

Death row families lead march to end executions

By Gloria Rubac
Austin, Texas

Lydia Garza and 16 family members drove in a rented van almost seven hours from the Rio Grande Valley to the Texas Capitol here on Saturday, Oct. 19, without even stopping to eat. It was so they could stand up for her innocent son on death row, as well as say “No!” to all executions at the Texas March to Abolish the Death Penalty. “People have been executed and only later we find they

are innocent. The death penalty is only applied to the poor and it is unfair, brutal, discriminating and unjust,” Garza told hundreds of anti-death-penalty activists who listened intently. “Growing up I never really thought about the death penalty and never thought I would be part of its existence.” Behind Garza her family members held signs with a large photo of their loved one that read: “Help Save Humberto Garza #999495, Convicted under Texas’ Law of Parties.”

The Texas March to Abolish the Death Penalty has been held every year since 2000. Texas executes more people than the next six states combined. The total since 1982 is 565 executions, with another scheduled for Oct. 30 and eight more after that, including one on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday in January.

Family stories expose injustice

This year, stories of the families highlighted the event. Their few words, spoken with such emotion, such intensity and such clarity held the crowd virtually speechless. “We, the families standing up here today, are truly victims of this system ourselves. It is an injustice what has been done to us. It’s unbelievable what happens to all the families as well as our loved ones on death row,” said Delia Perez Meyer. Her brother, Louis Castro Perez, is now being represented by The Innocence Project. Terri Been is the sister of Jeff Wood, a man sent to death row under Texas’ Law of Parties for a murder that happened without him even being present. “Think about this,” she said. “Carved on the U.S. Supreme Court building are the words ‘Equal Justice Under Law.’ To sentence my brother to death is not equal justice. He has been living in a cell smaller than my bathroom for over 20 years — not equal justice. I have walked these halls at the Capitol for many years, my words falling on mostly deaf ears. I have spilled my soul to them. This is not equal justice. Let’s use our power to effect change!”

Lee Greenwood-Rollins said, “My son was Joseph

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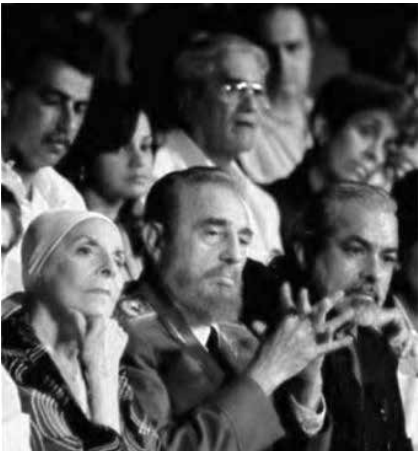
Supporters of death row prisoner Rodney Reed.

PHOTO: YANCY BALDERAS

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Cuban prima ballerina, sitting next to Fidel, 2010.

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In trial of killer cop

Black jurors struggle for guilty verdicts

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

After 27 hours of deliberation over six days, the jury in the trial of Robert Olsen, a DeKalb County officer charged with killing a nude, unarmed Anthony Hill, delivered its verdict Oct. 14. It found Olsen guilty on four of the six charges, but not guilty on the most serious — two charges of felony murder.

Olsen’s claim that he had feared for his own safety when shooting the unarmed man — the often-used reason that self-defense is granted to police agents — found justification with some jurors. Numerous studies have shown that despite thousands of killings involving police, very few are indicted, and even fewer are convicted of any wrongdoing. There was hope that this time the circumstances surrounding Anthony Hill’s death would be different.

Trial testimony from multiple witnesses revealed that Hill, an Afghanistan war veteran, the quiet, likeable 26-year-old Black man, who lived in an apartment complex with mostly Latinx residents, had been acting most unusually on March 9, 2015.

He first appeared at the door of the leasing office, bare-foot, wearing only shorts, unsteady on his feet and gesturing erratically.

Two maintenance workers approached him and told him he should go home. When he said he didn’t know where he lived, they guided him back to his apartment. Minutes later he appeared climbing down from his second-floor balcony, totally nude.

The staff of the complex saw him wandering in a playground area, crawling military style and peering around trees, and then crouched on a parking lot curb. Worried for his safety and well-being, they called 911 three times, seeking help for Hill.

Olsen got the call for a possible “demented person” and, upon arriving at the complex, observed a naked man sitting on the curb.

Hill, who had just been told by one of the maintenance

workers that he should go back home because the police had been called, responded, “Don’t worry. The police are my friends.” He began moving toward Olsen with his hands outstretched. The cop drew his gun, shouted “stop” and fired two rounds into the naked Hill, killing him.

Olsen initially claimed that Hill had physically pounded on his chest, forcing him to shoot. All evidence proved that to be a lie.

Olsen’s defense team offered no witnesses and rested.

The multiracial jury of seven women and five men deliberated for six contentious days while all the press gathered on the courthouse steps. It was the statements of Juror 31, the sole Black man on the jury panel, that received the most attention. He had decided to speak with Hill’s parents to let them know why Olsen was acquitted of murdering their son.

This unidentified forklift driver emerged as the leading voice in the deliberations for guilty verdicts on all charges, along with four Black women and another juror. He described to the media how difficult it had been to hear some jurors repeat that Olsen had acted in self-defense.

Once it became clear that it would be impossible to get a unanimous verdict on the felony murder charges, he said, this group of six stood firm that the evidence warranted guilt on the remaining four charges, including aggravated assault.

Juror 31 explained why two of the Black women jurors cried when the verdicts were read in the courtroom. He had convinced them that making the compromise assured that Olsen would be found guilty of causing the death of Anthony Hill and would serve jail time. He told them that there was no guarantee that another jury would render justice and that “we can be part of something that could make a change.” (Interview, www.11alive.com)

Robert Olsen’s conviction on four felonies, including aggravated assault, violation of oath of office and lying, carries a maximum of 35 years. Olsen is 57.

DeKalb Superior Court Judge LaTisha Dear-Jackson will announce the sentence Nov. 1 to a courtroom that will be packed with the Hill family and community supporters. □



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

people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

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GM strikers vote on new contract

By Martha Grevatt

In 1848, in “The Communist Manifesto,” Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels made an astute observation about the emergence of labor unions: “Now and then,” the young revolutionaries wrote, “the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers.”

This quote is as relevant today as ever, and it’s worth keeping in mind as striking General Motors workers decide whether to accept the tentative agreement negotiated by the United Auto Workers and GM.

What has happened on the picket line during the past month, after UAW members walked out Sept. 16?

Workers who labored under the same roof, but may not have had much personal contact, became friends. High seniority “traditional” workers, low seniority “in progression” workers and “temporary” workers with zero seniority walked the picket line together. In some locations they were joined by the lowest-paid workers in the plant — striking janitors employed under contracts with Aramark.

The strikers won the hearts and minds of exploited people across the country and beyond, with their emphasis on making “temporary” — i.e., precarious — workers permanent. The growth of precarious work has become a global crisis for the working class.

Isn’t this a living example of the “ever-expanding union of the workers”? Solidarity grows quantitatively during a strike. Eventually a qualitative change takes place. The “rugged individualism” fostered under capitalist society is replaced by class consciousness.

That is the greatest achievement during a strike — something that should be remembered by anyone assessing this tentative agreement.

Tiered pay a menace to solidarity

Tiered pay is introduced when a union and management agree to allow some workers—often future workers not yet hired when a contract is signed—to be paid less than others for doing the same work. Besides being unequal and unfair,

two-tier, and now multitier, pay scales keep a union membership divided. The impact of such a bad bargain has been disastrous, as workers at GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles have learned since two-tier was introduced in their contracts in 2007.

FCA workers voted down a contract in 2015 that maintained the unequal pay scales for workers hired after October 2007. They passed a revised contract that gave everyone top pay after eight years. But buried in the fine print were a number of hidden pay tiers, which were then put into effect at FCA, Ford and GM.

Under the 2015-19 contract, the number of so-called “temporary employees” grew — so-called because many of them have been working and waiting for years to acquire seniority.

Over the last four years, GM has made a record \$35 billion in profits on the backs of the workers. This has fueled a desire by workers to win back what they gave up to “save the company” during the company’s 2009 bankruptcy, and earlier during less profitable years.

The current tentative agreement falls short of this goal in many areas.

What does the tentative agreement offer?

The basic union principle of “equal pay for equal work” has still not been fully restored. While the agreement reduces the length of time it takes some second-tier workers to make first-tier pay, the proposed pension plans of the tiers are still grossly unequal, as are other benefits. Certain plants still have a lower pay scale than the major plants.

Temporary workers will need three years of “continuous service” to be made permanent in a process to begin in 2020. But if they have been laid off for over 30 days in a row during the past three years, their service is not considered “continuous.”

What about future hires? When will they make the same pay as current workers? It appears that workers hired after this proposed contract goes into effect would have to wait at least eight years to make top pay. Many, if not all, will start



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Strikers demonstrate outside GM world headquarters in downtown Detroit, Oct. 9.

out as temporary employees; there is no language giving future temps a path to permanent status.

The union leaders should have insisted on the formula raised by rank-and-file activists: “Everyone tier one.” Unfortunately, multiple inequalities remain — divisive inequalities threatening the precious new strike solidarity and the “expanding union of the workers.”

Doors to close at iconic Lordstown plant

In March, GM idled its Lordstown, Ohio, assembly plant. This sprawling complex employed many thousands when it opened in the 1960s. At the time it was a state-of-the-art facility that rolled cars off the lines at record speeds. Even after the steel industry abandoned the Youngstown-Warren area, Lordstown still provided good-paying union jobs to the community.

Under the tentative agreement, the plant, which one cannot miss while traveling the Ohio Turnpike, is being closed permanently, along with transmission plants in Michigan and Maryland and a parts warehouse in California. This means workers will have to relocate to far-off locations to keep their jobs.

Some dislocated former Lordstown workers demonstrated outside the meeting of GM local union leaders in downtown Detroit on Oct. 17, vowing to vote “no” to any agreement that doesn’t keep their home plant open.

There are additional past concessions this agreement fails to reverse. The cost-of-living allowance, a contract standard

that was taken away during the 2009 bankruptcy, has not been restored. Once again monthly pension checks are frozen — no raise for retirees. The consolidation of classifications in skilled trades, reducing opportunities in the highest-paying jobs, is not challenged.

On the other hand, GM’s attempts to force workers to pay thousands more in health care premiums were turned back. Unless one plows carefully through the 350-plus pages of actual language, there appears to be progress toward pay equity. Some voters might be taken in by the record \$11,000 signing bonus, although it is less than half that for temps — another example of inequality.

‘The biggest win’

How will workers vote? It’s hard to know. Some clearly feel that after the fight they put up, they deserve better. Others may think this is the best contract they’re going to get out of GM, which has played hardball from day one.

Rank-and-file posts on social media indicate a lot of opposition. The rank-and-file group Autoworker Caravan has developed a “contract lowlights” leaflet that outlines major problems with the agreement. A few local union leaders are calling for rejection.

Nevertheless, the first UAW locals to hold ratification votes passed the agreement by wide margins.

Either way, there are wins that can’t be measured in dollars and cents.

“The biggest win that was made in the past 33 days of our strike was educating a whole generation on the morals and the purpose of a union,” Jessie Kelley, a striking member of Local 160, posted on Facebook Oct. 18. “They have had the opportunity to witness a group of people willing to make sacrifices to improve the standard of living in America.

“We have made a dent in society’s ‘all about me’ thinking.

“I’m so insanely proud of my UAW family.”

Grevatt, a trustee of UAW Local 869, retired from FCA after 31 years. She was a founding board member of Pride at Work and served as vice president of its Michigan chapter.

Chicago education workers strike for their students

On Oct. 17, the Chicago Teachers Union — 25,000 strong — struck their school district, which is the third largest in the U.S. They were joined by 7,500 education workers from Service Employees Union (SEIU) Local 73. By Oct. 21, the CTU strike had entered its third day. These education workers are advocating for their students and going on the offensive against school privatization and austerity measures. Since 2012,

the CTU has prioritized rank-and-file activism, a tactic that influenced Red for Ed education actions that have rocked the U.S. and Puerto Rico since 2018. The launch of the strike is covered in this Oct. 18 article reprinted from Fightback News! (fightbacknews.org)

Chicago — Picket lines went up at hundreds of schools across Chicago at 6:30 a.m. Oct. 17. The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) walked out for their third strike since 2012. For the more than 7,000 members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 73 [joining them], this is an historic first strike, and the first against Chicago’s new mayor, Lori Lightfoot.

In the afternoon, the strikers went downtown in a river of red — the color of CTU — and purple — the color of SEIU. For over two hours, more than 20,000 marched back and forth, surrounding the Board of Education and City Hall buildings. They chanted, “When education is under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!”

Sarah Chambers, a special education teacher at Alcott College Prep in the Roscoe Village neighborhood, helped lead picketing at her school. She is an area captain, so she then visited the other picket lines in the nearby schools. As a member of the 40-person bargaining committee for CTU, she then sat in on the bargaining, and finally joined with her co-workers at the massive rally in the Loop, Chicago’s central business district.

Talking to Fight Back!, Chambers explained, “This strike of more than 30,000 teachers, teacher assistants, clinicians, and special ed classroom assistants with CTU and SEIU is about justice for Black and brown students in the city of Chicago. They deserve all the support in their schools, [and] support to deal with the trauma they experience living in the oppressive, racist system in Chicago means full-time social workers, nurses and restorative justice coordinators.

“Our students deserve class-size caps, with special education support, more resources, and fully funded schools.

“Lori Lightfoot has made it clear that



WW PHOTO

Chicago, Oct. 17.

she is choosing to support the rich people in Chicago by giving them \$2.4 billion in TIF [Tax Increment Financing] money, instead of putting money into our schools.”

When asked about the outcome of this strike, Chambers didn’t pause. “We are united and strong. We know we will win.” □



Chicago, Oct. 17.

WW PHOTO

Death row families lead march to end executions

Continued from page 1

Nichols, convicted under the Law of Parties. He was not the shooter and Harris County acknowledged this, but he was executed anyway. His death certificate read ‘state-sponsored homicide.’ Executions reverberate throughout your family and it leaves a lot of scars, some you don’t realize until later years. Joseph had four siblings and it affected each one differently. I only ask that you remember Joseph. Remember cases like Frances Newton’s and Shaka Sankofa’s. As I promised my son, we just must keep fighting!” Greenwood-Rollins had come with her granddaughter, Kristian Nichols-Muchiri, on a bus from Houston.

Vickie Curry spoke in front of the Capitol with her 13-year-old daughter Al’toria by her side. “George Curry is my husband. He’s innocent, but we didn’t have money for a lawyer. He refused to plead guilty in exchange for a sentence of 60 years without parole, saying he wasn’t going to confess to something he didn’t do. He was tried, convicted and now sits on death row.”

Dozens of supporters of death row prisoner Rodney Reed were present. Reed is represented by the Innocence Project in New York City. His execution date is set for Nov. 20, just four weeks after the rally.

The Reed family is spending night and day traveling around the country, speaking, protesting, marching, being interviewed and holding press conferences. Reed’s case was recently featured for two days on the “Dr. Phil” show. Reality star Kim Kardashian just came out in support of stopping Reed’s execution. Sister Helen Prejean, noted author of the best-selling book “Dead Man Walking,” from which a movie was made, is supporting Reed.

She regularly tweets and speaks about the Texas case.

Reed’s mother, Sandra, and his brother, Rodrick, spent a good part of the day speaking with supporters and with the news media. Because of the national attention his case of innocence is getting, the local media are paying close attention to developments.

Sandra Reed spoke at the annual marches beginning in 2002. She exclaimed to the crowd: “Thank you all for your support. Rodney’s case is a prime example of why we should not have a death penalty at all. Corrupt police, corrupt Department of Public Safety, corrupt lawyers, corrupt judges.”

Four honored guests flew into Austin for the weekend and told their horror stories.

Albert Burrell spent 13 years in the infamous Angola Prison, a former slave plantation, before being found innocent. He came within 17 days of execution in 1996 before his attorneys won a stay.

Ron Keine was on death row in New Mexico for three years until it was proven that a cop actually committed the murder!

Sabrina Butler-Smith was an African-American teenager in Mississippi when convicted of the murder of her nine-month-old son, Walter. She was later exonerated of all wrongdoing. She is one of only two women in the United States exonerated from death row.

Gary Drinkard spent almost six years on Alabama’s death row before he was finally exonerated in 2001.

Kids Against the Death Penalty

Kids Against the Death Penalty was likely the most energetic group at the rally, giving out free water, selling T-shirts and giving away cute and creative buttons for Abolition and for Jeff Wood,



Vickie Currie and her daughter, Al'toria, in front of Capitol.

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Louis Castro Perez and others on death row. Nick Been and Tanner Tucker, who founded KADP in 2008, tag-teamed their speech. “I have had the opportunity to speak at this march for the last ten years, quite literally for over half of my life. One of my favorite quotes is from Desmond Tutu: ‘If you are neutral in situations of injustice, then you have chosen the side of the oppressor.’”

Nicole Combs, speaking for the H.I.S. Ministry, introduced Lewis Bowden, who read a message from Pam Perillo. Perillo spent 20 years on death row before her sentence was commuted in 2000. She did 18 more years and was finally released this year.

Lillian Mauldin spoke for Amnesty International, University of Texas Chapter. Travis County (Austin) District Attorney candidate Jose Garza told the crowd that if elected he would not use the death penalty as a sentence for any crime.

The final speaker was Yancy Balderas, spouse of Juan Balderas, who strongly

condemned the use of the death penalty. “Juan spent almost nine years in the county jail waiting for a trial. Not a speedy trial! He has now been on death row for five years and we are finally learning how to prove his innocence.”

Balderas spoke for the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement in Houston. Juan Balderas’ family and supporters were the largest contingent at the march.

As the march approached the Governor’s Mansion, everyone loudly chanted: “Executions? Shut ‘em down! Capital punishment? Shut it down! Death row? Shut it down! Racist cops? Shut ‘em down! Corrupt judges? Shut ‘em down! Governor Abbott? Shut him down! The whole damn system? SHUT IT DOWN!”

The day’s activities were held on a bright sunny day, the weather finally under 90 degrees, with all participants energized and ready to take on the state until the death penalty and the execution chamber are finally shut down. □

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

#MeTooMcDonald’s confronts U.S. CEO

The president of McDonald’s USA, Chris Kempczinski (worth \$15.3 million as of February 2019), was a featured speaker at the annual Wall Street Journal Global Food Forum on Oct. 7. He and WSJ invitees were surprised when a determined group of survivors of McDonald’s workplace sexual harassment, all Black women, crashed the meeting. Calling themselves #MeTooMcDonald’s, the brave women demanded an end to “low pay, sexual harassment, violent attacks and attacks on union rights.”

An Oct. 10 email about the protest was titled “We Demand to Meet With the President of McDonald’s USA.” And a video of the action with the same title was posted on the Facebook page of Fight for \$15. Tanya Harrell, who has sued the mega-billion-dollar corporation demanding it do more to stop sexual assault on the job, said: “Black women are the backbone of our communities, but we experience more sexual harassment than anyone else in the workplace. After Monday’s action, I know that when we get together and demand justice, we’re a force to be reckoned with.” She added: “There will be no change for us, without us.”

To sign a petition in solidarity with the workers, go to

MeTooMcDonalds.org. For those in the fast food industry who’ve been harassed or assaulted, here’s a number to call: 844-384-4495.

Amazon night-shift strike in Eagan, Minn.

On the night of Oct. 2 in Eagan, Minn., nearly 60 Amazon warehouse workers stood outside in the freezing rain in a 2 ½-hour work stoppage. The crew — mostly immigrant women of Somali descent — demanded better pay for the night shift, weight restrictions on boxes and reversal of a cap on the 30-hour weekly workload. The night shift workers often lift boxes up to 70 pounds, and rest breaks for workers’ 9-hour shift are a measly 15 minutes. Pay currently sits at around \$16.25 an hour.

The workers ended the strike after a manager stated that all truck deliveries were cancelled for the night and issues would be resolved in the morning. Strike organizer Kadijo Mohamed told the Oct. 3 Vice that the workers decided to strike because it was the only way to get their bosses’ attention. “The managers don’t listen,” she said. “They ignore complaints. Sometimes they say, ‘If you can’t handle this job, you can quit.’” The strike follows a righteous wave of Amazon worker actions across the country, but especially at the warehouse in Eagan, Minn. (See coverage in Aug. 23 WW.)

Workers help save facility for mentally ill in San Francisco

Residents and staff were shocked Aug. 21 when without warning eviction notices from the San Francisco Department of Public Health were sent to all severely mentally ill residents at the Adult Residential Facility. Shutting it down set off citywide outrage and sparked

a spontaneous protest the next day. Virtually overnight, residents, health advocates and workers, members of Service Employees Union (SEIU) Local 1021 and Technical Employees (IFPTE) Local 21, gathered over 1,200 signatures on a petition to stop the closure. They delivered it to the SF Health Commission’s Aug. 22 meeting after over 200 activists shut it down.

Though the DPH initially refused to negotiate with the workers, who had been persistently grieving serious understaffing and cuts to programs, the new plan adopted on Oct. 15 helps both residents and workers by increasing staff and providing more comprehensive training needed to improve patient care. An SEIU 1021 press statement noted that a joint group of staff and management has been authorized for the first time to work on hiring and training, among other issues. Both unions claim this is a victory for patients and for San Francisco! (seiu1021.org)

Contract victory for 20,000 northwest workers

After a month of strong union boycotts against gender discrimination and months of negotiating, nearly 20,000 Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555 members in Oregon and southwest Washington voted to approve collective bargaining agreements with workers at more than 90 Fred Meyer and Safeway grocery stores. Voting took place Oct. 4-11.

The new agreement runs three years and for the first time will guarantee 20 hours a week for workers who want it. (KXL.com, Oct. 12) It also includes a fought-for victory, pay equity for Schedule B workers, mostly women who called attention to gender pay disparity: lower pay in historically majority-women departments like deli and bakery. Apprentices, who now get 10 cents above minimum wage, will see a raise of \$2 an hour. The first year’s contract will be retroactive, so workers will immediately see bigger checks. (NW Labor Press, Oct. 12) When unions fight they achieve! □

Haiti

People rise up, say President Moïse must go

By G. Dunkel

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians — particularly the poor of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere — came out on the streets of Port-au-Prince and every city throughout the country Oct. 20 to demand President Jovenel Moïse depart.

The regime’s refusal to concede has forced demonstrators to continue into the fifth week of their insurrection, tearing the country into shattered tatters. No schools have opened; hospitals are closed or are without essential medicines like those supplying oxygen; no public transportation runs; gas stations are closed; inflation is rampant; hunger, always present, is growing more intense; major roads are impassable due to people creating barricades.

Moïse is using force to maintain his tenuous and very fragile presidency. His party, the Bald-Headed Haitian Party, won its first election in 2011 only due to the very vigorous intervention of then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. U.S. intervention in the 2016 election was muffled but obviously present. Moïse won in the second round in 2016 with just over 20 percent of the electorate voting.

Without the continuing support of the United States and the police force trained and financed by the United Nations to the tune of \$7.5 billion over the past 10 years, Moïse would be long gone. The U.N. couldn’t have spent



Haitians take to the streets on Oct. 20.

this much money in Haiti without the consent and approval of the U.S. government.

Under a lot of pressure for being a foreign military force occupying Haiti, one that twice had introduced cholera to the population, causing thousands of casualties, the U.N. withdrew its last remaining military forces on Oct. 15. But the police force it created, financed and trained will remain, including its “conflict resolution programs,” a fancy name for social control apparatus.

The U.S. ruling class will still be able to use the U.N. presence as a veil for its activities in Haiti. The U.N. has withdrawn to the wings but is still on the stage.

How tenuous Moïse’s hold is can be seen in two incidents: an armed protest demonstration in Gonaïves,

a major coastal city north of Port-au-Prince, and a wreath laying in honor of Haitian independence leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

On Oct. 10, a big popular demonstration calling for the ouster of Moïse was accompanied by groups of armed individuals firing in the air to encourage the cops to stay in their barracks. (tinyurl.com/yxrprsvr)

It has been traditional for the Haitian head of state to lay a wreath at the tomb of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the founder of the state of Haiti, who was assassinated at Pont-Rouge in 1806. But protesters in Pont-Rouge said that if Moïse tried to appear, it would be the last day of his presidency.

Hundreds of thousands of protesters did come out in Port-au-Prince to protest Moïse laying the wreath Oct. 17 at the statue in a national museum. But hundreds of cops surrounded the museum, keeping the president well protected, and he kept the ceremony very short.

In the Haitian press, there have been reports of different committees being formed to handle the post-Moïse transition. Some reflect the bourgeois elements in the protest movement and others include trade unions and community organizations.

The Haitian people have made it clear that Moïse must go and that the United States, through the agency of the U.N., should stop interfering in Haiti’s internal affairs. □

A view from inside

Eleven days of Indigenous uprising in Ecuador

By Michael Otto & Zoila Ramírez Ibarra, Imbabura Province, Ecuador

Oct. 16 — On Oct. 7, 4,000 Indigenous people from towns in and around the same canton marched for four hours to Ibarra to present a manifesto to the governor of Imbabura. The governor refused to meet with them and later rejected their primary demands: Cease the military aggression against Indigenous communities and support their resistance to the “paquetazo” (economic package) ordered by the International Monetary Fund and Decree 883, which removed fuel subsidies.

Our friend — we’ll call him K — decided to join the Paro Nacional (Great National Uprising) when he attended a people’s assembly on Oct. 8 organized in his community by the Federación Indígena y Campesina de Imbabura. FICI is affiliated with CONAIE, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador. K said that FICI includes Indigenous communities from the following: the Otavalos, Caranquis and Natabuela people.

K is Otavalo and a veteran of two decades of resistance led by the CONAIE against former presidents of Ecuador who were imposing the dictates of the Washington Consensus [the IMF, World Bank and U.S. Federal Reserve] on the people of Ecuador.

In July 1999, FICI marched to Quito, the capital, for a Paro Nacional called by CONAIE. The paro was a general strike which overthrew then President Jamil Mahuad. The manifesto of that insurrection reads as if it were written today.

In 1999, a three-day march of Indigenous women from Imbabura traversed 60 miles over arid terrain and poorly paved mountain roads reaching Quito on July 15. Brutal repression failed to stop that march even though the national police and the military dropped tear gas bombs from helicopters on the marchers.

FICI was planning a similar three-day march on the capital city of Quito for the Paro Nacional that ended this past Sunday, Oct. 13. But last week, the people were spontaneously rising up, and to catch up with the uprising, FICI had to organize comuneros — Indigenous participants — to ride in big trucks and in double decker buses volunteered by a local bus company. The vehicles carried hundreds of comuneros back and forth between Imbabura and Quito during the uprising.

K said he joined the Paro for the sake of his daughters, his grandchildren and his extended family. The comuneros took children to Quito, not expecting that the repression would be an order of magnitude greater than anything they had ever experienced before.

The mobilization itself was a huge and militant uprising of the Indigenous movement, with estimates of 50,000 Indigenous marchers in Quito. They were met in solidarity by hundreds of well-organized Quito residents, Afro-Ecuadorians, students and workers who joined them in the streets.

Solidarity in Quito

Comuneros were housed in five universities in the center of the city. Residents of Quito provided more than enough food and water, mattresses, blankets and personal hygiene items for the out-of-town marchers. The staff in the Politechnical Catholic University, where K found refuge with about 700 people, maintained clean bathrooms and showers that were constantly in use.

People could hardly rest for two straight nights in Quito as the cops kept firing tear gas and noise bombs in and around their campus shelters. The national police used up all their tear gas and sent ambulances to other cities to get more. The gas canisters were being used as bullets — shot at protesters’ heads and bodies, injuring hundreds of people.

In the midst of the chaos, cops called a truce and then double-crossed mothers with children. Cops advised the women that they would be safe in the House of Culture. After the women and children were inside, the police gassed the building.

The Indigenous people were outraged. The well-reported repression was so brutal that the Indigenous forces devised guerrilla tactics for self-defense. K reported that he saw a huge explosion in Arbolito Park at 12:40 a.m. on Oct. 12 that rocked Quito. After being chased by mounted police, comuneros strung heavy steel wire between lamp posts on the streets where cops on motorcycles and horseback charged the protesters. Small groups coordinated to surround the police and pelt them with stones from all directions.

No cops were seriously injured. Nor has the government taken responsibility for the deaths, injuries and disappearances among the demonstrators.

The general strike forced President Lenín Moreno to call for dialogue. Unfortunately, it was much too late to spare the lives of the eight people killed by the police — as reported by the Defensoría del Pueblo (the national organization for the defense of human rights in Ecuador), and too late to prevent grievous injuries to many hundreds more. The Defensoría del Pueblo did not report on the disappeared, which CONAIE estimated to be more than 100.

The joint commission of government and Indigenous

representatives is meeting today, Oct. 16, to replace Decree 883, in accordance with the agreement in last Sunday’s dialogue. K was disappointed to learn that not all the items of the paquetazo were going to be placed on the table for discussion.

Lawfare feels like a police state

The persecutions and arrests of political leaders of Moreno’s main opposition party, the Revolución Ciudadana (Citizens’ Revolution) of former President Rafael Correa, have intensified. This repression occurs parallel with the dialogue and the work of the joint commission.

Assembly member Gabriela Rivadeneira, former president of the National Assembly and former governor of Imbabura Province is now targeted. K witnessed her marching with the Indigenous people of Otavalo on Monday, Oct. 7. Today she is reported to be a political exile in Mexico with Ricardo Patiño who was the minister closest to Rafael Correa.

The arrest of the prefect [magistrate] of Pichincha Province, Paula Pabón, was recorded and the video has gone viral on social networks. Pabón’s recent election was considered to be a major victory for the Revolución Ciudadana.

Several other leaders are exiled or being sought. Vice President Jorge Glas, a political prisoner for more than two years, was the first target of Moreno’s power grab after Glas exposed Moreno’s corruption in August 2017.

Although few people believe him, Moreno has claimed that Correa was paying the Indigenous \$45 a day to hold the general strike and charging that Nicolás Maduro, president of Venezuela, and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) were supporting the Indigenous movement. K said that the people knew that the whole world was watching.

Today, the CONAIE are calling on CIDH — Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (tinyurl.com/y225fp5f/ in Spanish) — to investigate claims of human rights violations against the general strike participants.

K had not yet learned as of yesterday, Oct. 15, that only Decree 883 was on the table of the joint commission. When informed of the current situation, K said that he went into the streets to fight the IMF paquetazo of neoliberal reforms and to get Moreno out, not just to repeal 883. Many people here in Ibarra are disappointed that the CONAIE has agreed to limit negotiations.

The class struggle has only begun in Ecuador. ¡Hasta la victoria siempre! Until victory! □

LeBron James and the Hong Kong debate

By Monica Moorehead

Los Angeles Laker icon LeBron James received a major amount of criticism from bourgeois pundits for his Oct. 14 statements on a controversial Oct. 4 tweet from white general manager of the National Basketball Association’s Houston Rockets, Daryl Morey. As the Rockets, the Lakers and the Brooklyn Nets were in China to play preseason games there, Morey tweeted, “Fight for freedom, stand with Hong Kong.”

This tweet, which was quickly deleted, created an immediate condemnation from millions of Chinese sports fans on social media, followed by the Chinese government. The condemnations evolved into a global debate regarding the NBA’s financial ties to China and the very nature of the Hong Kong controversy.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver apologized to the Chinese government for the tweet, but also defended Morey’s “right to free speech.”

NBA social programs between the players and the fans were cancelled, as well as some media events. NBA players were told by the association not to publicly comment on the controversy, especially if they were still visiting China. (Go to tinyurl.com/y4emvbc7 to read “NBA and China: The ‘right to free speech’ vs. the right to sovereignty.”)

LeBron stated, “I don’t want to get in a word or sentence feud with Daryl Morey, but I believe he wasn’t educated on the situation at hand, and he spoke. So many people could have been harmed, not only financially but physically, emotionally, spiritually. So just be careful what we tweet and what we say and what we do. Even though, yes, we do have freedom of speech, there can be a lot of negative that comes with it.”

LeBron continued, “When I speak about something, I speak about something I’m very knowledgeable about, something that hits home for me, something that I am very passionate about. I felt like with this particular situation, it was something that not only was I not informed enough about, I just felt like it was something that not only myself and my teammates or our organization had enough information to even talk about it at that point in time, and we still feel the same way.” (USA Today, Oct. 14)

LeBron even stated that there are times when social issues relevant to Black NBA players are not raised by the NBA hierarchy. Not one NBA official has been criticized for not publicly supporting Black Lives Matter; a case in point is Daryl Morey.

LeBron clarified that Morey being “miseducated” was not a reference to what he said in his tweet, but the ill timing of it and how it could have negatively impacted the players who were in China at the time.

Hong Kong rooted in colonialism

The protests in Hong Kong were sparked in June by a proposed bill to allow extradition to mainland China. The bill was withdrawn in September but did not stop the protests, which are indications of long-standing, deep anti-communist hatred of Chinese sovereignty, rooted in colonialism. This was the real motivation for Morey’s tweet and Silver’s defense of it.

Hong Kong was a British colony from 1841 to 1941. It was under Japanese occupation from 1941 until 1945. After World War II, Japan surrendered Hong Kong back to Britain as a colonial possession



LeBron James with Chinese fans.

until July 1, 1997, when it was legally declared a sovereign territory of mainland China.

The pronouncement of defending “democracy” is an attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of the world — to hide that the Hong Kong protests are pro-imperialist and seek to turn back the reactionary hands of time to when British Hong Kong existed. One only has to witness the domination of U.S. and British Union Jack flags to understand the protests’ long-term political objectives.

An important question is: Why aren’t the Hong Kong protests drawing attention to the growing numbers of homeless and impoverished residents there? This is in contrast to Hong Kong’s standing as a global capitalist financial center. In 2017, it was reported that one out of every seven residents were millionaires, a hugely disproportionate number considering the general population of just over 7.3 million. ([businessinsider.com](https://www.businessinsider.com)) In stark contrast, according to the South China Morning Post, one in five were impoverished in Hong Kong. (Nov. 17, 2017)

Self-determination for China and Black athletes

Once LeBron made his public statement, it provoked the burning of his popular jersey by Hong Kong protesters.

LeBron was accused of being inconsistent and even hypocritical when it came to not outwardly supporting the demands of the Hong Kong protests and for speaking out against racist injustice inside the U.S., especially the police killings of unarmed Black people.

This criticism came mostly from predominantly white sportscasters, who are not inhibited in exhibiting their anti-communist views. These same commentators accused James of caring more about his multimillion-dollar contracts with Chinese businesses than what was going on in Hong Kong.

That is certainly hypocritical considering the NBA is a multibillion-dollar, capitalist, global corporation with 10 percent of its revenue coming from China.

These were some of the same sportscasters who were critical of former pro-football quarterback, Colin Kaepernick, when he took a knee during the playing of the national anthem to protest racist police brutality three years

ago. He has not been allowed to play pro football since 2016.

Black sports commentators, for the most part, gave James the benefit of the doubt due to his being the most outspoken among the mainly Black NBA players on these social issues. Some of the Black commentators questioned why James should be expected to comment on other social issues outside of the U.S., especially those of a geopolitical nature.

China has the right to self-determination without the interference of U.S. and Western imperialism into its internal affairs. That is what the Chinese Revolution of 1949 was all about. Black NBA players like LeBron James should also have the right to self-determination in terms of what they say or don’t say about social issues at home and abroad, especially with issues they don’t feel comfortable talking about.

NBA comments deepen Chinese anger

Silver stated on Oct. 17 that the Chinese government asked the NBA to fire Morey. This was refuted by Chinese state media, CCTV, which broadcast NBA games to millions of Chinese on a regular basis

before the Morey tweet. The South China Morning Post also reported that Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said the Beijing government never requested that Silver fire Morey.

As the Post explained, “Silver has spared no effort to portray himself as a fighter for free speech and used freedom of speech as an excuse to cover for Morey, who voiced his support for the violent actors in Hong Kong. This has crossed the bottom line of the Chinese people.” (Oct. 19)

When Silver addressed this, he stated that not only would he not fire Morey, but he would not discipline him.

At a Brooklyn Nets home preseason game Oct. 18, film producer Andrew Duncan purchased 3,000 tickets, costing tens of thousands of dollars, for protesters who wore “Stand with Hong Kong” T-shirts in the arena. This was an obvious slap in the face to Joseph Tsai, the Chinese principal owner of the Nets, who was critical of the Hong Kong protests from a historical and cultural perspective. □

New York forum

‘End sanctions on Zimbabwe’

A Workers World Party forum on “Resisting Sanctions & U.S. Economic Warfare, from China to Zimbabwe” was held in New York City on Oct. 17, featuring two speakers.

Omowale Clay, a longtime leader of the December 12th Movement, has been a main organizer in building solidarity in the U.S. with the former British colony of Zimbabwe, located in southern Africa. He spoke on the impact of 20 years of sanctions imposed by U.S. and Western imperialism, calling it an act of international terrorism on the Zimbabwean economy and its Indigenous population.

Clay also shared remembrances of his organization’s relationship with the late president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, who visited Harlem many years ago. President Mugabe died on Sept. 6 at the age of 95. (See Clay’s talk

at tinyurl.com/y2b6g7de.)

The 16 member nations of the Southern Africa Development Community have declared Oct. 25 “A Day of Action” to end the sanctions on Zimbabwe.

Sara Flounders, a WWP Secretariat member, spoke about her recent trip to China as it celebrated 70 years of great social advancements since the triumph of the People’s Revolution in 1949. She also described U.S. sanctions as an act of economic war aimed at China, as it continues to move forward with building socialism. Read more of her observations about China at tinyurl.com/y3z9n8w8/ or watch Flounders’ remarks at tinyurl.com/y58543qz/.

— Report and photos by
Monica Moorehead

Omowa

WW COMMENTARY U.S. ‘democracy’ for \$ale

Hong Kong protesters in NYC unmasked

By Sara Flounders
New York

I watched as a prefab “rally in a box” about Hong Kong opened up here on Oct. 13.

I don’t know if this rally was funded directly by the notorious U.S. National Endowment for Democracy, a congressionally funded agency that plays the same role as the CIA did in an earlier period. But it featured Sharon Hom of the Human Rights in China organization. Hom actually announces on the group’s website that funding for its projects comes from NED, as well as Soros’ Open Society and Human Rights Watch. Hom is a law professor at New York University.

Alan Weinstein, founder of NED, explained in a 1991 Washington Post interview: “A lot of what we do today was done covertly by the CIA 25 years ago. We are the sugar daddy of overt operations.”

Recently web commentators have exposed NED’s sinister role in funding the protests, violent riots, fire bombings and assaults in Hong Kong.

So we can certainly ask what might be NED’s role at a Free Hong Kong rally in New York City. Funders with deep pockets were definitely needed to provide all the theatrical props, gear and anti-China propaganda I saw that morning.

The best ‘democracy’ money can buy

The Oct. 13 rally, which drew a couple hundred students, was announced on Facebook sites NY4HK and DC4HK. The location was “The Cube” on Astor Place, near New York University and Cooper Union.

The rally was scheduled to support anti-China bills due for a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives on Oct. 15. The bills, HR3289 and HR4270, were designed to set up sanctions on China, using Hong Kong as a lever.

I arrived an hour early to observe the set-up, and what I saw confirmed my suspicions. I watched as 15 to 20 matching boxes were delivered early. It looked like a roll-out for a movie set!

In them were stacks of glossy yellow postcards promoting “freedom, human rights and democracy in Hong Kong” and urging support for a “yes” vote on the bills.

As I saw the sophisticated equipment rolling in, I thought how, in my 50 years of participating in and organizing many different kinds of protests in New York City and in the U.S. — from anti-racist, anti-war, community-based small events to major coalition efforts of hundreds of progressive groups cooperating together — I had never seen a political event unfold like this action.

The advance team opened box after box, pulling out crisp new signs and flags, along with black facemasks, everything still plastic-wrapped. There were new gas masks, yellow umbrellas, yellow helmets and yellow



‘Rally in a box’ being unpacked, Oct. 13, New York City.

security vests. There were boxes of folded, new, black T-shirts with white silk-screened slogans. There was a cornucopia of pricey material.

A small prefab stage was quickly snapped together. Delivery people showed up with musical instruments, including wind, string and percussion, as well as folding chairs and music stands. A sleek generator powered a high-tech sound system that played the new “protest anthem” — “Glory to Hong Kong” — in repeat mode.

As people began to arrive, they were given facemasks, T-shirts and chant sheets to become “instant activists.” Out of plastic wrap came U.S. flags for them to hold and wave on telescoping metal flagpoles and “official volunteer” badges to hang around their necks

I sat and took pictures, trying to be inconspicuous. I admit I felt jealous of this incredible street equipment. The gear looked so high-tech and glossy! And delivered on site!

I thought of how I and other progressive activists spend hours designing signs, then copying and stapling them, first onto placard board and then onto cardboard tubes. I thought of the mismatched sound equipment we rig together, how we transport our gear in shopping carts on subways, hauling it up and down steps, or in dented rental vans or trucks.

And I looked at the telescoping metal flagpoles. Metal poles are explicitly prohibited in New York protests. There is also a well-known ban on facemasks. Migrant-rights activists, Antifa and Occupy forces have often been arrested for even having a bandana on their face.

At least one-third of these Hong Kong protesters were wearing full black fabric facemasks, as if they faced tear gas or any repression in this city, especially from police who conveniently and untypically were not present

I asked a few young people where they were from. They identified themselves as from Hong Kong and studying at New York University. Students at NYU and many universities have their own separate student and alumni organizations and clubs. Although Hong Kong is officially part of China, these clubs reinforce a separatist ideology.

Police repression and Chinese students

In September, one of the Facebook groups announcing the Oct. 13 rally, NY4HK, had attempted a “pro-Hong Kong” rally in Manhattan’s Chinatown. The group was chased out by pro-China community residents.

But pressure from the U.S. federal level now makes a pro-China show of support by Chinese students far more difficult.

No police were visibly present at the Oct. 13 “pro-Hong Kong” rally, but other branches of the police state are hard at work promoting an anti-China message by

attempting to intimidate thousands of students from China.

According to a June 28 NPR report, FBI agents are now busy visiting many of the 360,000 Chinese students in the U.S., reminding them that they are being monitored and should stay out of politics.

Universities are being pressured to monitor students, graduate students and visiting research professors of Chinese nationality.

This March, U.S. intelligence officials briefed about 70 college administrators in the American Council on Education, according to university participants. The officials said the presidents should increase oversight of Chinese researchers and avoid research funding from Chinese firms like Huawei.

The presidents were “skeptical of many of the claims, but many of them receive U.S. government research money.” (tinyurl.com/yytfm2s4)

U.S. intelligence agencies are encouraging U.S. research universities to develop actual protocols for monitoring students and visiting scholars from Chinese state-affiliated research institutions.

This clear double standard confirms that students from China are being monitored and surveilled, while students from Hong Kong are being funded and promoted.

‘Performance art’ protest

The Oct. 13 rally and its staging were followed by another “pro-Hong Kong” rally on Oct. 18 at the Brooklyn Nets basketball game. Thousands of dollars must have been spent to secure nine rows with more than 100 seats in the prime Section 1 area

in the Barclay Center. The people in those seats were wearing matching “Stand with Hong Kong” T-shirts and facemasks. There were also front-row seats reserved for those wearing “Free Tibet” shirts.

This was a direct challenge to Joe Tsai, the Chinese owner of the Nets — and also a challenge aimed directly at Chinese sovereignty.

All these events reaffirm a separatist agenda — by including prominent “Free Tibet” and “Independence for Taiwan” signs, as well as “Stand with Hong Kong.”

These costly “performance art” actions are actually promoting U.S. interference in Chinese sovereignty, as well as far-reaching sanctions on China.

New sanctions

The Oct. 13 pop-up rally promoted Congressional bills: HR3289, the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019, and HR4270, the Protect Hong Kong Act. These are sanctions legislation that subject Hong Kong’s special U.S. trading status to annual reviews and authorize sanctions on Hong Kong based on certain charges.

For instance, the annual Congressional review would include “human rights charges” against China as well as trade, customs and claims about any shipments from China to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Iran or any U.S.-sanctioned country.

The review, aimed at China, would determine whether Hong Kong was sufficiently “autonomous” from Beijing to justify its special trading status under U.S. law.

The bills were swiftly passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on Oct. 15 by an undisputed voice vote, with forceful assistance from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA). The legislation is now on a fast track to the U.S. Senate.

Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Geng Shuang warned U.S. lawmakers to stop meddling in China’s internal affairs. Geng said the House action “fully exposes the shocking hypocrisy of some in the U.S. on human rights and democracy, and their malicious intention to undermine Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability [in order] to contain China’s development.” (scomp.com, Oct. 16)

The Oct. 13 pop-up rally in New York, along with other costly staged events, are examples of U.S. so-called democracy at its finest. Just pour on \$\$!

All these measures — including the congressional legislation — are designed to undermine China’s continuing efforts to advance on the road to socialism.

Now is the time for social justice and antiwar activists to speak up and demand: Hands off China! End all sanctions! □

owe and China!’



ale Clay

Sara Flounders

China eyewitness, Part 2

Beijing rocks to celebration of 70 years of revolution

By Sara Flounders and Michael Kramer

The writers traveled in three major cities in China — Shanghai, Nanjing and Beijing — from Sept. 24 to Oct. 4 on a personal trip. This is Part 2 of an informal travel log sent to Workers World newspaper.

On Sept. 28, we took a high-speed train from Shanghai to Nanjing and a Sept. 29 overnight to Beijing. Nothing in our U.S. experience had prepared us for these enormous modern stations or trains. U.S. transportation seems a century behind.

From the windows, we saw many construction projects. In every town we zipped past there was older two, three, even five-story housing as well as tall modern apartment blocks, almost all with balconies and big windows. A forest of construction cranes showed that far more buildings are still under construction.

Tree planting is happening on a vast scale, both in cities and in open spaces between cities and towns. Judging from the size of the trees, much has taken place in the past two to four years. These plantings will be green forests in a few more years.

When we arrived in Beijing, we could see that China’s capital had been transformed by preparations for the Revolution’s anniversary. The city was awash in red flags that adorn every building.

With most stores closing for the national holiday, people are rushing to do last-minute shopping as we walk around for a last-minute personal look.

Red slogans were all over billboards and subways: “Listen to the Party, win every fight! Keep good moral character! Serve the People, train hard, keep a positive manner” were just a few. The characters for the 24 core Chinese socialist values were repeated on thousands of street flags.

Along with police, there were 78,000 proud young volunteers organized by the Communist Youth League wearing red armbands. They helped direct metro crowds and were vigilant at public buildings. There were lots of senior volunteers, also with red armbands, comfortably seated in chairs in front of buildings.

News coverage of Hong Kong protesters setting fires at metro station entrances and platforms heightened transportation precautions. Security was a high priority. Bag checks and scans, like at airports, were at every metro entrance. But the checks go seamlessly fast. There was a collective determination not to let this celebration be disrupted.

The zone for the parade and the evening’s spectacle was cordoned off for blocks, as equipment and units moved into place in Tian’anmen Square.



A parade (right photo) highlighting the People’s Republic of China’s poverty alleviation achievements during the celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in Beijing.

Later we and over a billion people watched the military and civilian parades and the evening celebration on TV. Access and participation in the actual parade was of course limited and a highly sought honor. But even on TV, on millions of handheld devices and on big screens, as people watched in big crowds, it was a long day of incredible pageantry and patriotism. Our guide Siu Hin Lee translated and explained what we were viewing. There was lots of commentary on WeChat discussion groups of the meaning and significance of different parade contingents.

Parades, fireworks, history and patriotism

Patriotism has a repugnant feel in the center of U.S. imperialism. It is coated in layers of chauvinism, jingoism and racism. It is embraced by right-wing and white supremacist forces and dragged out with fervor as part of war mobilizations.

But patriotism has an entirely different dimension in an oppressed country where a people’s movement has struggled to break free and resist domination. The 70th anniversary celebration on Oct. 1 was clearly intended to send a strong political message to the people of China

and to the imperialist forces that demand China change course.

The celebration opened with a short talk by President Xi Jinping, who encouraged the Chinese people to stay true to the “original mission” of the party and continue the revolutionary struggle. Xi made a political point to visit Chairman Mao Zedong’s tomb the day before the celebration. Xi has increasingly invoked Mao and the spirit of the Long March and the revolutionary victory of 1949.

Xi did not specifically mention any country by name, but he defiantly declared: “There is no force that can shake the foundation of this great nation. ... No force can stop the Chinese people and the Chinese nation forging ahead.” He emphasized that China would continue to pursue peaceful development.

The purpose of the military parade that followed was clearly to send a message of determined and well-prepared defense. Chinese media said the review showcased 160 aircraft and 580 pieces of new military technology, including drones and missiles. Some 40 percent of the armaments were displayed in public for the first time.

On display were units with ground-to-air anti-aircraft missiles, long-range and short-range missiles on trucks, sea-to-air missiles and tactical nuclear missiles. There were tanks and helicopter units, radar, info warfare and telecommunications divisions, a unit with mini-submarines and a unit with drones of every size. After logistics units and medical support units, finally came soldiers marching in military units; 15,000 military personnel participated.

The civilian part of the parade was far larger and longer, although it received no attention in Western media. It had 18 different contingents with themes, each with over 1,000 people, highlighting an event of the last 70 years. The civilian section opened with thousands, dressed in red, carrying a giant picture of Mao and enormous signs: “Firmly support Mao

ideology.”

The next units were listed as “People, rise up and become masters of the land” and “Praise to the youth, liberate choice and love.”

This was followed by a smaller contingent in yellow (not red) with a big picture of Deng Xiaoping, the 1979 reforms and the opening to Western investment, followed by a unit in praise of reforms. This placement seemed intended to give a harmonious sweep to tumultuous historical eras.

That sequence ended with thematic groups, such as One Country, Two Systems, with people from Hong Kong and Macau, and one on President Xi and his theme of Rejuvenation by strengthening socialist planning.

Next was a section titled Forward Thinking, with separate contingents emphasizing innovation, scientific progress, development of rural areas, lifting rural areas from poverty, unifying ethnic minorities and Chinese cultural pride. The unit titled “A beautiful life” included people with disabilities and buses of seniors.

Then came giant floats from many cities and regions. At the very end was a contingent of the future — 5,000 Communist Young Pioneers.

‘Me and My Country’

As the parade finished at noon, we were fortunate to get tickets to a new patriotic movie made for the 70th anniversary and playing in theaters across China, “Me and My Country.” This moving film consisted of six personal vignettes of ordinary individuals and their participation in key accomplishments since the 1949 Revolution.

We watched the movie at a packed film center in a huge five-level megamall in downtown Beijing. Every global brand name in cosmetics, clothing, shoes and fast foods seemed to have a shop there. Contradictions again!

We rushed from the movie with huge crowds all trying to get close enough to the evening program in Tian’anmen Square to see the fireworks. All around us people were using phones to watch the elaborate celebration at the square.

This program involved tens of thousands of people in a choreographed extravaganza with sparkling flash cards, a huge orchestra and fireworks displays between sets. The theme was “New sky, new land, new era!” A favorite old song, with the same name as the film we saw, “Me and My Country,” was the background music.

The day’s program ended with “Praise for the People!” written in fireworks of Chinese characters.

The next day, Oct. 2, Tian’anmen Square was opened to the general public. Though the parade was finished, the celebration continued.

It was a holiday, and we walked to the square with hundreds of thousands of people, many dressed in red, waving flags. Thousands of young people had their faces painted or stickered with PRC red flags. People were cheering and waving and had children on their shoulders and in strollers. Of course, everyone was taking pictures and watching videos of the previous day.

We have so much to process and think about since our return. The U.S. attacks on China are not likely to recede. China is determined to reinforce its core values and its revolutionary gains.

We all need to learn much more. □



To U.S. anti-war movement

Stay focused on getting U.S. out of Syria

By Sara Flounders

Oct. 20 — The author visited Syria in 2014 and 2015 in small International Action Center solidarity delegations. At that time, no road in the country was safe and one-third of the population was displaced — taking refuge inside Syria or in surrounding countries. The schools, mosques, churches and community centers in Damascus were packed with tens of thousands of desperate refugees. Everywhere, including downtown Damascus, was being shelled.

Today Syria is rebuilding after eight years of war. More than 1,550 schools have been rebuilt, and in the past month 10,000 teaching jobs were added. But U.S. war planners are still active.

When forces in U.S. ruling circles contend with and denounce each other to justify foreign intervention — as is currently happening in reaction to the announced U.S. pullback from the Kurdish area of Syria — this generates speculation, analysis and confusion in the population, including among anti-war activists. It demands a clear political response.

This confusion takes place because U.S. apologists invent pretexts for the government's military interventions. They falsely claim it sends troops to defend democracy or to protect the human rights for some group. Rather, U.S. troops are sent to intervene only to protect and expand the strategic or economic interests of U.S. imperialism.

U.S. forces in Syria have brought nothing but misery to that country's people, including its Kurdish population. The Pentagon was there neither to promote democracy in Syria nor to defend Kurdish self-determination.

Washington has tried to maintain its dominance in the Middle East by inflaming sectarian, national, ethnic and religious differences. In the long war against Syria, where all the people of Syria have suffered, the many statements for or against the Kurds in Syria take the focus off the real culprit — U.S. imperialism.

U.S. out!

Therefore the best response, the only legitimate response, from anti-war forces in the U.S. is to re-raise the most basic demands: U.S. out of Syria! Respect Syrian sovereignty!

This response is the only viable solution to the more than eight years of U.S.-instigated war that have ripped Syria apart, displaced one-third of the population, created millions of refugees and homeless people, and laid waste to large parts of this once relatively prosperous, developing country.

Turkey has been a member of the U.S.-commanded NATO military alliance since 1952 and is the site of many NATO and U.S. military bases, including the major air base at Incirlik. The Turkish regime has played a criminal role in the efforts to dismember Syria.

Vice President Mike Pence's latest proposal on Oct. 17 to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is the latest scheme to keep Syria divided. In essence, two members of the NATO military alliance agreed to partition Syria under Turkish occupation.

Their meeting in Turkey was little different from the eight years of U.N.-brokered "peace negotiations" in Paris, Geneva, Vienna or New York.

These meetings of imperialist forces and their collaborators simply repeated



Damage after U.S. bombing of Syria in 2017.

that a ceasefire by the armed militias attacking the Damascus government would be possible only if the elected Syrian government, led by President Bashar al-Assad, resigned. Then these pirates would decide what regime would lead Syria and what forces and militias would control various regions.

U.S. instigated war on Syria

In 2011, after seven months of U.S./NATO bombing of Libya, U.S. policy makers in the Obama administration, including Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, had convinced the Turkish regime and others in the Middle East and in the European Union that they could quickly dismember Syria. The Turkish rulers opened their borders to the invading anti-Damascus forces and served as a major conduit of arms to them.

Eventually 100,000 mercenaries in competing gangs operated inside Syria against the Damascus government. They were backed by different U.S./NATO/Saudi/Israeli/UAE money and advisers. At the time, the corporate media were predicting that the Syrian government would collapse within six weeks.

But after eight years of massively destructive war, this complex, U.S.-orchestrated effort to dismember Syria has failed.

U.S. advisers and contractors were embedded in numerous mercenary bands, which often fought each other. One by one all were pushed back by Syria's determined resistance and by assistance, first from Hezbollah militias in Lebanon, then from Iranian advisers, then in 2015, by decisive Russian intervention with air cover.

This assistance was both solidarity and self-interest. Each of these very different political entities identified with Syria's plight and knew a U.S. "success" in dismembering Syria would make them a target.

Syria's Kurdish population

Before 2011, the Kurdish population in northern Syria had a form of autonomy, with schools and services in their own language. In 2011, when the U.S.-backed destabilization effort started, Kurdish nationalists set up their own armed People's Protection Units — YPG.

In 2014, thousands of heavily armed ISIS terrorists swept into Syria, including northern Syria, with unprecedented brutality. The U.S. war strategists used ISIS terror as a convenient and cynical pretext to escalate military operations in Syria and to re-occupy Iraq. The Pentagon began openly bombing the whole region, destroying much of the developed infrastructure in Syria. At this time the Syrian

government was fighting for its very survival in Aleppo and Damascus and was in no position to do more.

Washington offered the Kurds a military alliance and U.S. protection from both U.S. bombing and ISIS forces. The armed Kurdish YPG units entered into an alliance, maybe of convenience, maybe of survival, with U.S. imperialism.

Through the war years, the Syrian government, although it had no control over the Kurdish region of northeastern Syria, continued to pay salaries to health workers, teachers and all government officials throughout the country. This was a lifeline for the civilians in the whole region, even where they were under ISIS control.

The Kurdish forces in Syria, while in an alliance with the U.S., nevertheless made it a point to avoid attacking Syrian government forces. Their focus was on defeating ISIS forces.

Now, faced with an abrupt U.S. pullback and a Turkish onslaught, the Kurds have announced that they will seek a negotiated solution with the Syrian government. This seems to be already happening. It is a realistic choice.

Throughout these years of war, many social democrats, academics and anarchists in the imperialist countries have glorified and idealized the Kurdish capital of Rojava as a place of social revolution. Some have described Rojava as the most communist, communal, feminist society in the world. Unfortunately, these forces have counterposed uncritical support for the Syrian Kurds and the Kurdish city of Rojava to support for Syrian sovereignty against imperialist intervention.

Syrian government on unity

During eight years of brutal combat, Syria's government avoided publicly attacking the Kurds. Groups supporting Syrian sovereignty should take a similar attitude. Syrian officials have also avoided attacking Sunni forces as a religious group or any of the other groups which were swept up into this war by the imperialists' false promises.

Syria's position has always been that any Syrian force that lays down arms and stops fighting the Syrian government will be granted amnesty and be welcomed back into Syria. President Assad says in every public statement that Syrians have to consider how to put Syria back together after the war ends.

In sharp contrast, the Syrian government position has always been that all the uninvited foreign-funded forces — including the U.S., NATO, Turkey, ISIS, and tens of thousands of foreign mercenaries operating under many names and funded by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE — must leave Syria.

Syria's population of 22 million

(5 million live abroad now as refugees) includes Arab, Kurdish, Assyrian, Armenian, Turkoman and Circassian nationalities as well as Sunni, Alawi, Shia, Druze, Yazidi, and Christian religious sects. There are also 1.5 million Palestinian and Iraqi refugees.

Syrian government spokespeople, diplomats and the mainstream Syrian media always assert that Syria is a secular and multi-ethnic, multinational, multireligious country and that the identity and culture of every group must be respected.

The Syrian government has again and again expressed its determination to resolve the problems among the whole mosaic of nationalities and religious groups within Syria, free of foreign interference.

U.S. plans in disarray

Today in Syria, U.S. plans are in complete disarray. Each of its many mercenary armies is defeated. Faced with a new reality on the ground, Turkey is now open to making other deals, possibly with Russia and Iran, which could destabilize NATO. This is why Pence rushed to visit Erdogan.

The Turkish ruling class fears having armed units of Kurds in Syria, because the Turkish army is waging a war against the far larger oppressed Kurdish population in Turkey.

The Kurds are an oppressed nation in Western Asia. Some 20 million people who identify as Kurds — the overwhelming majority of the Kurdish population in the Middle East — live in Turkey, where they are 25 percent of the population. They are denied the use of their own language in schools and services.

The Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK) is waging a guerrilla struggle against Turkish domination.

There are 1.5 to 2 million Kurds in Syria, where they make up 30 percent of the population in their northeastern region. Even this region is truly a mosaic of different peoples, not only Kurds. There are also 5 to 8 million Kurds living in Iraq and in Iran.

U.S. imperialism has often maneuvered to use for its own interests the movement of Kurds for independence against the governments in the region. And it has just as often abandoned the Kurdish movement.

U.S. wars, invasion, bombing campaigns and sanctions in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen; U.S. sanctions and threats on Iran; U.S. military bases and arms sales to the Gulf monarchies or to Egyptian dictators; and its decades of support for the Zionist occupation of Palestine have destabilized and impoverished Western Asia and North Africa.

U.S. imperialism is an enemy of all human progress.

All those interested in peace, human solidarity and national sovereignty need to refocus the discussion on Syria and more strongly demand: U.S. out! □



In Chile, one abuse too many

The ideology of the “Chicago Boys” is facing its moment of truth in Latin America. This week, the Chilean government’s attempt to impose a fare hike for public transportation in the capital resulted in a full-fledged rebellion. Led by high school students, the protesters obtained support and encouragement from the entire working class.

The Chicago Boys is a nickname for Chilean economists trained at the University of Chicago in the 1970s. Milton Friedman was the leading professor there. He, his team and the Chicago Boys proposed unfettered capitalism as the model of “development” for Chile, and anywhere else they could impose it.

What that really meant was restructuring the Chilean economy to eliminate social programs and whatever might allow some of the wealth produced by the workers to be used for their benefit. It meant privatizing every government sector in order to turn it into a profit center for the rich — including education, health care, public transportation, even

the water supply. They would have privatized air if they could have figured out how to charge for the oxygen.

It also meant using the state to break or at least weaken workers’ organizations. Since only the working class produces wealth, what that really meant was using the armed state to increase the rate of theft from the workers — i.e., the rate of exploitation.

For the Chicago Boys, the pro-fascist military dictatorship in Chile from 1973-90 was their model experiment. The Augusto Pinochet regime had already crushed the workers’ organizations with brutal force. It was a success! The gross national product grew — with all the growth going to a handful of rich capitalists.

Even after the Pinochet era ended and governments were once again elected in Chile, this alleged economic success increased unemployment, cut workers’ wages and pillaged the Indigenous population, while leaving many retired workers on the edge of hunger.

The current president of Chile, Sebastián Piñera, a favorite of Washington and the International Monetary Fund, proposed a modest increase in subway fares. That turned out to be the straw that broke the camel’s back. High school youth decided to evade the fares and did it massively. Piñera treated them like criminals, calling out the police, declaring a state of emergency, launching tear gas, beating and arresting them. When the young people fought back, some destruction in subway stations brought the city to a near halt.

An article from a Chilean progressive, published on rebellion.org on Oct. 21, described the mood: “It is true that despite the inconvenience caused during these days to users — closed doors in the metros, closed stations, police presence at ticket offices, longer journeys — in the street what one can see most is support for young people. This apparent contradiction is simple: For the vast majority of those who use the metro, the protests are not only logical, but legitimate.”

The protest turned from one against a fare hike to a general protest against the rampant inequality in Chilean society, an inequality imposed through the ideology of the Chicago Boys, which is really the ideology of unfettered world imperialism. Piñera has rescinded the fare hike — but this may turn out to be too little, too late.

When Ecuador’s President Lenín Moreno made a similar attempt, in his case to raise gasoline prices, hundreds of thousands of people, led by the Indigenous population, walked out in a massive general strike. Moreno had to rescind his decree, which had been ordered by the International Monetary Fund.

In Argentina, across the Andes mountains from Chile, an Oct. 27 national election is expected to evict the neoliberal Mauricio Macri from the presidency.

These struggles are far from won by the masses of people in these South American countries. But, in all of them, the people are saying “enough” to rampant inequality. □

Legendary Cuban ballerina, Alicia Alonso, ¡presente!

The following obituary of Alicia Alonso was written by Prensa Latina on Oct. 17 and appeared in its entirety in granma.cu. On Alonso’s 97th birthday, Miguel Cabrera wrote on granma.cu: “Her rise to stardom knew no parallel, as she represented Cuba in 61 countries across the five continents, proving to be a dazzling figure from the early days of Broadway musical comedies to later groups with which she performed regularly, such as the American Ballet Caravan, the Ballet Theatre of New York, the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, and the Washington Ballet, and many others ... where she appeared as a guest star.”

“Her technical strength, ‘which was 20 years ahead of the standards of the time,’ as well as her stylistic adaptability, led her to perform an amazing repertoire of 134 titles, 82 of them worldwide ... the work of the most important choreographers of the romantic-classical tradition of the 19th century [as well as] of the most important figures of the 20th century, among them ... George Balanchine, Agnes de Mille, Jerome Robbins, Alberto Alonso and Alberto Méndez, to mention just a few.” (Dec. 28, 2017)

Workers World Party not only mourns the loss of this giant in the ballet world, but also salutes this staunch supporter of the Cuban Revolution, who moved from the U.S. back to her homeland in 1959 after the U.S.-backed Cuban dictator, Fulgencio Batista, had been ousted from power.

Cuba’s most internationally acclaimed ballerina, Alicia Alonso passed away today at the age of 98, the National Ballet of Cuba (BNC) announced.

The legendary dancer, founder and director of the BNC also participated in the founding of the American Ballet Theatre [in 1939].

Alonso’s talent was legendary, offering technical and interpretative virtuosity in classical works, while her resolve to continue dancing, despite her progressive loss of vision, and [her] will to remain active on the stage until a very advanced age was widely admired.

The prima ballerina assoluta directed the BNC and staged shows until her death, as well as the International Ballet

Festival of Havana.

“Art can contribute to understanding and dialogue between peoples as it shows some of the highest and purest coincidences among all human beings,” she once told Prensa Latina.

The Cuban ballet school founded by Alicia, Fernando and Alberto Alonso is unique in the Americas and one of the six recognized in the world.

The BNC, created by the three of them in 1948, was distinguished by the Cuban government last year as Cultural Patrimony of the Nation.

Alicia served as a model for maestro Fernando when he wrote the methodological bases of the Cuban school and starred in many of Alberto’s choreographies, the first great defender of national identity in the choreographic field.

Alonso was awarded Cuba’s National Dance Prize, Spain’s Gold Medal for Merit in Fine Arts, and the ALBA Prize for the Arts, awarded to recognized personalities of the continent.

In 2000, the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba granted Alonso the highest decoration of the island, the José Martí Order, and in 2015, the same body decided to add her name to Havana’s Grand Theater.

Precisely in the foyer of the Alicia Alonso Grand Theater of Havana stands a bronze statue of the artist dancing her favorite classic [role], “Giselle.”

In 2017, she was invested as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. In addition, UNESCO officially created the Alicia Alonso Ibero-American Dance Institute in 2018, attached to the Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid, Spain.

Since January 2019, she has shared the artistic direction of the BNC with one of her disciples, first dancer Viengsay Valdes. As such, the very school that Alonso founded has contributed to guaranteeing her continuity.

The legendary artist received many more awards throughout her lifetime, including the Star of the Century award from the Latin Institute of Music, for having been a true promoter of Latin cadence in classical dance.



Alonso performing her legendary role of “Giselle.”

However, no award is comparable to the mark she has left as the leading paradigm of dance in Cuba, a legacy that lies with all Cuban ballet dancers today. □

Change is essential! Build Workers World!

As a newspaper that promotes revolutionary socialism, it’s essential to welcome change — especially long overdue change. Like throwing Christopher Columbus into the dustbin of world history with other false idols of colonialism and imperialism.

A movement has been afoot for several decades to eliminate Columbus Day, the second Monday in October, and rename it Indigenous Peoples’ Day. This country, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, was built on stolen lands. Indigenous Peoples’ Day calls attention to U.S. genocidal policies of warfare, massacres, smallpox blankets and forced assimilation.

Indigenous Peoples’ Day also commemorates and honors the great



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

historical, cultural, social, economic and political contributions that Native nations and peoples have made across this country.

If you agree that it’s essential for

Workers World to salute the importance of change this month, then it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program, which since 1977 has helped put out the paper. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends for a donation of a minimum of \$75 or \$100 or \$300 (only \$25 a month). Workers World appreciates your generosity.

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/; it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. Know we’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future! □

Barcelona, Catalonia

Massive general strike demands ‘Free political prisoners’

By Nelson Marinelli

Marinelli writes often for Prensabrera.com on Catalonia. This article was published Oct. 19 on redroja.org and translated by John Catalinotto. Some background on the events is included in a Note at the end of the article.

Oct. 18—More than a half-million people overflowed the streets of Barcelona today, as five columns of marchers who had left from different points inside the Catalanian region [in eastern Spain] two days ago converged on the city. The marchers demanded the release of nine regional political leaders, who were found guilty of sedition and sentenced this week to between 9 and 13 years in prison for having organized an independence referendum two years ago. (tinyurl.com/yyrqs6fu)

An enormous number of picketers on roads, highways, avenues, trains and subways accompanied today’s mobilization, which also demanded Catalonia’s independence from Spain. These picketers aimed to ensure compliance with a strike, which two smaller pro-independence trade unions (Intersindical-CSC and IAC-CATAC) called, attracting significant sectors of workers.

This widespread network of picket lines was coordinated by the Committees for the Defense of the Republic (CDR), an organization that operates through assemblies in different neighborhoods. The left-wing political tendency Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP) has a major political influence in the CDR. Today the press reports that the CDR organized its own column that brought more than 10,000 people to Barcelona.

The scope of the strike

Data from the two employers’ associations of Catalonia’s small and medium-size companies show that the strike shut down more than 40 percent of the companies in these associations. According to official sources, the strike was also felt strongly in commerce (between 60 and 80 percent compliance); in education, where activity was paralyzed at all levels and tens of thousands of students mobilized; and in public administration and transport, where the strike call was followed to the extent allowed by Spanish laws that force workers to “guarantee minimum services.” These repressive rules apply to all public services.

The supermarket and gas station sector announced the closure of all its establishments. Dockers in Barcelona’s seaport supported the strike, which was strong there. Catalonia’s largest company, the automaker SEAT, had closed its plant, in which 3,500 cars are produced per day, because of “the difficulties that workers will have reaching the plant.”

Traditional union leadership sides with ‘order’

The strike’s repercussions take on a greater dimension because the leadership of the two central labor confederations — the pro-Socialist Party (UGT) and the Workers Commissions (CCOO), led by the Communist Party — did not support the action, a sign these union officials align with the parties of Spanish “order.”

The Councillor of the Department of Labor of Catalonia, Chakir El Homrani, stressed that “many other people, because of their work or personal situation, have not gone to work but have not registered their strike,” given “the pressure of precarious work.” The media point out that, in the massive columns that marched toward Barcelona, “the demonstrators’ chant spread of ‘Strike, strike, general strike!’ which repeatedly merged into shouts of ‘Independence.’” (La Vanguardia, Barcelona, Oct. 18)

Raising these same popular demands, 60,000 people mobilized and marched Oct. 18 in Catalonia’s second largest city, Girona, showing the strength of the strike.

Solidarity spreads

The other important political fact is that faced with the harshness of the official repression and the appearance of hostile pro-fascist elements, which have gone to demonstrations and have attacked people who are pro-independence, a movement of solidarity with the Catalan people has begun to appear in different cities in Spain.

An Oct. 18 mobilization in Madrid was joined by others in different Spanish cities, such as in Bilbao, in the

Basque Country. And in the city of Oviedo, that same night, at the presentation of the Princess of Asturias literature prizes, a ceremony attended by kings, there was a mobilization in the street that expressed support for the Catalan struggle.

An interesting fact is that the “Classic” Barcelona-Real Madrid soccer match has been suspended (it is usually watched by millions of people around the world) for fear that it would turn into a massive rally for sovereignty and for freeing the political prisoners.

Political crisis

The picture of rebellion unleashed in Catalonia has put the Spanish central government in check and has triggered a crisis within the Catalan independence parties. A few days before the new general elections (set for Nov. 10), the Socialist Party (PSOE), which has not been able to form a government for months, is trying to avoid an intervention in Catalonia. Such an action could generate a greater crisis that could spread beyond the Catalanian region.

Opponents from the right (Popular Party, Citizens, Vox) question the government’s tepid reaction in the face of the popular rebellion and call for a “strong hand” and immediate intervention in Catalonia, in what also appears as a way of reducing votes for the PSOE candidate in the next elections. The PP spokesperson in Barcelona has described the strike as an “attempt at a rude and useless coup” and the leader of Citizens, Albert Rivera, as “general sabotage.” (La Vanguardia, Oct. 18)

Independence movement divided

In Catalonia, the independence front has been broken in the face of the elemental mass force that has captured the rebellion. The Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), which forms part of the bloc, is calling for the resignation of Catalanian Prime Minister Quim Torra and calling for elections to “achieve a government that tackles the economic crisis and thus build a negotiating scenario” (with the central government). And the Catalan National Assembly (ANC), one of the organizers of today’s marches and part of the coalition of the sovereign bourgeois parties, demands the resignation of the head of the Catalan government’s Interior Councillor, accusing him of not controlling the police repression carried out by the Mossos [Catalonian police].

In this unstable situation, the center-left Podemos (We can), the third political force and potential partner of the Socialist Party to form a government (which has already divided), asked the pro-independence supporters to abide by the ruling and the government to negotiate. But the mayor of Barcelona, in the same party, played it safe and warmly greeted the pro-independence mobilizations. This is opportunism preparing for a crisis.

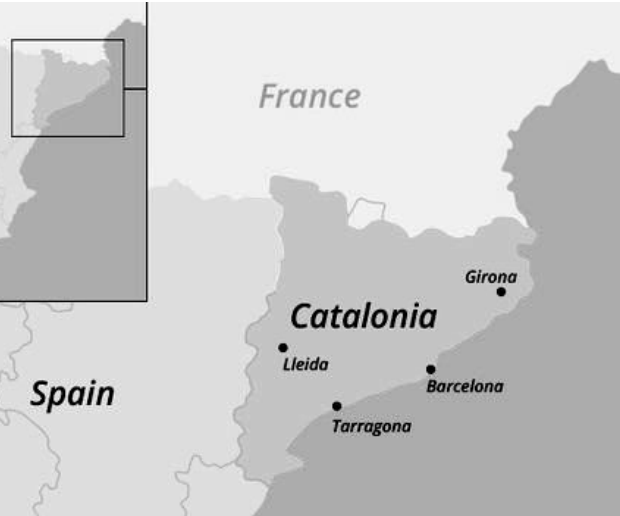
Un reporte interno del levantamiento indígena en Ecuador

Continúa de la página 12

las redes sociales. Las recientes elecciones de Pabón se consideraron una gran victoria para la Revolución Ciudadana.

Varios otros líderes son exiliados o buscados. El vicepresidente Jorge Glas, preso político durante más de dos años, fue el primer objetivo de la toma de poder de Moreno después de que Glas expusiera la corrupción de Moreno en agosto de 2017.

Aunque pocas personas le creen, Moreno ha afirmado que Correa le pagaba a los indígenas \$45 por día para realizar la huelga general y acusó a Nicolás Maduro, presidente de Venezuela, y a las FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) de apoyar al movimiento indígena. K dijo que la gente sabía que todo el mundo



Together with this debacle, which has produced a dislocation of all political parties, the rebellion is taking place in the midst of an enormous economic crisis throughout Europe and Spain in particular — which includes in Catalonia itself.

For that reason, the Spanish bourgeoisie and its political and judicial apparatus harshly punished the attempt at independence, which would further undermine the state. At the same time, it seeks to strike at all manifestations of independence and workers’ and people’s struggle throughout Spanish territory.

Perspectives

After today’s mobilization and strike, the sectors linked to the Catalan bourgeoisie have decreed a pause in the struggle, but the resistance seems far from being brought under control. The most active sector of the CDRs has called for an indefinite encampment in the center of Barcelona.

The enormous wave of these days, which included the working and student youth in a prominent position, indicates that the crisis will be ongoing. The Catalan rebellion has triggered a process that puts on the agenda the unity of the workers of the entire Spanish state for their demands and against the capitalist, monarchical regime.

Faced with threats of the application of the national security law and of a new intervention, we [Prensabrera.com] defend the right to self-determination of the Catalan people, including their independence, within the framework of a federation of socialist republics.

Note: Spain is a multinational country ruled from Madrid by a parliamentary monarchy since 1978, with significant movements for national self-determination in the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia. The dominant parties in the national parliament are the right-wing Popular Party and the centrist Socialist Party, which have alternated running the central government since 1978. Recently they have lost their predominant position and depend on alliances, with the PSOE, with Podemos and the PP with the Citizen’s Party.

estaba mirando.

Hoy, la CONAIE hace un llamado a la CIDH — Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (tinyurl.com/y225fp5f/) para investigar las denuncias de violaciones de derechos humanos contra los participantes de la huelga general.

K aún no se había enterado hasta ayer, 15 de octubre, de que solo el Decreto 883 estaba sobre la mesa de la comisión conjunta. Cuando se le informó de la situación actual, K dijo que salió a la calle para luchar contra el paquete de reformas neoliberales del FMI y para sacar a Moreno, no solo para derogar 883. Muchas personas aquí en Ibarra están decepcionadas de que la CONAIE haya acordado limitar las negociaciones.

La lucha de clases solo ha comenzado en Ecuador. ¡Hasta la victoria siempre! Hasta la victoria! □



MO FOTO

Huelga de maestrxs en Chicago, 17 de octubre.

Un reporte interno del levantamiento indígena en Ecuador

Por Michael Otto y Zoila Ramírez
Ibarra, provincia de Imbabura, Ecuador

Octubre 16 — El 7 de octubre, 4000 indígenas de pueblos de los alrededores del mismo cantón marcharon durante cuatro horas a Ibarra para presentar un manifiesto al gobernador de Imbabura. El gobernador se negó a reunirse con ellos y luego rechazó sus demandas principales: Cesar la agresión militar contra las comunidades indígenas y apoyar su resistencia al “paquetazo” (paquete económico) ordenado por el Fondo Monetario Internacional y el Decreto 883, que eliminó los subsidios al combustible.

Nuestro amigo, lo llamaremos K, decidió unirse al Paro Nacional (Gran Levantamiento Nacional) cuando asistió a una asamblea popular el 8 de octubre organizada en su comunidad por la Federación Indígena y Campesina de Imbabura. FICI está afiliada a CONAIE, la Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador. K dijo que FICI incluye comunidades indígenas de los siguientes: los pueblos Otavalos, Caranquis y Natabuela.

K es Otavalo y un veterano de dos décadas de resistencia liderado por la CONAIE contra ex presidentes de Ecuador que estaban imponiendo los dictados del Consenso de Washington [el FMI, el Banco Mundial y la Reserva Federal de Estados Unidos] sobre el pueblo de Ecuador.

En julio de 1999, FICI marchó a Quito, la capital, para un Paro Nacional convocado por CONAIE. El paro fue una huelga general que derrocó al entonces presidente Jamil Mahuad. El manifiesto de esa insurrección se lee como si hubiera sido escrito hoy.

En 1999, una marcha de tres días de

mujeres indígenas de Imbabura atravesó 60 millas sobre terreno árido y caminos de montaña mal pavimentados que llegan a Quito el 15 de julio. La represión brutal no pudo detener esa marcha a pesar de que la policía nacional y el ejército arrojaron bombas lacrimógenas desde helicópteros a los manifestantes.

FICI estaba planeando una marcha similar de tres días en la ciudad capital de Quito para el Paro Nacional que terminó el domingo pasado, 13 de octubre. Pero la semana pasada, la gente se estaba levantando espontáneamente, y para ponerse al día con el levantamiento, FICI había organizar comuneros, participantes indígenas, para viajar en grandes camiones y en autobuses de dos pisos ofrecidos por una compañía local de autobuses. Los vehículos transportaron cientos de comuneros de ida y vuelta entre Imbabura y Quito durante el levantamiento.

K dijo que se unió al Paro por el bien de sus hijas, sus nietos y su extensa familia. Los comuneros llevaron a los niños a Quito, sin esperar que la represión fuera un orden de magnitud mayor que cualquier cosa que hayan experimentado antes.

La movilización en sí fue un gran levantamiento militante del movimiento indígena, con estimaciones de 50.000 manifestantes indígenas en Quito. Fueron recibidos en solidaridad por cientos de residentes de Quito bien organizados, afroecuatorianos, estudiantes y trabajadores que se unieron a ellos en las calles.

Solidaridad en Quito

Los comuneros estaban alojados en cinco universidades en el centro de la ciudad. Los residentes de Quito proporcionaron más que suficiente comida y agua, colchones, mantas y artículos de

higiene personal para los manifestantes de fuera de la ciudad. El personal de la Universidad Católica Politécnica, donde K encontró refugio con unas 700 personas, mantuvo baños limpios y duchas que estaban en constante uso.

La gente apenas podía descansar durante dos noches seguidas en Quito mientras los policías seguían disparando gases lacrimógenos y bombas de ruido dentro y alrededor de los refugios del campus. La policía nacional utilizó todos sus gases lacrimógenos y envió ambulancias a otras ciudades para obtener más. Los cartuchos de gas se usaban como balas, dispararon contra las cabezas y los cuerpos de los manifestantes, hiriendo a cientos de personas.

En medio del caos, los policías pidieron una tregua y luego traicionaron a las madres con los niños. Los policías aconsejaron a las mujeres que estarían a salvo en la Casa de la Cultura. Después de que las mujeres y los niños estuvieron adentro, la policía inundó de gas el edificio.

Los indígenas estaban indignados. La represión bien denunciada fue tan brutal que las fuerzas indígenas idearon tácticas de guerrilla para la autodefensa. K informó que vio una gran explosión en el Parque Arbolito a las 12:40 a.m. del 12 de octubre que sacudió a Quito. Después de ser perseguidos por la policía montada, los comuneros colgaron alambre de acero pesado entre postes de luz en las calles donde policías en motocicletas y a caballo atacaron a los manifestantes. Pequeños grupos se coordinaron para rodear a la policía y arrojarles piedras de todas las direcciones.

Ningún policía resultó herido de gravedad. El gobierno tampoco se ha responsabilizado por las muertes, lesiones y desapariciones entre los manifestantes.

La huelga general obligó al presidente Lenín Moreno a llamar al diálogo. Lamentablemente, ya era demasiado tarde para salvar la vida de las ocho personas asesinadas por la policía, según lo informado por la Defensoría del Pueblo (la organización nacional para la defensa de los derechos humanos en Ecuador), y demasiado tarde para evitar lesiones graves a muchos cientos más. La Defensoría del Pueblo no informó sobre los desaparecidos, que CONAIE estimó en más de 100.

La comisión conjunta de representantes gubernamentales e indígenas se reunirá hoy, 16 de octubre, para reemplazar el Decreto 883, de conformidad con el acuerdo en el diálogo del domingo pasado. K se decepcionó al saber que no todos los artículos del paquetazo iban a colocarse sobre la mesa para su discusión.

La guerra jurídica se siente como un estado policial

Las persecuciones y arrestos de líderes políticos del principal partido de oposición de Moreno, la Revolución Ciudadana del ex presidente Rafael Correa, se han intensificado. Esta represión ocurre paralelamente al diálogo y al trabajo de la comisión conjunta.

La asambleísta Gabriela Rivadeneira, ex presidenta de la Asamblea Nacional y ex gobernadora de la provincia de Imbabura, ahora está en la mira. K fue testigo de su marcha con los pueblos indígenas de Otavalo el lunes 7 de octubre. Hoy se informa que es una exiliada política en México con Ricardo Patiño, el ministro más cercano a Rafael Correa.

El arresto de la prefecto [magistrada] de la provincia de Pichincha, Paula Pabón, fue grabado y el video se volvió viral en

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¡Día de los pueblos indígenas!

MUNDO OBRERO editorial

Workers World Party se solidariza firmemente con los pueblos indígenas en la lucha por abolir el actual “Día de Colón” como feriado nacional de los EE.UU. y cambiarle el nombre y transformarlo en el “Día de los Pueblos Indígenas”.

La organización de los pueblos indígenas, que se niegan firmemente a marcar el genocidio como un feriado, ya ha dado como resultado que seis estados y 130 ciudades y pueblos hagan el cambio progresivo en los EE. UU.

Los pueblos indígenas han librado siglos de lucha para sobrevivir y avanzar contra la marea mortal del colonialismo en los Estados Unidos. La decisión de cambiar el nombre del feriado es un intento de corregir la historia oficial según lo contado por los invasores y colonizadores.

El “viaje de descubrimiento” de 1492 de Colón, que se enseña a todos los niños de las escuelas de los Estados Unidos, fue de hecho un viaje de conquista por parte de cristianos europeos. Esa conquista fue bendecida oficialmente por la máxima autoridad religiosa. En 1493, el papa Alejandro VI emitió una bula papal dando la justificación espiritual, política y legal para apoderarse de cualquier tierra no habitada por cristianos. Los autores de este documento sabían que había pueblos indígenas que vivían en esa tierra, elaborados deliberadamente para justificar la colonización.

El “nuevo mundo” de la conquista europea se estableció sobre la base del genocidio, el robo de tierras y la brutal injusticia hacia los pueblos indígenas. Y eventualmente, en todo Estados Unidos, se levantaron estatuas para honrar al iniciador simbólico de este derramamiento de sangre.

Aunque algunos pueden discutir

ingenuamente, o con racismo deliberado, que el Día de Colón simplemente honra la herencia cultural italiana, las personas progresistas de ascendencia italiana han dejado en claro que se unen en solidaridad con los pueblos indígenas para luchar contra la supremacía blanca.

La memoria histórica aguda subraya este apoyo porque los italianos del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX que emigraron a los Estados Unidos enfrentaron un racismo virulento. Este racismo estaba especialmente dirigido a los del sur de Italia y Sicilia vinculados al linaje africano. De hecho, en 1891, once hombres italianos fueron linchados abiertamente en Nueva Orleans.

Pero en 1892, cuando el presidente de los Estados Unidos, Benjamin Harrison, pidió a los Estados Unidos que marcaran el 12 de octubre como el “descubrimiento de América por Colón” en parte debido a “el cuidado y la guía divinos que han dirigido nuestra historia”, no estaba

tomando una posición contra la xenofobia, la supremacía blanca o la colonización. (Sueños comunes, 11 de octubre)

En cambio, esa llamada fue la señal de un nuevo acuerdo emergente en los Estados Unidos y se ofreció a los “inmigrantes étnicos”, que podrían ser esclavos, italianos u otros grupos vilipendiados por su color.

¿El trato? Acepte y sigue a la supremacía blanca y conviértase en “blanco”, o enfrente el genocidio, la violencia y la discriminación que se visitó en los pueblos indígenas o afrodescendientes.

Pero millones de personas han dicho NO a ese acuerdo, eligiendo en su lugar organizarse y luchar contra el racismo.

El próximo año, hasta el 12 de octubre de 2020, ofrece otra oportunidad para que las personas progresistas digan “¡No a la supremacía blanca! ¡Abajo las estatuas de Colón o cualquier monumento al racismo y la colonización! ¡Arriba con pancartas del Día de los Pueblos Indígenas!” □