

# United against capitalism

## Detroiters speak truth to power

By Workers World Detroit bureau

A people’s assembly in Detroit on Oct. 26 brought together a broad array of community organizations and activists united in their vision to rebuild this city, which has been hard hit by the ravages of capitalism. The meeting, billed as “Real Detroiters Speak Out,” was held to counter the message of Detroit as a model for “urban revitalization” being touted at the World Conference of Mayors, which took place at the MGM Grand Hotel that week.

It turned out the mayor’s conference was a dud, with only a few dozen participants. In contrast, the people’s assembly and speakout grew steadily throughout the evening. About 150 activists spoke on and heard about the role of the banks, global corporations and political comprador elites in perpetuating the superexploitation of the majority African-American, working-class and poor residents who have been totally left out of the so-called rebirth of Detroit.

The event was initiated by the Moratorium Now Coalition and held at St. Matthews St. Joseph Episcopal Church in Detroit, a historic sanctuary tied to the Black Liberation struggle since the time of the abolitionist movement. It was chaired by two young activists, Carlos Topp, a community organizer from Detroit’s West Side, and Fiana Arbab, a former leader of the Student Justice Coalition at the University of Michigan Dearborn.

The evening began with a showing from “Looting Detroit,” a film produced by community activists Jean Vortkamp and Jan Bendor. Then an array of activists, too numerous to all be called on in the time allotted, spoke eloquently on the various struggles of the workers and oppressed people of Detroit.

Will Copeland from Breathe Free Detroit, an environmental justice group, described how asthma rates in Detroit are five times higher than the rest of Michigan. Jonathan Roberts, from ROC [Restaurant Opportunities Center] Michigan, talked about organizing efforts among restaurant workers, whose minimum wage is only \$3 per hour in Michigan. He described the origin of food-service work in slavery and how it ties to chronic low wages especially for African-American women workers in the industry.

### Robbing the poor to pay the banks

Yvonne Jones, representing the Detroit Active and Retired Employees Association, described the devas-

tating effects of Detroit’s bankruptcy on city of Detroit retirees, whose pensions were robbed to pay debt service to the banks.

Other speakers included Baxter Jones, on behalf of persons with disabilities and one of the Homrich 9, who were arrested for blocking contractors from carrying out water shutoffs; Durk Barton, a street artist representing the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice; Dr. Penny Logan for Unemployed Detroiters, fighting to insure that a job is a human right; and a representative from Votes not Politicians, petitioning to end

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WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

Carlos Topp, a community organizer from Detroit’s West Side, and Fiana Arbab chair the Detroit Assembly.

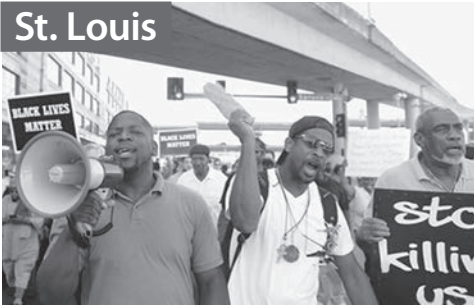
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## BLACK LIVES MATTER

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# St. Louis protests discredit cops, disrupt economy

By Lyn Neeley

One hundred days of angry, passionate protests in St. Louis are impacting the city's economy and raising criticism of the cops' use of excessive force. Protests were sparked by the Sept. 15 not-guilty verdict acquitting Jason Stockley, a white former police officer, in the fatal shooting of Anthony Lamar Smith, who was Black.

Daily demonstrations have cost the city over \$3 million in police overtime; major concerts have been canceled; grocery stores and malls have had temporary closures; tourists are afraid to visit the city; and the hope for winning the bid as home to the new Amazon headquarters is in jeopardy.

Protesters are committed to continue demonstrations for at least 100 days.

Some of the demonstration leaders were involved in the nearby Ferguson uprisings. They are evolving their organizing strategy by using the element of surprise to throw off the police and by live-streaming demonstrations online. They are organizing protests that cause economic disruption, especially in white neighborhoods.

"We are bringing it to the doors of people who do not have to live this life and just giving that little bit of discomfortableness," said LaShell Eikerenkoetter, a protest leader who is Black. "Now you understand what we as Black folks feel and why we are out here." (New York Times, Oct. 26)

A suit against the city of St. Louis filed by the American Civil Liberties Union says police used excessive force on Sept. 17, when they pepper sprayed and maced crowds without warning, struck or pepper sprayed people after they were in handcuffs or pushed to the ground, and targeted those taking pictures of police. Police also used the "kettle" to indiscriminately capture and arrest over 100 of the 300 people they have taken into custody. Among those arrested were an undercover cop, an Air Force officer, a medical student and several journalists.

Missouri ACLU Legal Director Tony Rothert com-

pared the use of chemical sprays to the fire hoses used against mainly Black protesters in the 1960s. Rothert is asking Judge Catherine Perry to bar St. Louis police from arbitrary arrests and the use of chemical sprays against protesters.

St. Louis has a 300-year-old history rooted in slavery and vicious racism. As a major port city along the Mississippi River, it was at the center of the slave trade. In 1719, Philippe Renault brought the first 500 kidnapped and enslaved people from the French colony of Haiti to be sold on the auction block outside the old St. Louis courthouse. In the 1790s, people held in slavery made up one-third of the town's 900 residents. Slave patrols — forerunners of today's police force — operated throughout the city, constantly on the lookout for runaways or enslaved people who were resisting. After visiting St. Louis, Army Capt. Amos Stoddard noted in 1804 that "[the owners] were habitually cruel to their slaves." (Scott K. Williams, "Slavery in St. Louis," tinyurl.com/qc5yo)

Journalism organizations objecting to the arrests of over 10 journalists have sent a letter to St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson criticizing the excessive force used by police on reporters, including pepper spray in the face. Leaders of 17 media advocacy groups signed the letter, including the American Society of News Editors, the Associated Press Media Editors and the Society of Professional Journalists.

Krewson has been forced to criticize interim Police Chief Lawrence O'Toole and call his remarks inflammatory. She called for an independent investigation into accusations of police brutality. She was critical of cops mimicking a chant that protesters were using: "Whose streets? Our streets!" which Chief O'Toole defended, saying police had "owned" that night.

Now the "bad press" of protest is putting a potential \$13 million in pay raises for city police in jeopardy. That's a potential \$6,000 increase per cop. The decision rests on the outcome of a tax bill before St. Louis voters on Nov. 7.

In spite of her criticism, Mayor Krewson has not met protesters' demands to replace Chief O'Toole, who is white. □



On Oct. 22, 100 Days of Protest continue in St. Louis, the center of the Southern slave trade, with its 300-year old history of vicious racism.



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.

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# Atlanta protest demands: 'Stop police brutality'

By Chris Coughlin  
Atlanta

National Stop Police Brutality Day was the culmination of a weekend of events here on Oct. 19-22, bringing together family members of people murdered at the hands of the police, as well as community organizers from Atlanta, Ferguson, Mo. and St. Louis. On Oct. 22, demonstrators gathered outside the CNN Center in downtown Atlanta with large banners and signs declaring "Black Lives Matter."

Jamarion Robinson's mother and family carried large photos of the devastating damage done to his body, pierced by 76 bullets fired by U.S. Marshals in 2016. Other participating mothers were Felicia Thomas, whose son Nick Thomas was killed by Cobb County police at his job in 2015; Montye Benjamin, whose son Jay-

vis was shot in 2013 by police in Avondale Estates; and Patricia Scott, whose son Raemawn died in the Fulton County jail in 2003. All have been steadfast in demanding accountability and truth in their children's deaths.

The demonstration coincidentally occurred as largely white crowds were flocking to an Atlanta United soccer game in the nearby stadium. There were some expressions of support and a few hostile remarks, but the mostly nonresponsive passersby intent on getting to the game reflected sharp racial and class divisions, and the complex relationship of sports to oppression and exploitation.

Just down the sidewalk at CNN, a group of Kurdish people, waving flags and carrying signs, were demanding open immigration for Kurdish refugees impacted by repression in Turkey and war

in Syria and Iraq. At one point, in a show of solidarity, the two crowds became one. Mothers of the slain and Kurdish women then took turns addressing the crowd.

Another significant moment was a presentation to the five Kennesaw State University cheerleaders who have "taken a knee" in protest of police brutality. They were given plaques in recognition of their brave acts in openly hostile Cobb County.

The closing element of the day was a march through downtown Atlanta. The demonstrators took to the streets, holding up traffic and calling for people to get "off the sidewalks and into the streets" and join them. People lining the sidewalks and in their cars showed support with raised fists and cheers. Several restaurant workers left their jobs to come out and "take a knee" as the protest closed down intersections on Peachtree Street. □



Holding down Peachtree Street intersection during Stop Police Brutality march in Atlanta, Oct. 22.

# Texans players take knee against racist owner

By Monica Moorehead

Before week eight of the National Football League's 2017 season, no member of the Houston Texans team had taken a knee in protest during the playing of the national anthem. That all changed dramatically when, on Oct. 29, right before their away game with the Seattle Seahawks, at least 30 Texans players knelt in unity to protest Texans' owner Bob McNair's racist remark. It was reported that the vast majority of the Seahawks home crowd gave the Texans players a standing ovation.

The sports channel ESPN revealed that at an owners-only meeting held almost two weeks ago in New York City, the billionaire owner McNair, one of the biggest contributors to Donald Trump's presidential campaign, stated that "we can't have the inmates running the prison." (USA Today, Oct. 29)

Several Seahawks sat during the anthem, led by defensive end Michael Bennett, one of the most outspoken players in the NFL. Bennett was racially profiled in late August by the Las Vegas police, who put a gun to his head while he was handcuffed. Bennett took another knee during the game after sacking Texans quarterback DeShaun Watson.

The "inmates" that McNair was referring to were the players, as much as he tried to deny the analogy. Once his comment was made public on Oct. 27, many of the players considered a spontaneous walkout from the Texans' practice facility. Two Texans players, D'Onta Foreman



Texans players and Michael Bennett of the Seattle Seahawks take a knee, Oct. 29.

and DeAndre Hopkins, boycotted practice on Oct. 28 after McNair "apologized" to the team.

McNair made the statement while owners were discussing whether to bench players on their individual teams if they took a knee during the anthem to either protest police brutality and racial inequality or in solidarity with former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who began the anthem protest during the 2016 season. The owners, in defiance of Trump's demand for the owners to punish players, decided not to take such actions, at least for the present moment.

Kaepernick has filed a grievance

against NFL owners, charging them with collusion for keeping him locked out from getting a job this season. He opted out of his 49ers contract in March. Various teams have carried on Kaepernick's protest during the 2017 season by taking a knee.



McNair's statement should not be viewed in isolation, but reflects the objective relationship that exists between team owners and the players — the owners are like other bosses, who expect their workers to just keep their mouths shut when it comes to social issues, especially police brutality, and be happy to get well paid while being superexploited.

And because the NFL is at least 70 percent African American, while the NFL owners are 99 percent white, McNair's racism shows that these players are demonized no differently than the huge disproportionate number of prisoners in the U.S. who are Black.

However, as these players become more disrespected by these owners, they will become more and more rebellious, just like enslaved field workers against the plantation masters.

Also see articles from *Workers World/Mundo Obrero Newspaper* [www.workers.org/books](http://www.workers.org/books):  
"Why Colin Kaepernick is right"

# In Bay Area 'Free Mumia' fight continues

A pair of forums titled "The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Continues" were held in San Francisco and Oakland on Oct. 27 and 28. The featured speaker was Rachel Wolkenstein, one of Mumia's lawyers during his long and successful fight to get off of death row. More recently, victory was achieved in getting Mumia life-saving hepatitis C medication, as the state was trying to kill him by medical neglect.

Now the fight has turned to the real possibility of a new trial. A 2016 U.S. Supreme Court ruling is the basis for Mumia's present lawyers to argue that Mumia has been denied due process. That's because former Philadelphia District Attorney Ronald Castille, now a Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice, has refused to step down from hearing appeals and motions in cases, including Mumia's, in which he had been involved as a prosecutor. The current DA's office is stonewalling the court orders requiring the release of related documents.



Rachel Wolkenstein speaking.

The meeting was sponsored by the Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and endorsed by Workers World Party, Justice for Palestinians, the Leonard Peltier Support Group, Donna Wallach, the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee, Alameda County Peace and Freedom Party, Taking Aim, Socialist Viewpoint, Bay Area National Lawyers Guild, Mobilization To Free Mumia, Kiilu Nyasha, Freedom Socialist Party, the International Bolshevik Tendency and the Oscar Grant Committee Against Police Brutality.

—Photo and story by Terri Kay

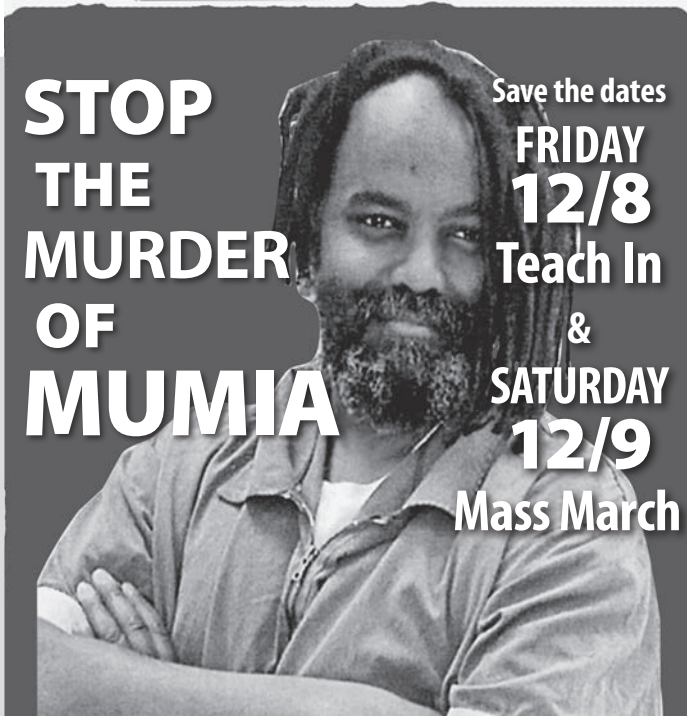
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# Imprisoned PA activist: ‘time to speak’ on water crisis

By Bryant Arroyo

On Sept. 19, 21, 24 and 27, prisoners at the State Correctional Institution—Frickville experienced four incidents with respect to the water crisis. Drinking contaminated toxic water, an overwhelming majority of the inmate population experienced bouts of diarrhea, vomiting, sore throats and dizziness. This isn't and cannot be construed as an isolated incident.

The SCI—Frickville staff passed out bottled spring water after the inmate population had been subjected to drinking the toxic contaminated water for hours, without ever being notified to refrain from consuming the tap water. This is as insidious as it gets!

SCI—Frickville's administration is acutely aware of the toxic water contamination crisis and has adopted an in-house patterned practice of intentionally failing to notify the inmate population to refrain from drinking tap water until we [the inmates] discover it for ourselves through the effects of diarrhea, vomiting, sore throats, etc.

In general, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections knows it has a water crisis on its hands. The top agencies, like the Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency, know about this “open secret” and have conspired to deliberately ignore most, if not all, of the inmates' official complaints.

Pennsylvania has received four drinking water violations from the EPA. The underlying problem is money, money and more money.

The DEP expects to receive 30 percent in drinking water grants, split between 30 percent for air and 25 percent for superfund clean up. This leaves us with 43 inspectors, but, to meet the EPA mandates, we need at the least 85 full-time inspectors. This means Pennsylvania inspectors have double the workload, and this has resulted in some systems not being inspected.

Logically, the larger systems get routine inspections, and systems that have chronic problems get inspected, but smaller and rural systems like ours may

not be inspected because we are the minority that society doesn't care about. *Persona non grata!*

Many Pennsylvania taxpayers would be surprised to know that our infrastructure is older than that of Flint, Mich., with its toxic water crisis. Something is very wrong in our own backyard, and the legislative body wants to keep a tight lid on it. But how long can this secret be contained before we experience an outbreak of the worst kind?

Silence no more: It is time to speak. I could not stress the urgency enough. We need to take action by notifying our Pennsylvania state legislators, make them accountable to the tax paying citizens and highlight Pennsylvania DOC's water crisis to assist those of us who are cornered and forced to drink toxic, contaminated water across the Pennsylvania state prisons.

There's no telling how many of us inmates have contracted the waterborne disease polycythemia vera by drinking this toxic contaminated water for years without recourse to medical diagnosis



*Arroyo is an environmental activist imprisoned at the State Correctional Institution—Frickville in Pennsylvania.*

or treatment. The Pennsylvania DOC refuses to test the inmate population, in spite of the ongoing water crisis.

We all know what would happen if the inmate population discovered that they had contracted the disease. Obviously, it wouldn't be economically feasible for the DOC medical department to pay the cost to treat all the inmates.

If you want to obtain a goal you've never obtained, you have to transcend by doing something you've never done before. Let's not procrastinate; let's unify in solidarity and take action before an outbreak becomes inevitable. There's no logic to action, afterwards, if we could have avoided the unnecessary catastrophe in the first place.

Let's govern ourselves in the right direction by contacting and filing complaints to our legislative body, the DEP, EPA and their higher-ups, etc. In the mountains of rejection, you are our yes. □

# Eyewitness Ames plant fire: ‘a week of hell’

By a local activist in the Parkersburg, W.Va., area

It was around 12:20 a.m. I had just gotten off a 10-hour shift and was heading back to my apartment when I happened to notice what looked like a gas flame at a plant off in the distance. My ride and I decided to investigate, so we got off 7th Street and began heading to the interstate. Once there we saw the biggest fire I had ever seen, with a thick black column of smoke rising shooting out from it as sirens whined in the background.

I assumed it was some freak accident, that it would be put out, and that I'd hear about it in our local news. I headed home, ate my meal and went to sleep.

What I then woke up to, and lived through over the next week, was far different than anything I could imagine.

What had taken place was that a plastics warehouse owned by Intercontinental Export-Import Inc. had caught on fire. The city of Parkersburg was thoroughly unprepared, despite hosting 30 or more chemical plants in and around the city, including four or five IEI warehouses.

More than 100 first-responder firefighters from 40 different fire stations, including from neighboring Ohio, as well as an environmental emergency company, came to put out what many began to call Chemblaze 2017.

Despite sporadic rainfall and the relentless day-and-night efforts of the first responders, the blaze continued for nearly a week. The thick black column traveled from “ground zero” to neighboring working-class communities as well as communities across the river on the northside of Parkersburg. Residents of towns 30 miles away have reported the smell of burnt chemicals in the air.

A thick, inescapable chemical odor was constantly present throughout the week, forcing city and state officials to declare a state of emergency. Schools were closed, residents were warned to stay indoors, and gas masks were distributed in Parkersburg and its sister city of Vienna.

Myself and many of my neighbors,

even while staying indoors, experienced symptoms including nausea, burning eyes, headaches and increased respiratory problems even during day six of the disaster, with the fire largely put out and no visible smoke hovering over the communities.

From initial reports, roughly 50 to 60 patients have been treated in relation to the fire, many with hallmark symptoms of chemical pneumonitis. This figure is likely to increase as it is only reflective of patients going to the emergency room.

Eyewitnesses have reported that several of the first responders were visibly ill in the street, and had to be taken to hospital.

Two days after the fire began, amidst the usual song and dance of “everything is fine, it's all safe,” the city urged residents to boil their water to neutralize possible contaminants related to the fire.

A local news website, [newscenter.tv](#), gave an incomplete list of chemicals contained in the IEI warehouse. It included polyvinyl chloride, nylon, formaldehyde, carbon black, titanium dioxide, anhydride TLV 0.1pm, polytetrafluoroethylene (Teflon), styrene-acrylonitrile, polybutylene terephthalate and acrylic sheets.

Three days into the disaster, a Wood County Commission meeting was held where IEI representative Sunny Naik stated: “A disaster of this nature is something we have never encountered before. The (fire departments) have the most technical knowledge on a disaster of this sort. ... We provided the MSDS [Material Safety Data Sheets] of the things in the building. We will take all responsibility for their insurance companies as the No. 1 priority will be cleaning up the site.” ([newsandsentinel.com](#), Oct. 24)

Sounds reasonable enough, except within these statements is a glaringly bold-faced corporate lie: State officials have said that IEI has filed absolutely no MSDS inventories. The state and federal chemical right-to-know law requires disclosures for certain chemicals if stored in certain amounts.

State environmental inspectors visited the IEI warehouse earlier this year. West

Virginia Department of Environmental Protection records released on Oct. 25 reveal numerous violations, indicating continuing problems at a facility that two local volunteer firefighters had warned could be at risk of a major fire nearly 10 years earlier.

Lawrence Messina, director of communications for the West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety, said that no emergency and hazardous chemical inventory forms for the IEI facility were supplied to emergency response entities.

In 2015, the WVDEP issued a consent order regarding IEI's failure to file water runoff discharge monitoring reports. IEI was slapped with an \$80,000 penalty and was forced to make an initial payment of \$20,000. The DEP chief communications officer, Jake Glance, stated that “the rest of it was contingent on them filing their DMRs with us, and they never did.” ([newsandsentinel.com](#), Oct. 24)

The DEP's Division of Water and Waste Management investigated the conditions in the warehouse in February. Inspectors

said that “waste and pellets were still scattered around the site,” a diesel spill had not been fully cleaned, and storage drums left outside were deteriorating. Additionally, the company had continued water pollution violations and had not submitted required monthly progress reports to the DEP. ([wvgazettemail.com](#), Oct. 25)

An electrical fire broke out at the same IEI plant in 2012, but was quickly put out by local fire departments. Former City Fire Inspector Tim Flinn recalls that the sprinkler system didn't work then. ([thenewscenter.tv](#), Oct. 25)

The plastics warehouse, formerly an Ames True Temper Tool plant, had a contract with DuPont to store its chemicals. DuPont officials have now attempted to distance themselves and obfuscate their relationship to the plant.

While no official answer has been given as to the exact cause of the most recent fire, it's a safe bet to assume that investigators will come back with a report of corporate negligence as the root cause — something all too familiar to the citizens of Parkersburg, and to West Virginians in general. □

# Detroiters speak truth to power

*Continued from page 1*

gerrymandering in Michigan.

John Philo from the Maurice Sugar Law Center explained his organization's lawsuit to recover the \$7 billion in lost revenue-sharing stolen by state government from cities across Michigan. Jim Anderson, professor of history at Michigan State University, gave statistics documenting the robbery of Michigan cities by the Pentagon war budget.

Vanessa Fluker, people's lawyer and longtime anti-foreclosure activist, outlined the targeting and robbery of Detroit's African-American community by the banks, which led to 65,000 mortgage foreclosures from 2005 to 2009 in De-

troit, and tens of thousands of tax foreclosures in the aftermath.

Tom Stephens explained how Detroit's tens of thousands of water shutoffs are a product of the plan to regionalize the city's water system, to signal to the banks the extent to which the administrators will go to satisfy the banks' debt payments.

Tyrone Allen of the National Action Network spoke on the mistreatment of veterans in the city. A representative of the Detroit Independent Freedom Schools Movement described the destruction of public education in Detroit on behalf of for-profit charters, and DIFS's efforts to supplement city schools by teaching real Black history to the youth.

*Continued on the next page*



# AFL-CIO Convention concludes October 25

# How can labor fight back?

By Martha Grevatt

From Oct. 22 to Oct. 25 more than 1,200 delegates to the AFL-CIO's quadrennial convention met in St. Louis. They came from all over the U.S. and represented a wide range of public and private sector unions.

The labor federation met in a community that has been in revolt against police brutality, first in Ferguson, Mo., and recently in St. Louis itself. Speakers at the convention repeatedly made the link between labor rights and civil rights.

Delegates had the opportunity to put program into practice when the America's Center, where the convention was held, locked out a delegation from Black Lives Matter that had been invited to speak. The Center management cited "danger to property" as the reason the doors were chained shut. The BLM delegation included state Rep. Bruce Franks.

Former AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt-Baker urged the delegates to walk out and join the BLM members. When they did, the center management relented and let Franks and the BLM activists in. This action took place at a pre-conference program called "All of us or none of us."

By the close of the convention, the delegates had passed 56 separate resolutions, most of them of a progressive nature. The labor federation took positions to combat climate change, for national health care, for a "Workers Bill of Rights," for full employment and a \$15 minimum wage, for immigrant rights, to "condemn rising fascism" and one declaring that "war is not the answer."

Not all the stands taken were progressive. For example, resolutions were passed reviving the chauvinistic "Buy America" campaigns. Earlier this year President Rich Trumka made a treacherous decision to work with the Donald Trump administration's economic advisory council. Trumka and other labor leaders quit the council in response to Trump's pro-fascist comments after the murder of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville, Va., on Aug. 12.

## Detroiters speak truth

*Continued from page 4*

### International solidarity

Highlights of the evening included a video from young, anti-austerity activists in Puerto Rico. Katja Torres and Gabriela Ros, members of Our Revolution Puerto Rico and the Citizen's Front for the Auditing of the Debt, gave a first-hand account of how the continuing lack of electricity and water in Puerto Rico since hurricanes Irma and Maria is a direct result of the banks' destruction of the island's infrastructure. The crowd erupted into chants of "Detroit, Puerto Rico! Same struggle, same fight!" after their presentation.

Kim Simmons, just released after 29 years since being sentenced to life in prison as a juvenile, said that despite a Supreme Court decision outlawing life sentences for juveniles, Wayne County prosecutor Kym Worthy has released only a handful of the hundreds of juvenile lifers impacted by this ruling.

Marilyn Jordan, from the Detroit People's Task Force, recounted their organization's targeting of the Detroit crime lab for its mishandling of evidence leading to countless wrongful convictions.

The speakout reflected the commonality of all the struggles affecting the oppressed in Detroit, and the need for unity to bring all the organizations fighting these battles together in a united front against capitalism and the banks. This call for unity in the common struggle was eloquently expressed by Maureen Taylor of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, Joanna Underwood of New Era Detroit and a delegation from Black Youth Project 100.

Abayomi Azikiwe of the Moratorium Now Coalition summed it up: "Tens of thousands of water shutoffs. Two hundred public schools closed due to state control. Tens of thousands of homes foreclosed. Who's responsible? It's the banks and corporations." He conveyed how Detroit was targeted for these attacks as a result of its position as a center of the Black Liberation struggle. Azikiwe urged all those present to continue the coalition, "so on the 50th anniversary of the Detroit rebellion, we can move forward the process of rebuilding Detroit in the interests of the people." □

Trumka, Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler and Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre were re-elected with no opposition. In 2009, Shuler became the first woman to hold the office of secretary-treasurer. Gebre, a Sudanese immigrant who begins his second term, is the first immigrant to hold his post.

### Need for a fightback program and strategy

In "Value, Price and Profit," based on an 1865 speech, Karl Marx spoke about labor unions while Europe was in the midst of a mass strike wave for higher wages. Marx hailed this development and tore apart an argument that these struggles were pointless because higher wages would only lead to higher prices.

Nevertheless, Marx saw the limitations of fighting for a bigger share of the value labor alone creates. "Instead of the conservative motto: A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" Marx argued, the unions "ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: 'Abolition of the wages system!'"



## Tesla workers protest inside Calif. plant

After Tesla workers, who build zero-emission electric cars, rallied outside the Fremont, Calif., factory on Oct. 24 to protest recent firings, they marched into the plant to drive home their demand to rehire the workers. They accused Tesla bosses of targeting workers who had complained about working conditions. This action follows a National Labor Relations Board ruling that Tesla violated the workers' rights by discouraging their efforts to unionize. Tesla must attend a hearing before an NLRB administrative law judge on Nov. 14 in Oakland. The complaint against Tesla was filed in August by the United Auto Workers.

In the workers' letter to Tesla management about the protest, they noted that while Tesla is important for "the regional economy" as an employer of thousands: "[W]e expect Tesla to be a responsible employer that leads with fair treatment of its workers. Among the fired workers are people who have raised their voices with concerns about health and safety risks, fair pay and the right to organize free from intimidation, and we are concerned that these workers may have been unjustly fired for doing so." (Business Insider, Oct. 24)

What's exciting is that Tesla workers, who are on the leading edge of 21st-century auto making, were paying homage to UAW history by taking their demands into the plant. The 1936-37 sit-down strike in Flint, Mich. — which ended 80 years ago — helped establish the UAW. On with today's struggle!

## Strike threat wins living wage for university workers

Dining hall workers at Northeastern University in Boston were set to strike Oct. 4. But only hours before, they ratified a five-year contract significantly raising members' wages by \$5.65 an hour. The workers were inspired by a 22-day strike at Harvard last fall, when UNITE HERE Local 26 dining hall workers fought hard for and won a contract guaranteeing a living annual wage of \$35,000 for full-time workers. (See extensive coverage in WW.)

In addition to increasing the number of full-time workers, the contract stipulates that the university will now cover 97 percent of health care insurance; provisions for immigrant workers were expanded and nondiscrimination language was strengthened, including gender identity and expression; and there are more sick days and new snow days. The workers will also be able to join Local 26's pension plan to save for retirement. (Local26.org, Oct. 10)

Today, more than 150 years later, the AFL-CIO still has no anti-capitalist orientation. The Workers Bill of Rights, while it seeks to ameliorate the growing pauperization of the working class and its genocidal impact on the most oppressed, still boils down to the old "conservative motto."

For unions to really advance the interests of their membership and the broader working class, they need a program that challenges the capitalist system of exploitation. They need to recognize that the relationship between labor and capital is inherently antagonistic.

Moreover, there was no serious deliberation on how to resist the ongoing assault on labor or the growth of white supremacy and extreme bigotry. Why not have a conversation about employing general strikes, political strikes, sit-downs and other militant, outside-the-box tactics to push back the whole right-wing agenda? Immigrant workers showed the way on May Day 2006.

The convention took some positive steps in the direction of social justice unionism, in contrast to the narrow, pragmatic business unionism that has hamstringed the U.S. labor movement in the recent past. Showing concrete solidarity with Black Lives Matter was one important such step.

However, much more is needed. Now is the time to revive militant class struggle politics and build a global movement of all working-class and oppressed people. □

## Friday the 13th union victory for LA gravediggers

The bosses at the Rose Hills Memorial Park & Mortuaries were acting like horror movie monsters, but that didn't stop the gravediggers, who bury 7,000 people a year at Los Angeles' largest cemetery. On Friday, Oct. 13, the National Labor Review Board certified election results and handed a victory to the mostly Latinx "internment specialists" under the wing of Service Employees Union Local 265.

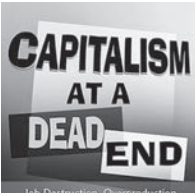
When the workers began organizing, management wielded standard tactics, along with some intimidating tricks. Anti-union consultants held meetings once and then twice a week leading up to the vote. They tried to scare younger workers with threats that promotions would be frozen if they voted union. Then they offered a treat by raising wages a month before the vote. After sending friendly letters to workers' homes, they resorted to mind games. Attempting to instill fear, management hired subcontractors and forced the workers to train them. But the workers saw through the anti-union fog and trusted the union more than the vampire bosses. (LA Weekly, Oct. 14)

## Workers win union at NOLA's largest hotel

New Orleans is a city powered by workers in the \$7.4 billion tourism industry. Some 80,000 workers make that possible — running front desks, room service, concierges and casinos, and doing janitorial jobs. (New Orleans Advocate, Oct. 8) Workers at the city's largest hotel, the Hilton Riverside, won a major victory when they joined UNITE HERE Local 2262 earlier this year. The national union represents 270,000 apparel, hotel, casino and restaurant workers in the U.S.

Though Hilton workers, many of them women of color, can't talk about contract terms still on the table, a mid-October rally, covered by Best of New Orleans, revealed some of the issues — from badly needed raises to consecutive days off. A major problem is that management often schedules workers for a late shift, followed the next day by an early one.

Than Dao, a cocktail server at a Local 2262 casino, told BNO she had worked for 16 years at \$5 to \$6 an hour. She got a raise with Local 26 and thinks the casino respects workers now. Unions give workers a new set of power tools. □



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100th anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution

PART 4

External and internal problems, strengths and setbacks

By Deirdre Griswold

Karl Marx was not a utopian — that is, he did not pull out of his head the concept of what an ideal society would look like.

Rather, he analyzed capitalism, as well as earlier forms of class and pre-class societies, to understand what gives rise to new social forms and the passing away of older ones.

Why did private property and the development of classes take over from the early, communal form of human society, which had existed around the globe for tens of thousands of years?

How is it that capitalist development, which has led to a spectacular increase in productivity in pursuit of profits for the ruling class, has also laid the material basis for realizing socialism? By abolishing private ownership of the means of production, socialism is the only system that can carry out plans to use the wealth created by the workers to benefit everyone.

Marx also studied revolutions as the necessary catalyst to make such a transformation possible. He wrote that people “make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.” (The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte)

What happened in Russia in 1917, and later in all the nations under the heel of the vast czarist empire, confirmed this important concept of Marx. The revolution came because of unbearable poverty and repression, but it came to the weakest of the capitalist countries, not the most advanced. While the Russian revolutionaries had counted on the revolution spreading in Europe because of the desperate conditions created by World War I, that didn’t happen. There were soldiers’ and workers’ rebellions in several European countries, but they were crushed, leaving the Bolshevik Revolution surrounded by stronger capitalist powers bent on its destruction.

Lenin on world revolution

V.I. Lenin, the great revolutionary thinker and fighter, recognized the terrible dangers facing the besieged Bolshevik Revolution. In a resolution for the 7th Congress of the Russian Communist Party on March 6, 1918, he wrote: “The Congress considers the only reliable guarantee of consolidation of the socialist revolution that has been victorious in Russia to be its conversion into a world working-class revolution.”

Six weeks later, in a speech to the Moscow Soviet on April 23, he said: “We are a revolutionary working-class contingent that has advanced to the forefront, not because we are better than other workers, not because the Russian proletariat is superior to the working class of other countries, but solely because we were one of the most backward countries in the world. We shall achieve final victory only when we succeed at last in conclusively smashing international imperialism which relies on the tremendous strength of its equipment and discipline.

“But we shall achieve victory only together with all the workers of other

countries of the whole world. ... Our backwardness has put us in the forefront, and we shall perish unless we are capable of holding out until we receive powerful support from workers who have risen in revolt in other countries.”

The Bolshevik Revolution survived for another 74 years, a testament to the enormous potential of a workers’ state, even one born out of underdevelopment and devastating imperialist war. But from the beginning it had to make concessions in order to exist.

Need for skilled personnel

Take the question of personnel to run the new society. In the civil war and invasion by 14 imperialist countries that followed the actual seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, the most advanced workers committed to the revolution rushed to the battle. Many never came back. They died of war wounds, epidemics and even famine. Lost were the most dedicated communists with skills, both political and practical, desperately needed to get production going again and also to win over the masses to enlightened views on women’s rights, the rights of oppressed nationalities, how to collectivize agriculture, how to take over and run the factories and other workplaces under new worker management, etc.

Sam Marcy, the founder and theoretical leader of Workers World Party, wrote on this in a pamphlet called “Soviet Socialism: Utopian or Scientific?” The Bolsheviks could not make history out of their own materials, he said, referring to Marx, but had to make do with the conditions that prevailed in Russia.

“First and foremost among these conditions,” wrote Marcy, “was that the workers’ state in the USSR only succeeded because of its alliance with the much more numerous peasantry. The alliance was correct, principled and indispensable in the overthrow of czarism. But it presented an enormous problem. The proletariat as a class is supremely interested in the socialization of property and production, which the bourgeoisie has in fact already started. But the peasants are concerned with private property, their private plots. The alliance showed its difficulties right from the start of the revolution. How to keep the loyalty of the peasants?”

Wolves in sheep’s clothing

“This led to the next problem. It was not a pure workers’ state in the sense that the proletariat was a majority of the population or was able to organize a new social system on its own. The truth of the matter, as Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin and Stalin all saw and agreed, is that it was necessary to rely to a large extent on the old czarist administrative apparatus — a bitter pill to swallow. This was true even in the military sphere. Former czarist officers were recruited, even though they had to be guarded by communist civilian cadre, the commissars. ...

“Relying upon elements of the old state apparatus in all fields of life held not only obvious dangers but a hidden one: These elements knew how to show eagerness and servility to the state, as in czarist times. The Communist Party, which they had previously scorned and feared — not

to speak of imprisoned and banished — now could become a source of privilege if they showed support for the government and party.

“The question before the Bolsheviks was how to deal with these layers — the old bureaucracy, the officialdom, remnants of the old educated classes — who now sensing the victory of the revolution tried to find an easy entrance into it.”

How to feed the people?

During the civil war the Bolsheviks had to requisition grain from the peasants to avert an even greater famine. In 1921, shortly after the counterrevolution was finally defeated, Lenin advocated a temporary return to market relations in agriculture — the New Economic Policy — in order to stimulate food production, which had fallen to a disastrous low. It was another necessary step backward, and one that led some rich peasants, known as kulaks, to become richer while the majority remained poor.

Lenin’s death in 1924 was a terrible blow to the party and the revolution. As the acknowledged leader, he had participated in vigorous debate and discussion at every step along the way, usually, but not always, winning over the rest of the party leadership to his point of view.

Without Lenin, how to collectivize agriculture became a bone of contention in the party. To win over the poorer peasants and try to neutralize the kulaks, the government needed to supply the collectives with material support. The lives of the peasants would be vastly improved if the collectives could offer them electrification, education and less back-breaking agricultural work by providing at least horses and, even better, tractors and mechanized harvesters.

The 15th Congress of the Communist Party in 1927 resolved to proceed with collectivization at a gradual pace and let the peasants join the collectives voluntarily. Soviet industry was still only on the verge of being rationalized by the first five-year plan, which began in 1928. It was not yet producing the machinery needed to run many large-scale collectives.

But by the end of 1929, peasants were being forced to join the collectives, many of which had not yet been supplied with either horses or farm machinery. This led to resistance on their part, the slaughter of livestock and destruction of farm equipment, with many peasants abandoning the collectives. Another famine followed in the countryside in 1932-33.

Women and gay rights set back

Other setbacks occurred in this period. Legal breakthroughs won soon after the revolution regarding the rights of women and gay men were partially rolled back.

The Soviet Union had been the first country in the world to remove restrictions on divorce and abortion, as well as same-sex love. But Soviet law was changed in 1936 and again in 1944 to put restrictions on divorce in order to “strengthen the family.” A decree of July 8, 1944, also

imposed a fee of at least 100 rubles to obtain a divorce. While the rationale given was concern over the fate of children, the result was to put wives more firmly under the control of their husbands.

In 1936, abortions, which had been made free on demand in 1920, were banned except in cases involving danger to the mother’s health. It became a crime for anyone to provide an abortion other than authorized doctors.

All restrictions on same-sex love had been removed just months after the 1917 revolution. But on March 7, 1934, a decree was issued criminalizing same-sex love between men and setting a punishment of up to five years of hard labor in prison.

Of course, we cannot forget that in even the most advanced capitalist countries, similar and often much more repressive laws were the norm at that time. Where they have been changed since then, it is because of the strength of the women’s and LGBTQ movements and not the enlightened goodwill of the capitalist ruling class.

Soviet Union survived and inspired

These concessions to social conservatism, serious as they were, did not undo the revolution or restore the old ruling classes. In fact, they came at a time when the Soviet Union was pulling ahead in industrial production after the initiation of its first five-year plan. The capitalist world, on the other hand, was in the depths of the Great Depression, a crisis caused by the inner contradictions of the system itself.

To millions of workers and oppressed peoples around the world, the Soviet Union remained a beacon of hope. Great communist parties sprung up in both the imperialist countries and the colonies their rulers exploited. Among the latter, the parties in China, Korea and Vietnam eventually managed to carry out socialist revolutions based on both national liberation from imperialism and the struggle of the workers and peasants against class oppression and exploitation.

Even the outbreak of another disastrous world war failed to undo the 1917 Revolution. In June 1941, the Nazi regime launched Operation Barbarossa, sending 4 million German troops to invade the USSR along an 1,800-mile front. It was then, and continues to be, the largest invasion the world has ever seen.

The Germans captured 5 million Red Army troops in the war that followed. A majority of these POWs never returned alive. The Nazis deliberately starved and killed 3.3 million prisoners, as well as a huge number of civilians, through their “Hunger Plan,” intended to replace the Slavic peoples with German settlers. Nazi death squads and gassing operations also murdered over a million Soviet Jews.

But the enormous heroism of the Soviet people in defending the gains of their revolution won the day. The war in Europe ended with soldiers of the Red Army planting the hammer-and-sickle flag on the roof of the Reichstag in Berlin.

*Next: Revolution in the belly of the beast?*

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WWP leader’s open letter to revolutionaries

# How to commemorate centennial of October Revolution

Revolutionary greetings to all, on the centennial of the Russian Revolution. The 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution may have different meanings for many of us across the world, based on our age, background and political experiences. That’s understandable. Why is this such an important anniversary?

The 1917 revolution, referred to sometimes as the October Revolution, and the establishment of the first socialist country, the Soviet Union, was a new beginning, not just for Russia, but for the entire world. The conditions for the revolution grew out of the suffering that the imperialist war subjected the masses of Russia and all of Europe to.

Revolutionaries in Russia hoped that their revolution would spread to Europe. That did not happen. Still the Russian Revolution opened up a century of struggle for socialism, for revolution and for solidarity with the national liberation struggles throughout Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East. It was the precursor to the Chinese and Cuban revolutions, other revolutions, and all of the chapters of a century of worldwide class struggle against capitalism and all forms of oppression.

The Russian Revolution convinced millions of people in every part of the world that another world is possible.

The capitalist ruling class will mark this anniversary by loudly reminding us that the Soviet Union is no more, and that this is proof that communism failed and capitalism prevailed. In a sense, all who believe that history has not ended, and that there has to be an alternative to capitalism, will be put on trial this anniversary by the ruling class.

It is unlikely that the capitalists will tell the truth about how much they hated and feared the revolution from the very beginning, and how the idea that workers and peasants would dare to rise up against the ruling class and free themselves from their masters horrified them. Nor are they likely to mention that world imperialism, led by U.S. imperialism, dedicated itself to crushing the Soviet Union in one way or another and spared no effort economically, militarily, covertly and overtly in accomplishing this.

Why is the Soviet Union no more? Like Workers World Party, most political tendencies in the movement have their own ideas about that.

It is a discussion that is inexhaustible. It’s a discussion we should have, even if it leads to arguments, as long as we agree not to let the arguing get in the way of the work we must do going forward. Which brings us to our main point.

How should we use this anniversary?

The capitalists pray that the fight for socialist revolution ended with the Soviet Union’s demise. It is up to us and millions like us, to affirm that it did not, and that it must not. This is not dreaming; it is cold, calculating realism.

We believe that capitalism has reached an unprecedented stage in the process of dying. Any hope that capitalism can be reformed and made more humane, is also dying as it surely must.

From the perspective of the working-class movement and the struggle of the oppressed, ultimately this is a reality that can’t be ignored much longer. This reality pushes the class struggle and the global struggle against capitalism into a new phase.

The capitalists can no longer pretend that their system can meet the needs of the people. All of the lies and illusions about the wonders of capitalism are crashing, in prelude to the system itself crashing.

For the oppressed, all the system has to offer are deportations, prison, death by cops, Muslim bans, occupation and war, and the way Trump is treating the devastated people of Puerto Rico. Some sections of the working class used to feel secure before globalization, automation, austerity, union busting, bank foreclosures and pauperization.

Now, all that capitalism has to offer them is white supremacy, “make American great,” misogyny, anti-LGBTQ bigotry and an opioid epidemic.

In more and more ways, capitalism is an existential threat to all life.

How much time do we have before capitalism destroys the environment, making the planet uninhabitable?

When an empire is falling apart, as the U.S. imperialist empire is, it is more, not less tempting to use its remaining advantage, military might. The question is not if, but when and where the next U.S. war will be? Will it be against Iran? Will it be against Venezuela? Will it be somewhere in Africa, where the Pentagon has thousands of troops in at least 53 countries? Or, will it be against People’s Korea, which would really be against both Koreas and China, making it a third world war? How much longer can we endure such a threat?

A new beginning for revolutionary struggle and higher level of unity

We propose that every group and every individual that considers themselves to be revolutionaries and in the service of the workers and oppressed of the world, including Workers World Party, embrace the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution as a time to rededicate ourselves, not only to fighting capitalism every day, but to bringing it to an end at the earliest possible time, and replacing it with socialism.

Furthermore, we propose that we all commit ourselves to achieving a higher level of revolutionary unity in the struggle. The form that this unity might take is not a question that needs to be answered here. The program, basis and plan of action for such unity are questions that we can answer together if there is the understanding and the will to do so. We will all need to reassess whether or not we are holding on to conceptions, attitudes or any baggage that might be a barrier to a higher level of revolutionary unity. It’s the right time to do that.

An immediate program and a maximum one

As much as we’d like to, we cannot predict capitalism’s imminent demise. Revolution, as a practical task in the U.S., is not yet on the table. The masses will be fighting under capitalism indefinitely for their basic needs and against repression, against all of the mounting attacks and for the right to organize.

Revolutionaries can’t be distant from or above these struggles; they must be in them. Revolutionaries have to work with progressive forces knowing that some of these forces will become revolutionary, while others never will.

We will be constantly fighting the tendency within the larger movement to be pulled in to the electoral appeals of the capitalist parties. This is all the more reason why, as revolutionaries, we need both an immediate perspective and a maximum one. There must be an end game. However long it takes, we must build an independent, mass revolutionary resistance able to take down capitalism.

Trump: a symptom of the crisis

Trump is a symptom of the severity of the capitalist crisis and of the political and economic explosions that are ahead of us. Trump, with a section of the ruling class behind him, has launched a pre-emptive strike against the prospect of class unity in the coming struggle against capitalism. His goal is to smash the working class into a thousand pieces by attacking its most oppressed sections. We must prevent that from happening at all cost. Fighting the white supremacists and neofascist forces that Trump has empowered is our number one task at this moment

It is critical to understand that Trump didn’t win because of “identity politics,” which is a phrase that really means the oppressed. The struggles of Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples, or Muslims, immigrants, women, the disabled and LGBTQ people, are not responsible for Trump. And neither is Russia. The crises of U.S. imperialism and capitalism, plus racism and the Democratic Party’s abandonment of the entire working class, are to blame.

Almost 100 years ago the communist movement, with the guidance of Vladimir Lenin, changed its main slogan from “Workers of the world unite” to “Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite.” This change meant that the best revolutionaries in the working-class movement understood that to weaken imperialism, there would have to be solidarity between the workers of the oppressor countries and the people of the oppressed nations.

The circumstances and conditions of the struggles of oppressed peoples may be different than they were in Lenin’s time. Oppressed people may have different demands and they may be more intertwined with the workers’ struggle. But they remain extensions of the struggle for national liberation and self-determination.

The struggles of oppressed peoples, including women, LGBTQ people and the disabled, are not secondary struggles. They are working-class struggles and they are central to the working-class movement. If our mission is to prevent Trump and the ruling class from smashing working-class solidarity into 10,000 pieces, then first and foremost we have to stand with and defend the most oppressed.

Re-empowering the revolutionary perspective

The capitalist ruling class is not going to allow itself to be voted out. We cannot live in denial of this fact. The urgency of

Larry Holmes

WW PHOTO:  
BRENDA RYAN



this truth must move us all to act. We cannot substitute ourselves for the masses, as tempting as that is sometimes. Nothing can be achieved without the people. We understand that our class must overcome many weaknesses. But we have confidence that it will. It is entirely possible that a time may come when the masses are ready to move and it is the revolutionaries who are not ready, because being ready was not their perspective.

When the great revolutionary leader Lenin returned to Russia from exile in Switzerland in April of 1917, many of his comrades told him that the conditions in Russia made a socialist revolution impossible. Fortunately, he convinced them that they were mistaken.

Let’s make the anniversary of October 1917 the occasion to restart, in a serious and meaningful way, the perspective of socialist revolution. It’s a perspective that has been far too weak for far too long.

This anniversary is a good time to remind the world that there is a future beyond this terrible system. Moreover, that future is not another 100 years away. People who are alive today will help bury capitalism in the graveyard of history.

Youth are rising up

There are promising signs. Capitalism is more and more hated with every passing hour. Amongst the youths of the world, socialism is more popular than capitalism.

And many of these youths are rising up. They are the ranks of Black Lives Matter, of the immigrant rights movement and of Antifa. They are shutting down white supremacist speakers, pulling down racist statues, and fighting fascism and white supremacy. Young militants are also starting to show that they understand the need to engage and learn from wider sections of the working class.

Women and LGBTQ people are visible in the leadership of the rebellion. This bodes well for the future. It is a sign of the transformation of the working class. It’s revolutionary and it must go forward and be defended.

Solidarity is so important

Capitalism has always threatened the health of the masses. Now that the system is in an advanced state of decay, its existence is a daily assault on every aspect of our well being, our identities and our social relationships. We must work deliberately to build a culture of solidarity as part of the struggle and as a necessity for our very survival.

Inspiration from Che’s words

This month also marks the 50th anniversary of Che Guevara’s martyrdom. Che once said that “at the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality.” May Che’s words inspire us all to take a step forward into the future.

Happy anniversary comrades!

Signed,  
**Larry Holmes**  
First Secretary of Workers World Party



# WW challenge overturns PA prison ban

By Joe Piette  
Philadelphia

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections sent a letter to Workers World Publishers on Oct. 13, informing us that the denial of Workers World issue 35, Aug. 31, into Pennsylvania prisons has been “overturned.”

A previous DOC letter to Workers World Publishers on Sept. 11 stated: “The August 31 issue of Workers World newspaper has been denied to all inmates housed in Pennsylvania prisons.”

Their reason: The issue contained articles that “call for people to join the fight against white supremacy.”

This was the fourth issue of WW denied to Pennsylvania prisoners since Donald Trump’s election. Earlier this year, the DOC censored issues numbered 7, 12 and 13 for advocating a May 1 global general strike.

The Oct. 13 DOC letter identified the prisoner denied the right to receive our newspaper as imprisoned at Smithfield Prison.

Coincidentally, several Philly comrades visited Smithfield on Oct. 12 to speak, by invitation, to a Muslim group of prisoners. When the comrades tried to bring a bundle of WW newspapers into the prison, officials opened up an issue and said they were banning it because on page 2, the headline of our own article said WW was banned: “Pennsylvania prisons ban WW for supporting ‘fight against white supremacy.’” (<https://www.workers.org/2017/10/02/>)

No matter what the comrades argued, the prison official would not allow the papers inside.

Workers World has as much right to be read by prisoners as any other newspaper or magazine, and especially so because its articles are written by activists in on-

the-ground leading positions in diverse people’s movements.

## \$50 for each issue denied

WW Publishers filed an appeal of the original ban on Sept. 26, demanding that the DOC cease this unconstitutional practice for future issues; give each prisoner the WW copies that were denied to him or her; and make each inmate “whole” whose constitutional rights were denied by compensating them \$50 for each issue withheld from them.

The DOC’s Oct. 13 letter does not mention the demand that prisoners be compensated.

Workers World has since received a copy of another prisoner’s grievance, which demands that the Pennsylvania DOC “reimburse me a total of \$50.00 into my account. My constitutional rights were impinged upon by censoring me from receiving this publication.”

Workers World shared the DOC’s Sept. 11 denial letter widely in social media so the public at large could view the white supremacist attitudes of the prison administration expressed outright in their

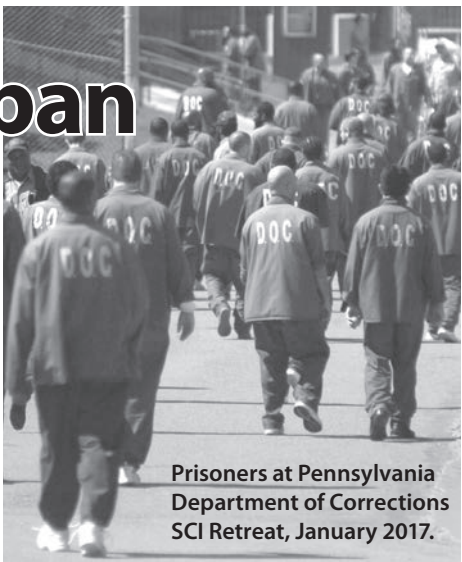


PHOTO: MARK MARON/CITIZEN VOICE

own words.

Our loved ones behind bars in this state are subjected to those racist attitudes and actions every day.

WW urged activists to send complaints to the DOC in Mechanicsburg, Pa. Reporters from the Guardian, Newsweek and other media outlets reached out to WW for confirmation and comments. Many expressed initial disbelief the DOC would be so blatant in their support for white supremacy until they saw the facsimile of the letter.

The social media campaign forced the

*Continued on page 10*

# Transit advocates square off with bankers

By Julie Varughese  
New York

Members of the People’s MTA (PMTA) advocacy group delivered blistering remarks at a public hearing of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Wall Street-oriented board on Oct. 25. They denounced the lack of accessibility in this city’s 113-year-old public transit system, which has become a cash cow for the banks to the tune of billions of dollars in profits.

The MTA recently announced it would remove seats from 100 subway cars by an undisclosed date. This news angered New Yorkers who have already been frustrated with the lack of accessibility for people with disabilities, people who push strollers and shopping carts, and others who need elevators to access the subway. Seats have already been removed from the E subway line, and will be taken out of the C and L subway cars.

Only one out of every four subway stations provides elevators.

In another swipe against riders, trains with foldable seats debuted earlier in the week on the L subway line, which connects eastern Brooklyn with the West Village in Manhattan. This is meant to pack even more riders onto already overcrowded trains.

Activists say the most sensible response would be to cancel the MTA’s \$35-billion debt and use that money to build a system with more trains and buses, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

People’s MTA says money for subways, not Wall Street.

Terrien Mitchell, a longtime disability rights activist, was skipped over during the public hearing portion of the MTA meeting, even though she had followed the protocol to get on the speaking list. Folks familiar with Mitchell’s fiery speaking style suggested this may have been a silencing tactic. Members of the group are conducting research to submit a formal complaint to the board.

Eman Rimawi, an amputee and disability rights activist who works for New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI), told the board it took her three hours to get to the meeting because her Access-

*Continued on page 10*

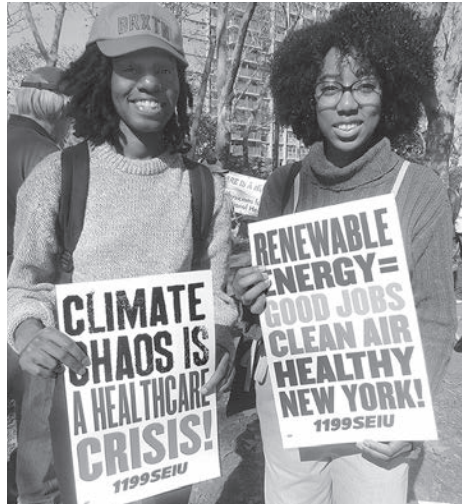
## New York City:

# Climate activists denounce hurricane devastation

Led by youth of color, thousands rallied and marched into Manhattan over the Brooklyn Bridge on Oct. 28 to commemorate those lost five years ago in the devastation dealt by Hurricane Sandy. Speakers called for action on climate change linked to increased hurricane fury and also for “no pipelines!” They raised colorful banners calling for absent politicians to take responsibility: “Mayor De Blasio, Gov. Cuomo and Sen. Schumer: Where were they?”

Victims from several Southern states hit by hurricanes, as well as those from recently devastated Haiti and Puerto Rico, spoke. A nurse from the New York State Nurses Association also connected via cell phone to some of their nurses now volunteering medical assistance in Puerto Rico. NYSNA union leader Judy Gonzalez, R.N., denounced the “disastrous politics of the ruling class” citing Puerto Ricans “who have lost everything.” Other unions participated in the march, including the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York (CUNY).

Along with climate neglect and damage by big business and government, speakers highlighted the disproportionate suffering and loss by poor communities that include a majority of people of color. Bilingual chants in English and Spanish resounded in the march as it left



Brooklyn, crossing the bridge to end with a rally in support of Chinatown’s public housing in downtown Manhattan.

There, speakers denounced cuts in public housing and the displacement of renters by gentrification. They pointed to the crisis of climate change, as past and current hurricanes leave millions stormed out of housing and homeless, their circumstances worsened by racist policies, the continuing impact of past colonial occupation and banking industry profiteering.

One banner in the march proclaimed: “The storm began in 1492. End white supremacy!”

**Story and photo by Anne Pruden**

# New York City supermarket protest:



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Neighborhood activists rallied outside one of three Gristedes supermarkets located in the Chelsea area of Manhattan on Oct. 28. They were there to demand that the grocery chain reverse its decision to stop accepting Women, Infants, and Children vouchers.

WIC is a program that subsidizes certain food and baby formula pur-

# ‘Bring back WIC!’

chases. Although it is flawed (mainly because of the influence of agribusiness for profit), WIC does help somewhat with prenatal and early childhood nutrition for families living up to twice the poverty level — regardless of immigration status.

Residents of three nearby low and moderate income housing complexes, including mothers who had used WIC to get a break from high grocery prices while pregnant, nursing or otherwise feeding a child under 6, spoke to shoppers and passersby over a microphone provided by the Solidarity Center.

The group chanted “Bring back WIC!” and pointed out how much Gristedes owner John Catsimatidis has enriched his own family off the profits made in this neighborhood.

Chelsea Rising organizer Lizette Colon denounced the rejection of WIC at these stores as another racist act that makes the cost of living in a gentrified area prohibitive, even for those whose own rent is still affordable. For information about this campaign, contact [make.chelsea.affordable@gmail.com](mailto:make.chelsea.affordable@gmail.com).

**– Sara Catalinotto**



# Activists plan WWP national conference

By Ben Carroll and Taryn Fivek

*‘There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen.’*  
— V.I. Lenin

Against the backdrop of the Trump regime’s infliction of terror and pain on the working class and oppressed worldwide, 2017 has been a year of historic fightback against capitalism and white supremacy. Starting on Jan. 20, tens of thousands gathered in the streets of Washington, D.C., against everything Trump represents, and the struggle has continued ever since.

The Workers World Party national conference in November 2016 was held just days after Trump was elected, and it gave militants from across the United States the opportunity to rally and network. We are not alone.

The 2017 Workers World Party conference is being organized under the banner “Unite to Smash White Supremacy and Capitalism! Fight for Socialism!” and will convene in Newark, N.J. (a short train ride from New York City), one of the largest and most impoverished working-class cities in the Northeast, as well as a historic site of resistance. This year’s conference will bring freedom fighters from

across the country together to strategize the next steps toward our goal of socialist revolution in the belly of the beast.

What has always been a unique venue to meet other activists has now taken on critical importance in the fight for socialism. Mond Jones, a WWP member in Port Huron, Mich., told WW: “Right now, in the state of the movement, even with technology and the internet connecting a lot of folks, many organizers are still isolated in their areas. This conference will be a great opportunity for activists who are isolated to be in a space with not only newer comrades, but also seasoned comrades who have been in the struggle for decades.”

**Developing as revolutionaries**

“This year’s conference holds a special importance to me,” continued Jones, who is a youth leader in the party’s Detroit Branch. “Last year’s conference was where I was first approached about party membership. I’m excited to see not only how far I’ve developed, but how far other comrades and the party as a whole have developed after a whole year.”

This year, the movement has seen everything from the inauguration of arch-bigot Trump to the toppling of racist Confederate statues. It has responded with militant action to the attacks on

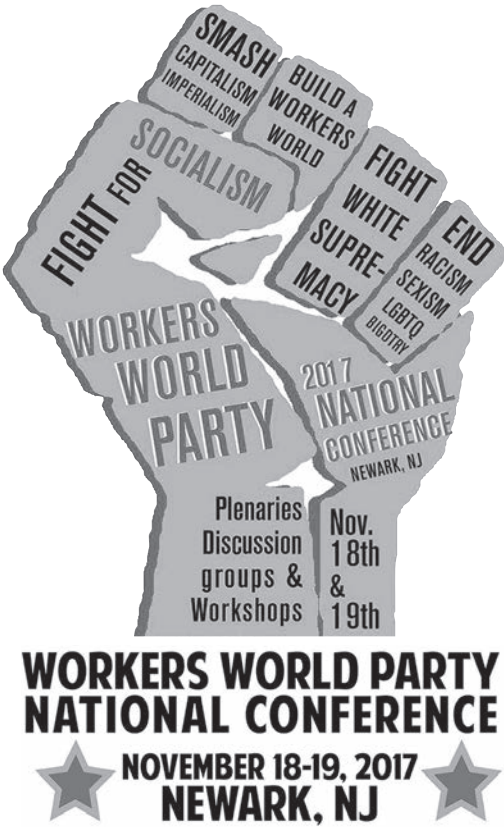
migrants, the LGBTQ community, Black lives, women, people with disabilities, and U.S. wars and sanctions abroad.

We’ve responded in horror at colonized Puerto Rico and other oppressed nations suffering from catastrophic global warming and genocidal policies; the murder of anti-racist activists and state repression of freedom fighters; the repeal of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals immigration policy; and the sharpened attacks on Muslims, among many others.

As the centennial of the Bolshevik Revolution approaches, we are faced with an urgent need to unite and fight for our lives. The 50-year anniversary of Che Guevara’s martyrdom, the Newark Uprising and the Detroit Rebellion offer critical lessons for going forward. Our comrades in the streets who’ve risked their lives to topple symbols of white supremacy need our support — a people’s army to back them up. That’s what this conference will help build.

The deepening crisis of capitalism on a world scale and the actions of the vile and racist Trump government are among the many reasons that a new generation of activists is entering the struggle in a way we have not witnessed in some time.

Join us for dynamic workshops, plenaries, cultural performances and social



activities. As the battle against capitalism and white supremacy continues to intensify, we will strategize a path forward in the fight for socialism.

For conference registration, housing, schedule and other information, go to [workers.org/wwp](http://workers.org/wwp). □

## Spanish state coup seizes Catalonia, charges leaders with ‘rebellion’

By John Catalinotto

Oct. 31 — This morning Carles Puigdemont, the president of Catalonia who was deposed by the force of the Spanish state, announced from Brussels that he and the six Catalan government members with him would not ask for asylum in Belgium. Instead, he told the media they came for a little quiet space to “contribute to the internationalization of the process” in Catalonia. (El Periódico, Oct. 31)

A flurry of moves and countermoves between the repressive Spanish state and the defiant Catalan government led to this situation today. The regime in Ma-

drid is beginning to seize the administration, police and public media from the regional government in what some have called a coup d’état. It has also declared new elections in the region on Dec. 21.

While big banks and the big bourgeoisie in Catalan oppose independence — they’ve already moved their headquarters outside the region — a less powerful sector is pro-independence. Today Puigdemont and six other top bourgeois leaders of Catalonia’s independence movement are in Belgium, facing charges of “rebellion, sedition and misuse of funds” in the Spanish state. Despite the charges, their parties say they will participate in

the Dec. 21 elections.

Catalonia is one of the more prosperous regions, located in northeastern Spain, an area the size of Maryland, with a population of 7.5 million people, including many from other parts of the Spanish state and from abroad.

### Popular resistance?

The brutal tactics of the Spanish state, which injured 900 Catalans for trying to vote in the Oct. 1 referendum, aroused strong popular resistance. Tens of thousands of people formed the Committees to Defend the Referendum — spontaneous mass organizations with leftist participation that organized and mobilized for the referendum despite repression.

More than 2 million people defied police attacks to vote for independence. A pro-independence general strike two days later stopped much of Catalan industry.

While the bourgeois leadership of the Catalan independence movement — represented by Puigdemont and the others in Belgium — made a call for peaceful resistance to the central regime’s takeover, they are no longer on the ground in Catalonia to lead this effort. It is too early to see, especially from afar, how Puigdemont’s decision to try to avoid direct confrontation and to participate in the Dec. 21 elections will impact the morale of the popular movement.

An important question remains: Are there forces in Catalonia from the left and workers’ organizations that can mobilize resistance to the Spanish state’s takeover?

Important because the working class in Catalonia and in the entire Spanish state suffers from high unemployment, cutbacks to health care, education and pensions and a lack of prospects that it has faced since the 2008 worldwide capitalist financial crisis hit Spain so hard. Popular resistance in Catalonia can inspire resistance to the Madrid regime throughout the Spanish state.

### Timeline of events

After a majority of voters opted for Catalan independence, Madrid took the offensive more than a week ago by arresting two members of the Catalan government. Then Spain’s rightist Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy declared on Oct. 21 that the central government would seize control of Catalonia’s administration and force a new vote to reconstitute the regional parliament.

The Catalan parliament voted 70-10 to declare independence on Oct. 27. The 55 members of parties opposing independence refused to take part in the vote.

Within two hours of the declaration, the Spanish state got approval from the Senate in Madrid to use Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution to seize control of the Catalan government. The Catalan government then called for peaceful civil disobedience in response to the takeover.

On Oct. 28, the Spanish state fired the head of the Catalan police and deposed Puigdemont.

**Rightist demonstration in Barcelona**

The next day, Sunday, Oct. 29, all the pro-Spanish-state parties, led by Rajoy’s right-wing governing party and including all the ultra-right and neo-fascist organizations, mobilized hundreds of thousands of people in Barcelona, Catalonia’s capital, on the basis of a united Spain under the rule of the rightist parties in Madrid and the Spanish king.

The current regime controlling the Spanish state is led by the Popular Party, a rightist party that absorbed many of those who made up Francisco Franco’s fascist regime from 1939 to his death in 1975. The PP, along with the so-called Socialists (PSOE), have directed the government since the 1978 “Transition,” which is really a continuation of rule by the oligarchs with a democratic facade and a corrupt monarchy.

Remember that Spain is an integral

*Continued on page 10*

## Give to Workers World newspaper!

We like to think our readers value Workers World — because for 51 weeks a year we bring you news that doesn’t appear in the corporate media through a working-class lens. And our Marxist analysis of both national and international issues can’t be found anywhere else in the progressive U.S. press.

We trust you rely on Workers World for coverage of such topics as:

- The importance of the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution
- Why WWP sides with People’s Korea against U.S. warmongering
- Defense of the right of athletes to protest racist injustice
- The many ways Trump and Co. like screwing poor and working people every day
- Why defending Durham activists should be at the top of labor’s agenda
- Ending the racist death penalty, working to free political prisoners and tear down the jails
- How imperialism is expanding its military presence in Africa while China builds that continent’s infrastructure

- Why Che Guevara still lives 50 years after his death
- Fighting for worldwide socialism means plenty for all workers and the oppressed

How can you show your gratitude for what WW newspaper gives you every week? One way in this capitalist economy is with hard-earned dollars. That’s why we set up the Workers World Supporter Program 40 years ago. Help us continue to publish working-class truth and build many critical struggles in 2017 and beyond.

For a donation of at least \$75 a year — and much more if you’re able — members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends. Write checks (either monthly or once a year) to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at [workers.org/donate/](http://workers.org/donate/); it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. Know that we’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future! □



# When the Border Patrol arrests a 10-year-old

Rosa Maria Hernández is 10 years old. She has had cerebral palsy from birth, and so, her elementary school teachers say, she has comprehension closer to that of a 4- or 5-year-old.

Rosa María’s mother, an undocumented immigrant, brought her across the border into Laredo, Texas, when she was just three months old, so she could receive medical care.

Doctors discovered Rosa Maria needed immediate emergency gallbladder surgery on Oct. 24. She was in an ambulance with her cousin, a U.S. citizen, to look after her, speeding toward a children’s hospital in the south Texas city of Corpus Christi, when they were stopped at a Border Patrol checkpoint far from the border.

Following the new punitive Trump/Sessions anti-immigrant protocols, the Border Patrol cops determined Rosa Maria was an “illegal immigrant.” Only after delay did they finally allow the ambulance to proceed to the hospital, where doctors performed the life-saving surgery.

But Border Patrol agents were placed outside her hospital room door as she lay unconscious so they “could prevent her from escaping.”

The doctors said Rosa Maria could go home to her mother and family on Oct. 25. They wrote instructions that she should receive postoperative care from her primary care physician in Laredo and be released to “a family member who is familiar with her medical and psychological needs.”

She took two steps out of her hospital room before she was seized by Border Patrol goons and hauled away to a privately contracted juvenile detention facility.

Dan Hetlage, a spokesman for Customs and Border Protection, said in callous defense of this action: “It’s not a traf-

fic ticket. We follow the letter of the law.”

The advocacy group Dream Activist says 10-year-old Rosa María was told “she has two options: sign voluntary departure or spend up to 3 weeks in detention.” In their open letter to Department of Homeland Security Acting Secretary Elaine Duke, the Dream Activist group added: “Families should not have to decide between getting life-saving help or being deported.” (npr.org, Oct. 26)

Rosa María’s jailers won’t even allow her mother, Felipa de la Cruz, to visit her. “All I wanted was for her to get the surgery that she needed. It never crossed my mind that any of what is happening right now could happen. When you’re a mother, all you care about is your child.” (nypost.com, Oct. 26)

Here is the bitter irony under capitalism: The U.S. governing powers say that nothing can be done to prevent an arrogant, rich white man from carrying an arsenal of weapons up to his plush Las Vegas hotel room, converting some into machine guns and opening fire on working people just out to enjoy a concert, killing 58 people and wounding hundreds.

At the same time, they tell us that a critically ill, 10-year-old Latinx child represents a threat to national security and must be wrenched away from her mother and family and deported.

The white supremacist policies pushed by boss Trump and his trillionaire appointees and friends are the real threat to national security — to the safety, health, happiness and security of workers and oppressed people.

By organizing, by hitting the streets in mass protest, by shutting down the whole rotten system, we can turn the tide against the monstrous policies that result in these kinds of atrocities. And we will. □

## WW overturns PA prison ban

Continued from page 8

DOC to reverse course. But until each prisoner is awarded \$50 for being denied the time-sensitive publication, we do not consider the matter closed.

Nevertheless, our campaign was successful not only in overturning the DOC denial but also in supporting the prisoners’ right to Marxist literature, in getting the word out in social media about Workers World Party, and in exposing the Pennsylvania DOC’s racism and cruel punishments once again.

After all, this is the same incarceration system that denies hepatitis C medicine to prisoners.

It imprisons so many children and young adults 16 to 25 years of age — more than any other state in the U.S. — that it has a special prison for youth at Pine Grove SCI. As of Oct. 21, there are 1,099 prisoners there, 39 percent of them under the age of 20. (<http://www.cor.pa.gov/>)

The Pennsylvania DOC imprisons political prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal, Bryant Arroyo, Russell “Maroon” Shoatz, Major George Tillery and others who have contributed to peoples’ movements for liberation despite being held behind bars. Their wisdom and courage are sorely needed on the outside.

And now many people have become

aware that the DOC also tries to censor what inmates are constitutionally allowed to read.

The DOC admission that its banning of an issue of Workers World was wrong may be a long way from tearing down the cruel walls of Pennsylvania’s dungeons. But it’s another chip in their façade, revealing the foundation of oppression. □

## Transit advocates vs. bankers

Continued from page 8

a-Ride driver was late and subsequently stuck in morning rush-hour traffic.

Several members of the disability community complained to the board about the rudeness and tardiness of Access-a-Ride and authorized taxi drivers. These services are supposed to make up for the lack of elevators in most subway stations.

Before the hearing, activists had held a rally and press conference in front of the MTA’s headquarters, just a few blocks from the offices of its Wall Street creditors.

“Every media outlet in the city was there. At the press conference, the microphones of major local TV news were on the mic stand. But none of this was covered by the corporate media, which are colluding with the MTA to deny riders

# The Bergdahl case: ‘Taking responsibility’

By Dee Knight

Bowe Bergdahl’s recent sentencing hearing did not address whether he’s guilty or not. Bergdahl had already pleaded guilty, both to “desertion” and to “misbehavior before the enemy.”

A former Army lawyer said this “is the best type of plea to show a defendant is serious about taking responsibility for their misconduct.”

It’s a weird case, and a weirder story.

Bergdahl was held captive by the Taliban for five years, from June 2009 until May 2014. He returned to the United States in May 2014 following a prisoner exchange for Taliban prisoners held at the U.S. detention center in Guantanamo. Bergdahl has been in military custody since December 2014.

At the time of his release, President Obama “embraced Sergeant Bergdahl’s parents in the Rose Garden, and his national security adviser, Susan E. Rice, said the sergeant had served with ‘honor and distinction.’” (nytimes.com, Oct. 23)

Yet during the 2016 presidential campaign, one candidate frequently called Bergdahl a “dirty rotten traitor,” adding that he should be executed: “Bing, bong!” the candidate said as he pantomimed a firing squad. That erstwhile candidate and current president recently reiterated: “They’re setting up sentencing so I’m not going to comment on him. But I think people have heard my comments in the past.” (npr.org, Oct. 23)

The case against Bergdahl has varied since the Army announced he would face a general court-martial on charges of desertion and misbehavior before the enemy. At first the Army’s chief investigator said he believed the most serious charge Bergdahl should face was desertion, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in military prison. Then the Army’s preliminary hearing officer said he endorsed the lead investigator’s recommendation against any jail time.

There was also a finding at one point that Bergdahl should never have been allowed to enlist in the Army at all after being discharged earlier from the Coast Guard. “There just seemed to be a lot of manipulation in this case, all resulting from the political pressure on the Army,” stated a retired Air Force lawyer who is now a law school professor in Los Angeles, in the New York Times article.

Gen. Robert Abrams is now commander in charge of the case. He is the son of Gen. Creighton Abrams, who in 1968 replaced Gen. William Westmoreland as war-criminal-in-chief in Vietnam.

The younger Abrams most recently held the title of Strategic War Planner for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with responsibility for the U.S. Central Command Area of Operations. As such he was a major commander of U.S. operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the remote case that Abrams might show leniency toward Bowe Bergdahl, Sen. John McCain — former prisoner of war in Vietnam after the plane he piloted was shot down — warned that the Senate Armed Services Committee, which he chairs, would “hold hearings” on the Bergdahl case if there were no punishment. McCain’s committee must sign off on any future promotions for the general in charge of the case.

So Bowe Bergdahl is at the mercy of a cabal of war criminals who seek to blame him for the loss of anyone sent to find him after he left his unit and was taken into Taliban custody. He has testified that he left his outpost in Afghanistan to hike to a larger base to report concerns about problems in his unit. For this at least one person wants him executed, others want him sentenced to life in military prison, and a few seem willing to settle for a mere five years of jail time.

Criminality is a tough call in times of crisis. But this one is easy. Bowe Bergdahl should not be in military custody at all. If anything, he deserves an apology. But the powers that be in this country are not very good at that. They are the ones who deserve to be punished. The haunting question is what punishment could suffice for what they have done, and what they continue to do. In other words, when will true justice be served?

*Dee Knight refused to be drafted for the U.S. war against Vietnam and instead lived in Canada from 1968-74. While there he was an editor and organizer with Amex-Canada, the magazine of U.S. war resisters in exile. Amex forged an alliance with Vietnam Veterans Against the War and built the National Council for Universal & Unconditional Amnesty. NCUUA waged a national campaign in defense of all U.S. war resisters. Knight served on the NCUUA board from 1971-76.*

## Spanish state coup seizes Catalonia

Continued from page 9

part of the imperialist world, with membership in NATO, and it participates in most of the aggressive wars led by U.S. imperialism.

Although not all the Oct. 29 demonstrators were as right-wing as the organizers — who encouraged chants like “Long live Spain” and “Arrest Puigdemont” — Spanish patriotism serves reactionary interests there just as U.S. patriotism serves imperialist interests here.

On Oct. 30, Spain’s Attorney General José Manuel Maza said he would ask the national court to charge 14 members of Puigdemont’s administration with pushing ahead with independence, which he claimed was in defiance of Spain’s constitution and constitutional court. These include the serious charges of rebellion — with a possible 30-year sentence — sedition and misuse of funds.

Anticipating this attack, sometime in the night of Oct. 29-30, Puigdemont and six government members drove to Marseille, France, and took a plane to Brussels. □



# Cuba responds to ‘sonic attack’ allegations

The following edited statement was issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba on Oct. 3. The full text is available at [workers.org](http://workers.org).

On Sept. 29, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson announced the decision to significantly downscale the diplomatic staff of the U.S. Embassy in Havana and withdraw all their relatives, claiming that there had been “attacks” perpetrated against U.S. government officials in Cuba which have harmed their health.

On Oct. 3, the U.S. government, in an unwarranted act, decided that 15 officials of the Cuban Embassy in Washington should depart from the United States, claiming that the U.S. had reduced their diplomatic staffing levels in Havana and that the Cuban government had failed to take all appropriate steps to prevent “attacks” against them.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly protests and condemns this unfounded and unacceptable decision as well as the pretext used to justify it, that the Cuban government did not take the appropriate measures to prevent the occurrence of the alleged incidents.

In a meeting that, at the proposal of the Cuban side, was held with Secretary of State Tillerson, the minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Cuba, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, warned him against the adoption of hasty decisions that were not supported by evidence, urged him not to politicize a matter of this nature, and once again required the effective cooperation from the U.S. authorities to clarify facts and conclude the investigation.

It is the second time, after May 23, that the State Department has ordered two Cuban diplomats in Washington to abandon the country. The U.S. government reacts in a hasty, inappropriate and unthinking way, without having evidence of the occurrence of the adduced facts, for which Cuba has no responsibility whatsoever, and before the conclusion of the investigation that is still in progress.

As was expressed by the Cuban foreign minister to Secretary of State Tillerson on Sept. 26, Cuba — whose diplomatic staff members have been victims in the past of attempts perpetrated against their lives; who have been murdered, disappeared, kidnapped or attacked during the performance of their duty — has seriously and strictly observed its obligations under the Geneva Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, referring to the protection and integrity of diplomatic agents accredited in the country, of which it has an impeccable record.

As was informed by the Ministry on Aug. 9, [after] Feb. 17, when the U.S. Embassy and State Department notified us of the alleged occurrence of incidents since November 2016 against some officials of that diplomatic mission and their relatives, arguing that these had caused them injuries and other disorders, the Cuban authorities have acted with utmost seriousness, professionalism and immediacy to clarify this situation and opened an exhaustive and priority investigation following instructions from the top level of the government. The measures adopted to protect the U.S. diplomatic staff, their

relatives and residences, were reinforced; new expeditious communication channels were established between the U.S. Embassy and the Diplomatic Security Department; and a committee of experts was created to make a comprehensive analysis of facts, which was made up of law enforcement officials, physicians and scientists.

In the face of the belated, fragmented and insufficient information supplied by the U.S., the Cuban authorities requested further information and clarifications from the U.S. Embassy in order to carry out a serious and profound investigation....

Only after repeated requests were conveyed to the U.S. government, some representatives of specialized agencies of that country finally traveled to Havana on June last, met with their Cuban counterparts and expressed their intention to cooperate in a more substantive way in the investigation of the alleged incidents. They again visited Cuba in August and September, and for the first time in more than 50 years they were allowed to work on the ground, for which they were granted all facilities, including the possibility of importing equipment, as a gesture of

goodwill that evidenced the great interest of the Cuban government in concluding the investigation.

The Cuban authorities carefully assessed the three visits made by the U.S. specialized agencies, which have recognized the high professional level of the investigation started by Cuba and its high technical and scientific component, and which, as a preliminary result, concluded that, so far, according to the information available and the data supplied by the United States, there was no evidence of the occurrence of the alleged incidents or the causes and the origin of the health disorders reported by the U.S. diplomats and their relatives.

Neither has it been possible to identify potential perpetrators or persons with motivations, intentions or means to perpetrate this type of actions; nor was it possible to establish the presence of suspicious persons or means at the locations where such facts have been reported or in their vicinity. The Cuban authorities are not familiar with the equipment or the technology that could be used for that purpose; nor do they have information indicating their presence in the country.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs categorically rejects any responsibility of the Cuban government in the alleged incidents and reiterates once again that Cuba

has never perpetrated, nor will it ever perpetrate attacks of any sort against diplomatic officials or their relatives, without any exception. Neither has it ever allowed nor will it ever allow its territory to be used by third parties for that purpose.

The Ministry emphasizes that the U.S. government’s announced decision to reduce Cuba’s diplomatic staff in Washington, without the conclusive results from the investigation and without evidence of the incidents that would be affecting their officials in Cuba, has an eminently political character.

The Ministry urges the competent authorities of the U.S. government not to continue politicizing this matter, which can provoke an undesirable escalation and would rarify and reverse even more bilateral relations, which were already affected by the announcement of a new policy made in June by President Donald Trump.

The Ministry reiterates Cuba’s disposition to continue fostering a serious and objective cooperation between the authorities of both countries with the purpose of clarifying these facts and conclude the investigation, for which it will be essential to count on the most effective cooperation of the U.S. competent agencies.

Havana, October 3, 2017  
@CubaMINREX

## Venezuela Consul General ‘The Revolution remains popular’

By John Parker  
Los Angeles

Oct. 24 — Consul General of Venezuela Antonio Cordero, visiting from the Consulate in San Francisco, told an invitation-only meeting here that the Bolivarian Revolution is maintaining popular support despite the efforts of U.S. imperialism to undermine it.

Workers World Party members John Parker and Nathan Norris were at the meeting, along with organizations representing Latin and Central American liberation struggles.

Cordero listened to everyone’s questions and then answered them. He also explained about the challenges facing a country that has been under attack for the past 18 years by U.S. imperialism. The U.S. has used nongovernmental organizations and funding of the opposition while encouraging terrorism against the people of Venezuela.

Cordero added, however, that the revolution remains popular due to its continuing the work of former President Hugo Chávez. This work emphasized winning the trust of the people, prioritizing the needs of working and poor people, and building the type of social relationships in the military that are unifying and encourage loyalty to the people of Venezuela, not the elite.

He contrasted Venezuela’s military



PHOTO: JEANETTE CHARLES

with the military in Brazil, which he said was plagued with racism. Cordero, who is Venezuelan of African ethnicity, had participated in a student exchange program with the Brazilian Air Force. He said that none of the Brazilians of African ethnicity as dark as him were able to graduate from the program, but because he was an exchange student from Venezuela he was given fairer treatment. Cordero explained that this type of racism creating divisions and mistrust does not exist in the Venezuelan military.

In addition to U.S. attacks on Venezuela, Cordero explained that the loss the government’s United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) suffered in the December 2015 elections to the National Assembly was also the result of economic problems. These were caused by a drastic

drop in oil prices to as little as \$20 per barrel and a drought that severely limited the generation of electricity produced by the main hydroelectric dam.

Together with violence from the opposition and other U.S. economic attacks, the economic disruption allowed the opposition aligned with U.S. imperialism to make gains at that time.

Now programs providing, for example, 1.8 million homes in just five years, a greatly improved transportation infrastructure and other pro-people policies have allowed the PSUV to achieve a qualitative victory in the July 30 elections for the Constituent Assembly and in recent regional elections.

The meeting concluded with everyone pledging to help build a movement in Los Angeles for solidarity with Venezuela. □



**48th NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING**  
**Cole’s Hill, Plymouth, Mass.** *Hill above Plymouth Rock*  
Unite with us in our struggle to create a true awareness of Native peoples and demonstrate the unity of Indigenous peoples internationally.

For more information/orientation:  
**United American Indians of New England** ✉ [www.uaine.org](http://www.uaine.org)  
[info@uaine.org](mailto:info@uaine.org) ✉ [Facebook.com/events/187901245087869](https://www.facebook.com/events/187901245087869)

**Thursday, November 23, 2017 @ 12 Noon**

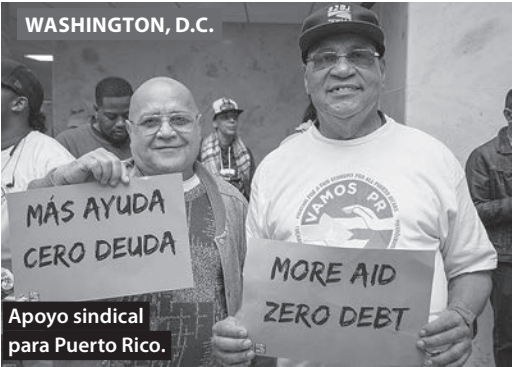
Help shatter the untrue glass image of the Pilgrims and the unjust system based on racism, sexism, homophobia and the profit-driven destruction of the Earth. We will show up in solidarity with Indigenous struggles throughout the world, and especially our relations in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean and Mexico suffering from hurricane and earthquake devastation compounded by colonialism.



**Special message from Leonard Peltier**

For info. about bus tickets from NYC call 212.633.6646. (See IACenter.org)





# Explotación obrera y crisis de salud mental

Por Mike Kuhlenbeck

Los trabajadores se enfrentan a una crisis de salud mental derivada de la explotación en manos del sistema capitalista.

Trabajar largas horas por un salario escaso y malos tratos a manos de los jefes puede llevar a un mayor riesgo de ansiedad, depresión y altas tasas de suicidio para los trabajadores, según recientes estudios de salud mental.

El estudio “Informe sobre el bienestar en el lugar de trabajo: Mind the Workplace”, publicado por Mental Health America (MHA), midió “niveles de estrés en el lugar de trabajo y salud mental general” para 17.000 trabajadores encuestados durante un período de dos años. Llegó a la conclusión de que el estrés en el lugar de trabajo aumenta el riesgo del desarrollo de una discapacidad mental.

De acuerdo con el informe de la MHA, los trabajadores que experimentan el mayor número de víctimas mortales en salud mental se encuentran en las industrias manufacturera, minorista y de alimentos y bebidas. Estas profesiones caen dentro de las categorías de trabajadores mal pagados, meno-

spreciados y con exceso de trabajo.

El Centro de Depresión Integral de la Universidad de Michigan destaca los siguientes estresores en el lugar de trabajo: tensión laboral, interferencia laboral, discriminación y acoso laboral e inseguridad laboral.

Tres académicos de la Universidad de Stanford concluyeron en un estudio de 2015 que trabajar la injusticia y el conflicto entre el trabajador y la familia tiene el mismo impacto en la salud que el trabajo por turnos y la colocación de largas horas. Los investigadores Jeffrey Pfeffer, Stefanos Zenios y Joel Goh también concluyeron que “el factor estresante con mayor impacto en general es la falta de seguro de salud. Tiene una alta clasificación en el aumento de la mortalidad y los costos de la atención médica”.

Además, “Otro gran impulsor de la muerte prematura es la inseguridad económica, capturada en parte por el desempleo, los despidos y el bajo control del trabajo”. (Stanford Graduate School of Business)

La inseguridad laboral es uno de los mayores factores de estrés para los trabajadores. El temor al desempleo mantiene a mucha gente despierta por

la noche, mientras se preguntan cómo van a sobrevivir en la economía de hoy en día. Como señaló la Asociación Estadounidense de Psicología, “Agregar a las presiones que enfrentan los trabajadores son nuevos jefes, vigilancia de la producción por computadora, menos beneficios de salud y jubilación, y la sensación de que tienen que trabajar más tiempo y más duro solo para mantener su estado económico actual”.

Informes como el informe MHA son útiles, pero a menudo adolecen de un error fatal. A menudo, las llamadas “soluciones” presentadas se reducen a alentar a los empleadores a aumentar la autoestima y la confianza de los trabajadores, en lugar de ofrecer seguridad concreta, como salarios más altos o seguro de salud. Estos investigadores pasan por alto o ignoran la naturaleza explotadora del capitalismo, ya que es la naturaleza de este sistema obligar a los trabajadores a vender su fuerza de trabajo al mejor postor.

Los empleadores maximizan sus ganancias al reducir los costos laborales. Lo logran reduciendo, des localizando y automatizando. Tales preocupaciones se convierten en una carga y la salud

mental se pone en riesgo.

Como editor colaborador de Workers World, Fred Goldstein escribe en su importante libro de 2008 “Low-Wage Capitalism”: “El capitalismo, el sistema de producción con fines de lucro en lugar de humano, es incompatible con nociones como la salud y el bienestar de quienes producir toda la riqueza y realizar todos los servicios, la prioridad de la organización social y económica”.

Los trabajadores pueden beneficiarse de muchas maneras de la lucha por un salario digno y el derecho a una unión, como el movimiento de Lucha por \$ 15 lanzado en los últimos años. El Instituto de Política Económica (EPI) ha declarado que si los trabajadores organizan sindicatos pueden asegurar aumentos salariales, acceso a la atención médica, una mayor seguridad en el lugar de trabajo y mejores horarios. (“Cómo los sindicatos de hoy ayudan a los trabajadores”, 24 de agosto)

Quienes producen la riqueza no deberían tener que pagarla sacrificando su bienestar mental y físico. Para enfrentar esta crisis, los trabajadores deben enfrentar el sistema que pone en peligro sus vidas. □

## Apoyar la ayuda de pueblo a pueblo para Puerto Rico



Por el personal de Workers World

Lo que sigue es el texto de un correo electrónico enviado por el Centro de Acción Internacional a activistas de todo Estados Unidos.

El Centro de Acción Internacional está lanzando una campaña de ayuda de pueblo a pueblo para la ultra devastada nación de Puerto Rico.

El IAC está recolectando donaciones monetarias para enviar a organizaciones de base establecidas políticamente, específicamente la Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (FMPR), que trabaja con otros sindicatos y grupos que organizan brigadas en toda la isla para ayudar a comunidades pobres, maestros y estudiantes que perdieron todo.

¿Por qué el IAC está lanzando esta campaña? El mundo entero ha visto la destrucción total de la hermosa isla de Puerto Rico después del paso del huracán María por el Caribe el 20 de septiembre. Semanas después del huracán, millones permanecen sin comida, agua o refugio. Casi toda la isla no tiene electricidad. La gente está muriendo, ham-

brienta y desesperada, a pesar de que es bien sabido que los EUA Podrían aliviar la situación si realmente quisieran.

Llevará años reparar a Puerto Rico. Pero si el movimiento de solidaridad no continúa su trabajo en los EUA para exigir ayuda genuina, la isla podría reconstruirse completamente para las necesidades de los bancos y las corporaciones. La gentrificación que vemos en nuestros vecindarios se apoderará de toda la isla.

Además, la lucha contra el colonialismo y la independencia de Puerto Rico podría descarrilar por completo como resultado de esta catástrofe. Sin embargo, confiamos en que el pueblo puertorriqueño no permitirá que esto suceda.

El IAC quiere hacer su parte para



ayudar. Estamos llevando a cabo la solidaridad de persona a persona enviando dinero a organizaciones que han estado luchando durante mucho tiempo para defender a la gente del imperialismo de los Estados Unidos.

Mucho después de que las noticias de Puerto Rico estén fuera de portada, las acciones de solidaridad con Puerto Rico y todo el Caribe serán urgentes. El movimiento de solidaridad de los EUA. Ahora está discutiendo brigadas de trabajo de persona a persona, así como continuas protestas para exigir ayuda real, no una ocupación militar para Puerto Rico. Además, las acciones arrogantes de Trump hacia Puerto Rico no pueden ser usadas por los demócratas para pasar por alto los problemas reales. ¡Fue durante la administración

demócrata de Barack Obama que se aprobó la Ley Promesa, lo que obligó a Puerto Rico a pagar la deuda ilegítima de \$74 mil millones!

Done al IAC en iacenter.org. El cien por ciento del dinero recaudado se destinará a la FMPR con un mensaje de solidaridad contra el imperialismo estadounidense.

Estamos pidiendo:

**¡Poner fin a PROMESA, derogar la Ley Jones!**

**¡Sin privatización de la isla!**

**¡Puerto Rico para los puertorriqueños, no para los bancos!**

**¡Cancele la deuda y pague reparaciones!**

**¡No a la militarización de Puerto Rico!**

**¡Solidaridad con las Islas Vírgenes, Haití y todo el Caribe!**

