rewarded by the state of Pennsylvania with $500 million for his excruciating torture, suffering and liver infection due to denial of competent health care over the last 30+ years — and awarded a MacArthur "genius" grant.

As for Woody Allen, I could not watch his movies after his totally egregious, insensitive, uncaring, incestuous scandal where he cheated on Mia Farrow with her daughter Soon-Yi and then married his step-daughter. Truth be told, I didn't warm to his movies at all until a friend convinced me in the 1970s he wasn't a stone misogynist, so I saw "Love and Death" (1975) with Diane Keaton and developed an "artistic" crush on him. But after that debacle with the Farrow family, I couldn't see any of Woody's movies until "Midnight in Paris" (2011) with Corey Stoll, whom I had known from the first time he was bald. (Always a fan, Corey!)

Now, considering Woody's thinly veiled support for Weinstein, I won't see his work for a long time to come, if ever again. Of course, I might if he were to confess on his deathbed that he has objectified and demeaned women in many of his movies and apologized to Mia, Soon-Yi and the rest of the Farrow family for his many crimes against them and who knows how many others. I might consider seeing his movies again, but only the ones that don't demean or stereotype poor women; Black women or women of other nationalities; LGBTQ and gender-neutral or -nonconforming people; or sex workers. On second thought, I may never see another Woody Allen movie in this life.

I'll value artists' work only if they don't demean women in any way, shape or form. And not until.

Susan Elizabeth Davis, writer and editor, member of the National Writers Union, UAW 1981 since 1987 and of Workers World Party since 1967.

News conference

Groups condemn U.S. threats against north Korea

Jeanne Mirer

Rev. Tong-Kyun Kim

Sara Flounders

Bernadette Ellorin

Christian Cobb

Jackelyn Mariano

WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

By John Catalinotto
New York City

Representatives of the International Committee of the National Lawyers Guild and anti-war organizations held a news conference Oct. 18 at the Solidarity Center in New York City. They called President Donald Trump's threats against north Korea — which he made at the United Nations in September — a criminal act not only by international law, but by U.S. law.

Jeanne Mirer, co-chair of the NLG International Committee and president of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), quoted the United Nations charter, noting, "all nations are required to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state or in any manner inconsistent with the Charter." Mirer said that the U.S. Senate had approved the U.N. Charter by an 89-2 vote, thus making it U.S. law.

The Rev. Tong-Kyun Kim of the Least of These Church [The Korean Progressive Church], urged the U.S. to "take the path to dialog and peace," and "stop all war provocations." He said the U.S.'s refusal to "give up its hostile policy" toward north Korea was the root cause of the ongoing tensions.

Sara Flounders of the United National Antiwar Coalition said, "the permanent state of war" that the U.S. had imposed on the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea since 1950, the "occupation of the south" and the "militarized massive war games" the U.S. held on and near the Korean peninsula were the causes of the danger.

Bernadette Ellorin of the International League of Peoples Struggles expressed her organization's "solidarity with the DPRK and the Korean people in asserting their national sovereignty." She said that country's nuclear program was "self-defense against U.S. aggression to keep from being an easy target, such as the U.S. found in Iraq, Syria and Libya."

Christian Cobb of the International Action Center said his organization "stands with the DPRK" and against "President Donald Trump's call for genocide."

Jackelyn Mariano, co-chair of the NLG International Committee, introduced and moderated the event.

Anti-war actions set for early November

In reply to a question from Workers World newspaper, the groups discussed anti-war actions that are set to take place in different countries in early November to coincide with Trump's trip to Asia. On Nov. 4, people in south Korea will protest Trump's visit and the military buildup in the region. Philippine organizations are planning a mass protest a few days later when the U.S. president participates in a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, at the site of the former Clark Air Force Base near Manila.

The organizations at the news conference said they would coordinate their actions in the U.S. in solidarity with the Asian-Pacific protests during that time period. Organizers also distributed pieces written by Marjorie Cohn, former president of the NLG and IADL deputy secretary-general, including an article entitled, "Trump Threatens Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea." (Truth-out, Sept. 29)

A video of the news conference is avail*able at tinyurl.com/y73xwjzw*

TURN THE GUNS AROUND

Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions

by John Catalinotto

NEW

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.

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

– **Pvt Larry Holmes** *GI resister and organizer for the American Servicemen's Union 1972-74.*

Available at online booksellers

Behind anti-gov't protests in Togo

Editor's note: U.S. military presence and intervention continue to ramp up on the African continent, with reverberating consequences. Bourgeois news sources trumpet the devastating bombing deaths of more than 300 people in Somalia on Oct. 14, but neglect to reveal the instigator's hometown was attacked by U.S. Special Forces two months ago, killing 10 civilians. (Guardian, Oct. 17) U.S. politicians make patriotic hay from the death of four Special Forces soldiers in Niger on Oct. 4, but never mention that the U.S. is building a massive "hunter/killer" drone base, the "largest U.S. Air Force-led construction project of all time," attempting to control much of West Africa. (CNN, July 21)

Despite their propaganda, U.S. or European powers never send troops or economic emissaries to countries in order to "keep the peace" or to "assist struggling developing countries," but always to set up a platform for exploitation and domination, or for destabilization of a country trying to wrest its political independence from their grasp.

The following article on the West African country of Togo gives important context for current internal struggles there, as opposition parties resist a current administration backed by former colonizing power France.

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

In Togo, opposition demonstrations against the government, restricted by Togolese officials, were carried out nevertheless beginning on Oct. 18. These actions, which have spread broadly across the West African state in recent months, have been a source of concern to the current government.

Fourteen opposition parties and coalitions are united in an effort to force the removal of the regime of Faure Gnassingbe, the president whose father took complete control of the country as a result of a military coup engineered by France during 1967. Togo has a population of 7.8 million people, with a tumultuous history of colonization by Germany, France and Britain.

Anti-government forces had begun mobilizing for marches when the minister of territorial administration, Payadowa Boukpessi, announced at a press conference in the capital of Lome that street demonstrations would not be allowed on the scheduled days. The spokesperson for the government emphasized that people would be allowed to gather at fixed spots instead of taking to the streets in marches.

Providing a rationale for the restrictions, Boukpessi stressed on behalf of the administration that "there have been calls for civil disobedience, calls for economic sabotage, even calls for murder issued by protesters targeting the authorities and members of their families as well as security services." (AFP, Oct. 10) Since the beginning of anti-government demonstrations in August, the country's internet services have been periodically shut down by the administration in Lome.

Despite the government claims of violent tendencies on the part of the opposition groups, it is the Togolese authorities who are responsible for several deaths, the wounding and injuring of scores of people along with the arrests, and the prosecution and imprisonment of leading political activists. Hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets in the last two months calling attention to the machinations of the government aimed at extending its dominance of political power. Most people in Togo work within the agricultural sector in cocoa and coffee production.

Mass discontent, calls for constitutional reform

The opposition forces moved forward on the actions slated for Oct. 18 with the intended purpose of bringing large crowds into the streets. The big march was directed towards the offices of [the West African regional group] ECOWAS in Lome.

Brigitte Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson, a political leader of one of the anti-regime coalitions, said of the announced restrictions by the government: "The fight continues." (Sunday Vision, Oct. 22)

Adjamagbo-Johnson, a longtime political activist, was, in 2010, the first woman to run for president of Togo. She has worked on various projects designed to enhance the status of women inside the country.

During the largest anti-government demonstrations on Oct. 4-5, Adjamagbo-Johnson emphasized the willingness to negotiate on the part of the opposition, saying: "We can never say no to dialogue. The president himself has not called for any dialogue despite seeing what is going on in this country. We all know that he has heard our messages that we are sending." (Africa News, Oct. 5)

Eric Dupuy, the spokesperson for the National Alliance for Change (ANC), reiterated that proper legal requirements for notification of the Oct. 18-19 demonstrations were met, and consequently there was no basis for the announcement by Boukpessi. "If the government decides to break the law, the people will not respect it," the ANC spokesperson said.

In response to the demonstrations, the Togo Parliament has quickly passed a draft bill calling for term limits. The legislation would ostensibly mandate a maximum of two terms of office for the presidency, not retroactively, instead moving forward. Opposition parties have criticized the parliamentary action, noting that it would still allow Gnassingbe to run for an additional two terms of office, extending his tenure potentially to 2025.

Members and supporters of the ruling Union of the Republic (UNIR) party held their own series of demonstrations in support of President Gnassingbe on Sept. 20-21. UNIR has rejected the claims by the Pan-African National Party (PNP), the National Alliance for Change (ANC) and the Group of Six, who are all demanding sweeping political reforms.

Opposition members of Parliament refused to support the measures, saying they did not go far enough in guaranteeing genuine democratic practice. They are calling for the restoration of the 1992 constitution, which grew out of a nationwide process of negotiations, debates and discussions.

In the aftermath of the death of former President Eyadema Gnassingbe in 2005, his son Faure was installed, in contravention to the wishes of the opposition forces. He is currently serving his third consecutive term in the presidency.

Regional and international implications of the Togo crisis

The government of Ghana has realized the potential for the conflict in neighboring Togo to spill over into its territory. Togolese refugees have fled across the border fearing an intensification of the political violence. Ghana has strengthened its security on the border with Togo since the eruption of demonstrations nearly two months ago.

The unrest in Togo is taking place alongside other developments in West Africa, including the secessionist movements in South Cameroon and Southeast Nigeria, and the killing of several U.S. Special Forces troops in Niger.

In a joint statement on the situation in Togo, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) acknowledged that the political tensions in the country require constant monitoring by regional and international groupings.

An Oct. 4 press release states: "The three organizations take note in particular of the passage of the draft constitutional bill to amend relevant articles of the Togolese constitution. ... [They] call on the Government to set a date for the organization of the referendum on the draft bill. They encourage the opposition to take this opportunity to further advance the constitutional reforms."

On Oct. 10, the opposition refused offers to meet with a delegation from the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), which arrived in the country in an attempt to mediate the conflict between anti-Gnassingbe parties and the government. OIF is a relic of the Parisian imperialist system from the late 19th century, consisting of representatives of 57 member-states who have French as their national language. The organization was relaunched in 1970 to promote joint projects between France and its current as well as former colonies.

The situation in Togo requires drastic moves on the part of the government. Until a more representative system is established, unrest will continue. ☐

Oscar López Rivera on U.S. colonialism

By Dolores Cox

The Caribbean island of Puerto Rico has been a colony since it was invaded by the U.S. in 1898. Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens in 1917. It is the homeland of Oscar López Rivera, a leader in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence.

López Rivera served 35 years in a U.S. federal prison, much of it in solitary confinement, for his active opposition to U.S. forceful authority over the island. He was pardoned by President Barack Obama in January and released in May.

While visiting the community of Las Monjas in San Juan on Oct. 18, after Hurricane Maria, López Rivera said in an interview with Democracy Now that the hurricane had been a devastating experience for him, primarily because one of the first things he noticed was gentrification.

"We can anticipate that a lot of communities, including the one here, will be displaced once it is beautified, embellished in the end, and probably gentrified. And once they can wipe out the residents, then they can do whatever they feel like doing here. We can see it in Ponce de León with Ciudadela, the buildings, the condominiums. Every part of Puerto Rico along the ocean, we can see gentrification taking place. Vieques and Culebra are probably the biggest targets now."

He added that "gentrification means the displacement of Puerto Rico, of the working class. Foreigners coming into Puerto Rico who invest are having access to incentives that we don't have access to. If a multimillionaire buys a condominium for $1.5 million or $2 million, he will not have to pay any taxes for 25 or 30 years. I have found a Puerto Rico with a very, very high unemployment rate, that seems to be in a desperate state, especially after the hurricane. ...

"The financial institutions are going to move in; they will invest. They will buy out because the property is real cheap right now. I am surprised at the number of Puerto Ricans that are moving out of Puerto Rico still. But with the hurricane, it has increased."

López Rivera sees the financial institutions, especially hedge funds, moving into Puerto Rico in force, knowing that what they invest now will be multiplied, reflecting how the colonizer treats the colonized.

Federal government response

"President Donald Trump has no sense of respect for Puerto Rico," said López Rivera. "He has demonstrated it already by doing what he's done. It is shameful for me to see a president tossing things to people who are suffering so much. The way that they came in with FEMA [the Federal Emergency Management Agency] and Homeland Security really reflect what colonialism is to Puerto Ricans. FEMA can come into Puerto Rico and dictate to Puerto Ricans what they have to do, and be totally disrespectful. Homeland Security comes in bearing arms. It's almost incredible how they treat people, dealing with our situation. Treating us not like citizens, but like animals. From the medical side of Puerto Rico, we are being killed by neglect. It reflects the response of Donald Trump and the U.S. government to the crisis."

He believes that most Puerto Ricans want to be Puerto Ricans. "Once we become annexed to or by the U.S., we will lose our national identity. I look at Hawaiian Natives and Native Americans on reservations as an example, losing their culture, their language, their lifestyles and their land. And that's what's going to happen to Puerto Rico. The Hawaiian Native population is about 9 percent. The overwhelming majority of prisoners are the Natives; the same thing with Alaska. Puerto Ricans will not be better off by annexation by the U.S. Once any nation or people lose their identity, they are a little dehumanized. This is the reality we are facing as Puerto Ricans.

"In the U.S. I have found young Puerto Ricans who really love P.R., and who want to do something for P.R. For me, Puerto Rico has to be the promised land of all Puerto Ricans, wherever we are," added López Rivera. ☐

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Apoyo sindical para Puerto Rico.

WW/MO FOTO:JOE PIETTE

Puerto Rico enfrenta genocidio

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

17 de octubre de 2017

Lo que está ocurriendo ahora en Puerto Rico solo puede describirse como genocidio, ¡simple y llanamente!

Los huracanes Irma y María han descubierto la realidad puertorriqueña para que el mundo la vea: la crueldad asesina y obscena del capitalismo desnudo reflejado en la subordinación de un territorio poblado, una colonia de los Estados Unidos, donde sin piedad el sistema más sangriento oprime a una población desesperada desprovista de recursos materiales.

Así como los rayos X descubren lo que esconden los tejidos blandos, los huracanes han demostrado las terribles condiciones de miles de familias, que viven en la pobreza y sobreviven en viviendas inseguras que bordean las impresionantes laderas de las montañas, cubiertas por el exuberante verdor de esta región tropical. Ahora, con la vegetación derribada, han salido a la luz los olvidados y desesperados, demostrando que el sistema no ha logrado proteger a su pueblo.

Y si María aplastó la vegetación, han sido los planes de "recuperación" tanto del gobierno de Estados Unidos como de su subordinada administración puertorriqueña los que han causado la mayor devastación. El lema "Las acciones hablan más que las palabras" seguramente resume la situación.

Incluso se podría pensar que este es un plan bien ejecutado para destruir a Puerto Rico tal como lo conocemos, diezmar su población e imponer una agenda extranjera para beneficiar al capital, sin tener en cuenta las voces de las/os residentes. El plan "desmantela" y reestructura a Puerto Rico en beneficio de unos pocos – capitalistas.

Echemos un vistazo a una de las áreas para ilustrar esto.

Sector energético en juego

De todos los sectores, la electricidad es la más crucial. En esta isla tropical donde la ventilación y la refrigeración juegan un papel determinante para mantener los alimentos y los medicamentos a una temperatura segura, la pérdida de electricidad afecta a toda la población. Ninguna industria, ni hospitales, puede funcionar sin ella. Ya muchas personas han muerto por falta de electricidad para alimentar dispositivos que salvan vidas. La falta de electricidad también disminuye la capacidad de mantenimiento y suministro de agua potable.

Aunque se ha restaurado algo de energía eléctrica mediante el uso de generadores, hay muy pocos para mantener la energía necesaria y no todo el pueblo tiene acceso. Funcionan principalmente con diésel, que a su vez es más caro y depende del envío desde los EUA.

Después de la tormenta, el daño de las torres y los cables de energía caídos prevaleció. Pero no solo eso. La falta de materiales en el inventario expuso el plan fallido propuesto por la firma estadounidense Alix Partner, un plan por el cual la empresa eléctrica nacional, PREPA, contrató pagando alrededor de $45 millones.

Ese plan era "reestructurar" la agencia de energía eléctrica para pagar su parte de la deuda pública, que es de $9 mil millones. Esto significaba mantener un mínimo de inventario, desde el combustible hasta los postes, para mantener el presupuesto bajo. Este "ahorro" resultó ser no solo un error, sino una acción criminal contra el pueblo de Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico, Octobre 2017

FOTO: LOST AT E MINOR

El sindicato de trabajadores de la electricidad, UTIER, había criticado repetidamente esta movida. UTIER decía que dado que Puerto Rico es una isla, solo podría obtener los materiales necesarios a través del envío por barco, lo que se entorpecería en situaciones de tormentas, algo que es ordinario en el Caribe. Exactamente.

Incluso antes de la promulgación de la ley PROMESA que impuso una Junta de Control Fiscal para hacer pagar al pueblo boricua la deuda ilegítima de $74 mil millones, hubo intentos de privatizar la AEE. PROMESA lo convirtió en uno de sus objetivos.

Trabajadoras/es sindicales se oponen a la privatización

Ahora, después de que María llegó a la isla, el gobernador Ricardo Roselló, bajo la dirección del Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército de los EUA, el cual fue impuesto a Puerto Rico para restaurar el sector energético, contrató a varias empresas estadounidenses con el objetivo de privatizar la AEE a pesar de la firme oposición de los trabajadores de la UTIER.

El gobierno se niega a encender la planta de Palo Seco en la costa norte, cerca de San Juan, con la esperanza de que la desesperación del pueblo los obligue a aceptar la privatización. La planta de Palo Seco podría proporcionar la estabilización necesaria del sistema en esa área mientras se repara el resto.

En esta área se encuentra el Centro Médico de Río Piedras, el principal centro médico del país, donde se atienden los casos más severos de todo el archipiélago. Desde que se volvió a conectar la electricidad después de María, el Centro Médico ha perdido la energía eléctrica cuatro veces debido a la inestabilidad.

Ricardo Santos, ex presidente de la UTIER, ha expuesto estas interrupciones en cada programa de TV, radio e incluso en Facebook, y propuso un plan que podría evitar las interrupciones del servicio. Su solución y la de UTIER es encender la planta de Palo Seco, que se apagó antes que Irma y María con la falsa excusa de que no podía soportar un viento de 40 millas por hora.

La planta está en pie y operacional. Según Santos, el gobernador anunció un contrato con Weston Solutions para instalar un generador diesel para la región de Palo Seco que produciría 50 megavatios a un costo de $35 millones en alquiler por seis meses. En cambio, indicó Santos, dos unidades de la planta de Palo Seco podrían proporcionar tres veces más de energía, 150 MW, a un costo mucho más bajo.

Estados Unidos rechaza ayuda de Cuba, Venezuela, México

Otra acción criminal ha sido la negativa del gobierno de aceptar los servicios de la Asociación Americana de Energía Pública (APPA por las siglas en inglés), con sede en Washington, DC. Un artículo publicado el 6 de octubre en eenews.net informa que la APPA dijo: "En lugar de activar un acuerdo de ayuda mutua que podría haber acelerado el tiempo de recuperación, la empresa recurrió a Whitefish Energy Holdings, un pequeño contratista con sede en Montana, para coordinar la ayuda externa. La AEE no ha dado ninguna explicación para esa decisión".

Al mismo tiempo, Estados Unidos ha rechazado la ayuda ofrecida por Cuba, Venezuela y México. El Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas, el SME de México, que tiene vínculos fraternales con la UTIER, había ofrecido una brigada de trabajadores especializados. Cuba ofreció un hospital móvil con 35 médicos y otra brigada de electricistas. Venezuela ofreció un barco cargado con el tan necesario diesel. El gobernante colonial rechazó todas estas ofertas.

Mientras tanto, la "ayuda" de los EUA, la infame Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias - FEMA por sus siglas en inglés - el ejército, la policía y los contratistas, no están proporcionando lo que necesitan las personas más pobres ubicadas en lugares remotos de las islas.

Debido a la falta de comunicación, que incluye televisión, radio e Internet, la mayoría del pueblo boricua no tiene conocimiento de lo que sucede más allá de su vecindario. Muchas personas sospechan que los gobiernos de Estados Unidos y Puerto Rico han retrasado intencionalmente cualquier solución para mejorar la comunicación, de modo que puedan imponer cambios en las reglas que de otro modo habrían sido inaceptables y protestados por el pueblo y las organizaciones progresistas.

Uno de estos cambios es que el gobernador emitió una orden ejecutiva suspendiendo todos los contratos de negociación colectiva hasta el 28 de octubre. ¡No dio ninguna razón!

FEMA, el personal de "ayuda" juega mientras las/os puertorriqueños sufren

Rosa Clemente, una organizadora de la comunidad Boricua, periodista y artista de hip-hop que vive en la ciudad de Nueva York, fue a Puerto Rico para cubrir la situación, y asegurarse de que una persona Boricua progresista enviara informes desde la isla.

El 15 de octubre, Clemente fue al lujoso Hotel Sheraton frente al Centro de Convenciones donde el gobierno instaló el Centro de Comando, para registrar y transmitir desde el lobby lo que estaba sucediendo.

Lo que mostró fue escandaloso: el personal de FEMA, los militares de los EUA Y los contratistas, pasaban un estupendo rato, bebiendo, bailando, comiendo comida maravillosa y escuchando a un DJ tocar los últimos éxitos musicales. Mientras la gente moría de hambre en las montañas, moría de sed y falta de cuidado, se esforzaba por reparar lo poco que quedaba de sus casas, las personas presuntamente enviadas para ayudarles, en cambio retozaban en un hotel con aire acondicionado.

Si bien este artículo se ha centrado en la electricidad, debemos al menos mencionar la gravedad de otros problemas.

En términos de salud, la posibilidad de enfermedades transmitidas por el agua y por los mosquitos es una realidad. Ya han muerto personas por leptospirosis, una infección benigna en tiempos normales, causada por la orina de ratones y otros animales. Las inundaciones masivas en las que abundan los cadáveres de animales, junto con la falta de agua limpia para una higiene adecuada, han creado este último problema de salud.

El gobierno de EUA envió un "hospital flotante", el USS Comfort, con 900 empleados y sofisticadas máquinas de salud e instalaciones quirúrgicas. Puede ver 1.000 pacientes por día. Pero desde el 3 de octubre, cuando llegó frente a la costa de San Juan, se han visto menos de 100 pacientes.

Las/os pacientes primero deben ser vistos en el Centro Médico de Rio Piedras, donde esperan durante horas, o días, para ser referidos al barco y ser entonces atendidos allí.

La burocracia también se extiende a la "ayuda" de FEMA. En un país de habla española, se requiere que una persona complete una solicitud larga en inglés. FEMA dice que las personas pueden llenar las solicitudes por internet o por teléfono. Por supuesto, tanto el internet como el teléfono son casi inexistentes ahora.

Otro crimen que debemos mencionar es el agua tóxica que se encuentra en sitios de "superfund", es decir, agua muy contaminada. Según un informe de la CNN, esta agua se está distribuyendo a las personas.

Han pasado 119 años desde la invasión estadounidense a Puerto Rico. Su explotación ha destruido los medios de autosuficiencia del país, su economía. Ha aislado a Puerto Rico del mundo, imponiendo un sistema monetario extranjero y la marina mercante más cara del mundo como su forma exclusiva de comerciar.

Después de envenenar el agua, el aire y el suelo con bombardeos militares y fábricas farmacéuticas y petroquímicas, después de la represión del movimiento independentista puertorriqueño, después de la esterilización forzada de mujeres, después de la migración forzada y la separación de familias, después de estos y muchos más crímenes, Estados Unidos tiene una obligación con el pueblo puertorriqueño.

No es caridad, ni siquiera "ayuda". ¡Es una deuda que tiene con el pueblo boricua! ¡Son REPARACIONES!

¡Cancelar la odiosa deuda!

¡Abrir las fronteras a la solidaridad internacional!

¡Revocar las leyes Jones y PROMESA!

¡Militares y FEMA fuera de Puerto Rico!

¡Ayuda y asistencia real para el pueblo boricua!

¡Libertad para Puerto Rico!

¡Todo el poder para el pueblo!