

Ecuador strike pushes back austerity

By Michael Otto and Zoila Ramírez
Ibarra, Imbabura, Ecuador

Oct. 14 — Eleven days of massive protest, especially by Indigenous communities marching all over Ecuador, forced President Lenín Moreno to repeal his Oct. 1 Decree #883 ending fuel subsidies. Increased fuel costs also mean higher prices for food, public transportation and much more, so this step was the final straw for already suffering Ecuadorians.

By Monday, Oct. 14, at noon, however, Moreno showed once again why people in Ecuador consider him a liar and a traitor. Government authorities raided progressive political leaders' homes, focusing on elected leaders of the Citizen's

Revolution — the party that led Ecuador from 2007-17 — and arrested them.

Moreno had ordered massive state violence against the Indigenous people and their organizations, but was forced to call for negotiations on Sunday, Oct. 13. As people around the country learned that Moreno had pulled back from increasing fuel prices, they exploded in jubilation and a new sense of their own power, even as they felt anxious about an imminent double cross.

Manufactured crisis

The Citizens' Revolution of former President Rafael Correa considers Moreno a traitor because he was elected to carry out their progressive platform, but instead reversed many of its gains for the people, especially for the poor. Moreno forgave \$4.5 billion in tax debt of the rich, allowing billions to flow to financial tax havens. Consequently, Moreno surrendered to the International Monetary Fund and neoliberal policies, including privatization of public companies.

The IMF demanded Ecuador end fuel subsidies, fire public workers or reduce their salaries, and impose other conditions of austerity that primarily hurt the poor — measures described as the “paquetazo” [economic package] — as terms for granting a \$10 billion loan. That Moreno was forced to make a public concession is itself a sign of the strength of the mass struggle against a treacherous president and the



WW PHOTO

Ibarra residents deliver food to embattled Esperanza, where 1,500 people marched earlier and were under siege. At left is WW writer Michael Otto.



WW PHOTO: MICHAEL OTTO

Part of unprecedented demonstration of 6,000 in small city of Ibarra, Oct. 13.

imperialist IMF.

Negotiators from the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) had opened talks with Moreno on Sunday, Oct. 13. According to yesterday's agreement, talks between the government and a commission of Indigenous representatives will determine the very important details of the new decree replacing #883. At a news conference today, CONAIE leaders had to defend themselves against charges they had “betrayed” the movement by making a deal with Moreno.

The masters demand repression

Within ten days of the original decree, Ecuadorians had risen up in every city,

town and community to demand the end of the Moreno government. As of Oct. 13, the country's north-south Pan American highway was still blockaded by well-organized Indigenous people in many places. In as many as ten provinces, such as Pastaza and Cañar, people were occupying government buildings.

Before the agreement, the National Federation of the Chambers of Industry was reported to be calling for emergency action by the state armed forces to impose what it calls “law and order”: Open the highways and prosecute the insurgent people, who it calls “the perpetrators, accomplices and collaborators, and the

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Oct. 14, 2019

Indigenous Peoples' Day

Workers World Party is in firm solidarity with Indigenous peoples in the struggle to abolish the current “Columbus Day” as a national U.S. holiday and to rename and transform it into “Indigenous Peoples' Day.”

Organizing by Indigenous peoples, who steadfastly refuse to mark genocide as a holiday, has already resulted in at least six states and 130 cities and towns making the progressive change in the U.S.

Indigenous peoples have waged centuries of struggle to survive and advance against the death-dealing tide of settler-colonialism in the U.S. The move to rename the holiday is an attempt to correct official history as told by invaders and colonizers.

The 1492 “voyage of discovery” by Columbus, which every U.S. school child

is taught, was in fact a voyage of conquest by Christian Europeans. That conquest was officially blessed by the highest religious authority. In 1493,

Pope Alexander VI issued a papal bull giving the spiritual, political and legal justification for seizing any land not inhabited by Christians. The fact that there were Indigenous peoples living on that land was known by the authors of this document, deliberately crafted to justify colonization.

The “new world” of European conquest was established on the basis of genocide, land theft and brutal injustice to Indigenous peoples. And eventually, all over the U.S., statues went up to honor the symbolic initiator of this bloodshed.

Though some may argue naively, or

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Cleveland

Protest hits county jail conditions

By Martha Grevatt

The Coalition to Stop the Inhumanity at the Cuyahoga County Jail held a march and rally in downtown Cleveland on Oct. 8 to spotlight the deplorable conditions in the local jail. After gathering outside the “Justice Center,” a building in which the jail is located, they packed the meeting of the county’s “Criminal Justice Council.” This body includes judges, prosecutors, attorneys, elected officials and others — but no one from the community who has suffered or seen their loved ones suffer inside the jail.

The coalition came together last year in response to deaths and inhumane conditions inside the jail: overcrowding; poor sanitation, food and medical care; beatings; strapping inmates into restraint chairs; and pepper spraying and “red-zoning” — that’s the practice of locking down inmates solely because understaffing makes it difficult to monitor them.

‘We want justice at the jail!’

Chants of “End money bail! We want justice at the jail!” and “No prisoners, no detainees, stop this killing industry!” rang out along the march. The coalition is demanding “bail reform” to stop the wholesale lockup of people too poor to afford bail, who are brought in for such offenses as probation violations, unpaid tickets and drug possession. Signs and chants also blasted County Executive Armond Budish, who has the power to stop the mistreatment of



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Coalition to Stop the Inhumanity at the Cuyahoga County Jail rallies outside Cleveland’s so-called “Justice Center” Oct. 8.



Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

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

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ 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 and trans

inmates and fire those responsible, but has so far allowed the injustices to continue.

During the council’s “public comment section,” coalition members criticized the slap on the wrist given to former Warden Eric Ivey, who received probation for obstructing an investigation into an inmate’s fatal overdose and then lying about it. They objected to the county’s decision to hire an expensive consultant to advise them on how to fix the problems, when all they have to do is listen to the community and to the prisoners.

A number of those who testified had first-hand knowledge of jail conditions. A mother described her son being deprived of basic comforts due to the jail administration’s recent decision to take away bedsheets and give inmates wool blankets to sleep on. The officials’ excuse was that sheets were being used to attempt to and to commit suicide.

However, this mother pointed out that paper sheets could be used and that patients in mental hospitals, where suicide is a concern, are allowed bedsheets. On the other hand, a man in the now-closed Cleveland city jail reportedly used a blanket to hang himself.

Since the middle of 2018, there have been nine deaths from suicide, drug overdose and medical neglect — and 55 suicide attempts in the jail. Jail guards and staff repeatedly denied inmate pleas for medical attention, including for mental health problems, and they ignored stated suicidal intentions. Another mother of a prisoner testified before the Council that her son was verbally abused because of his mental illness.

It is no understatement to say that this situation exacerbates mental health struggles. That — and not blankets instead of bedsheets — is what desperately needs fixing.

Council members spoke after the public comment session, trying to appease the audience with claims of improvements made and more planned. These included a reduction in overcrowding and vague attempts at addressing the racially biased bail issue. If their statements are accurate, it is only because of the publicity about jail conditions and the militant activism demanding change. Much more needs to be addressed. The movement will not go away until it is. □

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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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Over 700 march in Philadelphia for trans justice

By Betsey Piette

Chanting “We’re here, we’re queer, we’re fabulous, don’t f--k with us,” over 700 LGBTQ+ people and their supporters marched through West Philadelphia on Oct. 12 for Philly Trans March 2019. The march, led by Black and Brown transgender women, received wide support in the predominantly Black neighborhoods along 52nd Street.

Other chants included “What do we want? Liberation! When do we want it? Now!” “Prison abolition is trans liberation!” and “How do you spell racism? I.C.E.!”

People carried signs with the pictures and names of 13 trans women of color killed in Philadelphia, six in the last six years. The most recent was Tamika Washington, a Black transgender activist shot to death in May. Many signs read, “Stop Killing Black Trans Women.”

At a rally in Malcolm X Park preceding the march, organizers explained that they chose the community setting to drive home the point that many trans women were murdered and attacked when they were coming or going to work or coming home after an evening out. Speakers strongly appealed to the community to resist this violence and defend Black trans women, and they denounced legislative and judicial efforts to restrict and



Philly Trans March 2019, Oct. 12.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

target trans people.

The final speaker before the march kicked off was Pennsylvania political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal in a recorded message linking violence against trans women to the rise of white supremacy and fascism. He stated, “We need to build a radical movement that protects all of us, for all of us — that consigns such racist violence to the trash heap of history.” □

When trans women die

By Mumia Abu-Jamal



In recent weeks, we have seen naked violence unleashed against trans women, directed against them by the state in the form of police beatings and by rightist forces in this emerging fascist movement in America.

What does this mean? Why now?

I believe it comes now for specific strategic purposes, for trans women stand on the periphery of the gay rights movement, not its nucleus. This means they are isolated, and as such they are targeted by rightist forces to isolate them further. We must not forget that they are after all Black folks in a land and in an era where and when Black life remains cheap. Now as Black, gay and transgender: See where the analysis goes?

And if it’s Black trans women today, it’ll be Black straight women tomorrow. And Black children soon thereafter.

That’s the nature of the fascist beast. Attack those who seem weak, isolate them, destroy them. Since Charlottesville, we’ve seen the emergence of rightist racist forces who are committed to destroying Black life and to proving that Black lives don’t matter.

The lives of Black people are of the literal foundation, not just of America, but of all of us. We need to build a radical movement that protects all of us, for all of us — that consigns such racist violence to the trash heap of history.

Thanks to PrisonRadio.com.

Atlanta Pride says ‘Free Chelsea Manning!’

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

For over three hours on Oct. 12, tens of thousands of Atlanta Pride marchers passed by stationary teams on both sides of Peachtree Street with banners and leaflets calling for freedom for Chelsea Manning, the anti-war whistleblower.

Upon spotting the banners reading, “Free Chelsea Manning! Jail War Criminals,” countless participants reached for flyers, cheered, gave a thumbs-up or chanted “Free Chelsea.”

The flyer promoted an Oct. 29 teach-in on Chelsea Manning’s heroic actions in the context of broader anti-imperialist and anti-repression struggles, particularly by queer and trans people.

On Oct. 11, the same banners were

carried in the annual trans march that saw hundreds of people filling multiple blocks of midtown Atlanta streets.

In 2010, the military intelligence analyst then known as Bradley Manning released some 750,000 documents to Wikileaks, revealing the lies and misinformation being told to the U.S. public about the war in Iraq.

Manning was jailed, court-martialed in 2013 and sentenced to 35 years in prison. While in prison, Manning announced her transition to Chelsea Manning while in federal custody. Her sentence was commuted to time served in 2017.

She has steadfastly refused since early 2019 to testify before a secret grand jury seeking the extradition of Julian Assange, the publisher of those documents. Manning is currently being held in an

Alexandria, Va., jail on contempt charges.

For the many who were unaware of the current case of Chelsea Manning, the solidarity action by activists of Atlanta’s trans and anti-war organizations brought needed information.

The Atlanta Pride festivities rank among the largest in the U.S. with LGBTQ2+ people coming from across the U.S. and other countries to celebrate the diversity and resilience of their community to overcome state and social discrimination and repression.

Scores of major international corporations as well as local businesses had contingents of their LGBTQ2+ workers clad in company-themed Pride T-shirts, which dominated the march. There was only one, very visible union marching, the International Alliance of Theater Stage

Employees.

The Chelsea Manning unit represented progressive politics in a sea of corporatization.

Additionally, students from area high schools and colleges, congregants from numerous churches, members of LGBTQ2+ service organizations, decorated floats from clubs and restaurants, several LGBTQ2+ bands and multiple politicians with their supporters marched in intermittent rain past tens of thousands of energetic and loud parade watchers.

Workers World Party is proud to be a sponsoring organization of these efforts to raise awareness of Chelsea Manning’s important role in exposing the war crimes of the U.S. □

Massachusetts

Hundreds pack State House to resist mass incarceration

By Phebe Eckfeldt

Hundreds of families, friends and supporters of prisoners packed the Massachusetts State House Oct. 8 to support “An Act to Reduce Mass Incarceration.” This bill, H3358, would eliminate life sentences without parole. A person serving a life sentence would be allowed to have a parole hearing after 25 years, then every 5 years. This would apply retroactively, so people currently in prison would be affected.

Prisoners and prison activists refer to life without parole, or LWOP, as “death by incarceration” or “the other death penalty.” The Sentencing Project states that as of 2016, some 162,000 people are serving LWOP nationally.

According to the ACLU, 65 percent of

those prisoners are Black. Massachusetts has the second highest percentage of its total prison population sentenced to LWOP — 1,018 out of about 8,500 in 2016. (New Boston Post, March 1) Nationally, thousands are serving LWOP for nonviolent drug offenses and such acts as shoplifting or siphoning gas.

Racist, cruel laws have filled prisons

In the 1980s Congress enacted mandatory minimum sentences for drug crimes. According to the ACLU, “African Americans are 4-5 times more likely to be convicted for drug possession, even though whites use drugs at a higher rate.”

Another law from that era is the “Three Strikes” law, where a person convicted of three separate felonies receives the maximum penalty, usually 25 years to life with

no parole.

Determined to speak for their loved ones and friends behind the walls, hundreds waited hours, standing or sitting on the floor, to testify in favor of the bill.

Suzette Cook, a community organizer in Rhode Island, told the crowd and legislators: “The prisons are a big business. Prisoners provide free or cheap labor. You have people basically working for nothing; and if they are not working for free, they are working for wages like 25 cents an hour that, if we saw this happening in other countries, we would be very critical.

“When you read the 13th amendment that [addressed] freed men and women [who] were enslaved, inside it is a clause allowing the reenslavement of people who are convicted of a crime.

“Two million people in the U.S. are

incarcerated at this time, my husband Sam Smith being one of them. He has spent the last 18 years systematically enslaved to a system that has been designed to keep him in there. In there, he has been away from his family, friends, his ill mother and, most importantly, me. ... As a result of a corrupt judicial system, we have wasted a lot of taxpayers’ dollars forcing him to prove what he did not do and not giving him a fair trial.

“My husband is specifically under this bill; he was sentenced to life without parole, and he was 17 at the time and charged as an adult. Under this law, all I request is that he be given a fair chance to come home and show that he is a productive member of this society.” □

A month on strike

GM workers won't back down

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

On Oct. 15, close to 50,000 General Motors workers will have been on strike for one month. The last time this many workers struck a single company was in 2007, also a GM strike but lasting only two days. Determination is growing, not waning with time, and the longer workers are out the less they say they will settle for when a contract is finally presented to them.

For the past week the United Auto Workers and GM have traded offers. The UAW says if GM agrees to its latest contract proposal, they will bring it to the striking members for a vote. But the company has not agreed to anything; the UAW says GM is “playing games.” (uaw.org)

One of GM’s “games” was sending a letter appealing to each striking employee directly. GM gave a vague description of its latest proposal and blamed the UAW for dragging out negotiations and prolonging the strike. This is an illegal Unfair Labor Practice known as “direct dealing.”

GM and CEO Mary Barra apparently see themselves as above the law, as they demonstrated previously when Barra announced in 2018 that four U.S. plants would close. Three were closed before the strike, violating contract language prohibiting closing or idling plants during the life of the agreement. GM is also violating conditions mandated by the state of Michigan when it granted billions in tax breaks.

But the unwritten caveat under capitalist law is that the exploiting class is not bound to respect laws or legal contracts when their class interest is impinged upon.

Strikers are not so fortunate, even though they are engaged in what’s known as “protected concerted activity” under the National Labor Relations Act. Police in several locations have been forcing strikers to let management and delivery drivers through the gates. Some supervisors have even brought in non-union workers to work on the lines during the strike. Picketers have been arrested at plants in Tennessee, Texas, and Kansas.



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Rank-and-file strikers and supporters picket GM World Headquarters in downtown Detroit Oct. 9.

When GM sent its letter to individual workers, the company also released it to the media. This was a shallow ploy designed to leverage public opinion against the UAW, as was GM’s opportunistic decision to restore health benefits initially cut at the strike’s onset.

Spend a few minutes on any picket line and listen to the cacophony of honking horns, and you will witness the effectiveness of GM’s public relations gimmicks! Donations of food, water, coffee and now firewood to help strikers keep warm arrive regularly at the lines and local union halls. Other unions are joining strikers and raising money. Businesses are offering everything from free haircuts and pet food to \$1 hamburgers at a bar and grill.

Backbone of the strike

The rank and file, holding down the line and making huge financial sacrifices, are the backbone of the strike. From social media comments and memes to hip-hop videos made on the strike lines, they are showing class awareness, thoughtfulness, humor, creativity and above all militancy.

Two members of UAW Local 163 in Romulus, Mich., have been holding regular pickets of GM world headquarters in downtown Detroit. On Oct. 9, they built a “red flu” protest via social media. Strikers and supporters traveled from Flint, Toledo

and Cleveland to attend the action, which was not sanctioned by the UAW.

Opinion on the lines varies when it comes to trusting the top leadership. The head negotiator, UAW Vice President Terry Dittes, has thus far not been linked to the corruption scandal that erupted after a federal investigation made embezzlement and bribe-taking public. Many strikers see the federal government’s ulterior motives in going after the union right before the strike began.

Some union members feel Dittes is genuinely fighting in their interest, but others are leery of anyone at the International. Either way, the red flu action raised a serious question: Why don’t the UAW and the AFL-CIO mobilize their members and vast numbers of supporters for a mass strike rally in front of GM? Or how about mass picketing to defy — and

defeat — court injunctions that limit pickets and enable line-crossers? Much more could be done to win this strike.

GM is still resisting union demands to make temporary workers full time with seniority and other rights. Reports on the latest company proposal indicate they would have to work three years without interruption to upgrade. In other words, they would have to start over after an unplanned “interruption” such as a layoff or medical leave.

Given the preponderance of low-wage, part-time and precarious work in today’s gig economy, strikers will tell you they are fighting for the whole working class.

Grevatt is a UAW activist who retired from Fiat Chrysler Automobiles after 31 years. She continues to serve on the board of UAW Local 869.

Potluck solidarity with striking GM workers

Around 100 United Auto Workers’ supporters gathered in Langhorne, Pa., at the General Motors Service Parts Operation warehouse on Oct. 13. Workers, both unionized and not, came from surrounding New Jersey and Pennsylvania cities and towns, some from as far away as Philadelphia to break bread and barbeque in a massive potluck dinner.

Solidarity Sunday, a grassroots, community-led effort, saw workers from all sorts of jobs come out to affirm the GM workers’ efforts for the second week in a row. Union affiliation included the Communication Workers, several American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees district councils and Working Educators, a progressive teachers’ group from Philadelphia.

A coalition of educators and community



WW PHOTO: BETSEY PIETTE

Supporters of GM strikers in Langhorne, Pa., Oct. 13.

members in New Jersey, NJ21 United, also attended. Members of Industrial Workers of the World, Workers’ Solidarity Network, Workers World Party and Democratic Socialists of America were on hand. A collection was taken that raised funds to cover one and a half weeks of food for the striking workers’ families.

— Report by Workers World
Philadelphia bureau

Obituary

A. Grace Lee Mims: a cultural treasure

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

People filled St. James African Methodist Episcopal church in Cleveland on Oct. 11 to celebrate the life of Dr. A. Grace Lee Mims. She was remembered as a gifted musical artist, educator, librarian, music scholar, radio host, aunt, sister, cousin, neighbor, friend, church member and more. Tributes and anecdotes painted a picture of a remarkable soprano voice, perfectionism, stubbornness, achievement and above all else generosity.

Mims was highly regarded, in the city and beyond, for her advocacy for and preservation of African-American cultural heritage, especially the Negro spiritual tradition. For 43 years she hosted a one-hour show, The Black Arts, on classical music station WCLV — bringing Black culture to a wider audience.

Along with her brothers, Clifton and Bill, and sister, Consuela Lee, Mims performed for many years with their ensemble, The Descendants of Mike and Phoebe, and recorded the album, “A Spirit Speaks.” The group’s name honored two enslaved

ancestors whom the siblings learned about as children from their grandfather, William James Edwards, founder and first principal of Snow Hill Institute in Snow Hill, Ala. Edwards was a protege of Booker T. Washington, who founded Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Ala.

A song on the 1973 album, now considered a jazz classic, paid tribute to the Attica rebellion. Mims also recorded a 1981 solo album, “Spirituals.”

Howard Mims and A. Grace Lee met while students at Hampton Institute, now Hampton University. After graduating in 1952, they married. Howard Mims founded the Speech and Hearing Department at Cleveland State University and for many years headed the African-American Studies Department and ran its Cultural Center. After his death in 2002, the center was renamed in his honor.

The couple formed the Cleveland Chapter of the Hampton University Alumni Association, which has awarded over 100 college scholarships to area youth. A. Grace Lee Mims gave music lessons and assisted her students in entering college and pursuing musical



From the cover of the album, “Spirituals.”

careers. Several of her students attended the memorial, with one performing on the church organ and piano.

Mims worked for decades as a librarian — in Detroit at Cleveland Public Library and for ten years in Cleveland Public Schools at Glenville High School. The Glenville neighborhood is perhaps best-known for the 1968 rebellion against racist police brutality. While at Glenville High, she coordinated the Black Arts Festival, assembled Ohio’s largest collection of books on African-American history and culture, and helped launch the

first Afrocentric lecture course in CPS. Black celebrities, including Muhammad Ali, participated in the Black Arts Festival.

Mims later earned a master’s degree from Case Western Reserve University and was awarded an honorary doctorate in music from Cleveland State University in recognition of her many contributions to the arts and arts education.

At 89 Mims was still producing her radio show, taping two shows every other week. It was on Oct. 3, after she did not show up at the WCLV studio as expected, that she was found dead in her home.

Monica Moorehead, a WW managing editor and Mims’ niece, told WW, “My aunt was sympathetic to not only the plight of Black people but to people of color around the world. She loved to talk politics around the dinner table during our visits to Snow Hill. I will always cherish our time together, from when she took me to a jazz concert when I was 16 years old until she came to a Cleveland campaign rally in 2016 — at the age of 86 — to hear me speak as the presidential candidate for Workers World Party. She was a very special aunt and woman.” □

California

Criminal PG&E’s latest outages are an outrage

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

From midnight Oct. 9 to 2 p.m. Oct. 12, more than a million people in Northern and Central California were without electric power. This was not from a fire, explosion or natural disaster, but a planned action by the corporate heads of Pacific Gas & Electric — an action that many people believe was driven by corporate greed rather than people’s safety.

PG&E has been on the hot seat for its mismanagement, financial shortcuts and inability to avoid large disasters in its system from the 2010 San Bruno pipeline explosion, which killed 8 people and injured 58 and was caused by failure to inspect and maintain safe pipelines, to the 2018 Camp Fire tragedy in Paradise which killed at least 88 people, destroyed homes, businesses and most structures in the town and left thousands homeless. (tinyurl.com/y6zaoy28)

PG&E faces massive lawsuits and \$30 billion in liabilities from its role in the Camp Fire tragedy and filed for bankruptcy in January.

Let’s also not forget the 2017 series of fires in and around Santa Rosa, which destroyed over 5,600 structures and killed at least 22 people. In 2015, in Amador County, the Butte Fire destroyed 365 homes and killed two people — a Sacramento judge found PG&E at fault and fined the company \$8 million. Additionally, California Fire and Rescue asked for \$90 million, and Calaveras County said they would ask for hundreds of millions in compensation.

Fast forward to this year. Newly elected

Gov. Gavin Newsom went on record favoring a financial bailout of the bankrupt company (which might be up to \$5.5 billion). Newsom apparently received a hefty donation to his election campaign from PG&E. (tinyurl.com/y4d75tjc) This year, the private utility proposed big bonuses for their board and corporate heads. California residents were left extremely angry and wondering if they will ever be compensated for their losses.

PG&E’s board is similar to the current federal Environmental Protection Agency — filled with fossil fuel executives, capitalists and corporate lobbyists. By no means does it resemble a company that will act in the interests of the millions of people who depend upon its services.

Environmental activists and organizations have been demanding for years that PG&E carry out the inspections needed to prevent pipeline explosions and equipment malfunctions that have sparked fires. PG&E has refused to trim the trees near power lines. Many groups, including the Democratic Socialists of America, have pointed out that if PG&E “had invested in infrastructure upgrades to make the power system resistant to high winds,” they could have avoided the wildfires. (Majority, Oct. 10.)

‘Time for public takeover of PG&E’

Despite strong critical reaction to the outage, PG&E maintains it was necessary to shut down power during peak heat and wind conditions to avoid wildfires. Several mayors and other elected officials have questioned the necessity and the size of the PG&E power shutdown; the mayor of Nevada City organized a “light parade”

to protest the shut-off. State Sen. Jerry Hill from San Mateo called the shutdowns “excessive” and said, “PG&E clearly hasn’t made its system safe. These shutdowns are supposed to be surgical. But shutting down power to 800,000 people in 31 counties is by no means surgical.” (Los Angeles Times, Oct. 9)

Many people feel that PG&E is punishing the people of California for their lawsuits and anger, and covering itself for future lawsuits resulting from this massive outage. People are concerned that, rather than fix the problem, PG&E will fall back on regular massive power outages that not only disrupt people’s lives but also endanger many people, including elderly and disabled people who depend upon electrical power for their daily survival.

When 40,000 people took to the streets of San Francisco during the Sept. 20 climate strike, one of the planned stops was in front of the PG&E headquarters. In front of this large and well-fortified building, activists performed a skit documenting this utility company’s crimes against the people of California, exposing its corporate greed and indicting PG&E for its actions.

Close to 50 people held a vigil Oct. 11 outside PG&E’s office in Oakland. Most people agreed that PG&E should be held responsible for the wildfires and the danger of future wildfires caused by its refusal to spend the money to make its system safer.

Momentum is growing for a “public takeover” of PG&E. A Jan. 17 op-ed in Truthout by Johanna Bozuwa made a strong case for the state of California taking over PG&E and “creating a more democratic energy system.”

Nearly 40 years ago, at the height of the oil industries’ imposed gasoline shortages and price hikes, Workers World Party launched a national campaign to demand “oil belongs to the people” and called for a worker takeover of the oil industry.

It is time to raise a similar demand within the progressive and climate crisis movements for real workers’ and community control of the energy industry. This can only be fully accomplished if we join together to overturn this murderous, for-profit system and build a socialist system that will first and foremost focus on people’s needs. □



WW PHOTO: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

Syracuse, N.Y. says

‘Close the Camps’ with people’s power

“Up, up with liberation! Down, down with deportation!” rang out Oct. 11 as more than 75 people marched through the streets of downtown Syracuse, N.Y. They were responding to a national call for Close the Camps actions that day to “Stop the war on immigrants, Indigenous peoples and refugees!”

At a rally before the march, longtime local activist Ursula Rozum pointed out connections between white supremacy, crimes of colonization against Indigenous peoples, the enslavement of African peoples and criminalization of immigrants and refugees. She emphasized these crimes were “bipartisan” — neither Democratic nor Republican parties really intended to stop these long-standing

injustices. “People’s power is the only answer!” she asserted.

The depth of Syracuse community determination to close the foul concentration camps showed in the list of rally endorsers, including the initiator Syracuse Immigrant and Refugee Defense Network, Black Lives Matter-Syracuse, CNY Solidarity Coalition, Indivisible NY24, New York Immigration Coalition, Syracuse Childcare Collective, Syracuse Graduate Employees United, Syracuse Peace Council, Syracuse Tenants United, and the Workers Center of Central New York.

— Report and photo by
Minnie Bruce Pratt



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People's Power Assemblies (PPA)
PeoplesPowerAssemblies.org
Twitter: @PPAssemblies
IG: PeoplesPowerAssemblyNYC
Facebook.com/PeoplesPowerAssemblies

#SomosVisible #AbolishICE #CloseTheCamps #EndTheRaids #ICEOffGreyhound

Portland, Ore.

Details TBA. portland@workers.org;
For more information:
Facebook: Workers World
Party — Portland.

Oakland, Calif.

Picket and rally,
Oakland Greyhound Station,
2103 San Pablo Ave., 4:30-5:30 p.m.,
Friday, Oct. 25, (510)-394-2207.
www.facebook.com/
events/396727074594372/.

Houston

Protest, 2121 South Main St.,
Sunday, Oct. 27, 4-6 p.m.
Facebook: FIRE.

Buffalo

Called by IWSN-Buffalo,
North Division and Ellicott,
Friday, Oct. 25, 2:30-4 p.m.
www.facebook.com/
events/381727799449326/.

New York City

George Washington Bridge Station
179th Street and Broadway,
Friday, Oct. 25, 6 p.m.
www.facebook.com/
events/447404769457830/.

Atlanta

Action at Greyhound Station, details TBA.
For more information:
internationalworkersolidarity@gmail.com.

Venezuela First International Women's Congress calls for unity and solidarity

The following is based on a slightly modified translation by Resumen Latinoamericano, published Sept. 21.

**By Marco Teruggi
Caracas**

The First International Women's Congress for Peace and Solidarity among Peoples, held in Caracas [Sept. 19-21], assembled representatives of 110 organizations from 23 countries from all over the world. The proposal and plans for the Congress stemmed from agreements [to hold international events by sector] reached at the São Paulo Forum, held in July in the Venezuelan capital.

"It is one of the events in which sectors of the country conduct discussions, because within the framework of the Forum, topics are developed in a very collateral way. This allows us to carry out and fulfill our agreements," explained Gladys Requena, vice president of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) — Women's Sector, which promoted the organization of the Congress.

This is not the first Congress held since the Forum. In August, the Workers' Congress took place, and the Indigenous Peoples' Congress will be held soon.

"On the one hand, this is about developing discussion and organizing each social sector," said Requena. "On the other hand, it is about reaffirming the solidarity of the world with the revolutionary project and with the agreements aimed at condemning the unilateral sanctions and criminal blockade undertaken by U.S. imperialism against the people of Venezuela."

Deciding to hold the Congress in Caracas was politically significant, as it was for the São Paulo Forum. "We are showing Venezuela that it is not alone, that the women of the world are following its cause and that we are here to see the reality they are living. More importantly, we are here to tell the world why Venezuelan women are defending the process of the Bolivarian Revolution," said Gloria Inés Ramírez Muñoz, vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Women's International Democratic Federation (FDIM).

Ramírez Muñoz, representing Colombia, was present at the opening session, sharing the stage with other world leaders and representatives of the Venezuelan

revolution's political leadership, including Diosdado Cabello, president of the National Constituent Assembly. Also present on the stage was Wafi Ibrahim from Lebanon, who is the coordinator of the José Martí Arab-Latin American Solidarity Association and vice coordinator of the FDIM's Arab region.

Ibrahim underlined the dimension of the common enemy: "All the peoples of the world who have been victims of the same policy and the same aggression adhere to this type of solidarity with fervor because no one wants any nation in the world to endure the tragedy that we in the Arab region have experienced as a result of all the plans implemented by the United States and Israel."

Venezuelan women came from all states

Five hundred Venezuelan women attended the Congress. They included representatives of diverse political, territorial and state organizations: the PSUV, different Chavista [pro-government] parties, the Ministry of People's Power for Women, the National Constituent Assembly, peasants, commune members and women of African descent. Also participating were members of the Bolivarian Militia and military members of the Ministry of People's Power for Defense — where an organization exists to address gender inequality.

There was nationwide representation, with women coming from all 24 states in the country. It made visible both the different expressions of women's organizations and public policies. Ramírez Muñoz explained, "We are able to [offer] evidence about the situation of women's rights because the government has implemented public policies to defend women's rights."

Requena, who served as minister for women and gender equality, highlighted this point: "The Bolivarian Government promotes public policies for women's economic, political and social empowerment, as well as policies for the integral protection of women and that guarantee the lives of women and children — such as the right to breastfeed and humanized childbirth, two major programs that we are carrying out."

The International Women's Congress provided a forum where women could get acquainted with the policies developed during the years of the Chavista government and those which are still being implemented during this period of siege.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro referred to this issue during a ceremony where he appeared with Vice President Delcy Rodríguez and Requena. He emphasized the policies implemented by the national government to meet women's needs from pregnancy and childbirth and until children attend school.

'War targets women'

Women are "the first ones to be impacted by war — in our bodies, in our territories and in our country," said Ramírez Muñoz. "Women are part of the day-to-day construction of the social fabric of this society, and as such, the central target of wars in their different forms. In Colombia, where one of the main objectives is to build peace with social justice, this attack is expressed, for example, in the murders of social leaders and human rights leaders. Most of them are women."

In Venezuela, Requena explained, a "multifactorial war" is taking place. Women have been targeted because of their key roles at home, in the countryside, in organizational processes, and in political and social mobilizations. Women play a central role in the popular sectors — organizing food distribution, building solidarity networks, [participating] in the Bolivarian Militia, mobilizing for electoral campaigns and [carrying out] political acts.

Requena stressed: "The right wing in Venezuela and abroad, bourgeoisies and oligarchies, have identified that everything in Venezuela is [being] sustained on women's shoulders. We are the political target. They seek to depress us and disconnect us from the Bolivarian project. We are a target of the imperial power because the U.S. empire has identified the mobilizing strength of women."

'We know how to resist'

"We have proven that we know how to resist and that we have an agenda for a counteroffensive," continued Requena. "We are manufacturing soaps, toothpastes, eco-friendly cloth diapers. We are sowing and producing corn meal. Here the empire does not find women have surrendered. Women are developing [their] creative capacities



PHOTO: ORINOCO TRIBUNE

Women cheer outside First International Women's Congress," Sept. 20, Caracas.

and potential for struggle."

Ibrahim emphasized: "The U.S. policy of siege — as it is with their weapon of the economic blockade — is not only being implemented against Venezuela." She explained that she brought her voice from Lebanon in the Middle East to "shake the hands of Venezuelan women and tell them we are with them ... [and we have] a view to developing a joint road map with them."

"We need to coordinate actions," stated Ibrahim. "The enemy is doing it. People who are struggling, people who have a cause, must coordinate their steps and yell at the same time and push in the same direction to reach our goal. The enemy cannot catch us divided and distanced. We have to understand each other and get closer."

President Maduro affirmed that a joint road map is part of the government's central policy. He delivered a draft of the final statement of the Congress opposing an open war against Venezuela — a threat that comes from both the diplomatic siege by the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance and from actions taken by the Colombian government and its elites.

Ramírez Muñoz emphasized: "We are calling on Colombian and Venezuelan men and women not to fall into hatred and confrontation, but to strengthen and deepen our bonds of unity; to revive our joint history and roots and to denounce what is taking place at the border — and condemn the paramilitary groups there, backed by the Colombian state."

The International Women's Congress is expected to establish a road map for actions, debates and mobilizations within the current context, which is marked by major scenarios of conflict, joint [hostile] efforts and multiple common enemies.

Additional sources: Internationalist 360° (Sept. 22), Orinoco Tribune (Sept. 20 and Sept. 26).

Ecuador strike pushes back austerity

Continued from page 1

material and intellectual authors of the crimes that have been committed."

According to CONAIE, since Oct. 2, some 10 people have been killed in confrontations with the army and police, 1,000 were wounded or injured, 2,000 arrested and as many as 100 have been "disappeared."

It is obvious from their words that the members of Ecuador's oligarchy — not to mention its big bosses in the United States — prefer brutal repression to making any concessions to the workers and peasants of the country.

The government refused to recognize CONAIE's demands to remove the two hated ministers who control the forces of repression and to end the state of emergency. The main demands of the thousands of Indigenous-led demonstrators have been: Restore the fuel subsidy eliminated by Decree #883; end the state of emergency;

down with the paquetazo; Lenín Moreno must go; end military and police aggression against Indigenous communities.

Observations through the last week in different parts of the country, mostly by first-hand or phone reports, show how the uprising progressed after the government tried to suppress it by force.

Ibarra and Imbabura province

Álvaro Castillo is the appointed governor of Imbabura province. Neither Castillo nor the mayor of Ibarra welcomed 4,000 Indigenous comuneros [members of groups of Indigenous people acting collectively] of all ages who had marched for hours on Oct. 7 to deliver a manifesto to the governor.

On the other hand, Councilperson Betty Romero and around 50 members of the local Revolución Ciudadana (Citizens' Revolution) waited to greet the marchers with food and water as they entered the city.

Hundreds and hundreds of these same Indigenous marchers could be seen on Oct. 8 taking food and resting by the Ibarra train station. Scores of mounted police and cops with shields, wearing full body armor and gas masks, stood ominously on the perimeter, ready for action.

Well-organized and highly disciplined, the Indigenous marchers calmly formed a people's assembly in front of the cops. They repeatedly chanted, "Take off your masks," and finally after about five anxious minutes the cops complied with the demand — a foretaste of Moreno's retreat five days later.

On Oct. 13, the people held an even bigger march of 6,000 people, completely unprecedented for Ibarra, before the agreement was announced. Bus and taxi traffic was nonexistent in Ibarra for the entire 11 days of action.

Esperanza

Cuartel Militar Yaguachi is a military base located on the outskirts of Esperanza,

seven miles south of Ibarra on the road to Cayambe, a city in an agricultural area 27 miles from Ibarra. The rural population around Cayambe is primarily Indigenous.

Armed forces from Yaguachi used extreme violence to repress the Indigenous Caranqui people who went into the streets to protect the Esperanza community.

Councilwoman Betty Romero of Ibarra called on all citizens to collect water and food to support besieged Esperanza, where some 1,500 people were reported to be in the streets yesterday. People have answered her call and delivered food aid to the people there.

Tear gas in Quito

Quito is the national capital and second-most-populous city of Ecuador, located high in the Andes Mountains. Already on Oct. 7, thousands of Indigenous people approaching Quito from the south encountered two armored vehicles blocking the highway at the Santa Rosa curve

Part 2 Cuba, reforestation and the climate crisis

The following is Part 2 of a slightly edited talk given at a Workers World Party forum on Oct. 3 in New York City. Hedgecote participated in the 50th Venceremos Brigade this summer.

By Stephanie Hedgecote

My subgroup of the brigade visited Las Terrazas [in the Sierra del Rosario Biosphere] July 28. We were joined by Ida, a local guide, at the village, and then we visited the Rio San Juan. The river is fed by sulfur springs, so it is regarded as a mineral treatment. Las Terrazas and the river are popular for workers in Havana to visit on holidays. We were there during the national holidays, and we joined the many Cubans swimming in the river and enjoying the forest.

Las Terrazas: Model for reforestation projects

The village was built with piped water, power, schools, daycare centers, family doctors, dentists, a clinic lab and a pharmacy. From the beginning, scientific workers, public service providers and artists joined the local people—and the project greatly improved [local living] conditions.

Villagers created a lake with fish farming, and some people raise livestock to provide meat. Las Terrazas has some solar power and plans to acquire more when possible. The village later added an eco-museum, a cinema and a disco, as Cubans are renowned for their love of film and music. They later decided to use their tourism profits to build a library.

Las Terrazas [the Sierra del Rosario project] became the model in Cuba for another 11 reforestation projects. UNESCO recognizes the Cuban reforestation programs for “principles of incorporating knowledge and traditional practices to strengthen community involvement in strategic planning,” and UNESCO has recognized five more Cuban biospheres to date.

The Sierra del Rosario Biosphere has regulations of conservation; the community, organized in the local Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), makes all decisions regarding sustainability, such as limits on further building and housing. The 11 other reforestation communities meet periodically at Las Terrazas to exchange indigenous seeds to promote biodiversity, and they trade produce.

Las Terrazas has three green gardens, which support the schools and community

as the source of most of their food. [They also] provide [food] for seven eco-restaurants in the park. Villagers grow fruits, flowers and plants with medicinal uses for herbal infusions and vitamins.

Kindergarten children have their own garden, and they eat their own produce at lunch and snack times. The children even learn to make herbal infusions with various flowers, such as chamomile, and guava, the guayaba fruit.

Ida, our guide, told us, “When I tell you it was mandatory to grow everything we needed, it was not because someone came and told us to do it. We need to do it. And we grow organic all the time.”

Some 7 million indigenous trees have been planted so far, and great biodiversity recovered, with over 800 species of plants. Scientific specialists search for species of plants and animals in the forest daily, and twice a week they work with the local students to teach them to recognize the plants. Even small children know how to recognize six or seven local plants.

Impact of global warming in Cuba

Our guide talked about the impact of global warming on Cuba’s growing seasons and local flora. Some varieties of plants have now disappeared from the forest due to the heat; others are in season earlier and longer, such as mangoes. This July was the warmest month ever recorded in the world. Ida told us the past average year-round temperature in Cuba was 24°C to 25°C (75°F to 77°F), but this year they had a new high of 39.8°C (103.64°F).

Ida said the reforestation plan was focused on the environment from the beginning. She said when she was a child before the reforestation, the rains were so intense that children were forced to stay home from school sometimes for a week or two. Now there are seasonal rains that might last only three days.

The people of Las Terrazas live a rural life — one enriched by living in the peaceful, beautiful forest — but a cultural life very different from a rural life in most capitalist countries. Beyond free health care, education, involvement of the community in all decision-making, the focus on science and sustainability, and the organic food, like all Cubans they are focused on their music and arts.

In addition to the local musicians—one of whom, Polo Montañez, became world famous—every June, Las Terrazas hosts a five-day music festival in tribute to the late Montañez, which is attended by people

from all over Cuba and other countries. This village has a very enhanced cultural life.

In the last couple of years, the villagers began to organize work to clean plastic and trash out of the rivers, where foreign tourists and some vacationing Cubans have littered. Children are invited to join the work to clean up the trash tourists leave; in this way, their environmental consciousness is developed from a young age. Their CDR is currently discussing the need to limit the numbers of tourists in order to protect the environment, as a matter of sustainable limits.

Capitalist corporations poison waters

What city in the U.S. ever discusses sustainability? What corporation ever took

account of that in its planning around mineral or fossil fuel extraction projects? None of them! They have left huge collection ponds of poisoned waters near shutdown mines that kill flocks of migratory birds.

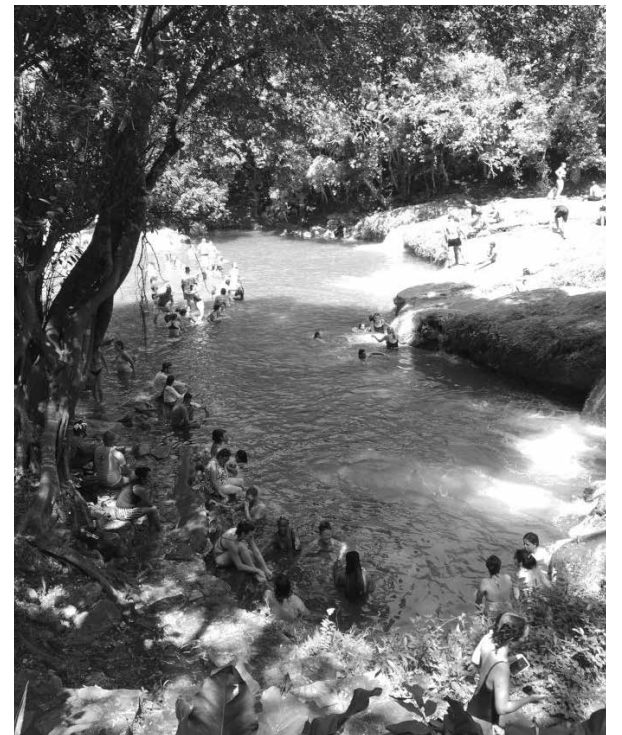
From the Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska, in the Arctic, to the BP spill in the Gulf, [corporations] never clean up their devastation of lands and waters. Life pays that penalty — animals, plants, humans.

Capitalism treats our Earth’s lands, waters and air as commodities to sell, exploit, damage, and to use as a dumping ground!

We need a rapid transition away from the use of fossil fuels to stop global heating, but capitalism won’t stop its war on nature. Capitalism is not going to stop adding to its damages to the atmosphere, oceans and lands. U.S. presidents have been getting briefings on greenhouse gases since Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965. Big Oil knew the risks decades earlier.

Today, more than 80 percent of U.S. residents live in urban areas, physically and mentally removed from relations with what remains of the forests. [Significantly,] forests that are on western Native reservations are in better shape than U.S. national forests, despite [getting] only one-third of the funding. Native forests are considered by forestry experts to be better cared for and in better condition.

Yet with global heating, there is now a longer fire season and much hotter, faster



WW PHOTO: STEPHANIE HEDGECKOTE

On the Rio San Juan in the Sierra del Rosario biosphere in Cuba.

wildfires. Indigenous nations are focused on sustaining ecological function across the lands. All national forests and parks are stolen Native lands.

The European colonialist worldview of “man over nature” should be seen as superstitious and anti-science. All resource planning needs to become holistic — this is what forestry scientists have learned from working with Native forestry programs: The needs of the forests — the ecosystems — must be protected.

There is no planet B!

Capitalism is not sustainable — it is the death economy, it is the death culture! By its very nature, it cannot be made environmentally sustainable. For those of you who are new to environmentalism, when we speak of sustainability, we are speaking of the biosphere, of life on Earth. There is no planet B.

Big Oil needs to be nationalized and expropriated, and the infrastructure rebuilt as needed to move toward a sustainable living future. And we need to win scientists to a working-class, socialist program — their abilities to help judge the best practices to rapidly transition away from fossil fuels will be sorely needed.

Instead of personal choices, we need central planning that enables communities and nations to make collective choices, like Cuba does.

Stopping global warming also requires reforestation. Forests do more than clean the air of [excess] carbon. They protect soil, water, air, biodiversity, and they provide livelihoods. Despite decades under the illegal U.S. blockade, Cuba has done 50 years of reforestation work. Cuba protects its endangered species and works to restore indigenous ecosystems. Cuba only grows organic food. Despite proximity to Florida, Cuba’s coral reefs are much healthier than Florida’s.

Cuba’s socialist planning centers on sustainability and enables the Cuban people to do all this. Revolutionary Cuba, despite the economic aggressions of imperialism, is a model for fighting global warming.

Like Fidel said, like the Zapatistas say: “Another world is possible!”

Mni Wiconi! Water is Life! Cuba Sí! Bloqueo No!

Source: “Our Nation’s Forests Need America’s First Stewards.” Gary S. Morishima and Larry Mason. Journal of Forestry, volume 115, issue 5, September 2017, pp. 354-61. (tinyurl.com/y4jzowbp)

The entire talk is posted at workers.org.

in Tambillo. A tweeted video shows the people pushing a burning tank onto the grass and down an embankment. (tinyurl.com/y5dor49j)

Fifty thousand peaceful protesters, led by CONAIE, were in the streets of Quito’s historic center along with workers, peasants and people from all sectors of society. On the morning of Oct. 9, hundreds of Indigenous people made history by holding a People’s Assembly in the National Assembly building before the forces of repression ended the occupation with tear gas. The Eugenio Espejo Hospital across the street from the National Assembly was similarly gassed, provoking outrage among the people.

Guayaquil

Tens of thousands marched and are marching for the National Strike/Paro Nacional in Guayaquil, Ecuador’s most populous city located on the Pacific Coast. Mayor Cynthia Viteri and former Mayor

Jaime Nebot (Partido Social Cristiano) of Guayaquil organized what to all appearances was a fascistic, right-wing march on Oct. 9 “in defense of Guayaquil.” This was after the two rightist leaders urged followers to stop “outsiders” — that is, Indigenous people — from entering the city, claiming they were coming to “trash” it.

An Indigenous man speaking with great emotion in both Quechua and Spanish in the Guayaquil region was recorded, saying: “There are more than 500 people from Chimborazo province in Guayaquil. ... You Social Christians say, ‘Indios go back to your mountains, you are not going to take a step in Guayaquil.’ Carajo! You live here thanks to us! If nothing passes from



PHOTO: TELESUR

50,000 peaceful protesters, led by the CONAIE Indigenous movement, were in Quito’s historic center on Oct. 8.

Chimborazo to Guayaquil you will all die of hunger.”

While an agreement has allegedly been reached on pulling back from the most noxious element of the paquetazo with the IMF, the new wave of repression shows that little has been resolved in Ecuador. The struggle continues. □

NBA and China

The ‘right to free speech’ vs. the right to sovereignty

By Monica Moorehead

The Houston Rockets are the most popular National Basketball Association team in China for one main reason: Yao Ming, the current president of the Chinese Basketball Association and an NBA Hall of Famer, played eight seasons for the Rockets. Basketball is very popular in China, thanks to the Chinese national team and the NBA.

Daryl Morey, the white general manager of the Rockets, tweeted out seven words during the first weekend in October that set off a firestorm of controversy and debate from China to the U.S. Those seven words were: “Fight for freedom, stand with Hong Kong.”

Those words were immediately deleted almost as fast as they were posted. Morey issued an apology after the Rockets’ owners publicly stated that they do not take political positions.

No matter, however, because the damage had already been done. The Chinese government stated that they were insulted and outraged over Morey’s comments. One only has to examine the class nature of the Hong Kong protests to understand why. These protests have been pro-imperialist and pro-colonial, reflected by U.S. and Union Jack flags, which are totally reactionary and insulting toward China’s sovereignty and self-determination. There have even been visible signs asking for Trump to intervene by making Hong Kong a U.S. territory!

Morey’s tweet, suggesting that Hong Kong, a strategic center of global finance capital, should break away from mainland China, is blatant interference into the country’s internal affairs. Yet the U.S. would be up in arms if, for example,



LeBron James, Los Angeles Lakers forward, in China.

China suggested the Virgin Islands break free of U.S. control.

China is a significant market for the NBA due to social media and the internet. In fact, according to David Carter, executive director of the USC Sports Business Institute, 10 percent of the NBA’s total revenue comes from China. That percentage is expected to double by 2030.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver apologized to the Chinese government for the tweet at a recent press conference in Tokyo. However, in the same breath, Silver defended Morey’s “right to free speech” and stated further that the NBA “will not pursue profits over principles.”

In a rebuttal to Silver, the Chinese state’s CCTV Sports said, “We believe any remarks that challenge national sovereignty and social stability do not belong to the category of free speech.” (CNN, Oct. 8)

Contrary to his statement, Silver wants to downplay the economic impact of this impasse with China, banking that a proposed meeting with Yao Ming will help resolve this huge political rift which would have major implications for the NBA’s bottom line.

NBA players, especially high-profile ones who have multimillion-dollar

merchandise contracts with Chinese businesses, have now been sanctioned by the NBA hierarchy not to answer any media questions associated with Morey’s tweet, even though this won’t stop the media from putting pressure on these players, the majority of whom are Black.

LeBron James from the Lakers stated that Morey was “misinformed” and “wasn’t educated” on the situation in China. He went on to say, “I think when we talk about the political side, it was a very delicate situation, a very sensitive situation. [I] do not believe there was any consideration for the consequences and ramifications of the tweet. I’m not discussing the substance. Others can talk about that.” (espn.com, Oct. 14)

China’s justified response

CCTV canceled a telecast of a preseason game between the Brooklyn Nets and the Los Angeles Lakers in Shanghai and Shengzhen. Tencent Sports (TCEHY), the NBA’s exclusive digital partner in China, plans to cease livestreaming Rockets’ games indefinitely and not report any news about the team. The Chinese government also canceled activities hosted by NBA Cares — a program that connects players to communities where teams are based — along with media events.

Chinese smartphone maker Vivo and other businesses announced plans to suspend contracts with the NBA.

Joseph Tsai, the Chinese principal owner of the Nets, wrote Oct. 6 on Facebook: “The NBA is a fan-first league. When hundreds of millions of fans are

furious over an issue, the league, and anyone associated with the NBA, will have to pay attention. As a Governor of one of the 30 NBA teams, and a Chinese having spent a good part of my professional life in China, I need to speak up.

“The problem is, there are certain topics that are third-rail issues in certain countries, societies and communities. Supporting a separatist movement in a Chinese territory is one of those third-rail issues, not only for the Chinese government, but also for all citizens in China.

“The one thing that is terribly misunderstood, and often ignored by the Western press and those critical of China is that 1.4 billion Chinese citizens stand united when it comes to the territorial integrity of China and the country’s sovereignty over her homeland. This issue is non-negotiable.”

Tsai went on to explain historically how China was occupied by foreign powers such as Japan, Russia, Britain, France, United States, Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary throughout the 20th century until the Chinese Revolution liberated one-fourth of humanity in 1949.

The right of free speech is a phony argument that not only deepens anti-communist attacks on China but hypocritically ignores the human rights’ violations that occur every minute of every day inside the U.S.

Sports commentators and other bourgeois pundits should not have the right to attack China when, historically and currently, the right to free speech has been granted to white supremacists and sexual abusers like Trump under the guise of protecting bourgeois democratic ideas. □

WW COMMENTARY

By Makasi Motema

Our news cycle is dominated by one overwhelming, all-encompassing story. While millions of people in the U.S. suffer without medical coverage, while police in Texas make a habit of entering Black people’s homes and murdering them, and while our climate catastrophe looms, it is the palace intrigue of Trump’s White House that dominates the air waves.

Commentators on cable news networks breathlessly cover every twist and turn of the ever-evolving scandal. But what does the discussion of Trump trading political favors, or Joe Biden’s son receiving a cushy, unearned salary, have to do with the people?

Workers World Party First Secretary Larry Holmes addressed the impeachment story at an Oct. 10 New York City party meeting. There, he raised a salient but mostly undiscussed point: The nature of the impeachment investigation against Donald Trump is being conducted in such a way as to totally exclude the participation of the masses.

There is nowhere for the people to vote, no issue behind which people can rally. The struggle is between attorneys in the Republican and Democratic parties. The crime in question is the leveraging of international relationships by one member of the political elite to the disadvantage of another.

But what does any of that have to do with the people? How will this impeachment address all the crimes which directly affect the masses? As First Secretary Holmes argued, what we on the

What would a ‘People’s Impeachment’ look like?

left must ask is: What would a People’s Impeachment look like?

It is not hard to imagine that immigrants and migrants from the global South might lay different charges at the feet of this U.S. president. An impeachment inquiry by Latinx, African and Asian refugees would likely focus on the heinous crimes being perpetrated not in Washington, D.C., but along the southern U.S. border, where adults and children are being held in concentration camps.

These are crimes against humanity which the entire world agree should never again take place. And yet, Donald Trump openly and gleefully cages human beings for the crime of trying to survive.

And what of Black people in the U.S.? Before Attorney General and known racist Jeff Sessions left office, he rolled back the meager consent decrees (federally mandated police reforms) imposed by the Obama administration.

Considering that the police have shown no signs that they will stop murdering Black people, the Trump administration’s loosening of regulations only seems likely to encourage them. What would Black people argue if they were asked to file articles of impeachment? What is a greater high crime or misdemeanor—digging for dirt on Joe Biden or murdering Botham Jean?

Donald Trump is one of the most openly bigoted presidents in recent

U.S. history. He gloats about assaulting women. He despises people of color. He is a base, odious, predatory monster who deserves to be removed from office — any office. But our revulsion at Trump should not deter us from the machinations of the ruling class. The ruling class, as always, seeks to shut out the will of the people in this impeachment inquiry. The true crimes being committed against women, LGBTQ2+, people of color, those with disabilities and all other members of the working class, both in the U.S. and abroad, go unmentioned by the spokespeople of the capitalist class. We should mark their attempts at exclusion and challenge them at every opportunity. □

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! □

China eyewitness, Part 1

21st-century Shanghai thrives despite U.S. sanctions

By Sara Flounders and Michael Kramer

The writers, who traveled in three major cities in China — Shanghai, Nanjing and Beijing — from Sept. 24 to Oct. 4 on a personal trip, sent an informal travel log to Workers World newspaper. This is Part 1.

October 1, 2019, was the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. We were interested in visiting China during a time when there was a huge national celebration of what we consider an unprecedented accomplishment in human history: China has met the basic material needs of its 1.4 billion population. The lives and expectations of the average person have been transformed. This revolutionary accomplishment deserves to be applauded.

The 100 prior years of colonial-style looting, unequal treaties and military occupation — a national humiliation — had reduced China to a country of staggering poverty, famines, social chaos, enforced underdevelopment and constant wars.

The first thing we took note of was that countless signs, parade themes, TV programs and most of the messaging for the anniversary reminded people that it was the firm leadership of the Chinese Communist Party that made the transformation into a united, well-organized and modern but still developing society possible. That was the core message.

Another message was of China's 5,000-year history. For millennia it was one of the most advanced societies in culture, art and technology. This was continually raised to promote self-reliance and build modern socialism with Chinese characteristics.

We experienced two weeks of tremendous national pride. There was a great deal of discussion, everywhere that we could see, of what needed to be strengthened, what were the challenges and how to cope with still uneven development.

Siu Hin Lee, a Chinese activist who has taken several solidarity delegations to China, was tireless in personally explaining and translating so much of this experience. Lee is national coordinator of the Action LA/National Immigrant Solidarity Network and the China-US Solidarity Network.

Communicating in China

Information technology has transformed China even faster than our internet links in the West. The great majority of people seem to always have their phones in hand.

In China everyone uses the app WeChat for texting, calls, photos, videos, calling cabs, grocery shopping, metro fares and schedules, movie listings, exchanging contact information and discussion groups.



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

China's military on parade, celebration of Chinese Revolution's 70th anniversary Oct. 1.



WW PHOTO:

Sara Flounders and Michael Kramer celebrate with Chinese people on Revolution's 70th anniversary.

Literally every social and financial transaction needs only a phone tap. Huawei centers look much like Apple centers in the U.S. Large display tables of telecommunications equipment and consumer electronics, including the newest smartphones, are surrounded by hundreds of young shoppers comparing equipment.

Since China's hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games, street signs, subway maps and numerous restaurant menus are also in English. More than 300 million people have studied and are English-language learners. English classes are now mandatory for all Chinese K-12 students.

By comparison, there are only 200,000 K-12 students learning Mandarin in the U.S., less than 0.4 percent. Only 20 percent of U.S. students study any world language. (U.S. News & World Report, Oct. 16, 2016)

We found lots of discussion groups and genuine interest in talking with U.S. leftists, especially now as U.S. corporate and political hostility increases every day.

It was not difficult to meet with people who have studied and traveled in the U.S. and have some grasp of its technological development, but have also seen firsthand the inequality and racism.

More than 4.5 million Chinese students have studied in Western universities. Currently there are 360,000 Chinese students studying in the U.S., although China graduates more students in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) from their own universities than the rest of the world combined. This sharp rise in educational standards and expertise in a country where the overwhelming majority of the population was formerly illiterate is another source of national pride.

We met with a group of left cyberactivists who are interested in more left-generated material from the U.S. and want to share some of their journals and views. It is not easy to figure out good translations that go both ways, but there is interest in making that happen.

A lot is going on in environmental arenas. We talked with the editor of a green living journal and with a turbine mechanic who works at a wind farm. Some of the most interesting environmental efforts are happening in newly designed second-tier cities, not only in the older megacities of Beijing and Shanghai.

We met with the Beijing City Friendship Association that has worked for decades to build friendly relations and exchanges. We had an evening discussion with a group of youth involved in the finance field, educated in the U.S. and working for big investment firms because they are expert math and software techies. But they are also socially aware.

In order to better understand China's revolutionary history we visited the site of the 1921 founding convention of the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai; the Yuhua Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery and Museum at Nanjing that highlighted the thousands of youth, aged 15 to 26, who died in the liberation struggle; and the Military and Revolution Museum in Beijing. All these sites were packed with large, excited delegations of the Communist Youth League. These were not stuffy or ignored museums.

Fundamental shift in U.S./China relations

There have been countless exchanges with China for the last four decades, with U.S. corporate investors, government agencies, scientific researchers and think-tank academics. China wants to continue these exchanges. But powerful forces in the U.S., both Republicans and Democrats, are determined to exert heavy political, military and economic pressures on China to undermine state planning and state-owned industries.

However, U.S. hostility appears to most sharply undercut Chinese capitalists, who have benefited disproportionately from the past four decades of opening to Western investment. This is the one grouping who, in their own self-interest, might have been most willing to concede to U.S. trade demands.

Many people we met in China raised the significance of meeting us now. The new U.S. sanctions on the state-owned Chinese freight fleet Cosco — the largest in the world with more than 1,000 cargo ships and 100 supertankers — hit just after we arrived.

These far-reaching sanctions, along with the escalating military threats going back to Obama's military Asia Pivot, and now Trump's trade war, confirm that U.S.-China relations are fundamentally shifting. The increasingly violent U.S.-backed Hong Kong protests confirm this.

The arrests of Chinese executives, and the purging of Chinese cancer researchers and other scientists working in U.S. universities, have sent out shock waves. The FBI "visits" to many Chinese students in the U.S. are dampening interest in studying here.

China's 21st-century Shanghai

Shanghai — three times the size of New York City — is almost surreal and unbelievably modern on a grand scale. There is spectacular architecture. But what was most impressive was to be in such a dense city and see no litter or graffiti. We did see miles of new high-rise housing in every direction, always surrounded by parks.

Sixteen new subway lines, with

hundreds of connecting stations, have been built in the last 20 years. The stations are beautifully designed, with escalators and elevators, clear signage, well-marked and clean connecting lines, staffed bathrooms in every station. In fact there were clean public bathrooms everywhere, usually within close walking distance, in the three cities we visited.

There were lots of funny videos on the metro trains, reinforcing passenger etiquette and safe conduct. We traveled mainly on the metro and quiet, smooth electric buses.

Being accustomed to seeing homeless and desperate people on almost every block in U.S. cities, this was not our experience in the streets, subways, plazas or many neighborhoods in China. We did find a huge variety of food shops, fruit stands, snack bars and coffee shops.

Unfortunately, there seem to be almost as many Starbucks here as in New York City. There are a total of 4,000 Starbucks in China and lots of other U.S. fast food chains.

Contradictions abound! Every corporate brand of clothes, shoes and designer items in the world seems to have flagship stores in big shopping malls and big ads in Shanghai and Beijing streets. Probably most of these goods are made in Chinese factories.

Consumerism on a grand scale is actually part of the national plan to raise the standard of living and consumption. Electric bikes are available everywhere with the tap of a phone. The stores, kiosks, markets, bakeries, cafes, local artisans, music venues and hangout places for youth are all socially encouraged and seem to have increased faster than subway lines.

But red flags and the red signs of the Revolution's 70th anniversary were also everywhere.

In this new period, the strong focus is on totally ending poverty and providing a "moderately prosperous society for all." At this stage of development this does not mean equality. There are extremely wealthy multimillionaires in China. They are protected, even though they are monitored, along with a sustained policy of encouraging as much Western investment as possible. Yet Maoism is still a strong undercurrent of political life here. People often express a healthy suspicion about the current level of privilege.

China's leaders are very careful to continually say this is not yet socialism, but they are building toward socialism and still face very uneven development. The focus is on improving interconnected and harmonious national planning.

Part 2: Beijing rocks to celebration of 70 years of revolution.



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

Beijing, world's busiest subway system, has 22 lines and hundreds of stations, most built in the past 15 years.

WORKERS WORLD

editorials

Not just a trade war

What's really behind the difficult trade negotiations between the U.S. and People's China?

Is it — as the administration has claimed — that China wasn't buying enough U.S. agricultural products? China has become a huge market for Midwestern farmers, who are heavily mortgaged and rely on Beijing buying large quantities of their soybeans and other crops.

"Soybean shipments did fall off a cliff in 2018, but in 2019 they staged a surprising recovery. If anything, soybean exports to China this year are running a little ahead of their 2017 rate." (Mother Jones, Aug. 27) Nevertheless, the Trump administration, anxious over the coming elections, has tried to blame China for the farmers' woes.

The Trumpites don't admit that a big part of the farmers' problem is due to climate change, with vast flooding over the past spring having turned Midwest fields into lakes. But according to Trumpspeak, climate change doesn't exist.

China's purchases of U.S. commodities have become so important to the U.S. economy that the stock markets here yo-yo up and down with each day's news on trade talks. Trump knows this. When he tweets that the talks are on, the markets go up. When it doesn't happen, the markets go back down.

China has no reason to sabotage its trading relationship with the United States. So what's the problem?

Never mentioned by this government — but alluded to in some press accounts — is the fact that the Trumpites have been using the trade negotiations to push an agenda that would undermine China's tremendous progress in economic and social development. It succeeded in liberating 850 million people from extreme poverty from 1981 to 2015, according to the World Bank.

China is not a capitalist country, although it allows capitalist ownership to exist alongside its state-owned, centrally planned economy. People's China is the

product of a great social upheaval that lasted decades and succeeded in bringing the workers and peasants to power in 1949. But this huge country suffered from extreme underdevelopment and poverty at that time. It is only in recent years that it has become an economic powerhouse.

What has really been happening is that the Trump administration, through its negotiations with China over trade, has been trying to obtain commitments from China to weaken state ownership over the parts of the economy that have been the underpinning of its progress.

Here's how the most informed news outlet for the U.S. imperialist ruling class put it: "Trump launched the trade war against China with demands for sweeping structural reforms, but Beijing has indicated it is not willing to fundamentally change the way it controls China's economy." (New York Times, Oct. 10)

In other words, Trump's trade negotiators were saying that China had to put up for grabs its socialized economic infrastructure. And the Chinese said no.

Washington then put pressure on Beijing by raising tariffs on Chinese imports. This has affected millions of people here, raising prices on a multitude of imported consumer goods that we have come to rely on.

Thus, the U.S. working class has been forced to pay for the Trump administration's trade war and efforts to bring regime change to China.

As of this writing on Oct. 14, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is saying that a deal is in the making. But nothing has been signed. And the stock markets are wary, given the administration's past record of false promises.

This could be just another "smoke and mirrors" feint by the brutal gang in Washington to avoid triggering a market crash. One seems long overdue as U.S. capitalism rots from within, seeking to lay the blame anywhere except on this wildly polarized system of multibillionaires versus ever more precarious workers. □

U.S., NATO, Turkey out of Syria!

The conflict within the U.S. ruling class about the Turkish invasion of northern Syria has created some confusion about events there. The latest new development — an alliance of Kurdish-based forces with the Syrian national army to defend the border from the Turkish army — may increase that confusion. To clarify the situation as best as possible, we need to state some basic positions and underline some basic facts.

First of all, U.S. imperialism never had, never has and never will have any legitimate "humanitarian" reason to station troops anywhere in Syria. Washington places troops in areas for strategic advantage and/or for economic domination. The reason U.S. troops have been in Syria and elsewhere in the region is for U.S. oil monopolies to control and exploit the natural resources — mainly fossil fuels, oil and gas — so the capitalist owners of these companies can get richer.

For the last eight years, U.S. arms and political influence, and those of other NATO countries, have fed a brutal war that has torn apart Syria, causing the death of hundreds of thousands of Syrian people. This war has also made as many as 10 million Syrians refugees, many within Syria or in neighboring countries and some in Europe. The U.S. goal was to remove the sovereign Syrian government and replace it with a puppet of Western imperialist powers.

In Libya, for example, in 2011 the imperialists succeeded in removing a legitimate government and replaced it with an unstable horror.

Nothing good has come or will come from the presence of U.S. troops, nor from political domination by U.S. imperialism. No one should believe that the racist, misogynist and xenophobic U.S. president has somehow become a peacemaker. Apparently as an electoral strategy, he has ordered the removal of a handful of U.S. troops from northern Syria. Simultaneously the Pentagon is sending 1,800 troops to the Saudi Arabian monarchy to defend the oil

fields and continue the genocidal war in Yemen.

Turkey's war crimes

Second, by sending troops to and arming puppet groups in northern Syria, the reactionary regime of President Recep Erdogan in Ankara, Turkey, is committing a war crime. This invasion is naked aggression against Turkey's neighbor, Syria, the latest of many crimes committed against Syria in the last eight years. This aggression will cause additional suffering to the people of northeastern Syria, who are mainly Kurdish, but whose makeup reflects the many ethnic and religious groups that inhabit the whole of Syria.

Erdogan persecutes Turkey's own Kurdish population, who are estimated to be 14 to 20 million of Turkey's 80 million people. The Ankara regime has been using its army, especially in the Kurdish regions, in an attempt to crush the Kurdish people's movement. Erdogan's government persecutes opposition political parties and journalists throughout Turkey as it oppresses Turkey's working class.

That Erdogan has taken some steps in the recent past that put him at odds with either the U.S. or the European Union — buying arms from Russia, participating in conferences with Russia and Iran to settle the war in Syria — should mislead no one into thinking the Turkish president represents any progressive tendency worldwide. Thieves, even those in the same gang, can have a falling out.

We do not at this time know the specifics of the agreement between the Kurdish-based fighters in northern Syria and the legitimate Syrian government, nor can we foresee how it will play out. We applaud, however, any alliance that confronts a local hegemonic power like Turkey and, even more importantly, excludes the imperialist regimes of Europe and the United States, who are the primary oppressors of humanity worldwide. □

Oct. 14, 2019

Indigenous Peoples' Day!

Continued from page 1

with deliberate racism, that Columbus Day merely honors Italian cultural heritage, progressive people of Italian descent have been making it clear that they unite in solidarity with Indigenous peoples to fight white supremacy.

Sharp historical memory underlines this support because 19th and early 20th century Italians who immigrated to the U.S. faced virulent racism. This racism was especially aimed at those from southern Italy and Sicily linked to African lineage. In fact, in 1891, eleven Italian men were openly lynched in New Orleans.

But in 1892, when U.S. President Benjamin Harrison called for the U.S. to mark Oct. 12 as the "discovery of America by Columbus" in part because of "the divine care and guidance which has directed our history," he was not taking a

stand against xenophobia, white supremacy or colonization. (Common Dreams, Oct. 11)

Instead, that call was the sign of a new deal emerging in the U.S. and offered to "ethnic immigrants" — who might be Slavic or Italian or other groups vilified as of color.

The deal? Accept and go along with white supremacy and become "white" — or face the genocide, violence and discrimination visited on peoples who were Indigenous or of African descent.

But millions of people have said NO to that deal — choosing instead to organize and struggle against racism.

This coming year, until Oct. 12, 2020, gives another chance for progressive people to say "No to white supremacy! Down with statues of Columbus or any memorial to racism and colonization! Up with banners of Indigenous Peoples' Day!" □



IMAGE: JOAQUIN JUNCO JR.

Oct. 12, 1969

Women-led march invaded Fort Dix to free rebellious troops

By John Catalinotto

The following text is Part 2 of a report on the Fort Dix Stockade rebellion of June 5, 1969 (Part 1 was published in WW on June 2, tinyurl.com/y2amhjs3). The stockade prisoners, many of them opponents in some way of the U.S. war against Vietnam, rose up in response to the provocations of the stockade authorities and burned down part of the stockade. The Army sent in 250 military police, who beat the prisoners and arrested 38 of the rebellious soldiers, finally charging them with serious crimes that could lead to decades in military prison.

The following report is adapted from a chapter in John Catalinotto's book, "Turn the Guns Around: Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions" (World View Forum, 2017), which tells the story of the American Servicemen's Union, an anti-war, anti-racist organization of U.S. active-duty service members during 1968-75. ASU members faced some of the heaviest charges at Fort Dix.

In the aftermath of the rebellion that burned down part of the stockade, 38 of the troops imprisoned there faced heavy charges, with a key ASU organizer, Terry Klug, facing more than 50 years in prison. In the summer of 1969, the popular mood in the country was turning decisively against the war in Vietnam. This was a key development in the movement to free the Fort Dix 38.

Could the supporters of these revolutionary anti-war troops build a movement that was both broad and militant and do it in time to keep them from being imprisoned?

During the summer of 1969, the ASU, the Fort Dix anti-war coffeehouse—part of a national movement that supported anti-war troops—Students for a Democratic Society, Youth Against War & Fascism, the Rainbow Coalition and the Committee to Free the Fort Dix 38 all began to start organizing for a mass demonstration on Oct. 12 at Fort Dix. The Rainbow Coalition then included the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords (a recently founded Puerto Rican organization) and other organizations that had mainly white membership.

Then something happened that gave this demonstration a special direction. The movement for women's liberation had been developing in the population as a whole, along with the overall rebellious sentiments of 1968 and 1969, led by the Black Liberation Movement. The drive for women's liberation was even more intense among women in the anti-war and other movements, women who considered themselves revolutionaries, than it was in the general population.

With the military 98 percent men, it was hard for women to play a leading role within the ASU or similar organizations. On the other hand, there was nothing stopping women from leading the demonstration of civilians at Fort Dix—except tradition. The women working with the ASU, especially if they were in Workers World Party—who at that time included Sue Davis, Laurie Fierstein and Maryann Weissman—were quite ready to break tradition's chains.

'Heroes of Dix Invasion: Women's Brigade'

In an article in the Oct. 23, 1969, issue of Workers World, Naomi Goldstein wrote this account of the demonstration: "Three hundred determined women showed that they could give both tactical and political leadership to a mass march. We broke out of our prescribed roles as



Women in anti-imperialist organizations took the leadership of the march on Fort Dix to demand freedom for soldiers who rebelled inside the stockade.

passive supporters on demonstrations and took the lead, while the men marched behind us, some accepting our leadership reluctantly.

"The idea for a women's brigade had been brought up at a planning meeting for the demonstration by Maryann Weissman, National Coordinator of Youth Against War & Fascism, who pointed out that in Vietnam, NLF [National Liberation Front] women are leaders in the struggle for liberation.

"The idea was enthusiastically supported by women from SDS, MDS [Movement for a Democratic Society] and various women's liberation groups. What began as a tactical move, to confront the GIs with their own male chauvinism, developed into a well-organized effort by a women's caucus to give the most militant and effective leadership possible to the Fort Dix demonstration."

Just as on the first day of the Paris Commune and the first day of the February Revolution in 1917 Russia (both histories are included in "Turn the Guns Around"), at the Fort Dix protest women also led the way. In the earlier examples, the interaction between the rebellious women and the potentially rebellious troops played a key role in sparking revolution. In 1969 the drive to organize the troops in a union had a similar goal, even if it failed to reach that intense level.

According to the report in the ASU newspaper, "The Bond," on Oct. 20, 1969:

'People's Army Invades Dix, Demands Freedom for GIs'

"The marchers moved forward eight abreast and the line stretched back as far as you could see. It was Oct. 12, 70 miles south of New York City at Fort Dix, N.J. There were maybe 10,000 people, men and women.

"They marched past the gas stations, houses and hamburger stands of Wrightstown toward Fort Dix, chanting in an angry roar their demands for freeing jailed GIs and ending the war.

"It was a people's army—as yet unarmed. Banners carried by the American Servicemen's Union stood out in a forward section. Marching with the ASU contingent were ASU leaders, ex-GIs and active duty GIs on leave or AWOL.

"But leading the huge march were young women. Women determined to show the world that they were in the front of the battle to free their brothers from the military dictatorship. ...

"Then the Brass sent hundreds of MPs running across the field with clubs, bayonets and gas masks to intercept the marchers.

"But the marchers continued to advance defiantly until they were face to face with the lines of MPs. Then the two forces stood still, holding their ground as the young men and women appealed to the MPs to act as GI brothers and not as cops. But these were for the most part special MP pigs flown in from Fort Meade, Md.

"The Brass had feared to use Dix GIs as MPs because of their great sympathy with the marchers. ...

"An order was given [by a colonel].

"MPs carrying special gassing guns opened up and a cloud of tear gas enveloped a large section of the demonstrators.

"The marchers put on plastic gas masks and retreated slowly, prodded by the now advancing MPs, to the roadway. At first there was confusion; then the march reassembled and continued with the Brass sending MPs to stand in a solid line along the road which forms the perimeter of the base, barring any further entry by the marchers.

"But the marchers continued to express their demands and continued to appeal to these MPs to act as GI brothers, not as pigs for the Brass.

"And throughout the base, the 32,000 GIs heard the story of the march."

Wave of anti-war struggle in fall 1969

The protest at Fort Dix was part of a wave of anti-war demonstrations in the fall of 1969. On Oct. 15, an action called The Moratorium was held in cities all over the country. No longer isolated in New York, Washington and San Francisco, the movement was reaching the interior. More than a million people around the country walked away from their workplaces, mostly during lunch hour or before closing time, wearing black armbands to show their opposition to the war in Vietnam.

A month later, on Nov. 15, in Washington, D.C., between a quarter million and a half million people gathered for what was the largest single action against the war up to that time. Within that massive crowd, there was a more revolutionary contingent of maybe 10,000 mainly young people, who left the main group to

surround the Justice Department, where, according to later reports, they terrified Attorney General John Mitchell.

Courts martial at Fort Dix

Judging by how they treated most of the Fort Dix 38, the Army knew it was facing trouble if it came down too hard on the soldiers. But they still could single out those they suspected of being leaders. The struggle to free the GIs had to continue both by organizing their legal defense and with actions supporting them.

The Workers Defense League and the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee handled most of the cases. Even before the demonstration, 26 of the defendants had received special courts-martial, with 22 acquitted. The other four received sentences between four and six months. Three of the defendants somehow escaped and disappeared.

Five of the soldiers most closely associated with the ASU faced general courts-martial with potentially much heavier charges. Their sentences had little to do with actual proof of guilt. Jeff Russell was found guilty of rioting and received a sentence of three years in prison. Tom Catlow was found guilty, but was sentenced only to an undesirable discharge. William Brakefield got three years at hard labor and Carlos Rodriguez Torres two years.

In Klug's case, the prosecution strategy depended on frightening the defendants with very heavy charges and getting them to give testimony against each other as the way to reduce the charges. The prosecution would lie, saying, "So and so ratted you out already. Why should you take the whole rap? Give evidence against him."

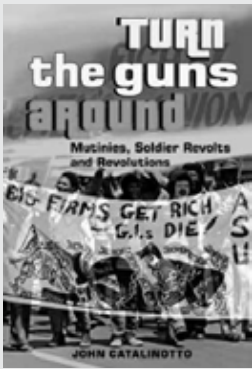
As one witness testified, the prosecutors kept hounding him to give evidence against Klug. They targeted Klug because of his history as a political organizer, his conviction for desertion and his role in the ASU. Sometimes these prosecution tricks work. In this case, however, the solidarity of the GIs remained strong. Besides, no one in the stockade wanted to be known as a rat.

On Dec. 8, 1969, five of the GIs who had given depositions against Klug under pressure from the guards and officers testified. Under oath they all repudiated their earlier statements.

The court-martial board acquitted Klug on all charges. His statement called attention to the recent exposure of massacres of villages in Vietnam and condemned the murder four days earlier of Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton in Chicago.

Klug added, "My acquittal was due to the solidarity of the men, the offensive legal defense put up by my counsel, Henry di Suvero, and the political struggle waged by the anti-war movement." (The Bond, Dec. 16, 1969) Klug still had more than a year in prison to serve for his earlier conviction for desertion.

This struggle had its casualties, but the anti-war movement and the ASU came out stronger than before the Fort Dix stockade rebellion. □



Turn the Guns Around

by John Catalinotto

Draftees and enlistees — eighteen-year-olds from the South Bronx, factory workers from Buffalo, miners' sons from Kentucky, unemployed youth from Watts — hate the military and the Vietnam War. They throw a wrench into the Pentagon's war machine, becoming leaders of the anti-war movement and organizing a union in the conscript military to battle war, racism and their officers.

Available at major online booksellers.



FOTO: PRENSA LATINA

El I Congreso Internacional de Mujeres en la ciudad de Caracas, Venezuela, 19-21 de septiembre.

Ecuador

¿Por qué la victoria del movimiento indigenista no es total?

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Hay celebraciones en Ecuador. Comenzaron el domingo por la noche cuando el gobierno nacional y el movimiento indígena centralmente agrupado en la Coordinadora de Nacionalidades Indígenas de Ecuador (CONAIE) anunciaron haber llegado a un acuerdo respecto al decreto 883, aquel que quitó los subsidios a la gasolina.

La reacción fue doble. Por un lado, las calles se llenaron de euforia luego de lo que fue considerado como una victoria tras 11 días de protestas enfrentadas a una fuerte represión. El escenario de batalla del centro de Quito fue entonces de aplausos, bocinas, camiones cargados de gente con banderas del Ecuador, taxis-tas, barrios populares.

Por otro lado, se abrió la pregunta acerca de qué se había logrado exactamente. Se había tratado de una derogación inmediata y efectiva, como anunció y celebró la CONAIE, o de una sustitución sin fecha determinada, como anunció en su cuenta de Twitter el presidente Lenín Moreno.

Parte de la respuesta fue aclarada por el comunicado de Naciones Unidas Ecuador, organismo mediador en el diálogo, quien afirmó que “se deja sin efecto el decreto 883” y “se procederá de manera inmediata a trabajar en la elaboración de un nuevo decreto que permita una política de subsidios, con un enfoque integral, que precautele que éstos no se destinen al beneficio de personas con mayores recursos y a los contrabandistas, con



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50.000 manifestantes en el centro de Quito, el 8 de octubre.

criterios de racionalización, focalización y sectorialización”.

La misma noche del domingo fue instalada la comisión para, informó la CONAIE, la “redacción del decreto que lo reemplaza -al 883- esto no termina hasta que el acuerdo no se concrete a cabalidad”.

De esta manera se logró una victoria parcial dentro del conjunto de medidas acordadas entre el gobierno y el Fondo Monetario Internacional, siendo el decreto 883 el de mayor impacto en la economía y en la batalla simbólica. El resultado final de esa parcialidad dependerá del nuevo decreto acordado.

Por fuera del espacio de diálogo estuvo también, hasta ahora, un acuerdo acerca de un procedimiento para investigar las actuaciones y abusos de las fuerzas de seguridad del Estado que costó al menos 7 muertos, 1152 detenidos y 1340 heridos.

¿Existía la posibilidad de lograr una victoria mayor? Esa pregunta reúne los

principales interrogantes. Según quienes protagonizaron las jornadas, es decir la CONAIE, no lo había. Y las movilizaciones, si bien no fueron únicamente del movimiento indígena, recayeron principalmente en su capacidad de acción, tanto en Quito como en los bloqueos de carreteras en el país.

Otro escenario se profundizó en paralelo al debate sobre el decreto: la persecución a dirigentes de la Revolución Ciudadana, el espacio político del ex presidente Rafael Correa. Ese accionar había sido anunciado por Moreno al descargar la responsabilidad de los hechos de violencia acontecidos en las espaldas de Correa. La táctica del gobierno fue reconocer a los indígenas como interlocutores legítimos y criminalizar al correísmo.

El despliegue persecutorio comenzó durante los días de la movilización: la asambleísta Gabriela Rivadeneira debió refugiarse en la embajada de México y la ex alcaldesa Alexandra Arce fue detenida.

El crimen contra Afganistán

MUNDO OBRERO editorial

Es la guerra más larga de los Estados Unidos. Y nadie en el establecimiento imperialista estadounidense en el poder puede explicar por qué continúa.

Antes de que Trump afirmara recientemente que estaba por retirar al menos algunos de los miles de soldados estadounidenses de Afganistán, los presidentes estadounidenses, demócratas y republicanos anteriores hicieron promesas similares. Pero la ocupación estadounidense nunca terminó.

Cerca de 4.500 jóvenes estadounidenses han muerto y miles han sido gravemente heridos allí. Algunos sobrevivientes comienzan a hacer preguntas sobre por qué fueron enviados a Afganistán en primer lugar.

Muchos, muchos más afganos han

sufrido un destino aún peor en esta guerra desigual, incluidos bebés, niños pequeños, fiestas de bodas y agricultores que trabajan en sus campos. Las minas terrestres están en todas partes. Los aviones no tripulados en Afganistán, incapaces de distinguir la diferencia entre una fiesta de bodas y una reunión de combatientes, son convocados para ataques aéreos asesinos desde bases desde el oeste de los Estados Unidos hasta el propio Afganistán.

La guerra ha costado a los contribuyentes estadounidenses más de un billón de dólares. Su costo para el pueblo afgano es incalculable.

¿Por qué empezó? ¡Porque la clase dominante de los Estados Unidos no podía soportar el hecho de que en 1978, hace más de 40 años! — Una revolución tuvo éxito en Afganistán, liderada por un partido progresista que era amigo de la Unión Soviética.

La revolución fue precipitada por el hecho de que Nur Muhammad Taraki, líder del Partido Democrático Popular de

Afganistán, había sido encarcelado por un gobierno reaccionario respaldado por los Estados Unidos. En respuesta al arresto de Taraki, los soldados y trabajadores de base derrumbaron las puertas de la cárcel y lo liberaron, lo que comenzó el fin del gobierno favorecido por Washington.

Luego, un gobierno revolucionario encabezado por el PDPA duró poco más de una década. Pero en ese corto tiempo, abolió la deuda de los campesinos con los terratenientes ricos, distribuyó tierras a los campesinos y estableció granjas colectivas, estableció escuelas para niñas y niños, eliminó el “precio de la novia” y declaró la igualdad de derechos para las mujeres, entre otras reformas.

En ese momento, la Guerra Fría con la Unión Soviética era la prioridad para Washington. Entonces, dentro de un año de la revolución progresiva afgana, Estados Unidos estaba planeando su derrocamiento. La CIA armó y financió en secreto un intento de contrarrevolución dirigido por terratenientes desposeídos.

Esto atrajo a la URSS, un aliado del gobierno de Taraki, al conflicto.

Ese fue el origen de la guerra de Estados Unidos en Afganistán, que continúa hasta nuestros días, a pesar de que la URSS se ha ido hace mucho tiempo.

Washington afirma hoy que es por los derechos de las mujeres en Afganistán, y debe permanecer allí para proteger a la gente contra las fuerzas reaccionarias islamistas. ¡Eso es pura hipocresía! Fueron los EE. UU. los que empoderaron a esas fuerzas en primer lugar, para usarlas contra la URSS.

Igualmente monstruoso es el historial de los poderosos medios capitalistas de EE. UU., que continúan suprimiendo el conocimiento del papel real de Washington en Afganistán y en cambio, presentan al Pentágono y a todos sus contratistas altamente remunerados como un instrumento para el progreso.

Es hora de revelar la verdad y poner fin a 40 años de la guerra de Estados Unidos contra Afganistán. □