

STRIKETOBER!

By Martha Grevatt

Before the month is half over, October 2021 already has a nickname: #Striketober!

On Oct. 5, 1,400 workers at four Kellogg's cereal plants went on strike to block the company's concessionary demands. They are members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM), which recently struck Frito Lay and Nabisco. That adds up to strikes at three Fortune 500 companies, involving thousands of workers, by a union with under 65,000 members.

Kellogg's wants to cut health care benefits, pensions, holiday and vacation pay, cost of living raises and union jobs — and, adding insult to injury, take the union label off cereal boxes. The company wants a two-tier system whereby future workers will pay more for health care and will not collect a pension when they retire.

As the union explains, "A two-tier system is a devious way for employers to slowly, but surely, take power from union members, their contract and their union. The company is trying to divide

the workforce by asking the current workforce to sell out the next generation of Kellogg workers." (bctgm.org) These workers have put in long hours of hard work throughout the pandemic.

That a small union would take on Kellogg's and two other Fortune 500 companies in a few months' time is indicative of a new mood of militancy in the working class.

Health care workers are on the move.

More than two dozen California hospitals have experienced strikes and 24,000 members of United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals have overwhelmingly approved a statewide strike against Kaiser Permanente. Nurses in Worcester, Mass. -- on strike at St. Vincent Hospital — have been out since March 8. In Buffalo, N.Y., 2,000 health care workers followed suit at Mercy Hospital on Oct. 1.

Alabama coal miners have been on strike since April 1 against Warrior Met — and, indirectly, against major Wall Street stockholder BlackRock, the world's largest investment firm. Metalworkers struck two factories in Cabell County, West Virginia; over 400 are still out at Special Metals.

Workers tell John Deere: 'No more tiers!'

Another 10,000 workers began a strike Oct. 14 against John Deere, hitting 14 plants in Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Colorado and Georgia. This strike is the first in 35 years against the agricultural and construction equipment company. Over 90 percent of United Auto Workers members at Deere rejected the first contract presented to them.

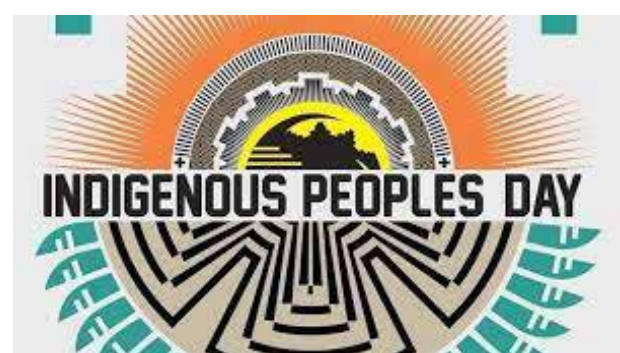
The media emphasize the company's offer of 5 to 6 percent raises. But in a six-year contract, this amounts to 1 percent or less per year, while annual inflation is running at 5 percent. The two-tier pay scheme in place since 1997 — still paying "post-1997" workers substantially less — remains intact. Now Deere wants a third

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Kellogg workers have been on strike since Oct. 5.

PHOTO: BCTGM



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WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Acronym for Sandinista National Liberation Front on top of the volcano directly across from the U.S. Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua.

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Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

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

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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.

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

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

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Changing racist names of prisons

Like ‘putting lipstick on a pig’

By Gloria Rubac

Outrage over the Minneapolis police murder of George Floyd in May 2020 was immediate. This righteous anger took many forms, from marches and rallies to toppling racist statues, shutting down highways and even setting fire to police stations. The disgust was palpable and widespread.

As a result, many Confederate symbols have since been removed, either by militant protesters or by government entities to pacify protesters. A report, issued by the Southern Poverty Law Center in February 2021, announced that 168 Confederate symbols were removed in 2020. Of those, 94 were monuments. (tinyurl.com/t6wknf8w)

Now reports are surfacing that prisons named after racist, slave-owning plantation owners or even former plantations may be changing their names as well. In Texas, Virginia, North Carolina and other states, many prisons were named to glorify slavery and the plantations that enslaved people.

One of the most infamous is Angola prison in Louisiana, built on land which was originally Angola Plantation. The prison requires incarcerated men to work in the same fields that enslaved people worked up through the Civil War.

Of Angola’s incarcerated men, 80% are Black. According to the Equal Justice Initiative, “its warden compares the grounds to ‘a big plantation in days gone by.’” (tinyurl.com/mzjxjp4s) The formal name of Angola prison is actually the Louisiana State Penitentiary.

Thirteenth Amendment’s prison slavery exception

The Thirteenth Amendment abolished enslavement in the United States, except “as a punishment for crime.” So prison slavery is, in fact, legal.

The end of slavery left the Southern labor market in need of workers to do the work previously done by enslaved people.

The criminal justice system became one of the primary means of continuing the legalized involuntary servitude of primarily African Americans across the South.

After the Civil War, enslavement continued in the form of convict leasing, a system whereby Southern states leased prisoners to private railways, mines and large plantations. While states profited, prisoners earned no pay and faced inhumane, brutal and often deadly work conditions.

Many historians call this period “worse than slavery,” because while the old enslavers had an interest in keeping their investment in enslaved workers alive to work another day, those who leased prisoners had no such interest. They could and did literally work a prisoner to death and then replace them with another prisoner.

Justice for the Sugar Land 95

In February 2020, as construction was beginning on a new school building in Sugar Land, a suburb south of Houston, a backhoe driver found a human bone. More bones were discovered, and ultimately the remains of 95 people were unearthed. Activist Reginald Moore had warned that the school was being built on the land of former plantations, and the remains of leased convicts were in the area.

By summer, the remains of 94 men and one woman, all African American victims of convict leasing, were recovered on the future site of a technical education center. Ranging in age from 14 to 70, the incarcerated people had muscular builds but were malnourished, their bones misshapen from backbreaking, repetitive labor. They were buried in plain pine boxes, sometime between 1878 and 1911.

Moore’s fears had been realized. After a struggle to honor these remains, to identify them and properly bury them, the work of activists under the leadership of the National Black United Front is paying off. Construction was halted and never continued.

On Juneteenth 2021, an event was held on the school district’s land that abuts the previously unmarked cemetery. It was organized by the Society of Justice and Equality for the People of Sugar Land (S.O.J.E.S.), a nonprofit organization dedicated to seeking justice for the Sugar Land 95. (sojesjustice.org)

Robin Cole, a Sugar Land resident and president of S.O.J.E.S., said, “We have to get justice for the Sugar Land 95, their unimaginable lives of forced labor, and explain why people should never again be subjected to such inhumane and cruel practices that benefitted only a few.”

Cole announced that S.O.J.E.S. will build a national convict leasing museum and educational center named after the late activist Reginald Moore, to inform the world about the harrowing system of racial oppression that existed in Texas and throughout the South from the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

The museum will be part of “the Sugar Land 95” experience, a collaborative effort developed by S.O.J.E.S. to take visitors through a journey of awareness through education, memorialization, healing and reconciliation between the past and present.

‘Still a pig’

In 2021, as racist monuments and statues have been removed through the struggle, another change is happening. Departments of Correction are beginning to change the names of some prisons named after racist owners of enslaved people, some named after actual plantations.

In Texas, the former Darrington Unit is now the Memorial Unit. South of Houston in Brazoria County, it was named after John Darrington from Alabama. A large plantation owner who owned land in Texas, he sold the land to the State of Texas after enslavement was abolished. The name may have been changed, but today’s incarcerated workers, mainly Black and Latinx men, still harvest cotton with no pay.

There are other prisons whose names

should be changed. A prison in Huntsville was named after Thomas Goree, a former enslaver and a Confederate captain. According to the Marshall Project, he was closely tied to the convict leasing program that killed thousands in Texas.

The Marshall Project also cites the Eastham Unit, as it is named after the landowners who bought Goree’s family plantation about 20 miles north of Huntsville and then used it for convict leasing. Depending on the source, there are between five and six state prison systems that still do not pay one cent for the work prisoners do. So changing prison names is a tiny drop in the bucket for change.

Texas prisoner Shedrick Roberson, fighting for clemency from his unjustly long prison sentence of 85 years for a robbery where no one was killed, told Workers World, “Changing names will not change conditions in Texas prisons. If you put a wig on a pig and apply lipstick, it is still a pig.”



W. F. Ramsey prison farm in Brazoria County, Texas, 1965.

Cosmetic changes that erase racist history don’t eliminate racism. Under capitalism, we must fight for fundamental changes like prison abolition while realizing that incarceration is not a solution. We must create a world free from racism and oppression — one that includes well-paying jobs, free health care and respect — so that all working people can live with dignity and freedom. □

Protests demand Luma out!

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Activists protesting the privatization of Puerto Rico’s electric utility company and the devastating power outages affecting the island’s most vulnerable communities rallied at Fairhill Square Park in Philadelphia’s Puerto Rican community Oct. 15. The event was called by Philly Boricuas.

The protest was in solidarity with thousands of workers demonstrating at the same time in Puerto Rico to demand the ouster of Luma Energy, which privatized their energy system June 1. The company

was given a 15-year contract to manage power distribution by Puerto Rico’s Electric Power Authority, PREPA.

Since Luma took over services, island residents have experienced widespread blackouts for extended periods. While the outages are due in part to the breakdown of generation units lacking maintenance and repairs, Luma has exacerbated the problem by using selective blackouts that last for hours. The lack of reliable electricity is impacting people’s health, work, and education.

The recurring blackouts leave people sweltering in the heat without fans for prolonged periods. Food is rotting from lack of refrigeration. Voltage fluctuations are damaging computers and appliances. The protesters called on Luma to pay for their losses.

In Puerto Rico’s capital, San Juan, 4,000 protesters marched onto Las Americas Highway and shut it down Oct. 15. This same main highway was

blocked by large demonstrations in 2019 that forced the resignation of the corrupt governor.

Puerto Rico’s power grid was severely damaged when Category 4 storm Hurricane Maria pummeled the island September 2017. Repairs to the system have been slow, leaving many people dependent on noisy and polluting generators.

In addition to the privatization of the power grid, federal funds to repair the system have been delayed. The first disbursement of \$7.1 million in federal funds for the reconstruction work was only announced Oct. 14. The money is part of \$9.5 billion obligated by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to rebuild the grid.

Fight for sustainable energy

Currently, more than 97% of electricity in Puerto Rico comes from expensive imported fossil fuels that negatively impact the environment. Puerto Rico passed laws to progressively increase the amount of its electricity generated from renewable sources to 40% by 2025, and 100% by 2050. However, FEMA, which controls the money to repair the power system, wants to fund two new fossil-fueled power plants.



Philadelphia activists stand in solidarity with Puerto Rican workers calling to end privatization of the island’s electricity, Oct. 15.

Do wage increases impact the unemployed?

By G. Dunkel

Why has David Card been co-awarded the 2021 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences?

Card, who teaches at UC Berkeley, did his research in the 1990s. The Committee obviously feels his research had major policy implications. (The research of the two other winners is more technical.) Hundreds of newspapers, web sites and other media reported on this award.

The world economy is today in a major, pandemic-linked recession. Back in the 1930s, after five years of deep recession, workers in the United States, under the 1935 Wagner Act, won an undisputed right to organize unions and bargain collectively. That same year, Social Security was established, which included unemployment compensation programs, run by the states. Three years later, a nationwide minimum wage was created.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan's smashing of the union representing air-traffic controllers (PATCO) marked a nationwide decision by the U.S. ruling class to adopt a harsher, more confrontational approach to unions and the needs of working people. Union membership



Outside the office of former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, May 2013.

dropped sharply during Reagan's eight years. It is now barely 10 percent of the private labor force.

While politicians don't need professional economists to agree with their attacks on unions and the workers they represent, their assertion that raising the minimum

wage reduces employment provides a lot of cover for refusing to raise wages.

A survey of academic economists in 1979 found that 90 percent agreed, generally, that "A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers." But by 2015, only 26 percent of

professional economists agreed. David Card wrote a series of papers in the 1990s with Alan Krueger, now deceased, that compared New Jersey, which had raised its minimum wage, with Pennsylvania, which hadn't. They used Pennsylvania as a control group (like the group which receives a placebo in a test of a new vaccine) for New Jersey (the group which got the real vaccine).

The increased minimum wage had very little if any negative effect on the number of jobs.

The Institute on Labor and Employment at Berkeley extended this research to multiple states over the years between 1990 and 2006. These days some economists believe raising the minimum wage actually increases jobs.

It is clear, looking at David Card's research, that the Nobel Committee agreed that disregarding it and continuing to restrict unemployment compensation would hurt the world's economic recovery.

Of course, what would really cause the world's economy to blossom would be doing away with the whole hierarchy of wages and rewards, along with the capitalist system on which it's built. □

when we fight we win!

On the picket line

By Marie Kelly

NLRB moves toward recognizing college athletes as workers

A National Labor Relations Board memo, issued by a lead attorney for the agency, states that athletes at private universities have the right to collectively bargain, join a union, and authorize a strike. This decision is crucial to any legal challenge athletes may bring to assert their rights as school employees. Even though the memo excludes public universities (which the NLRB has no jurisdiction over), there may now be the opportunity to target an entire league or athletic conference made up of both private and public institutions.

University sports teams like men's football and basketball generate tremendous revenue. Athletes on the field or the court should share a bigger piece of the pie. Given the exploitation by coaches, trainers, etc., it is essential that young athletes have their rights as workers defined. (tinyurl.com/22p4x85w)

Farmworkers in New York state unionize

Farmworkers at Pindar Vineyards became the first in the state of New York to successfully unionize. The state Public Employment Relations Board certified Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW to represent Pindar workers Sept. 27. Across the state, farmworkers fought for years and finally pushed lawmakers to pass the Farm Laborers Fair Practice Act in 2019, which guarantees their right to collective bargaining and to receive workers compensation and unemployment benefits. A majority of farm laborers across the state are migrant workers.

On October 11, shortly after the Pindar Vineyards workers' victorious union drive, activists from Voces de la Frontera in Milwaukee organized a walkout of hundreds of Latinx and immigrant workers to demand key immigration rights be included in the budget bill before Congress. More strikes are planned up to October 31st when the Senate is expected to vote on the budget. (tinyurl.com/mbsaefdh)



Strike begins at Mercy Hospital in Buffalo, N.Y., Oct. 1.

Health care workers strike wave

Kaiser Permanente is the latest hospital organization facing a potential strike. Nurses and other health care workers and technologists numbering 24,000 in California and Oregon have agreed to take strike action if their demands for safer staffing and pay equity aren't met.

Two thousand nurses at Mercy Hospital of Buffalo walked off their units and are striking for the same issues around unsafe conditions and short staffing. Letitia James, the New York state attorney general, issued a cease and desist order to Huffmaster, the strikebreaking firm hired by the Catholic Health chain that owns Mercy. The order states that Huffmaster must "immediately cease providing services to Mercy Hospital as either an employment agency or watch, guard, or patrol agency, and ensure that Huffmaster employees are not interfering with the picketers' right to protest."

In the longest nurses strike in Massachusetts' history, Tenet Corporation continues its stranglehold on negotiations with St. Vincent nurses in Worcester. Hospital corporations around the country are putting profits over patients and nurses, who are fed up with compromising their patient care standards to make fat cat hospital CEOs richer. (tinyurl.com/3y57e2ee) □

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STRIKETOBER!

Continued from page 1

tier with future workers ineligible for pensions. This same company is poised to make nearly \$6 billion in profits this year — an all-time record.

The rank and file aren't having it. Two strikers, speaking on a zoom call with rank-and-file UAW activists, complained of "disrespectful" management and the mistreatment of workers deemed "critically essential" because they manufacture farm equipment. Community support has been "overwhelming."

In a tight labor market this year, Deere employees have logged hours of mandatory overtime. From a strike standpoint this means two things: one, workers are angry; two, many workers have savings and can withstand the hardships of a long strike.

The difficulty finding workers may have been a factor in recent negotiations between the film and television industry and the International Association of Theatre and Stage Employees. Some 60,000 IATSE members were set to begin a countrywide strike Oct. 18, lifting the total number of current strikers to over 100,000.

Members are now voting on a new contract with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers. The union says, "We went toe to toe with some of the richest and most powerful entertainment and tech companies in the world, and we have now reached an agreement with the AMPTP that meets our members' needs."

There could still be a strike, which would bring Hollywood production to a halt if the workers vote no. Many are concerned that the issue of breaks between work shifts is not adequately addressed.

Unorganized workers show courage and creativity

Many actions of unorganized workers — often atomized or with only a handful of coworkers — are still of an individual character. Millions of workers have been leaving their jobs, a record 4.3 million in August. The lowest-paying jobs are seeing the highest number of quits.

But organized group quits are becoming a trend. From fast food restaurants to dollar stores to trendy microbreweries, workers are leaving their jobs together and posting signs saying the place is closed because "we all quit."

The current uptick in strike activity and workplace resistance reflects the sharpening of class antagonisms. The big question is, how can workers tip the scales in their favor?



John Deere strikers in Milan, Ill.

Other workers are using their power at the point of production to demand changes — not only in compensation and working conditions but in corporate policy. Amazon white-collar workers have walked out over the company's contribution to the climate catastrophe. McDonald's workers have stopped work to protest sexual harassment. Transgender workers at Netflix are threatening a walkout over the

continued streaming of an anti-trans comedy special.

In a groundbreaking development, the Amazon Labor Union at the company's JFK8 facility in Staten Island, N.Y., announced plans to file for a union representation election with the National Labor Relations Board. A number of unions, including the Teamsters, are planning a huge unionization drive at Amazon.

The power of the working class to resist capital is amplified in a tight labor market. But capitalism has faced a generalized systemic crisis for decades. At a dead end, it is driven to squeeze as much productivity from workers as possible and at the same time cut labor costs to the bone. If companies are paying higher wages, they are getting it back, and then some, by making workers work harder and longer.

How can our side win?

The current uptick in strike activity and workplace resistance reflects the sharpening of class antagonisms.

The big question is, how can the workers tip the scales in their favor?

A popular slogan on picket lines is "One day longer, one day stronger!" This expresses the determination of the strikers to hold out as long as it takes to

win their demands. But as a strategy, it has been proven inadequate against an aggressive capitalist class determined to maximize exploitation with a heavily militarized state at its disposal.

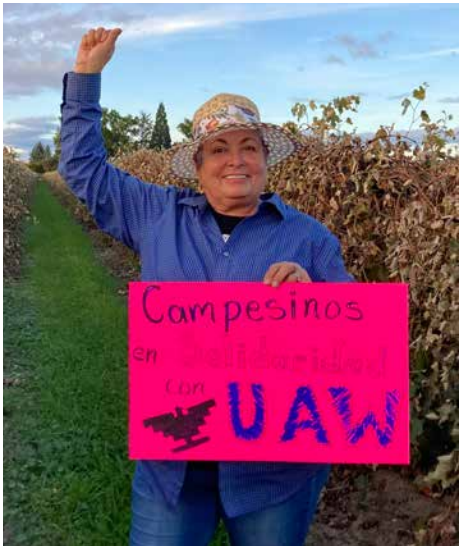


10,000 John Deere workers are on strike.



Kellogg strike, Battle Creek, Mich.

Too often, striking unions obey a court injunction limiting the number of pickets and strikebreakers who are able to cross the picket line. Workers eventually go back to work with a weak contract — or, worst case scenario, they are permanently



United Farmworkers' solidarity with John Deere strike.

replaced. The fraction of unionized U.S. workers has hovered around 10 percent, even though polls show workers favor unions by a substantial margin.

It will take a broad, global, class-wide

movement to turn the tide in labor's favor, for both organized and unorganized workers.

As Workers World Party First Secretary Larry Holmes explains: "From a genuine Marxist perspective, as the changes in the productive forces bring more workers across the planet into contact with each other, class-wide solidarity becomes not only more practically possible, it also becomes more necessary. Indeed, without greater political and strategic solidarity, the capitalist ruling class will use technology and globalization to isolate and atomize the working class.

"It is in this context that we should understand the importance of mass working class solidarity, which means workers who are not directly affected by a particular struggle, organizing themselves to support other workers anywhere and everywhere who are at the center of a particular struggle, be that struggle small and local, large and global." □



Warrior Met coal strike, begun in April, is still on.

Tip of a rotten iceberg

The National Football League is the oldest professional sports league in the U.S. Its owners are among the most reactionary. Founded in 1920, the NFL did not draft its first African-American player, George Taliaferro, until 1949. The singing of the national anthem before every NFL game, coupled with pro-military displays, became a tradition starting in 1941 during World War II.

Now, even though over 57 percent of NFL players are Black, there has never been a Black NFL owner. There are currently only three Black head coaches in 32 teams. The first Black quarterback to play in the NFL was Marlin Briscoe in 1968. And in 1997, Amy Trask became the first woman CEO of an NFL team.

Given the white male patriotism-dominated culture of the NFL for over a century, it should come as no surprise that Las Vegas Raiders head coach and former ESPN Monday Night Football analyst Jon Gruden had written such vile emails. He was forced to resign after the emails were made public Oct. 11. Those emails included a racist stereotype to describe the lips of the Black executive director of the NFL Players Association, DeMaurice Smith. Gruden used misogynistic and homophobic slurs disparaging NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell for welcoming the first openly gay player, Michael Sam, into the NFL.

Gruden attacked the hiring of women referees for NFL games and Black players

like Eric Reid, who followed the lead of Colin Kaepernick by taking a knee to protest police brutality during the playing of the national anthem. Gruden denigrated efforts to protect players from injuries, especially permanent brain-damaging concussions.

Most of these emails were sent to Bruce Allen, former president of the Washington Football Team, which came under fire for years for its now-discarded racist name and mascot that degraded Indigenous peoples and its sexist abuse of women employees, including team cheerleaders.

In his short resignation message, Gruden said that he didn't want to be a "distraction." But this development has had an opposite effect, creating a firestorm of controversy. Many of Gruden's critics, including DeMaurice Smith, are demanding that the hundreds of thousands of emails from the past decade or more be released to unearth this "good ol' boys club" of mainly white billionaire owners and corporate CEOs who share the same bigoted views as Gruden.

This is another argument for making the top echelons of the NFL more inclusive of people of color, women, gender-oppressed and LGBTQ+ people. There is a need to raise social consciousness and build solidarity with players, who risk injury and shortened careers to make super-profits for team owners. □

WORKERS WORLD editorial



Netflix: STOP promoting transphobia!

By Martha Grevatt and Monica Moorehead

Oct. 15 – Dave Chappelle has been rightfully criticized for transphobic, homophobic and misogynist comments made on his stand-up comedy special, The Closer, which aired Oct. 5. Netflix, which produced the show, has also come under fire for refusing to stop airing the show.

Trans and queer people who work at Netflix have spoken up, including Dear White People's co-showrunner Jaclyn Moore, the staff of the twitter account @Most and senior software engineer Terra Field. Field was fired after tweeting: "Promoting TERF ideology (which is what we did by giving it a platform yesterday) directly harms trans people, it is not some neutral act. This is not an argument with two sides. It is an argument with trans people who want to be alive and people who don't want us to be." She and other trans Netflix employees fired or suspended for protesting Chappelle's show are now back on the job.

Netflix's trans employee resource group is planning a walkout.

Responses continue to pour in from progressive groups and individuals condemning both Chappelle and Netflix for promoting bigotry and violence against some of the most oppressed sectors of society.

The National Black Justice Coalition is a "leading national civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer+, and same gender loving (LGBTQ+/SGL) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS through coalition building, federal policy change, research, and education.

Our mission is to end racism, homophobia, and LGBTQ+/SGL bias and stigma. NBJC supports Black individuals, families, and communities in strengthening the bonds and bridging the gaps between the movements for racial justice and LGBTQ+/SGL equity." (nbjc.org)

NBJC Executive Director David Johns states, "It is deeply disappointing that Netflix allowed Dave Chappelle's lazy and hostile transphobia and homophobia to air on its platform. With 2021 on track to be the deadliest year on record for transgender people in the United States – the majority of whom are Black transgender people – Netflix should know better. Perpetuating transphobia perpetuates violence. Netflix should immediately pull The Closer from its platform and directly apologize to the transgender community." (thesource.com, Oct. 7)

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation "rewrites the script for LGBTQ acceptance. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love." (glaad.org)

GLAAD tweeted the following Oct. 6: "Dave Chappelle's brand has become synonymous with ridiculing trans people and other marginalized communities. Negative reviews and viewers loudly condemning his latest special is a message to the industry that audiences don't support platforming anti-LGBTQ diatribes. We agree." (@glaad)

Workers World adds its voice to this condemnation. □

Columbus Day toppled in Boston

By K. James Boston

In a major victory for Indigenous people everywhere, Boston Mayor Kim Janey signed an Executive Order declaring the second Monday in October to henceforth be Indigenous Peoples Day. Janey [Boston's first woman and first Black mayor] signed the order Oct. 6 inside Boston City Hall, the administrative hub of one of the birthplaces of the European settler-colonial project in the Americas.

Present at the signing and press conference were members of the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, whose traditional territory encompasses the City of Boston, as well as Indigenous activists and leaders from the North American Indian Center of Boston (NAICOB) and United American Indians of New England (UAINE).

Raquel Halsey, member of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation and Executive Director of the NAICOB, said of the Executive Order: "As a service provider, we have heard countless stories

of Indigenous people feeling unwelcome in Boston, and they have felt the lasting consequences of genocide and colonialism every day. Recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day is an important step toward addressing the lived experiences of many residents and building trust between municipalities and Indigenous nations."

Bolstered by that victory, an energized crowd of several hundred Indigenous people and allies gathered Oct. 9 for a rally and march to demand the Commonwealth of Massachusetts follow Boston's example and replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day. The demonstrators rallied outside the Massachusetts State House.

Mahtowin Munro, Oglala Lakota co-leader of UAINE and lead organizer for IndigenousPeoplesDayMA.org, stated: "Indigenous Peoples Day is being declared in cities and towns all across Massachusetts and across the country. We call on the state legislature to step up now and pass our statewide Indigenous

Peoples Day bill.

"It will also be important to pass bills to ban Native American team mascots; to provide for Indigenous curriculum content in the public schools; to protect sacred Native American heritage; and to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students. And we call upon the federal government to Stop Line 3 and other destructive pipeline projects that run through and endanger Indigenous lands."

Munro continued: "In solidarity with our many migrant and refugee relatives who live in Boston and elsewhere, today we are also saying, 'Break down the borders! ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] and the Border Patrol need to stop harassing and detaining Indigenous, Haitian and other refugees!'"

After rallying at the State House, demonstrators joined Kevin Peterson, founder of the New Democracy Coalition, and other Black community activists to



WW PHOTO: MAUREEN SKEHAN

Indigenous Peoples Day on Oct. 9 in Boston.

demand that Faneuil Hall, one of Boston's shrines to slavery, be renamed. Jean-Luc Pierite from NAICOB and other speakers emphasized the need for collective Black and Indigenous action and liberation.

The crowd finally made their way to the so-called Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park, which once housed a Christopher Columbus statue, since beheaded and removed. Rally organizers demanded that the park's name be changed and a statue be erected to commemorate Boston's vibrant Indigenous community. □

Mark Indigenous Peoples Day–Support Workers World!

Boston Mayor Kim Janey proclaimed Oct. 6 that the second Monday of October every year would be Indigenous Peoples Day, "in lieu of Columbus Day."

This was a victory for Native people, since the European invasion, theft of their land and culture, oppression and genocide, began in what is now Massachusetts and continued there for years.

On Oct. 8, President Joe Biden proclaimed a federal Indigenous Peoples Day, acknowledging European explorers committed atrocities on Tribal nations and Indigenous communities.

These pronouncements came about due to the unified militant struggles by Indigenous peoples and their allies, which have intensified in the last five years against corporate pipelines, racist police terror and more.

The movement to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day began in Berkeley, Calif., following a huge march in San Francisco, on Oct. 10, 1992, protesting the celebration of genocidal conqueror and murderer Christopher Columbus' arrival 500 years earlier. Over 130 cities and 11 states have dumped that "holiday" and today honor Indigenous people on

that day.

Workers World has continually supported Native peoples' struggles on the streets and in our newspaper. WW joins Indigenous communities to demand: Drop 'Columbus Day' as a federal holiday! Commemorate Indigenous Peoples Day in every city, town and state! Down with white supremacy!

Your help is needed!

The WW Supporter Program was founded 44 years ago to help build this socialist newspaper. Since the early 1990s, it has supported workers.

org, where WW articles are posted daily and each week's issue is displayed. The newspaper is printed and mailed out monthly.

For annual donations of \$60, \$120 or \$300, members receive a year's subscription, letters about timely issues and gift subscriptions. Supporters can receive the book, "What road to socialism?" (Notify us.) Or read it at workers.org/books.

Write and mail monthly or annual checks to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. (Include your name and address.) Or donate at workers.org.

With free health care, education Nicaragua challenges U.S. domination

By Sara Flounders
Managua, Nicaragua

The writer was a member of a U.S. delegation that visited Nicaragua Oct. 3-10.

The reason Nicaragua is labeled an “unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security of the U.S.” — a military corporate superpower — became abundantly clear to a delegation visiting the country Oct. 3 to 10. The delegation was organized by the Alliance for Global Justice/Nica Network.

Nicaragua, a small developing country of 6.6 million people, lives in sharp contrast to its neighboring countries — Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. U.S. power dominates them, and over half a million people have fled the extreme violence, chaos and desperate economic conditions of these homelands. At the U.S. border, those migrants meet racist raids, round-ups and deportation, although it is U.S. policies that forced them to flee.

By contrast, comparatively few people have left Nicaragua.

Nicaragua's stability challenges U.S. domination

The recent delegation met with Nicaraguan doctors, medical staff, community organizers, teachers, disaster specialists and financial planners to learn about the impact of the country's Human Development Plan, which supports its stability.

In stark contrast to other Central American countries which have privatized health care for profit, Nicaragua has established community-based, free public health care, as well as free education for all. Unlike its neighbors, Nicaragua has instituted a major focus on disaster planning — essential in a region prone to hurricanes, volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis.

The AFGJ delegation was able to measure the difference between Nicaragua today and the state of the country in 2007, when 16 years of U.S.-backed neoliberal policies left every social program sold off to private investors.

Retaking Nicaragua for the people

Back in 1979, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional) had defeated the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship. When the FSLN came into governmental power, the U.S. sent armed mercenaries to wage relentless war in Nicaragua. The FSLN government was defeated when a U.S.-backed reactionary slate of candidates was elected in 1990.

In 2007, the Sandinista FSLN Coalition returned to political office in a general election, with a sharply different approach. They have attempted to revitalize the programs of the Sandinista Revolution and the years of struggle against U.S. domination.

Since the Sandinistas' return there have been stunning gains in maternal and infant survival, life expectancy and even in building new infrastructure of roads, electrification and sanitation. Women hold close to half the elected seats in the national legislature and are a majority of the doctors, health professionals and planners.

These concrete successes are what Washington and corporate power in the U.S. find so threatening. The example of

Nicaragua's independence is too dangerous to U.S. control over the region.

Human Development Plan

There is much national pride and enthusiasm in Nicaragua about the results of the Human Development Plan. Everyone the AFGJ delegation met with was emphatic about the difference made through mobilizing the population in a holistic approach and the positive impact on how people feel about themselves and how they look out for their neighbors.

The plan has vastly increased public investment in basic health services, education, potable water and environmental sanitation, especially in long-ignored rural areas. Today 66 percent of Nicaragua's budget goes to health and education — a huge investment for any country.

More than a century of U.S. corporate exploitation and direct U.S. military occupation, U.S.-backed military dictatorships and U.S.-supported contra wars, followed by the most recent U.S.-supported government of the elites, had left Nicaragua impoverished and underdeveloped when the Sandinistas returned in 2007.

The country's Caribbean coast on the east — where most Nicaraguans of African descent live — was left almost completely impoverished, with development restricted to the Spanish-speaking urban areas of the Pacific coast. Some 90 percent of medical services went to less than 10 percent of the population — the ruling elite and a prosperous middle class. Millions of people had no access to health care.

Now, however, infant and maternal mortality is less than a third of the 2007 level. At that time, fewer than 50 percent of the population had access to electricity. The FSLN government proudly proclaims that 98 percent of homes have access to electricity. The country is self-sustaining in basic food needs. In 2007, 48 percent of the country's population lived below the poverty line. Now poverty is 18 percent. Education, including medical school, is free.

Building infrastructure

Roads are essential, both to transport goods and to raise the level of access to health care and education. Today Nicaragua boasts some of the best paved roads in Central America. Large parts of the country once totally isolated are now part of national life.

Digging wells and constant water tests have brought potable water to 95 percent of urban areas and more than half of rural communities. While modern sewage and sanitation have more than doubled in urban areas, they are still a challenge in rural areas.

What impressed the AFGJ delegation in briefings by government planners was the honest assessment of what still needs to be accomplished to raise living standards for the whole population. But gains confirm that the current government's



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

Outside of Óscar Danilo Rosales Hospital in Leon, Nicaragua, with members of medical staff and U.S. delegation, Oct. 5. Rosales, a surgeon and Sandinista hero, was killed in 1967 by the U.S.-backed Somoza regime.

investment in social welfare programs is already having a big impact.

Community-based, not-for-profit health care

The Human Development Plan emphasizes community-based preventive and primary medical care. There is a strong focus on confronting centuries of inequality on the underdeveloped Caribbean coast and in rural areas that previously had never seen a doctor.

The health coverage network has been widened, with 192 health centers and 1,233 health posts that provide the first line of neighborhood care for immunization, high blood pressure and diabetes control. There are 178 “mother houses” where women can safely deliver babies, receive nursing advice and have complicated pregnancies carefully monitored.

The training of doctors, nurses, medical technicians and health administrators is a high priority. Medical workers are unionized state employees.

Deepening health care means building and outfitting hospitals, testing facilities, mobile medical clinics and other support infrastructure. Nineteen new hospitals have been built since 2007 and six more are planned.

There is a great deal of attention to small community development projects, such as installation of wells, roof repair, flood preparation and evacuation plans against disasters, and workshops in health and wellness.

Free health care includes much not covered by Medicare in the U.S., such as dental care, hearing aids, glasses and pharmaceuticals. Traditional medicinal herbs, physical therapy, massage and nutrition are being integrated into medical care. Recreation, sports and culture are considered part of health care.

Volunteer health brigades

One effective innovation is the Health Brigade Volunteers — community health advocates mostly chosen originally from the Sandinista Youth Organization to

serve in rural regions. Now all neighborhoods have trained Brigadistas.

For instance, the city of Leon, population 200,000, has 3,000 brigade volunteers who go door-to-door checking in with neighbors to give personalized attention and health education.

Organized years before the COVID pandemic hit, the Brigadista network was used to support extensive vaccine programs for flu, pneumonia, measles and other children's diseases; to combat dengue, Zika and malaria; to conduct nutritional surveys, health censuses and health education; and to help people get to appointments, receive medications and get follow-up care.

Health care and COVID

When COVID hit, the Brigadista social infrastructure gave instant health support to a population already vaccinated for many diseases and well educated on basic health and sanitation measures.

Nicaragua had an intense discussion on the difficulty of completely shutting down an economy that is still based on small farmers, small producers, craftspeople, local markets and community-based economic development. Some 41 percent of Nicaraguans live in rural areas, and 31 percent of the labor force is employed in agriculture.

Instead of a shutdown, health professionals and Brigadistas went house-to-house, educating families on how to protect themselves from the virus. There was an emphasis on testing and isolation.

The impact of community education was seen by the AFGJ delegation wherever it traveled. Everywhere they went Nicaraguans were wearing masks — in restaurants, streets, government buildings, schools, neighborhood cafes. As people entered buildings or met in groups, everyone sprayed their hands with sanitizer.

Nicaragua was hit by a slow COVID vaccine rollout, due to the unequal distribution of vaccines globally. In mid-September, larger donations of vaccines began to arrive through the international COVAX system. A fully vaccinated population before January 2022 is the goal.

But vaccines could have arrived earlier: the U.S. donated vaccines to every country in Central America except Nicaragua. By early September, the U.S. had thrown away more than 15 million doses of COVID vaccines — more than enough to have vaccinated every Nicaraguan twice. The use of punitive “vaccine diplomacy” and the U.S. denial of humanitarian pandemic aid highlights the intention of the U.S. ruling class to use any effort to overthrow the Sandinista government.

Nicaragua faces intense U.S. pressure and many challenges based on centuries of colonial and imperialist oppression. But there is a great deal of creative energy focused on improvements that will impact the largest number of people and address historic inequality with revolutionary determination. □



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Acrónimo de Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional en la cima del volcán directamente frente a la Embajada de los Estados Unidos en Managua.

Delegación de EE.UU. demanda defender a Nicaragua

**Equipo de Mundo Obrero
Managua, 8 de octubre de 2021**

La delegación de la Alianza por la Justicia Global para Nicaragua visitó Nicaragua con el fin de conocer los avances del Gobierno Sandinista durante los últimos 14 años, ante el tsunami de información falsa que diariamente genera el Departamento de Estado de Estados Unidos y sus aliados en los medios de comunicaciones nacionales e internacionales.

La delegación fue coordinada por Coleen Littlejohn, una economista de desarrollo jubilada, que ha vivido en Nicaragua durante la mayor parte de los últimos 41 años y ahora es la coordinadora de voluntarios locales de la Red Nica Alianza por la Justicia Global (AFGJ).

Los miembros de la delegación incluían activistas políticos y organizadores que trabajan desde hace mucho tiempo por el cambio en los Estados Unidos. Los participantes incluyeron a Monica Moorehead del Partido Mundo Obrero y editora gerente del periódico WW-MO; Yoav Elinevsky de Acción por la Paz de Massachusetts; Sara Flounders del Centro de Acción Internacional y la Campaña SanctionsKill y Stan Smith de la Red de Solidaridad con los países del ALBA de Chicago.

La delegación informó sus hallazgos durante una conferencia de prensa transmitida internacionalmente por la Coalición Nacional Unida contra la Guerra el 8 de octubre, después de una semana de visitas a ministerios gubernamentales, universidades, hospitales, escuelas; conversaciones con pequeños agricultores nicaragüenses y organizadores de cooperativas, además de miembros de la comunidad internacional, en Managua, León, Granada y Masaya.

La delegación también se reunió con el oficial de asuntos políticos de la Embajada de los Estados Unidos para presentar un comunicado de protesta contra la injerencia de Estados Unidos en los asuntos internos del gobierno de Nicaragua.

La siguiente es una muestra de las conclusiones de los miembros de la delegación:

Coleen Littlejohn

En la apertura de la conferencia de prensa, Coleen Littlejohn comentó que ha vivido en Nicaragua durante la mayor parte de los últimos 41 años, pero anteriormente había trabajado para una importante ONG de desarrollo internacional en Chile, una verdadera dictadura, de 1978 a 1980.

Continuó diciendo que Nicaragua no es una dictadura. Es un país que ha logrado y continúa trabajando para el desarrollo de su gente, haciendo cosas con las que solo se puede soñar en los EE.UU. Atención médica y educación gratuitas, vigilancia comunitaria, un país que obtiene el 75% de su energía de fuentes renovables, 92% de autosuficiencia alimentaria y mujeres en al menos el 50% de los cargos públicos y electos, etc.

Pero también comentó que leer todos los días sobre la “dictadura” en Nicaragua en los medios estadounidenses e internacionales, mensajes coordinados con un cambio de pocas palabras, es posible



La delegación de Estados Unidos se reúne con Ministros y Asesores Presidenciales de Relaciones Internacionales en Managua.

crear confusión sobre lo que realmente está pasando aquí.

La Red Nicaragua, un proyecto de la Alianza por la Justicia Global, ha estado trabajando para llegar a personas y movimientos que quieren un cambio real en los Estados Unidos para contarles lo que realmente está sucediendo en este increíble país. Y también para que la gente de los Estados Unidos sepa cómo el gobierno de los Estados Unidos ha estado tratando de destruir lo que ella llama la “amenaza de un buen ejemplo”.

Ahora la Red Nicaragua está organizando delegaciones de líderes del movimiento estadounidense para que vengan y vean por qué debemos defender a Nicaragua y la Revolución Sandinista. Y hoy escucharán a cuatro miembros de una delegación que actualmente están visitando el país. Es un momento importante para estar aquí.

Monica Moorehead

Fui miembro de una delegación pacifista que viajó a Nicaragua para honrar al Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. y su legado de compromiso con la igualdad, la paz y la justicia. Treinta y siete años después de todo lo que nuestra delegación ha presenciado de primera mano, esta revolución continúa prosperando como una democracia real, al utilizar sus limitados recursos para comprometerse con el bienestar de todo su pueblo.

La acusación hecha por Estados Unidos de etiquetar las próximas elecciones del 7 de noviembre en Nicaragua como “anti-democráticas e injustas” es un ultraje y un absurdo total.

¿Cómo puede alguien que piense racionalmente aceptar la palabra de un gobierno que priva del derecho al voto a los negros, los migrantes, etc. después de las elecciones de 2020 en Estados Unidos?

¿Cómo puede alguien creer en la palabra de un gobierno que dice apoyar a los “presos políticos” en Nicaragua pero que ha tenido como rehenes en prisiones estadounidenses durante los últimos 30, 40 e incluso 50 años o más a personas como Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Jamil al-Amin, Ruchell Magee y muchos más? Estados Unidos no tiene derecho a intervenir en los asuntos internos de otro país, especialmente en sus elecciones.

Joav Elinevsky

Encontré que Nicaragua es un país con un clima hermoso y bendecido con tierras fértiles debido a la gran cantidad de volcanes aquí. Por eso Nicaragua es 80% independiente de sus alimentos. Encontré que Nicaragua es como una casa con sus

puertas abiertas, con gente cálida y amigable. Personas trabajadoras, creativas y orgullosas.

Durante mis caminatas diarias aquí, podía ir a cualquier lugar que quisiera en cualquier momento del día o de la noche y sentirme seguro y bienvenido. Por mucho, Nicaragua es el país más seguro de Centroamérica y América Latina.

Por supuesto que si quieres aprender sobre Nicaragua la mejor manera es venir aquí. Pero hay una manera más fácil para las personas inteligentes que leen el New York Times o The Guardian o de nuestro gobierno. Simplemente invierta lo que escucha, la verdad es lo opuesto a lo que escucha y lee.

Después de 16 años de gobiernos de derecha, los nicaragüenses eligieron abrumadoramente a los sandinistas. ¿Por qué?

La pobreza disminuyó del 48% al 29% en 2014. Cientos de miles de mujeres recibieron préstamos en el marco del programa Usura Cero y Hambre Cero. La educación en todos los niveles es gratuita. Todos los indicadores socioeconómicos muestran un gran éxito del compromiso con los pobres por una economía mixta y una democracia.

Stan Smith

Nicaragua tenía poco más de 50 hospitales cuando Daniel Ortega fue electo presidente en 2007. Ahora hay 77 hospitales; un tercio de todos los hospitales en Nicaragua se construyeron en los últimos 14 años.

Hoy toda la atención médica es gratuita. Hoy en día, las mujeres representan el 50% de los cargos electos en los gobiernos nacional, regional y local.

Hoy la educación, incluida la universitaria, es gratuita. Incluso las guarderías infantiles son gratuitas y están disponibles para todos.

Estos son derechos y beneficios que no tenemos en los Estados Unidos.

Nicaragua es el país más seguro de Centroamérica. Su tasa de homicidios es la mitad de la de 2006. Su tasa de homicidios es de ocho a diez veces menor que en El Salvador.

La pobreza extrema se ha reducido a la mitad.

La mortalidad infantil y la mortalidad materna se han reducido a más de la mitad desde 2006. El 50% de la población tenía acceso a la electricidad. Bajo el gobierno de Daniel Ortega ahora es del 99%.

En 1989, después de 10 años de Gobierno Sandinista, el analfabetismo se había reducido al 10%. Después de 16 años de neoliberalismo, gobiernos pro-Estados Unidos, había subido al 30%. Se había triplicado. Después de los 14 años del actual gobierno de Daniel Ortega ahora ha bajado al 4%.

Nuestra delegación siente que es urgente que todos aumentemos nuestros esfuerzos para trabajar contra la injerencia de Estados Unidos en las elecciones de noviembre en Nicaragua. Es urgente que nos concentremos en oponernos a una

nueva operación de cambio de régimen de EE.UU.

Sara Flounders

Nos enfocamos en desarrollar la coordinación entre muchas organizaciones que se oponen a las sanciones de Estados Unidos en 39 países, un tercio de la población mundial. Este es un crimen de lesa humanidad.

Estados Unidos ha declarado a Nicaragua, un país en desarrollo de 6 millones de habitantes, como “una amenaza extraordinaria para la seguridad nacional de Estados Unidos”. ¡Qué absurdo!

Pero el poder empresarial estadounidense se ve amenazado por el ejemplo de lo que Nicaragua está construyendo para la gente. Vinimos a verlo por nosotros mismos.

Escuchamos descripciones vívidas de los crímenes cometidos durante el fallido golpe de Estado en 2018, financiado por Estados Unidos a través de la saturación de las redes sociales, escuadrones de mercenarios terroristas, tranques y demandas para que el gobierno popular sandinista renunciara.

La Revolución Sandinista de 1979 fue un profundo trastorno, un cambio de conciencia, una determinación combativa por construir una nueva sociedad.

Durante la década de 1980 no hubo un momento de paz. Hubo guerras de la contra de Estados Unidos sin parar, mismas que eran combatidas por una población movilizada.

De 1990 a 2006, los gobiernos de derecha dieron marcha atrás y privatizaron todo: educación, salud, servicios sociales. La economía neoliberal más cruel no significó nada para la gente.

En 2007 los sandinistas ganaron las elecciones e iniciaron programas que han tenido un gran impacto en estos 14 años. Sus programas son educación gratuita para todos, incluida la universidad, programas gratuitos de salud pública con logros asombrosos, construcción de carreteras, ahora la mejor en Centroamérica. Están abordando los grandes problemas de agua potable, alcantarillado y preparación para desastres en un país de huracanes, inundaciones, terremotos y erupciones volcánicas.

Visitamos escuelas, hospitales y clínicas de salud. Hablamos con planificadores financieros y planificadores de ayuda en casos de desastre.

El uso de distanciamiento social, máscaras y lavado de manos, una intensa estrategia comunitaria de monitoreo de la salud y atención básica para todos, el uso de 1233 puestos de salud y visitas casa a casa han resultado en la tasa más baja documentada de Covid en este hemisferio. Mientras tanto, Estados Unidos tiene la tasa más alta de muerte e infección del mundo. Esa es la diferencia que hace un sistema de salud pública gratuito coordinado.

Necesitamos defender a Nicaragua y unir a todo el movimiento político progresista para comprender lo que está en juego.

¡Defendamos Nicaragua!

Link para la Conferencia de Prensa: tinyurl.com/ut9yp2f5.