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 devastating 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...
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 critical questions of the city’s use of excessive force. Protests were sparked by the Sept. 17 not-guilty verdict acquitting Jason Stockley, a white former police officer, in the fatal shooting of Anthony Lamar Smith, who was Black. In the demonstrations, protesters have faced the city over 83 million in police overtime; major concert venues have been canceled; grocery stores and malls have had temporary closures; and retail businesses are afraid to visit the city; and for the hope of winning the bid as home to the new Amazon headquaters 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 the police off balance and by live-streaming demonstrations online. They are organizing protests that cause economic disruption, especially in the city’s neighborhoods.

“Are we bringing it to the doors of people who do not have to live this life and just giving that little bit of un-comfortableness,” said LaShell Eikerenkoetter, a protest leader who is Black. “People need to 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 threw the spray off police 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 commented on Oct. 22, 100 Days of Protest continue in St. Louis, the center of the St. Louis slave trade, with its 300-year-old history of vicious racism.

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 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 inter police Chief Lawrence O’Toole and call his remix 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 “own that night.”

Now the “bad press” of protest is putting a potential $43 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 pro-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 St. Louis slave trade, with its 300-year-old history of vicious racism.

Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black and Brown youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

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

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

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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Connecticut
St. Louis protests discredit cops, disrupt economy

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Atlanta protest demands: ‘Stop police brutality’

By Chris Coughlin

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 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.”

Jamario 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; Monty Benjamin, whose son Jayvis 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 turned addressing the crowds.

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.

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 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 NFL season. 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 79 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 dissatisfied 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:

“Why Colin Kaepernick is right”

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

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

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 out 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, Kilus Nyasha, Freedom Socialist Party, the International Bolshevik Tendency and the Oscar Grant Committee Against Police Brutality.

—Photo and story by Terri Kay
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—Frackville 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, 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 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. Pennsylvania grates.

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 here. But how long can these secrets be contained before we experience an outbreak of the worst kind?

Silence no more. It is time to speak. I am no longer stressed, exhausted and frustrated. 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 polyethylene vera by drinking this toxic contaminated water for years without recourse to medical diagnosis.

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Arroyo is an environmental activist imprisoned at the State Correctional Institution—Frackville 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 were sick. My time spent in prison wouldn’t be economically feasible for the DOC medical department to pay to test all the inmates.

If we were taken to court, the 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 because 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 legal representatives, the DEP, EPA and their higher-ups, etc. In the mountains of rejection, you are our yes.

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 fire burning at a plant off at the distance. I just happened to be inside and discovered, so we got off 7th Street and began heading to the interstate. Once there we were able to get the biggest fire I had ever seen, with a thick black column of smoke rising shooting out from it as si ngle.

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 dinner, went to bed and slept like a baby.

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

What then took place was that a plastics warehouse owned by Intercontinental Export-Import Inc. had caught on fire. The fire burned for nearly a week, was reported to be thoroughly unprepared, despite hosting 30 or more workers.

It’s a safe bet to assume that investigators have already been called. As a general rule, no matter how big a fire you had, the fire department is interested in investigating the causes, with the main question being “How did this happen?”

Three days into the disaster, a Wood County Commission meeting was held where IEI’s representative Sunny Navin stated: “A disaster of this nature is something we have never encountered before. The fire departments have the most technical knowledge of 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 the clean up and the environmental, companies as well as communities across the river on the northside of Parkersburg. Residents of towns like Vienna and New Haven began to smell 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, head aches, increasing respiratory problems even during day six of the disaster, with the fire largely put out and no visible smoke hovering over the area.

From initial reports, roughly 50 to 60 patients have been treated in relation to the fire, many with hallmark symptoms of chemical poisoning. This figure is likely to increase as it is only reflective of patients going to the emergency room. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources stated: “A disaster of this nature is something we have never encountered before.

A local news website, newswest30, gave an incomplete list of chemicals contained in the IEI warehouse. It included: acrylonitrile, formamide, carbon black, titanium dioxide, anhydride TLV 0.0 ppm, polytetrafluoroethylene (Teflon), styrene-acrylonitrile, polybuty rene-terephthalate and acrylic sheets.

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Eyewitness Amies plant fire: ‘a week of hell’

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Detroiters speak truth to power

Continued from page 1

gerrymandering in Michigan.

John Philo from the Maurice Sugar Law Center explained his organization’s fight 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.

Flucher is a Detroit activist, attorney and long-time anti-foreclosure activist, outlining the targeted and robbery of Detroit’s African-American community by the banks, which led to 65,000 mortgage foreclosures from 2003 to 2009 in Detroit, and tens of thousands of tax foreclosures in the aftermath.

Tom Stephens explained how Detroit’s tens of thousands of water shut-offs are a product of the plan 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. Stephens, owner of the Action Network spoke on the mistreatment of veterans in the city. A representative of the Detroit Independent Schools Movement described the destruction of public education in Detroit on behalf of for-profit charters, and DIFS’s efforts to prevent city schools by teaching real Black history to the youth.

Continued on the next page
Detroiters speak truth

Continued from page 4

International solidarity

Highlights of the evening included a video from young, anti-capitalist activists in Puerto Rico, Katia 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 chant: “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 Kim Wyniom has released only a handful of the hundreds of juvenile lives 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 speaker 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 Unerwood of New Era Detroit and a delegation from Black Youth Project.

Abayomi Azikiwe of the Moratorium Now Coalition summarized the highlights of the night: “The vote was about the death of the American Dream... Two hundred public schools closed due to state control. Tens of thousands of water shutoffs. The boss 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 Detroit’s largest cemetery. On Friday, Oct. 13, the National Labor Review Board certified election results and handed a victory to the mostly Latinx “intermountenists” 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 twice a week. Attempting to instill fear, management hired subcontractors and forced the workers 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.

Nevertheless, Marx saw the limitations of fighting for a fair day’s wage for all. “We expect Tesla to be a responsible employer that leads with fair treatment of its workers,” said the union’s lead negotiator. “We need to move forward the process of rebuilding Detroit in the interests of the people.”

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 pau- sing of American workers, need a new program that challenges the capitalist system of exploitation. They need to recognize that the relationship between labor and capital is inherently antagonistic.

Moreover, there is no serious discussion on how to resist the ongoing assault on labor or the growth of white supremacy and extreme bigotry. Why not have a conversation about developing 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 nar- ro, pragmatic business unionism that has hamstring the U.S. labor movement in recent years. Solidarity remains a movement with Black Lives Matter was one im- portant such step.

However, much more is needed. Now is the time to reestablish class struggle politics and launch a bold movement of all working-class and oppressed people.
PART 4

100th anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution
External and internal problems, strengths and setbacks

By Deirdre Griswold

Karl Marx was not a utopian — that is, he did not have a conception of what an ideal society would look like.

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

Why did private property and the development of such 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, is essential for the materi-

als for realizing socialism? By abolishing

private ownership of the means of pro-

duction, socialism is the only system that can allow the needs of the workers to be

created by the workers to benefit everyone.

Marx also studied revolutions as the necessary catalyst to work through a trans-

formation 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 di-

rectly encountered, given and transmit-

ted from the past.” (The Eighteenth Brum-

aire of Lenin)

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 revolu-

tion came because of unbearable poverty and repression, but it came to the weak-

est of the capitalist countries, not the most advanced. While the Russian revo-

lutionaries had counted on the revolution spreading in Europe because of the de-

spair caused by World War I, that didn’t happen. There were soldiers’ and workers’ revolts in several European countries at the end of World War I, both stud-

ying the Bolshevik Revolution surrounded by stronger capitalist powers bent on its destruction.

Lening on world revolution

V.I. Lenin, the great revolutionary thinker and the great who faced the ter-

dible dangers facing the besiegged Bol-

shevik 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 social-

ist revolution that has been victorious in Russia is to be its conversion into a world

working-class revolution.”

Six weeks later, in a speech to the Mos-

cow 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 work-

ers, not because the Russian proletariat is superior to the working class of other countries, but solely because we were one of the two most advanced countries in the world. We shall achieve final victory only when we succeed at last in conclusive-

smashing international imperialism which has left a heavy mark on the 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 back-

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

The Bolshevik Revolution succeeded for another 74 years, a testament to the enor-

mous potential of a workers’ state, even

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imposed a fee of at least 100 rubles to ob-

tain 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. It became a last resort for anyone to provide an abortion other than authorized doctors.

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 last resort for anyone to provide an abortion other than authorized doctors.

Soviet Union survived and inspired

These concessions to social conserva-

tivism, 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 in-

dustral 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 in-

ner 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 liber-

ation from imperialism and the struggle of the workers and peasants against class
capitalism and exploitation.

Even the outbreak of another disas-

trous world war failed to undo the 1917 victory. In 1941, the Nazis launched Operation Barbarossa, sending 4 million German troops to invade the USSR along a 1,800-mile front. It was then, and continues to be, the largest in-

vasion 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 throughout the “Hunger Plan,” intended to replace the Slavic peoples with German settlers. Nazi death squads and gas chambers also murdered over a million Soviet Jews.

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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 sometime 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 whole 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. Revolutionary in Russia hoped that their revolution would spread to Europe. That did not happen. Still the Russian Revolution opened up a century of struggles, for freedom, for union 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. The reason 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, as a system of domination of one country by another and as a barrier to a higher level of revolutionary unity, is no less tempting to use its remaining advantages, military might. The question is, 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 35 countries? Or, will it be against People’s Korea, which would really be against both Korea 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 understanding and the will to do so. We will all need to reassess whether or not we are holding on to conceptions, attitudes or habits 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 is, as a political and rebel appeal as well as a political program, 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 the white revolutionaries, while others never will.

We will be constantly fighting the tendency within the larger movement to bring the branches of the top leadership of the capitalist parties. This is the all the more reason why, as revolutionaries, we need to maintain 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 costs. Fighting the racist, supremacist and neo-fascist 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 of the world unite. 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 be solidarity between the workers of the oppressed 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 peoples may have different demands and they may be better interlinked with that 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 the working-class movement, we will have to tackle, at once, 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 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 masses. We understand that this 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 socialism. It’s a perspective that has been far too weak for far too long.

This anniversary is a good time to re-think 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 this struggle. It 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 broadened.

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 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 70th anniversary of Che Guevara’s martyrdom. Che once said that “at the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is the one who has a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality.” That’s 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

First Secretary of Workers World Party

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Nov. 2, 2017
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Larry Holmes

workers.org
Transit advocates square off with bankers

By Julie Varughese

New York

Members of the People’s MTA (PTMA) advocacy group delivered blistering remarks at a public hearing of the Metro- politan Transportation Authority’s Wall Street-oriented board on Oct. 25. They denounced the lack of accessibility in this city’s 143-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 frustratated 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 re- response would be to cancel the MTA’s $35-billion debt and use that money to build a system with more trains and bus- es, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Climate activists denounce hurricane devastation

New York City:

Climate activists denounce hurricane devastation

Led by youth of color, thousands rallied and marched into Manhattan 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, includ- ing the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York (CUNY).

Along with climate neglect and dam- age by big business and government, speakers highlighted the disproportion- ate suffering and loss by poor communi- ties 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 stove out of housing and homeless, their circumstances worsened by racist policies, the continuing impact of past colonial occupation and banking indus- try profiteering.

Our banner in the march proclaimed: “The storm began in 1492. End white su- premacy!”

Stony photo by Anne Pruden

New York City supermarket protest:

‘Bring back WIC!’

Neighborhood activists rallied outside one of three Gristedes supermarket located in the Chelsea area of Manhat- tan on Oct. 28. They were there to demand that the grocery chain reverse its decision to stop accept- ing WIC, Women, Infants, and Children vouchers.

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

charges. Although it is flawed (mainly be- cause 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, in- cluding mothers who had used WIC to get a break from high grocery prices while pregnant, nursing or otherwise feeding a child under 6, wrote to shoppers and passersby over a microphone provided by the Solidarity Center.

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

Chesapeake 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 pro- hibitive, even for those whose own rent is still affordable. For information about this campaign, contact make.chelsea.aft- fordable@gmail.com.

– Sara Catalinotto

WW challenge overturns PA prison ban

By Joe Piette

Philadelphia

The Pennsylvania Department of Cor- rections 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 newspa- per has been denied to all inmates housed in Pennsylvania prisons.”

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

This was the fourth issue of WW de- nied 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.

Incidentally, several Philly com- rades 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 arti- cle said WW was banned: “Pennsylvania prisons ban WW for supporting ‘fight against white supremacy.’” (https://www. workers.org/2017/10/12/)

No matter what the comrades argued, the prison official would not allow the pa- pers 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 erase this unconstitutio- nal 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 men- tion the demand that prisoners be com- pensated.

Workers World has since received a copy of another prisoner’s grievance, 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 ad- ministration expressed outright in their own words.

We loved ones behind bars in this state are subjected to those racist attitudes and actions everyday.

WW urged activists to send complaints to the DOC in Mechanicsburg, Pa. Re- porters 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 fac- simile of the letter.

The social media campaign forced the DOC to respond. Its denial letter widely in social media so that DOC had to respond to WW.

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Activists plan WWP national conference

By Ben Carroll and Taryn Fievé

“There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen.”

— V.I. Lenin

Against the backdrop of the Trump regime’s inflection 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 represented, 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 held 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.

We have assembled for a unique venue to meet other activists who have now taken on critical importance in the fight for socialism. Mond Jones, a WWP member in Fort Lauderdale, 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 new comrades, but also seasoned compañeros 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 first approached party membership. I’m excited to see not only how far I’ve developed, but how far other members have developed as a whole after a year.”

This year, the movement has seen many things coming together. The arch-bishop Trump to the topple of fascist 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 have answered the call of 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 uprising offer 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 movement. By this 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.

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 with him” without asking for asylum in other countries.

The Spanish state coup seizes Catalonia, charges leaders with rebellion

“The importance of the 500th 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. are 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 jail

How imperialism is expanding its military presence in Africa while China builds that continent’s infrastructure

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

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When the Border Patrol arrests a 10-year-old

Rosa Maria Hernandez is 10 years old. She has had cerebral palsy from birth, and as her elementary school teachers say, she has comprehension to that of a 4- or 5-year-old. Relying on a walker, an undocumented immigrant, brought her across the border into Laredo, Texas, where she was just three months old, so she could receive medical care.

Doctors discovered Rosa Maria needed immediate gallbladder surgery on Oct. 24. She was in an ambulance with her cousin, a woman, who looked after her, speeding toward a children’s hospital in the south Texas city of Corpus Christi, 100 miles down Interstate 35 from a Border Patrol check point far from the border.

Following the new punitive Trump/Sessions anti-immigrant protocols, the Border Patrol, contrary to Rosa Maria’s status as 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 instructed 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 officers who hauled away to a privately contracted juvenile detention facility.

Dan Hetlage, a spokesman for Customs and Border Protection, said in a statement: “Rosa Maria was an “illegal immigrant.” Only Border Patrol cops determined Rosa Maria’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.”

The Bergdahl case:
“Taking responsibility”

By Dee Knight

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

The Army’s special prosecutor, Lt. Col. Jerry Albin, said this is “the best type of plea to show a defendant is serious about taking responsibility for his conduct.”

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 statement in the Rose Garden, and his national security adviser, Susan E. Rice, said the sergeant had served with “honor and distinction.”

Yet during the 2016 presidential campaign, one candidate frequently called Bergdahl “a dirty rotten traitor,” adding that he “should be executed.” Disabling the candidate said as he panned a firing squad. That erstwhile candidate now president presently referred to: “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.”

The case against Bergdahl has varied from 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, then 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,” said a retired Air Force lawyer who is now a law school professor in Los Angeles. It was New York Times military analyst Gen. Robert Abrams is now command er 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.

Transit advocates vs. bankers

Continued from page 8

By David Sagan

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 away from the offices of Wall Street creditors. They were 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 accessibility,” explained Tony Murphy, a PMTA activist.

A-ride driver who burned a Manhattan “Shoutout,” Major George Tillery and others who have contributed to peoples’ movements for leverage despite being held behind bars, their lives and courage are sorely needed on the outside.

And now many people have become workers.org

Spanish state coup seizures Catalonia

Continued from page 9

part of the imperialist world, with members in NATO, who is in most of the aggressive wars led by U.S. imperialism.

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

On Oct. 30, Spain’s Attorney General Jorge Leon ordered both Catalan and national court to charge 14 members of Puigdemont’s administration with pushing independence, when he claimed was in defiance of Spain’s constitution and constitutional court. These include the serious charges of rebellion — “involvement in the promotion of terrorism.” Sen tence and misuses 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.

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

A central case that Abrams might show leniency toward Bowe Bergdahl, Sen. John McCain — former prisoner of war, who was shot down — was warned — that the Senate Armed Services Committee, which, when he found himself in the military, was shut down — that he would hold hearings on the Bergdahl case if there were no punishment. McCain’s committee’s sign off on any future promotions for the general in the Bergdahl 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. He has already been turned into a Taliban captive. He has testified that he left his outpost in Afghanistan to hike to a larger base to report concerns about policies in his unit. For this he was not going to comment on him. But I think people have heard my comments in the past.”

The case against Bergdahl has varied from 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.

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By David Sagan

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A-ride driver who burned a Manhattan “Shoutout,” Major George Tillery and others who have contributed to peoples’ movements for leverage despite being held behind bars, their lives and courage are sorely needed on the outside.

And now many people have become
On Sept. 29, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson announced the decision to significantly downscale the diplomatic and economic presence of the United States 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 the context of the situation on the Cuban side, was held with Secretary of State Tillerson, the minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Cuba, Bruno Rodríguez, a series of conversations in which they reached the adoption of hasty decisions that were not supported by evidence, urged him not to politicize a matter of this nature, and once again, demand effective cooperation from the U.S. authorities to clarify facts and conclude the investigation.

It is the second time, after May 29, 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 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 and access to 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, 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 alerted 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 the comprehensive and unconditional right of importing equipment, as a gesture of goodwill that evidenced the great interest of the Cuban government in concluding that 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.

In this regard, it has 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 or government officials in Cuba, the moment the Cuban government’s announced decision to reduce Cuba’s diplomatic staff in Washington, US, 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 rarely 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 the facts and concluding the investigation, for which it will be essential to count on the most effective cooperation of the U.S. competent agencies.

Cuba responds to ‘sonic attack’ allegations

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 work of former President Hugo Chávez. This work emphasized winning the trust of the people, prioritizing the needs of the working poor and building the type of social relationships in the military that are unifying and encourage loyalty to the people of Venezuela.

He contrasted Venezuela’s military 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 Venezue- ela, 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 due to the U.S.-led political 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.
Exploitation 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 27,000 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, menospreciados y con exceso de trabajo.

El Centro de Depresión Integral de la Universidad de Michigan destaca los siguientes factores 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 seguridad de salud. Tiene una alta clasificación en el aumento de la mortalidad y los costos de la atención médica”.

Además, “Otro gran impulso 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 hechos, 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 sólo 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 precio.

Los empleadores maximizan sus ganancias al reducir los costos laborales. Lo logran reduciendo, deslocalizando 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 2006 “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 producen toda la riqueza y realizan 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 vida, como el movimiento de Lucha por S 1 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 deben 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.

El Centro de Acción Internacional está lanzando una campaña de ayuda de pueblo a pueblo para 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, hambrienta y desesperada, a pesar de que es bien sabido que los EUA Podrían aliviar la situación si realmente quisieran.

Lleva años repasar 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 descarrilarse 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 personas a personas 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: ¡Ponen fin a PROMESA, derogar la Ley Jones! ¡Sin privatización de la isla! ¡Para Puerto Rico sin puer to-riqueños, no para los bancos! ¡Cancele la deuda y pague reparaciones! ¡No a la militarización de Puerto Rico! ¡Solidaridad con las Islas Virgenes, Haití y todo el Caribe!