Defying privatization schemes

Puerto Ricans fight to reopen schools

By Berta Joubert-Ceci
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Nov. 13 — Never before in the history of Puerto Rico has the barbarism of colonialism been as exposed as it is now after Hurricane Maria.

When President Barack Obama signed the PROMESA Law that the U.S. Congress drafted in June 2016 to charge the Puerto Rican people an illegitimate debt of $74 billion, he never could have imagined that the conditions of the archipelago would end in the enormous chaos in which Puerto Rico now finds herself, as conditions in the country are ripe for the implementation of criminal neoliberal actions. It’s as if the colony has been served on a silver platter to the empire, to be conveniently disposed of without further ado.

What are these conditions?

Puerto Rico is a country almost totally paralyzed. In a macro vision and in economic terms, it can be said that production is almost zero. Without electricity and depending on costly diesel-based generators, very few of its manufacturing industries — above all pharmaceuticals and those making specialized electronic components — have recovered some normalcy.

Underscoring the reality of the colonial state is the fact that these are large foreign companies that send their profits to the owners outside of Puerto Rico. As good capitalists, they have no interest in the welfare of the people. The persistent fear of the servile Puerto Rican rulers, however, is that these corporations will leave the island, taking with them the country’s artificial manufacturing base.

This fear is further aggravated by a recent U.S. congressional proposal to impose a 20 percent tax on merchandise produced by U.S. companies based in Puerto Rico. If approved, it will be a one-way ticket for these manufacturers.

The vast majority of small Puerto Rican businesses have had to close temporarily, if not permanently, as they are unable to afford the enormous economic burden of generating their own electricity. The owner of a small ice factory — a commodity in high demand now — recently reported on a radio program that the company would soon have to go bankrupt because he cannot afford to continue paying $1,000 a day for diesel fuel.

Solidarity brigade from MO-WWP

This writer recently visited Puerto Rico as part of a

Continued on page 8
Day of Mourning – Take the bus!

By Kathy Durkin

The 49th National Day of Mourning will take place on Thursday, Nov. 23, the so-called “Thanksgiving” holiday, in Plymouth, Mass. Participants will gather at noon on Cole’s Hill above Plymouth Rock and march through the town’s historic district. A speak-out, where Native people tell of their history and today’s struggles of Indigenous peoples throughout the world, will be followed by a potluck social.

United American Indians of New England says, “We will show up in solidarity with Indigenous struggles throughout the world, and especially our relations in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean and Mexico suffering from hurricane and earthquake devastation compounded by colonialism.” (UAINE)

There will be a special message from 73-year-old Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier.

Buses will be traveling to Plymouth from Boston and New York City.

**Boston:** A UAINE bus will head to “the Brewery” in Jamaica Plain, 284 Amory St. (near the Stonybrook station on the Orange Line MBTA), starting at 9 a.m. and will depart at 10 a.m. The bus will return to Jamaica Plain at 4 p.m. Tickets: $15 (below cost). Buy tickets at eventbrite at tinyurl.com/y9q52tze. Special message from Leonard Peltier.

**Manhattan:** The International Action Center bus is already sold out. Those who will have tickets must meet at 6 a.m. sharp at the Solidarity Center, 147 W. 24 St., 2nd floor, in Manhattan. It will depart at 4:30 p.m. and arrive in NYC by 9:30 p.m. For information, call 212-633-6646.

**Brooklyn:** A bus is being organized by Eritye Pama Desailin. It leaves at 6 a.m. from Radoyo Pa Nou, 1805 Nestland Ave. (between Beverly and Cortezosa roads). Tickets: $30. For information, call Dahood Andre at 347-730-3620 or email eritypapadesailin@gmail.com.

**New York, N.Y. 10011**

**Los Angeles**

By Kathy Durkin

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

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalism’s profit-driven destruction of the Earth. 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 assures basic human needs. To guarantee basic human needs, socialism must be fought for.

Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party

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.

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis

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Labor support and a win for Durham freedom fighters

Breaking news from Durham: On Nov. 14, Durham District Attorney Roger Echols decided not to pursue any felony charges against #DefendDurham defendants for toppling a Confederate statue on Aug. 14. Our movement is powerful. After dozens of unions and community organizations spoke out, hundreds of phone calls, thousands of emails, flooding the DA, we have overcome. We still have to beat back the misdemeanor charges. Onwards now to the People’s Tribunal! If you would like to testify about crimes of white supremacy, or want to be involved with the Commission of Inquiry, please direct message Workers World Party Durham Branch on Facebook. #WinWithHustle

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

In one step toward victory in the fight against white supremacy in North Carolina, the Durham County district attorney dropped all felony and misdemeanor charges on Nov. 9 against three people present when Durham freedom fighters toppled a Confederate statue on Aug. 14.

Six of the people charged in connection with the statueakedown were to appear in court on Durham on Nov. 14. They face very serious penalties, including “misdemeanor damage to real property” and “felony inciting a riot to cause property damage in excess of $1,500,” which carries a potential sentence of 2 to 3½ years in prison.

Defend Durham, a community organization that has rallied around those who brought down the statue, issued a Nov. 9 statement on the dropping of charges against the three defendants. In part, the organization said: “We must remember that we cannot trust the system to change that which it upholds. This was merely representative of a lack of evidence, not an acquiescence of power. … We must continue to fight until the remaining [people charged] walk free, until no Confederate statues remain, until all institutions of white supremacy have been abolished.”

One of the defendants, Loan Tran, a member of Workers World Party, declared in a Nov. 12 Facebook post: “We won [the recent acquittals] because we organized and because we didn’t do anything wrong! Myself and 11 others are still facing ridiculous charges — among them two felony riot charges. … Let’s keep flooding the streets and the phone lines. Let’s indict this system for its true crimes — the countless evictions and cession of Black and Brown neighborhoods to developers; the unending murders of our people in the streets, in the jails, at the workplace, in detention centers; the total and unapologetic protection this system offers to the statues that literally enshrine and uphold white supremacy.”

Electrical Workers (UE) Local 130, North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, issued a rousing “Labor Call to Action” in support of the freedom fighters.

Attack on immigrants aimed at all workers

By G. Dunkel

In its usual cruel fashion, the Trump administration made it obvious in the first week of November that it intends to end the Temporary Protective Status program. TPS allows refugees from countries where there have been natural disasters like hurricanes or earthquakes, or political violence like a civil war, to live and work legally in the United States. It is granted by the secretary of Homeland Security on advice of the secretary of State.

Most of those who have been recipients of TPS are from El Salvador (155,000), Honduras (57,000) or Haiti (50,000). (Journal on Migration and Human Security, July 2017) Close to 90 percent are now workers in metropolitan areas on the East and West Coasts. They are estimated to have nearly 275,000 children, who were born here and are U.S. citizens. About a third are buying a house. The average length of time they have been living in the U.S. is 19 years. (Center for American Progress, Oct. 10)

The Trump administration proclaims very loudly that it was elected to end TPS. These bigots single out the people of color in the TPS program, proclaiming that they are the reason wages are low and jobs are scarce — instead of admitting that this is how a capitalist economy works when it can get away with exploiting workers to the utmost because of their precarious status.

A number of economists say that the presence of workers protected by TPS actually benefits the economies of the areas where they are concentrated. In addition, the money they send to family back home amounts to 15 percent of the gross national product of the three countries that actually benefit from the remittances of their workers. (Pew Research Center, 2015)

When Elaine Duke, the acting secretary of Homeland Security, decided she didn’t have enough information about Honduras and so extended TPS for Hondurans another six months, John Kelly, the retired general who is Trump’s chief of staff, called her long-distance from Asia to tell her to reconsider. She refused and said she will retire when a permanent secretary is confirmed.

The TPS decision for Haitians will come in late January and for Salvadorans in early March.

A number of Haitians who had moved to Brazil for jobs connected to the Olympics and the World Cup games tried to get into the U.S. on TPS. They wound up going to Canada when they couldn’t enter the U.S. There are significant Haitian communities in Montreal and Quebec City.

Through August a large number of Haitians crossed from the U.S. into Canada and applied for asylum. Had they attempted a legal crossing, Canada would be required to send them back under existing treaties with Washington. But an “illegal” crossing lets them apply for asylum.

The Canadian government is preparing for a major influx of refugees from the U.S., especially if TPS protection is withdrawn from 195,000 Salvadorans in March. The Canadian system for hearing asylum requests is severely backlogged, but people with a pending asylum claim can get work before their case is heard. (Globe and Mail, Nov. 7)

Maryland Workers win fight for $15

By Kermit Leibensperger

Rockville, Md.

Nov. 7 — Chants of “$15, se puede!” and “Yes, we can!” rang out loudly here today in Montgomery County Council chambers and throughout the halls. Cadenced applause occupied the chants of an overflow crowd of workers packed the auditorium to witness the fruiting of years of struggle.

The council unanimously voted to pass a $15-an-hour wage bill. County Executive Isiah Leggett is scheduled to sign the bill on Nov. 13. He had vetoed a bill in January that provided for a faster rise to the $15 hourly rate, a bill opposed by business owners.

The law that just passed mandates that larger employers — those with 51 workers or more — will pay the $15 minimum wage, based on the Consumer Price Index, beginning on July 1, 2022. Other employers — those with 10 employees or less — will have an-

imum wage based on the Consumer Price Index, beginning on July 1, 2023, to pay the rate, and those who employ less will have until the next year to reach it. This legislation includes an annual increase in the minimum wage based on the Consumer Price Index, beginning on July 1, 2022. The federal minimum wage law, which has been frozen at $7.25 since 2009, has never before included an automatic cost-of-living provision.

A joyous, rousing rally followed the win in the council. There, minimum-wage workers told their stories to survive. Solidarity statements were made by supporters from CASA de Maryland, an immigrant rights group, as well as Service Employees Local 32BJ and Food and Commercial Workers Local 400. Speakers called on the activists to account for the majority of TPS recipients. (Pew Research Center, 2013)

But in the Trump scheme of things, inflaming white supremacy and inciting racism are worth even minor economic damage.

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Workers win fight for $15

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The law that just passed mandates that larger employers — those with 51 workers or more — will pay the $15 hourly wage by July 1, 2021. Bosses who employ 11 to 50 workers will have until July 1, 2023, to pay the rate, and those who employ less will have until the next year to reach it. This legislation includes an annual increase in the minimum wage based on the Consumer Price Index, beginning on July 1, 2022. The federal minimum wage law, which has been frozen at $7.25 since 2009, has never before included an automatic cost-of-living provision.

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VICTORY! Montgomery County Council passes $15 minimum wage.

This victory was the result of much struggle in one of the richest counties in the U.S. by workers, unions and their supporters against the resistance of retailers and restaurant and other business owners. It shows that even in the age of Trump, gains can be won.

Leibensperger is a steward with Food and Commercial Workers Local 1094.
NFL in crisis over brain and other injuries

By Monica Moorehead

When autopsy findings were released Nov. 9, the cause of death of 30-year-old Aaron Hernandez, a National Football League player with the New England Patriots, confirmed an earlier September diagnosis. The multidisciplinary Tufts Ra-
cian tight end was found hang-
ing in his cell earlier this year which was ruled a suicide. But he had served a 20-year murder conviction.

Medical examiners dis-
covered that Hernandez had suffered from stage 3 chron-
ic traumatic encephalopathy, more commonly known as CTE. Stage 3 is the most severe, and this degenerative brain disease caused by constant trauma.

CTE has演变 into a deepening crisis for players exposed to the violent physical game of football, especially helmet-to-helmet direct hits to the head or hitting their heads after being tackled on the play-
ing field. The result of these on-
going hits is concussion. These hits are happening at such a rapid rate that established pro-
tocols for early diagnoses of concussions are being ignored. NFL in crisis over brain and other injuries. (October 2021)

In August, a study by the Journal of the American Medical Associ-
ation showed that an alarming and growing number of high school and college players are showing signs of CTE. The dis-
ease was found in the brains of three out of 14 high school play-
ers (21 percent) and 48 out of 53 college players (90 percent).

These startling numbers in-
dicate that this kind of head trauma can begin as early as elementary school, when many young boys start playing full contact football. There is a growing chorus of critics who are characteriz-
ing the violent nature of foot-
ball as child abuse and calling for its total abolition.

Alarming number of NFL injuries

Along with the devastating potential of more CTE cases is the avalanche of season-ending injuries halfway through the 2017 NFL season. It is already a well-known fact that the NFL has the shortest playing span — an average of three to four years — out of the four major professional sports (the other three are baseball, basketball and hockey).

Injuries are nothing new in the NFL, but there has been much more public attention directed to them due to inju-
ries to high-profile players like Aaron Rodgers, DeShaan Watson, Richard Sherman and J.J. Watt to name a few.

Normally, teams play on Sunday for five weeks, with each team getting only a two-
week break. But there are also games on Thursday and Mon-
day nights during the regular season. Sometimes teams play on a Sunday and four days later on Thursday.

This is hardly enough time to allow a starting player’s body to “recover” from hard tackles to resolve the brain nibbling between games, and it also makes players even more vulnerable to injuries. During a Thursday night game, the players from the former Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks team were injured, including Sherman, an all-pro defensive player who ruptured his Achilles tendon.

The growing number of players are demanding that Thursday night football games be eliminated al-
together. Sherman’s teammate, Doug Baldwin, stated, “Thursday night football should be il-
legal. This shit should be illegal. It is not legal. It is not OK. You can quote me on that.”

Put players before profits!

Life-threatening and sea-
son-ending injuries to players are not a top priority to bil-
lionaire multimillionaire owner.

Along with the NFL hierarchy, starting with NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, their main goal is lucrative TV revenue profits.

In 2016, 32 NFL teams split an estimated $7.8 billion from this revenue, which also in-
ncludes leaguewide sponsor-
ships, licensing and merchandise sales. This is an increase of 10 percent compared to 2015, according to Bloomberg News. Putting aside the multi-
million-dollar contracts of a handful of players, the average annual salary of an NFL player is less than $1 million dollars. The last thing the owners want to do is pay for health care for the play-
ers, only view them as expend-
able gladiators — especially if they retire with debilitating injuries.

Goodell, on the other hand, is seeking an extension of his own contract from the owners until 2024: a salary increase from $10 million to $40 million, the use of a private jet for life and lifetime health insur-
ance for his family.

Victory against outsourcing at UTenn

Workers at the University of Tennessee just won a significant victo-
ry. The United Campus Workers, an affiliate of the Communications Workers of America, defeated a $300 million outsourcing scheme that would have ripped 1,700 custodial, repair and maintenance jobs from the community.

The deal was a flip from the start. A student-organized compar-
is of the current contract and the proposed contract discovered costly overruns in the latter. CWA path to victory was uniting labor, community and business allies with students, staff and faculty, and educating lawmakers about the flawed proposal.

The outsourcing debate of which had been defeated, Payday Report notes: The UCW win is “a sharp rebuff to those who say it’s impossible to win victories in the anti-South … [Public sector unions ... can continue winning victories by building communi-
ty alliances and mobilizing their members to put pressure on lawmak-
ers.” (Nov. 1)

Unionizing workers at imperialist Santander Bank

A heroic union drive at Santander Bank, led by the Communications Workers of America, is gaining momentum. CWA is trying to organize tellers, bankers and call center staffers in the U.S. arm of Spain’s giant global, Banco Santander. This is a vital struggle, not only because of its impact on the workers’ livelihoods, but also because it could shed light on the bank’s dirty deeds in Puerto Rico.

Santander’s no ordinary bank. Here in the U.S., Santander Con-
sumer USA has spent years since the Great Recession buying up debts and now controls a third of that market. But the bank faces a series of regulatory actions after failing to comply with national consumer protection laws. (Boston Globe, March 28)

In Puerto Rico, former head of Santander PR Carlos Garcia became head of the Puerto Rico Government Development Bank in 2009. There he misappropriated enough funds to send the bank into insolvency! This only exacerbated the island’s massive $74 billion debt. Now Garcia heads PROMESA, the fiscal board overseeing the privat-
ization and pillage of Puerto Rico. (For an expose of Santander and Garcia’s crimes, see WW article, “Santander Bank owes reparations to the Puerto Rican people” by Berta Joubert-Ceci, March 28, inyurl.com/cvxcoung.)

With Puerto Rico continuing to suffer from federal mismanagement and racism after the hurricanes, unionizing the workers at Santander USA would be a small step toward justice in the island nation.

Kroger workers in Ohio, W.Va., Ky. ratify contract

Kroger grocery workers in 39 stores in West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new contract on Nov. 6. The contract for 4,200 members of Food and Commercial Workers Local 751, which takes effect on Nov. 29, 2020, provides raises while maintaining health care and retirement benefits.

“This day, it is extremely rare to ratify a contract without losing a single benefit,” said Local 400 President Mark Federici. “I cannot overstate how much support of Kroger customers and the rest of the community made a difference in these negotiations.”

Allen Nick-

cs, a clerk from Oak Hill, W.V., added: “I lost count of how many times someone saw us at a rally and stopped to ask me, ‘Are you guys on strike?’ Because I wasn’t cross a picket line!”

Sweeping victory for Iowa public unions

Public unions in Iowa, forced by a new anti-union law to hold re-
recertification elections Oct. 10-24, won an overwhelming 93 percent victory. Of 53,326 eligible voters, 46,488 voted yes in their unions, with only 6,242 ballots in opposition. Of 46,886 state-wide elections, unions won 436 and lost only 32, announced the Iowa Public Employee Relations Board on Nov. 8.

Eric Larew, past president of the Vance Valley Education As-
sociation, told the Quad City Times that the high margin of victory was “probably” in reaction to undemocratic rules. Instead of requir-
ing a majority of those voting, all those not voting were counted as “no” votes. Calling it a “sweeping victory,” Danny Homan, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 61, said it confirmed that even non-union members “value their work.”

The law was approved in February by former Gov. Terry Branstad and the Republican-led legislature. It severely limits the number of issues public workers, except most public safety employees, can nego-
tiate and stipulates the new re-certification rules in the final months of contracts. Union officials have protested the law, asserting it was rigged against unions, and are challenging it in court. (qctimes.com, Nov. 9)

WAPOL to fight, strike with state workers

Workers’ Action for Police Oppression to Public Laws, an affiliate of the Communications Workers of America, is preparing for strike action on Nov. 16 when the state’s collective bargaining contract expires at midnight.

“After going through a summer without a contract, we are determined to stand up to the state,” WAPOL said in a statement. “We are prepared to close all state offices, delay all court services, close all state harbors and develop a comprehensive strike plan. These are not empty threats, we mean business.”

The union said it plans to continue bargaining, but the state is not budging.

See more at nytimes.com.

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See more at nytimes.com.
Philly elects progressive DA
Community activists vow to hold his feet to the fire

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

By a 3-1 to 1 margin, Larry Krasner, one of Philadelphia’s most progressive defense attorneys, was elected district attorney on Nov. 7. He defeated Republican nominee Beth Grossman after she was endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP).

Krasner, a criminal lawyer, was elected in a year when progressive lawyers and prosecutors were running in hundreds of districts across the U.S. in this off-year election in a city where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans 7 to 1.

Many other upset victories occurred across the U.S. in this off-year election in which Democrats defeated Republican candidates. Krasner, however, while running as the Democratic Party nominee, was hardly that party’s first choice. In this year’s primary elections, Krasner gained ballot access after easily defeating six other Democratic Party contenders, many of whom had powerful electoral endorsements. He had an 18-point lead over his closest rival.

That primary victory took place in the midst of one of the biggest scandals in the history of the Philadelphia DA’s office. Former DA Seth Williams, convicted on 11-year charges in 1982 for the “crime” of speaking out against rampant police brutality under the Frank Rizzo regime. His supporters plan to seek DA Krasner’s review of these cases. It remains to be seen if they can gain an audience. Abu-Jamal currently has an active legal appeal against the Philadelphia DA’s office, seeking the release of documents related to former DA Ron Castille’s involvement in his conviction.

No good cops in a racist system

While groups that supported Krasner are speaking out in support of his platform, police in Philadelphia have been using social media to attack, threaten, and denigrate him. One video post, which appears to have been made inside a police facility, showed a close-up of a notoriously violent officer prank-calling and threatening the law firm where Krasner works, which had no connection with his election campaign.

The organized racist police opposition during the election and their ongoing attacks on Krasner and the social justice platform he campaigned on demonstrate why an electoral victory by itself is not enough. It will take more than one progressive lawyer to fundamentally change the nature of the office of the Philadelphia DA, which is part and parcel of the oppressive capitalist state apparatus.

Krasner has stated that he can work with “good officers of the PPD,” who, he believes, are “the overwhelming majority.” This is in strong contrast to Black activists who call for abolition of the police. One slogan of the anti-police brutality organization REAL Justice is “No cops in a racist system.”

It took a collective, mass people’s movement to win this election for Krasner. It will take a continued movement, led by the most oppressed communities, to push forward the reforms they need. These communities are fighting against an establishment that wields formidable powers. Winning these reforms will certainly prove more difficult than the election itself.

It will require a united peoples’ movement pushing back against the establishment, including the FOP, to fulfill the promise of this campaign.

STOP the MURDER of MUMIA

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Nearly 100 people, complete with a giant Trump puppet, marched and rallied outside the Philadelphia Art Museum on Nov. 11 in support of the Philly J20 Solidarity team. Their goal was to raise public awareness about the mass arrests of more than 200 anti-Trump protesters in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 20 during counter-inaugural actions and to bolster support for defendants still facing trials later this year.

Along with the huge caricature of Trump, other puppets included a fully helmeted D.C. cop and a skinny elderly woman protester, used in a skit during the demonstration. On reaching the Art Museum plaza, protesters were immediately confronted by police, who attempted to limit their access to a space 10 feet from the curb. The broad plaza extends over 100 feet to steps leading up to the museum.

Rally organizers noted that the U.S. Attorney’s Office is setting a repressive precedent for political expression under the Trump administration. They urged anyone who values dissent to stand in solidarity with the defendants in this case.

A Voice from Harper’s Ferry Written by Osborne P. Anderson, a Black revolutionary who was there. Includes essays by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead and Vince Copeland on the ‘Unfinished Revolution.’

Read it at www.workers.org/ebooks/AVoiceFromHarper’sFerry.pdf Available at online.
Diary of the first week
‘IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CHE’

By Addison Gaddis

In defiance of the Trump administration’s “travel advisory,” a group of 19 Workers World Party comrades from around the U.S. embarked Oct. 1 on a two-week journey to our socialist neighbor, Cuba. Some of us had been there before, but many hadn’t. We went as part of an international brigade sponsored by ICAP, the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, which promotes international solidarity.

“In the Footsteps of Che International Brigade” commemorated the 50-year anniversary of Che Guevara’s death in Bolivia. In addition to our party’s delegation, it included dozens of representatives from other political tendencies in the U.S. and people from 25 countries in the Americas, Africa and Europe. The 226 guests, all there in solidarity with Cuba, were the recipients of the Cuban people’s gracious hospitality. What follows is a brief rundown of the first week of experiences “in the footsteps of Che.”

Arrival in Cuba, Oct. 1

Comrades arrived sleepless and bleary-eyed at the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp (CIJAM), an ICAP-run camp outside Havana that hosts solidarity brigades. After we were greeted by murals of revolutionary heroes Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and Camilo Cienfuegos, we ate a cafeteria-style dinner of rice and meat.

After socializing with comrades from other parts of the U.S., we headed to the Casa de Amistad, or House of Friendship, a repurposed colonial mansion. After dinner and drinks, we were treated to a cultural presentation by talented Cuban singers. There we learned more about the life of Che and his comrades in the 1960s.

Oct. 2-3

Comrades heard from a panel of people who knew Che personally and politically. Their anecdotes described his wit, intelligence and political acumen. It was striking to hear how people whose lives were more affected by Che and his comrades described his experiences aiding those of his compañeros who were martyred alongside him in Bolivia.

We then traveled to the province of Pinar Del Rio and visited the Cave of los Portales, where Che ran a communist training center during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Oct. 4

We got our first taste of voluntary work, an important aspect of international solidarity brigades. In the spirit of Che, we pulled weeds, macheted undergrowth, hauled rocks, harvested rice and performed other helpful tasks around the CIJAM camp. That afternoon, we traveled to the Morro-Cabaña fortress complex built by Spanish colonizers but later taken over by the revolutionaries.

In the evening we were welcomed at the Casa de Amistad, or House of Friendship, a repurposed colonial mansion. After dinner and drinks, we were treated to a cultural presentation by talented Cuban singers. There was something delightfully revolutionary about our evening, which included singing and dancing to revolutionary songs.

Oct. 5

After a late night, the brigade was up at 3 a.m. to begin a long trip out to the provinces. We were headed to Sancti Spiritus, with a stop first in Santa Clara. Our caravan of six buses hit the road at 4 a.m. Comrades were solemn and respectful at the Santa Clara memorial and the mausoleum that holds Che’s remains, as well as those of his compañeros who were martyred alongside him in Bolivia.

The mausoleum was freezing cold and silent, in contrast to the heat outside. Jungle plants flanked the gravesites, simulating the Bolivian jungle where Che and his comrades perished. An attached museum features rare photographs of Che and artifacts from his life. A bronze statue of Che stands over a large plaza, where we would gather three days later for the official commemoration of his death.

A quick visit followed to a memorial of the rebels’ heroic detailing of former dictator Fulgencio Batista’s train in Villa Clara. We then attended a charming reception by local authorities and schoolchildren from Sancti Spiritus, a historic town about an hour from Santa Clara.

Oct. 6

The brigade traveled to the municipality of Yaguahay in the province of Sancti Spiritus. There a memorial honors Camilo Cienfuegos, a hero of the Cuban revolutionary war. He is honored with a museum and an eternal flame, as well as a memorial dedicated to his favorite horse. Young people at the nearby Camilo Cienfuegos military school provide a round-the-clock guard for the eternal flame.

That afternoon, at the University of Sancti Spiritus, we received an in-depth talk from the Civil Defense that keeps Cuba safe in times of trouble — whether war or natural disaster. Sancti Spiritus was hit heavily by Hurricane Irma. A young person described the experiences aiding heavily affected towns and villages. It was inspiring to hear how people whose houses survived the wind and water hosted those whose homes were more vulnerable.

Before the hurricane even started, civil defense and youth organizations went door-to-door to spread awareness, while mass media were used to alert at-risk regions. The unofficial motto of the Civil Defense seemed to be “Nobody gets left behind.” This emphasis on “people first, property second” stands in stark contrast to hurricane and disaster management in the U.S.

That evening, we visited a local Committee for Defense of the Revolution. These community organizations serve individual neighborhoods. The one we visited organizes blood drives, health education and other community support. Some comrades imagined the CDR visit would be like the Civil Defense talk — a sit-down in a room, a political discussion, a Q&A. What actually happened was much better — a dance party in the streets!

Oct. 7

After doing voluntary work at an organic urban farm in Sancti Spiritus, we explored the town. Brigadistas got Wi-Fi cards, went to the natural history museum, drank coffee, bought books and souvenirs, or just happily wandered and explored the historic town with its beautiful architecture. We went to bed early because the next day would be our earliest wake-up time yet — 2 a.m.
Tending crops at an ‘organopónico’ — an urban organic garden.

I was then told to come back to the office in six hours, where I received a massage and an acupuncture treatment that continued to ease my suffering.

There is a doctor-and-nurse neighborhood. This is key to the system that makes medical personnel both assistant and being refused therapy or pain medication.

Doctors at all levels are trained to administer acupuncture, herbal cures or other complementary practices that Cuban practitioners have found to be effective. Cuban researchers develop their own vaccinations and treatments that Cuban practitioners have found to be effective. For health issues beyond the capacity of the neighborhood medical team helps make the transition go smoothly for the patient.

Cuban doctors and nurses are trained to administer acupuncture, herbal cures or other complementary practices that Cuban practitioners have found to be effective. For health issues beyond the capacity of the neighborhood medical team helps make the transition go smoothly for the patient. Doctors at all levels are trained to administer acupuncture, herbal cures or other complementary practices that Cuban practitioners have found to be effective.

Cuban researchers develop their own vaccinations and treatments that Cuban practitioners have found to be effective.

By Rafael E. Justo

On my second day visiting Cuba from the U.S. in October as a member of the “In the Footsteps of Che International Brigade,” I found myself suffering from a severe episode of back pain. I could not walk or put on my clothes, and I yelled out in excruciating pain. I also felt confused and worried about being in a foreign country with a different political system.

I started to think about my past experiences with back pain in the U.S., which include long waits to see a doctor, doctor’s emergency room visit and worrying about whether my insurance would approve treatment. I remembered facing discrimination in the U.S. as a person of color. I remembered being questioned whether I was an addict and being refused therapy or pain medication.

In Cuba the opposite situation occurred; I was treated with compassion and exemplary care. A security guard outside my room heard me yelling for help and immediately called for a doctor and nurse who both assisted me quickly. My stress was immediately eased as the doctor gently touched my shoulder and told me he would make me feel better, which calmed me in that moment.

The medical staff gently eased my suffering by giving me both a muscle relaxer and anti-inflammatory pill. I was then told to come back to the office in six hours, where I received a massage and an acupuncture treatment that continued to ease my suffering.

I was so appreciative and pleased by my experience with health care in Cuba that I was curious, so I asked one of the doctors why he was an addict and being refused therapy or pain medication.

In Cuba my experience with health care in Cuba system can spend more time on prevention rather than treatment. This prevents epidemics and diseases from spreading through the island population.

When a health hazard like dengue fever or malaria is identified, there is a coordinated, nationwide effort to respond. Cubans no longer suffer from diphtheria, rubella, polio or measles. They have the lowest AIDS rate in the Americas and the highest rate of treatment and control of hypertension.

For health issues beyond the capacity of the neighborhood doctor, polyclinics provide specialists, outpatient operations, physical therapy, rehabilitation and labs. Those who need inpatient treatment can go to the hospitals. The neighborhood medical team helps make the transition go smoothly for the patient.

Doctors at all levels are trained to administer acupuncture, herbal cures or other complementary practices that Cuban practitioners have found to be effective. Cuban researchers develop their own vaccinations and treatments that Cuban practitioners have found to be effective. For health issues beyond the capacity of the neighborhood medical team helps make the transition go smoothly for the patient. Doctors at all levels are trained to administer acupuncture, herbal cures or other complementary practices that Cuban practitioners have found to be effective.

Cuban researchers develop their own vaccinations and treatments that Cuban practitioners have found to be effective.

By Joe Piette

Last winter, people power plus solar power before our brigade left for Puerto Rico, we collected over 900 pounds of supplies. Besides medicines, batteries, flashlight and food items, our bags were stuffed with solar-powered kits costing $60 each, donated by members of the Calvary Center for Culture and Community and other supporters. The solar-powered kits include two lights, plus a USB port capable of charging cell phones.

Before our brigade left for Puerto Rico, we collected over 900 pounds of supplies. Besides medicines, batteries, flashlights and food items, our bags were stuffed with solar-powered kits costing $60 each, donated by members of the Calvary Center for Culture and Community and other supporters. The solar-powered kits include two lights, plus a USB port capable of charging cell phones.

We wanted the solar panels to go to people with the greatest need. Assuming that electricity will be restored in San Juan before isolated communities, we drove 65 miles to Utuado, the heart of the central mountainous region known as La Cordillera Central. The name of this Spanish colonial town, built in 1739, comes from the native Taino word “otoao,” which means “between mountains.”

There, we hooked up with a religious group of about 30 energetic puertorriqueños/as who had accumulated a truckload of groceries and cases of water to distribute to area residents. With vehicles full of supplies and people, three of the Philadelphia brigadistas walked up the steep mountain roads alongside other participants.

After catching up to the vehicles at the top, we spent several hours slowly walking down the mountain, stopping at homes along the way to see what supplies were needed and if people required any medical aid from two nurses in our group. Families with no electricity or generator were offered a solar kit. The first family we encountered included an older woman who had just moved in with her son. She pointed out how her home, 100 feet downhill, was wrecked during Hurricane Maria. She had spent two nights there before being finally rescued.

As we handed out solar kits to families, we noticed some homes had blue tarp roofs replacing permanent roofs destroyed by wind and rain. We gave a family with a leaky tarp a new one donated by people in Philadelphia. The hurricanes were called a natural disaster, but the failure of the U.S. government to restore electricity to Puerto Rico is a human-made calamity. Many people, however, are organizing their own bottom-up relief efforts without any government involvement. That movement of person-to-person aid holds a promise of future political solidarity beyond sharing food, water and solar panels.
solidarity brigade sent by Mundo Obrero/Workers World Party, along with comrades Cornelious Moody, Mike Wilson and Joe Piette. One afternoon we drove from Whitefish to the government of Puerto Rico was denounced in a picket in front of the Abraham Marín airport in San Juan — a privatized airfield that is part of that naval complex. In Ceiba we saw huge white tents with luxury hotels. However, they enjoyed a roof and electricity, which no longer exist everywhere. They were surely for low-rank- ing soldiers, not the ones who stay in the luxury hotels. However, they enjoyed a roof of electricity, which no longer exist in hundreds of homes in the mountains, which are still waiting for the famous blue tarps from FEMA.

Meanwhile, in an unprecedented exodus, thousands of Puerto Ricans are heading to the U.S. They go in search of work, medical treatment and, above all, education for their children. In just four hours at the Luis Muñoz Marin airport in San Juan — a privatized airfield that is part of a Marin compa- ny — I observed three flights to different cities: Atlanta, Orlando and Philadelphia. Each flight carried approximately 200 pas- sengers — entire families, some even with their pets. And this was just one airline. Six hundred people in four hours. Ap- proximately 100,000 Boricuas are be- lieved to have left in little more than a month. Whether temporarily or perma- nently, this exodus is another economic, political and cultural crisis.

There is much to talk about: the Fiscal Adjustment Act. This is a new law that cuts the people’s ability to live. It cuts their health care, education and social services, and it cuts their ability to have a decent future. Puerto Rican kids demand the reopening of their schools. In one of these contracts, blame is be- ing thrown from one side to the other, be- tween the Puerto Rican government and FEMA. It involves the much talked about agreement to give away the island’s immense electricity network — a contract, there is strong suspicion that he is part of the neocolonial plan before Maria. The Boston Group had recommended the closing of 500 schools; 179 had already closed their doors before the hurricane. Meanwhile, Secretary Betsy DeVos — known for her pri- vatization efforts — visited Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in recent days. After Hurricane Maria devastated the island, the governor’s spouse could give them out of their own pockets. And this was just one airline. Six hundred people in four hours. Ap- proximately 100,000 Boricuas are be- lieved to have left in little more than a month. Whether temporarily or perma- nently, this exodus is another economic, political and cultural crisis.

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Puerto Ricans fight to reopen schools

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 interna- tional issues can’t be found anywhere else in the progressive U.S. press.

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- Ending the racist death penalty, work- ing to free political prisoners and tear down the jails
- How imperialism is expanding its mil- itary presence in Africa while China’s has been repelled
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The Soviet Union had become a vanguard for the socialist bloc and inspired socialist revolution movements throughout the global South. All over the world, oppressed peoples were taking up arms, expelling colonizers from their lands and loosening the yoke of capitalist exploitation.

The Soviet Union played a huge role in supporting the socialist revolutions in Cuba, [Democratic People's Republic of Korea], Vietnam, China before the Second World War, and in several other countries, all identified as Marxist-Leninist. Leninism again provided a workable framework for the works of Marx and Engels into practice for the first time on such a large scale. The 1940s was a time of global revolution for the global south, and Russia's material and military aid to the other countries in the socialist bloc showed the nature of their internationalism.

Fall of USSR, counterrevolution and what we learn on workers.org

But we also realize that no country is perfect, and although the USSR had many social and economic gains, it still had to make many concessions to bourgeois elements of society, which inevitably led to its demise. This was a product of the difficulties of trying to build socialism in a relatively backward country, magnified by the fact that the revolution did not spread to other more developed capitalist countries as anticipated by Lenin and his followers.

It's common sense that it takes people to build a society. There is a need for industrial workers, but also skilled and unskilled workers needed to help rebuild society. It was necessary for the Bolsheviks to build alliances with the peasantry, but the peasantry had a different set of values at the time than the industrial proletariat. The proletariat was focused on the socialization of society, whereas the peasants valued private property and the private ownership of their land. This alliance would obviously come with contradictions.

The rise of the bourgeoisie in opposition to the workers and peasants. Many of the most advanced workers in the society died fighting in the revolution, which meant that there was a vacuum of skilled workers needed to help rebuild society.

Left groups commemorate Bolshevik Revolution

V.I. Lenin’s ‘Letter to American Workers’

By Mike Kuhnenbeck

Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin’s “Letter to American Workers,” written in 1917, stressed the role of the U.S. working class in the struggle against oppression. It contains important lessons for workers on the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution.

Lenin called on workers to be the first workers’ state in Russia on Nov. 7, 1917, and pulled the country out of the imperialist slaughter of World War I, a global catastrophe accompanied by anti-labor violence and anti-union crackdowns on the U.S. front.

The Shilka, a former Czarist naval vessel, arrived in Seattle harbor on Dec. 21, 1917. The ship had left Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution and the sailors were excited to hear about the victory of the Socialists. The U.S. workers greeted their Russian comrades when the ship docked in Seattle.

On Jan. 8, 1918, carrying a letter co-written by lumberjack Roy Brown and other Seattle IWW leaders, the document, describing the conditions in Russia and the U.S. work class, was hidden in a lifebelt by Commissar Nikolai Kryukov.

The letter was addressed, “To Nicolai Lenin at the Revolutionary Soviet of the Ukraine Government, and through them to the Workers of Russia.” In this document, Lenin called on all U.S. workers to demand a higher level of wages, and “a new form of freedom, of freedom of speech, of the U.S. Workers, an end to all forms of oppression and exploitation.”

Lenin finished drafting his response in August 1918. Addressing his “Comrades,” Lenin “calls upon all our American proletarians to make a thorough study of the Russian experience.” Lenin concluded, “Your victory is our victory. And your defeat will be a blow to us.”

V.I. Lenin’s ‘Letter to American Workers’...
There are times when a few words speak volumes. “Me too” succinctly expresses the pain of millions of women and others who retweeted the hashtag or commented on it. “Me too” has always fought the battles. The master class has always assaulted in the workplace. The master class has always experienced sexual harassment and sexual abuse perpetrated by Hollywood capitalist sharks, imprisoned Debs without a trial, deported workers from revolutionary activities. The ruling class, through its mass media and political mouthpieces, indoctrinates the masses with its class perspective. As Karl Marx explained, the dominant ideas of any age are the ideas of its ruling class. Today they’re from the owners of capital. Despite all the gains of the women’s and LGBTQ liberation movements, the rich and powerful still view women, young men and nonbinary and trans people who work for them — even “big stars” — as property to be exploited economically and sexually. Sexual abuse pervades the entire news, publishing and entertainment industry under capitalist conditions. And until three decades ago there were no legal ones for working class and oppressed people. Today’s workplace sexual abuse and assault is yet one more vile way for bosses to attempt to intimidate, divide and control workers who are just trying to survive in a cold, hostile, unjust capitalist world.

The letter of workplace sexual violence is another reminder of the irreconcilable antagonism between labor and capital. Putting an end to all systems of exploitation will finally enable humanity to rid itself of the entrenched patriarchy that only serves the interest of the bosses.

By John Catalinotto

With the Pentagon poised to sail three massive aircraft carriers toward north Korea, there’s a U.S. war threat hanging in the air. Washington is engaging deals in Asian-Pacific capitals, mass demonstrations protested his presence from Manila to Seoul. And tens of thousands of demonstrators marched toward the meeting place of the Association of South East Asian Nations conference in Manila, where Donald Trump was representing the world’s most destructive imperialist power.

Demonstrators burned U.S. flags and an effigy of the U.S. president shaped like a Nazi swastika, meant to symbolise fascism, war and plunder. Large contingents held banners reading “DUMP Trump” and demanding the U.S. get out of its military bases. Filipino police turned a water cannon on protesters.

Demonstrators in south Korea days earlier also made a clear protest for an end to the U.S. war threatened against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea that endangers the lives of everyone on the Korean peninsula.

In support of sovereign foreign policy, independent of U.S. imperialism, protest gatherings in Seoul’s Gwanghwamun Square, an historic center, on Nov. 7. A sign seen everywhere in the photos reads, “Say no to Trump, say no to war!” Despite the presence of more than 15,000 police officers, thousands of protesters attempted to block Trump’s entrance to the Blue House, the office of south Korean President Moon Jae-in.

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By Sara Flounders

“Me too” says ‘No U.S. war!’

[Image]

[Image]

[Image]
Saudia threatens wider war

By Chris Fry

Stunning events in Saudi Arabia have stepped up the threat of a wider war in the Middle East.

The prime minister of Lebanon, Saud al-Hashemite bin Abdullah, pulled out of the Saudi capital of Riyadh, after the Crown Prince forced him to announce his resignation. More than 200 leaders, including billionaire media moguls, 11 royal princes and several major investors, have been arrested on corruption charges and confined to luxury hotels.

The Saudi regime, which has been waging a brutal war against the people of Yemen, declared what amounts to war against both the Hezbollah organization in Lebanon and the government of Iran, after a missile was launched from Yemen toward Riyadh, (newsweek.com, Nov. 7)

The Israeli regime under Benjamin Netanyahu has champed in with its own war threats against Lebanon and Hezbollah, and Washington has voiced its strong approval of Saudi actions.

Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman (MBS), nicknamed “Mr. Everything” because he controls the military, the economy and all foreign affairs, is now the apparent heir to the throne.

The Brookings Institution wrote on June 6 that there is no turning back from the half-year-old war in Yemen is his signature policy initiative. The Saudis are bogged down in a quagmire with enormous consequences for the people of Yemen. For Yemenis, the war has brought mass starvation and migration from the country.

A child dies every ten minutes as a consequence of the war. Seven million people are at acute risk, The United Nations has calculated; this is the worst humanitarian disaster in the world.

“...and nationalism.”

The deposed president of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, and four of his ministers have been in Brussels, the capital of the European Union, after the Spanish government brought charges against them. Puigdemont’s party, the European Democratic Party of Catalonia (Pdecat), has opted to take part in the Dec. 21 elections, even though the Spanish state is imposing the elections on the region. Meanwhile, Rajoy is attempting to stir up even greater chaos among them in all the regions who identify as Spanish. His party, the PP, the PSOE, the monarchy and big business all have been exposed as corrupt exploiters. As expected, the last refuge of these soundbites is Spanish patriotism and nationalism.

The enemy of all the workers of the Spanish state — whether they identify as Catalan, Basque, Galician, Castilian or whatever nationality — is the imperialist ruling class and its parties running the Spanish state. That means mainly the PP and PSOE, the parties that have alternated in ruling over all the peoples of Spain since the 1978 “Transition.”

Working-class solidarity

For working-class revolutionaries, the most important goal is to build solidarity among the workers of all nationalities. The only way to do this is to support the self-determination of all the peoples in the Spanish state. This was a cornerstone of the united front since Spain’s 1936-39 Civil War.

In the Puerta del Sol plaza in the center of Madrid, a demonstration on Nov. 5 called the May 20th Front Diaz and the SAlthough the western world’s capitalist crisis, Catalinotto’s ‘Turn The Guns Around’

Catalonia

750,000 demand Madrid ‘free the prisoners’

By John Catilinotto

Some 750,000 people took to the streets of Barcelona on Nov. 11 to demand the release of Catalan pro-independence political prisoners who are being held as retaliation for organizing massive peace demonstrations on Dec. 21. The “Socialist” Party of Catalonia, led by the outgoing air force commander, Maj. Gen. Amir Esbil, told a conference. “What we could do in 24 days during the second Lebanon war, we can do in 24 to 60 hours. The growth of our strength has not been linear.” (theguardian.com, Nov. 15)

At the end of the meeting, the son [MBs] is also behind the Saudi regime and the government of Iran.

The main Yemeni group that the Saudi-led coalition is attacking is the Houthi’s news channel, Al-Masirah, said on Twitter: “We repeatedly affirmed that capitals of aggression states won’t be the owners of the Houthi movement in all its forms. We hope that the world is watching and that it will put pressure on the region to stop the attacks.” (nytimes.com, Nov. 4)

And Hezbollah is an active participant in the Middle East.

Weaving together GI letters, interviews and first-hand narratives with historical research, the author brings to life the story of the decision-making which led to the Vietnam War. shows its relevance to current wars.

Nov. 16, 2017

TUnE ThE GUnS AROuNd

Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions

Weaving together GI letters, interviews and first-hand narratives with historical research, the author brings to life the story of the decision-making which led to the Vietnam War. shows its relevance to current wars.
Radio agria parcial pos de María de Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci
San Juan, PR

La privatización de la educación era parte del plan neoliberal por Puerto Rico.

La escuela se veía en perfecto estado y había sido utilizada como centro comunitario durante los días siguientes al huracán para proveer y coordinar ayudas. Ese mismo día el piquete se estaba usando para preparar almuerzos para que los empleados del FBR y del congreso de EU. Para este período, se firmó otro contrato leonino de $200 millones, pese a las denuncias de corrupción. Ese mismo día del piquete se estaba usando la escuela para preparar almuerzos para que los empleados del FBR y del congreso de EU.

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