

Maureen Skehan and Local 8751 Pres. Andre François at Boston MLK March. See page 5.

In face of gov't inaction Solidarity brings water to Flint

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

Water You Fighting For? It's more than a great play on words. It's a grassroots organization in Flint, Mich., founded by mothers Melissa Mays and Lee Anne Walters, who refused to sit back and watch their children suffer. WYFF has been protesting the toxic Flint water for almost two years.

Mays said in a national interview: "When your 12-year-old wakes up in the middle of the night crying because his bones hurt and there is nothing you can do, no creams, no medicine that you can give him to ease his pain, that's infuriating. When your youngest can't go anywhere because his white blood cell count is four, and his immune system is so compromised you're worried he is going to get sick with anybody breathing on him, that's awful.

"When your oldest is starting to struggle in school subjects that were very easy to him," continued Mays, "there's nothing more than I want to do than scream and yell and that's what we did for over a year, scream and yell, 'This isn't right, stop it, tell us the truth.'" (fox-business.com, Jan. 22)

Now, because residents like Mays organized and fought back, the Flint water crisis is a national scandal, even making the front page of the New York Times. Two officials of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the regional head of the Environmental Protection Agency have resigned in disgrace.

The DEQ failed to instruct the Flint water department to add anti-corrosive chemicals to the water when Flint stopped using water from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department and began tapping into the polluted Flint River. The DEQ's bad instructions allowed Flint system pipes to leach deadly lead into the water, leaving the whole city of 100,000, including 9,000 children under age 6, poisoned.

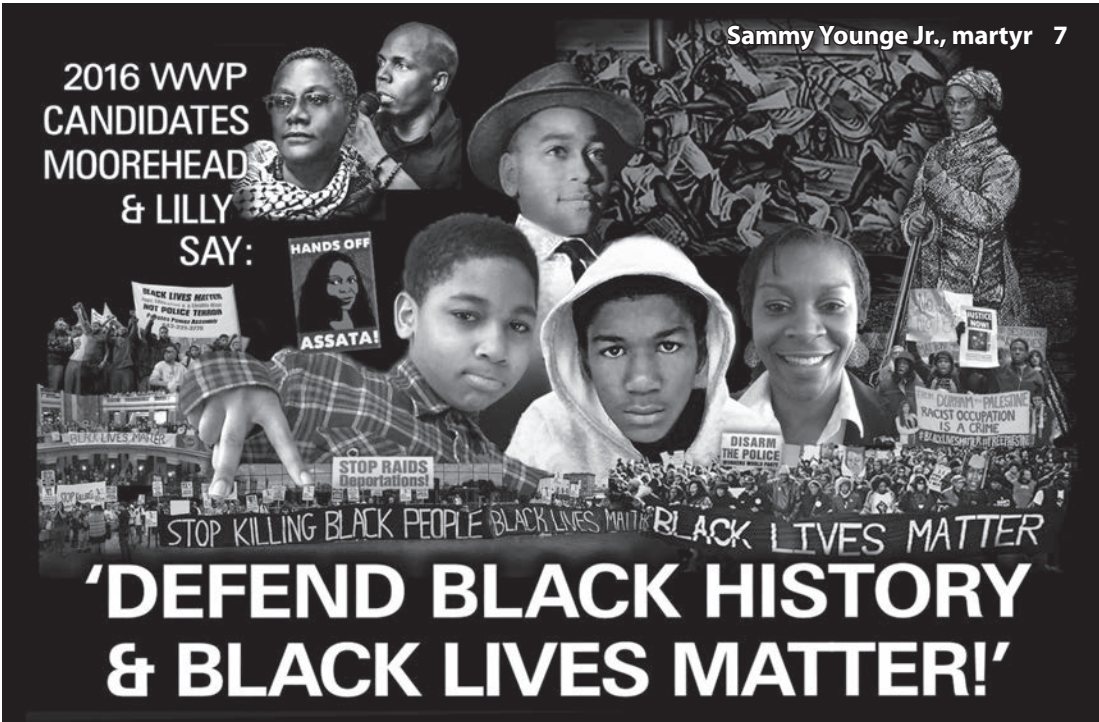
Calls for governor's arrest

The primary target of community anger is Gov. Rick Snyder, a reactionary Republican who has been deflecting blame while scraping up a woefully inadequate \$108 million in state and federal funds for Flint.

Political pressure forced Snyder — who by state law has immunity from the Freedom of Information Act — to release emails between him and other state officials about Flint's water. Now it should be impossible for Snyder to escape criminal responsibility. Despite saying "I'm sorry" to Flint residents over two dozen times in his State of the State speech on Jan. 19 in the State House in Lansing, his disdainful indifference and lack of remorse were evident.

"Arrest Snyder" has become a rallying cry. Signs against him were popular at Detroit's annual Martin Luther King march on Jan. 18, which included a Flint delegation led by Mays. Later that day people picketed Snyder's newly purchased swank condominium in downtown Ann Arbor. The following day, 500 peo-

Continued on page 6



Sammy Younge Jr., martyr 7

Flint's people deserve REPARATIONS

By Monica Moorehead

The writer is the 2016 Workers World Party presidential candidate. Her vice presidential candidate and running mate is Lamont Lilly.

The capitalist system — whose main feature is to make profits for the billionaire ruling class at the expense of the rest of humanity — should and must be ABOLISHED, root and branch. Why? Because this system that feeds off the super-exploitation of the labor of the workers and oppressed peoples on a global scale is resulting in unimaginable poverty, suffering and hardships.

One of the greatest weapons the ruling class uses to protect its wealth is institutionalized racism, intended to keep the multinational working class divided and weak so it can't fight in its own class interests.

How else could the ruling class get away with the horrors inflicted on Flint, Mich., which have made national and international news? The

100,000 people of Flint, including 9,000 children under the age of 6, have been poisoned for at least two years with lead-laden water carried through a corrosive system from the Flint River, which was polluted in the first place due to General Motors' corporate greed and governmental neglect. As a result of the state's indifference, children are suffering from lead poisoning, which causes irreparable disabilities and can lead to a slow, painful death.

Black people make up more than 50 percent of Flint's population. Some 41 percent now live below the poverty line, caused by the devastating loss of jobs in the auto industry. Every demand for water justice by Flint's people must be met immediately.

GM: Pay reparations now!

For the past four years, the Black Lives Matter movement has helped shine a bright light

Continued on page 10

- Winter storm & inequality in Baltimore 10
- Dr. Martin Luther King's Day of Struggle 4-5
- LABOR ON THE MARCH
- Battling 'right-to-work' 2
- Teachers in action — Milwaukee 3
- — Detroit 6
- Boston school-bus drivers strong 3

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West Virginia

Workers rally against anti-union law

By Benji Pyles
Charleston, W.Va.

Over 1,000 workers, union staff and their supporters showed up at a West Virginia AFL-CIO demonstration in the state Capitol rotunda on Jan. 13 to display their collective anger and opposition to proposed “right-to-work” (for less!) legislation, which is to be introduced this session. If passed, West Virginia would become the 26th RTW state.

While the House is firmly in the hands of the Republicans, there is controversy in the Senate. Daniel Hall was a Democrat when elected to the Senate in 2012 but switched parties in 2014, giving the Republicans the Senate majority and breaking a 17-17 tie. However, earlier this month Hall resigned to take a job at the National Rifle Association. The controversy is over whether a Democrat or Republican should be appointed to his seat.

If a Democrat is appointed, neither party will have a majority. The state’s Supreme Court of Appeals will hear the case.

RTW is not the only attack being leveled against the working class in West Virginia. There is also a bill to repeal the “prevailing wage” law. This law requires contractors on state-funded construction projects of \$500,000 or more to pay roughly union scale wages, using wage rates calculated by WorkForce West Virginia that are based on surveys of more than 3,700 contractors conducted this summer.

Workers and supporters raised slogans such as “Stop the war on working families” and “Right-to-work is wrong for WV.” One organization stood out as a clear left flank in the demonstration. The Appalachian Workers Alliance dropped banners from the rotunda saying, “Beat back RTW! Say NO to Jim Crow!” AWA members were quick to educate people on the racist origins of RTW in Jim Crow segregation in the South.

Vance Muse (1890-1950) was a business owner and conservative lobbyist from Texas who invented the “right-to-work” movement against the unionization of workers and helped pass the first anti-union laws in Texas. Muse was editor of the Christian American newspaper and worked for the Southern Committee to Uphold the Constitution, which used both anti-Semitic and anti-Black rhetoric in



its lobbying against the re-election of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Christian American Association was on the far right wing in Texas labor politics.

Muse also used segregationist views as an argument against unions, stating in the most vile language that white workers would be forced into organizations with Black workers or lose their jobs.

A union-community fightback is needed to defeat this reactionary offensive. Workers have to understand that the threat of direct, coordinated and collective action is what made unions work in the first place. Their power has always frightened the bosses and the state.

Michigan and Wisconsin have shown that the union officialdom and Democrats were outmaneuvered in the struggle against RTW. The worst thing the working class can do at this juncture is to simply look forward to the next election cycle with hopes they can get RTW overturned.

What are needed are People’s Assemblies to organize and educate workers on how to win wage increases and safety measures and to raise their consciousness. The working class must come to see that they are the sole producers of society’s wealth and can direct the economy collectively without the need of the private profit motive of capitalism. To do this takes the greatest amount of working-class solidarity and must unite low-wage and part-time workers, as well as the unemployed, Black/Brown/Native workers, students and youth.

For more information, see appalachianworkersalliance.weebly.com or call 304-314-4340.

MUNDO OBRERO
WORKERS WORLD

Who we are & what we’re fighting for

Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers’ living standards while throwing millions out of their jobs. If you’re young, you know they’re stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unplanned, profit-driven stranglehold over the means of production.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That’s why for 57 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We’ve been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism’s wars and aggressions.

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

National Office
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
PO Box 18123
Atlanta, GA 30316
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
c/o Solidarity Center
2011 N. Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
443.221.3775
baltimore@workers.org

Bay Area
1305 Franklin St. #411
Oakland, CA 94612
510.600.5800
bayarea@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.286.6574
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
712 Main St #113B
Buffalo, NY 14202
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
312.229.0161
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
313.459.0777
detroit@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9970
durham@workers.org

Huntington, W. Va.
huntingtonwv@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Lexington, KY
lexington@workers.org

Los Angeles
5278 W Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90019
la@workers.org
323.306.6240

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Pittsburgh
pittsburgh@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
585.436.6458
rochester@workers.org

Rockford, IL
rockford@workers.org

San Diego
P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92163
sandiego@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org

Virginia
virginia@workers.org

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300
Washington, D.C. 20037
dc@workers.org

WORKERS WORLD
this week

★ In the U.S.
Solidarity brings water to Flint 1
Flint’s people deserve REPARATIONS..... 1
West Virginia workers rally against anti-union law 2
Milwaukee teachers call for ‘Walk-ins’ vs. austerity 3
Boston school bus union members ‘in very high spirits’ .. 3
Struggles spotlighted at Detroit MLK rally and march 4
Mumia Abu-Jamal: ‘Free Reverend Pinkney!’ 4
Treat hep C in Philly jails!..... 4
MLK Day protests vs police brutality & gentrification..... 5
New York City: Black & Brown unite to reclaim MLK 5
Criticism grows of racism surrounding Oscar snubs 6
Detroit teachers beat back injunction 6
Anthony Hill’s killer cop indicted 8
Upstate drones: State terror & the ‘Drone Economy’ 8
What’s driving shocks to the economy..... 9
Baltimore poor abandoned by capitalist government.... 10
Anti-racists support Islamic Community Center..... 10

★ Around the world
Haiti in turmoil as masses reject corrupt election 11
Pentagon, NATO plan renewed war on Libya..... 11

★ Black History Month
1966 murder prompted SNCC’s anti-war stance..... 7

★ Noticias en Español
Tiempo de definición del estatus en Puerto Rico 12
¡Crisis escolar de Detroit!..... 12

Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011
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E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
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Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell,
Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead; Web Editor Gary Wilson

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Andy Katz, Cheryl LaBash

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Mundo Obero: Redactora Berta Joubert-Ceci;
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Milwaukee

Teachers call for ‘Walk-ins’ vs. austerity

By Workers World Milwaukee Bureau

In response to the largest cuts to education in the history of Wisconsin since right-wing politicians took over the Legislature and governor's office in 2011, the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association (MTEA) last September held walk-ins at dozens of schools.

The union, representing over 4,000 educators and staff in the Milwaukee Public Schools system, is now helping to organize walk-ins at over 700 U.S. schools on Feb. 17.

The MTEA call declares, “Parents, students, educators and community members: Please join us at a public school near you on Feb. 17 to celebrate public education and to stand up for public schools that welcome and serve all children. Public education supporters in Los Angeles; Seattle; Chicago; Green Bay, Wis.; Boston; and dozens of other cities around the nation will also be walking on the same day. Public education supporters will gather in front of their schools before the school day starts to chant, march and share information about how school takeovers hurt our students. We will also educate others about public community schools that we know are a better solution than handing schools over to private third party operators. Finally, attendees will walk into the school collectively just before the start of the school day as a community.” (stopmpstakeover.com)

Fighting racist austerity: Make the banks pay

Very much a part of Wall Street's ongoing privatization plans, since 2011 unrelenting attacks on public education in



PHOTO: JOE BRUSKY

Milwaukee, May, 20.

Wisconsin have been taking place against K-12, technical schools and the University of Wisconsin system. Charter schools have expanded statewide and a Detroit emergency manager style “Opportunity Schools Partnership Program” (OSPP) was made law by Gov. Scott Walker last summer.

The defunding of public education in Wisconsin is part of Wall Street's practice of manufacturing a “crisis” to justify privatization for corporate profits and to increase “debt service” for the banks.

Wisconsin's decades-long austerity legislation was planned and funded by Wall Street forces, including the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), Americans For Prosperity, the Bradley Foundation, the Koch Brothers and the Heritage Foundation. Banks were a central driving force.

In Milwaukee, a city with a majority of people of color, the attacks on public education are modeled after austerity legislation policies enacted in other cities with large African-American and Latino/a populations, including Detroit, New Orleans and Philadelphia.



Under Act 10, made law in June 2011, Wisconsin public sector unions must annually vote to recertify by 50 percent plus one of the entire membership in a bargaining unit. Even where certified, unions are barred from collective bargaining except for wages up to the rate of inflation.

Act 10 also increased pension and health care payments by public sector workers, who must also work longer to be vested in the state's pension system.

The OSPP allows so-called “failing” Milwaukee public schools to be handed over to capitalist corporations to operate. They would be run by a commissioner to be appointed by Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele, a leading capitalist in the Wisconsin Democratic Party. The commissioner would have parallel authority with the elected Milwaukee Public School Board but be accountable only to the county executive.

Targeted schools are those that have predominantly Black or Latino/a student populations and are in neighborhoods devastated by decades of deindustrialization and lack of social safety nets. All MPS workers at schools taken over would be fired and forced to reapply for their jobs. To be considered for rehire, workers would have to waive their right to union representation.

The MTEA, along with union and community organizations such as Schools and Communities United, Youth Empowered in the Struggle and Voces de la Frontera, is engaged in numerous battles to stop the OSPP and other austerity measures. Union members and supporters, including K-12 students, have led school defense actions at dozens of schools, staged walk-ins, packed Milwaukee school board meetings and initiated other actions.

Building labor-community power

Since 2011, the MTEA has implemented a social justice union approach similar to the Chicago Teachers Union and public workers in other cities. They prioritize mass outreach and solidarity events in schools and communities across the state. Union members are joining in solidarity with the Fight For \$15 movement and Black Lives Matter actions, including protests demanding justice for Dontre Hamilton and other victims of police brutality.

MTEA brought water to Flint, Mich., residents poisoned by Wall Street and Wall Street's bought-and-paid-for politicians. It mobilized members to support their union sisters and brothers during the 2015 strikes by Amalgamated Transit Workers Union 998 and United Auto Workers Local 833.

Feb. 17 is the next step in their courageous resistance and labor-community unity building process. The MTEA calls on families and educators in Milwaukee and across the U.S. to “Join us! Walk in on Wed., Feb. 17, and be a part of history!”

For more information about Feb. 17 actions: facebook.com/schoolsandcommunitiesunited; mtea.weac.org; and stopmpstakeover.com. □

Boston school bus union members ‘in very high spirits’ post-victory

By Martha Grevatt

Jan. 24 — It has now been more than a month since Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers' union, won a major victory against the transnational monster Transdev/Veolia and the austerity-minded city administration that employs them. This company, which illegally fired four key union leaders in 2013 and was taking a hard line in contract negotiations, was forced by the militant rank and file to rehire President Andre Francois, Vice President Steve Kirschbaum, Financial Secretary Steve Gillis and Grievance Chair Garry Murchison. Local 8751 also won a great contract for the members.

“Our members are in very high spirits and in a fighting mood,” said Gillis. “Good thing, because Transdev/Veolia's management are in the throes of a major corporate temper tantrum, refusing to pay some of our leaders, withholding millions of dollars in retroactive pay and benefits, bringing down the unjust discipline hammer on our good people, etc.”

Indications are, however, that the fighting spirit that brought the four leaders back to work will prevail and that the workers will see the retro pay in their checks before the end of January. They have already won other victories, such as the reinstatement of an unjustly fired union veteran in the first arbitration

struggle since the four's return.

Living the dream

The victory has not given the union a moment's rest. According to Gillis, “Getting back to work has been an equally difficult job as winning our jobs back! We got back into the swing of things with a major yard rally, complete with picket signs, bullhorns and special guest speakers organizing for the Martin Luther King day march.” The January 18 march, organized by Massachusetts Action Against Police Brutality, combined community demands of “Jail killer cops” and “No to Islamophobia” with issues of young workers from the Service Employees union who marched into a KFC restaurant and a Burger King parking lot to demand “\$15 and a Union” and the rehiring of fired co-workers.

Labor and community voices were heard loud and clear from the back of Local 8751's sound truck. The union also sent a delegation and the sound system to the Boston Black Lives Matter march the same day. The local also carried colorful placards with slogans such as “Dr. King's dream: end poverty, raise wages.”

Living Dr. King's dream is Local 8751's legacy, from its founding during the violent racist campaign aimed at stopping school desegregation in 1974 to its solidarity action on MLK Day in 2012, which helped stop the closing of the Grove Hall

post office that provides critical service to the Black community. Now bus drivers are getting ready to jump into the fight against \$50 million in austerity cuts proposed by Boston Public Schools and the expansion of charter schools.

Fruitful lessons

“It is certainly our desire to publicize our victory in the hope that it can provide some morale to our class,” said Gillis. “We offer fruitful lessons from the multinational unity, solidarity and militant actions we built over a sustained period, inside a relatively small local of mostly immigrant workers. Rank-and-file leadership with class-conscious training, in alliance with the communities we serve and the broader political movement, can turn back even the most well-planned and strategically targeted assault of the ruling class.”

The four have taken the victory's narrative to the airwaves, including an hour-long radio show in Wisconsin — at the invitation of those on the front lines fighting Gov. Scott Walker and the Koch brothers' brand of union busting and austerity — and the Labor Forum radio show



PHOTO: TEAM SOLIDARITY

Some of Local 8751's Team Solidarity attended MLK Day actions in Boston. From left, Claude St. Germain, Stevan Kirschbaum, Fred Floreal.

in Atlanta. “[Veolia/Transdev] came with the promise to bust our union, and they gave the city that promise,” Francois shared. “To do that they had to try to get rid of us. I am glad that we finally won.”

In the coming months the four union leaders will share their story at the Southern Workers' Assembly School in North Carolina March 4-6, the Appalachian Workers' Alliance conference in West Virginia, the Labor Notes conference in Chicago April 1-3 and other gatherings around the country. The victory was written up in Avante, the organ of the Portuguese Communist Party.

“The rich lessons of this historic struggle,” union Vice President Steve Kirschbaum explained, “are the collective property of the international working class.” □

Struggles spotlighted at Detroit MLK rally and march

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

The 13th annual Martin Luther King Day rally and march took place Jan. 18 in downtown Detroit, where a host of speakers and organizations participated.

Despite a windchill factor below zero, Central United Methodist Church was filled with social justice and peace activists who work tirelessly throughout Michigan. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke in this church numerous times in the 1950s and 1960s.

The special guest for the 2016 gathering was Pastor Cori Bush of Ferguson, Mo., who traveled to Detroit and Toledo, Ohio, to bring news about the ongoing movement against racist violence and state repression in St. Louis County. Bush is a health care professional and clergywoman who experienced firsthand the police violence against the people of Ferguson in the aftermath of the cop killing of Michael Brown on Aug. 9, 2014.

Mrs. Dorothy Pinkney was a scheduled speaker, but was unable to drive some 200 miles from Berrien County due to inclement weather. However, a statement from her was read by Marcina Cole, a leading organizer in the Detroit area campaign to win freedom for the Rev. Edward Pinkney, Michigan’s political prisoner.

Rev. Pinkney was railroaded in the racist Berrien County courts during 2014 on fraudulent felony charges of changing five dates on recall petitions aimed at the removal of Benton Harbor Mayor James Hightower. During the course of the trial there were no eyewitnesses presented by the court who could testify that Pinkney had committed the alleged crimes.

The political activities of Pinkney and his associates were introduced as evidence by the prosecuting attorney. Pinkney is the leader of the Benton Harbor Black Autonomy Network Community Organization (BANCO), whose political work was utilized by the prosecution to convict him of these spurious charges.

At present, Pinkney is serving a sentence of 30 to 120 months in Marquette prison in the far northern area of the state. He is appealing the conviction in

the state courts.

The Homrich 9, who were arrested in July 2014 for blocking Homrich company trucks that were heading out to shut off Detroit residents’ water services, were co-recipients of the People’s Spirit of Detroit award.

Solidarity with broad array of struggles

The Detroit MLK event is the largest annual gathering of progressive forces in southeastern Michigan and is endorsed by a host of organizations and coalitions dealing with education, water rights, housing, police misconduct and other issues.

Speakers and artists participating in the rally and march included people’s lawyers Vanessa Fluker and Alice Jennings, addressing housing and water rights, respectively; Elena Herrada, an elected member of the Detroit Board of Education in exile, which is still under emergency management appointed by Gov. Rick Snyder; U.S. Rep. John Conyers Jr., who drafted and pushed through the federal bill recognizing the King holiday,



WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

which went into effect in 1986; and Tony and Mary, two of the now adult children of Detroit-based Civil Rights martyr Viola Liuzzo.

Among those addressing the assembly, Joe Mchahwar of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) spoke on the plight of the Syrian people and the role of the U.S. and Israel in the continuing oppression of the peoples of the Middle East. Melissa Mays of Flint, Mich., whose pioneering work exposed the crimes committed by Gov. Snyder in poisoning the children and adults of that formerly industrial city, also spoke. And Amer Zahr, a Palestinian-American writer and adjunct professor at the University of Detroit Mercy Law School, explained the central role of Palestinian oppression in the political developments in the Middle East.

Music was provided by Bobbi Thompson of Central United Methodist Church, the director of the Deep River Choir. Songs that addressed the right to clean,

safe water were performed by the Flowtown Revue.

March for justice & people’s gathering

After a more than two-hour rally, a march was held through downtown Detroit. It wound past the 36th District Court to demonstrate against foreclosures and evictions; then to the Wayne County Jail to protest the mass incarceration of African Americans and other oppressed peoples; on to the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department in opposition to water shutoffs and proclaiming that water is a human right; and finally through the financial district with the message, “Bail-out the people and not the banks!”

Marchers returned to the church for a community meal supplied by the Detroit Wobbly Kitchen. Hundreds were served. A cultural program, coordinated by award-winning poet Aurora Harris, an author and lecturer at the University of Michigan at Dearborn, followed.

Numerous artists, musicians and poets presented their works, including Wardell Montgomery, Joe Kidd and Sheila Burke Music, Wanda Olugbala, Jim Perkinson, Shushanna Shakur, Susan Sunshine and many more.

Tracy Mathews, a longtime Detroit community activist who has been a logistical volunteer at the Detroit MLK Day for the last six years, said this year’s event was the best so far. Mathews commented, “My interaction with Pastor Cori Bush provided insight into the struggle in Ferguson and was inspirational.”

This annual commemoration, which seeks to evoke the social justice and anti-war legacy of Dr. King, was founded in 2004 by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECA-WI) during the early months of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. Since then, a Detroit MLK Planning Committee has been organized, bringing in veteran Civil Rights activists, along with youth and workers who help organize the event. More than two dozen progressive organizations and individuals are co-sponsors and endorsers. □

Mumia Abu-Jamal: ‘Free Reverend Pinkney!’

The following edited commentary was written by political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The Rev. Edward Pinkney is the kind of preacher that Martin Luther King Jr. would have admired.

Rather than build a mansion and live like a prince, Pinkney has, for years, advocated for his community, fighting for water rights, fair elections and social justice for the people of Benton Harbor, Mich.

Because of his political activities, he’s been targeted by the government, tried by the Michigan political machine before an all-white jury and, with no evidence, convicted of allegedly altering five petition dates!

Incredibly, Rev. Pinkney is facing 10 years in prison!

Remember the petitions? They were recall petitions of Benton Harbor’s mayor, a politician owned and operated by the Whirlpool Corporation — the real owner of the town.

For speaking out against this corporate-political domination, Pinkney became the target of the legal system.

At trial, no one even claimed Rev. Pinkney altered anything. He turned in hundreds of recall petitions against Whirlpool’s puppet mayor. That was crime enough, apparently.

As Rev. Pinkney approaches his second year in prison, his support is growing across the country, as he fights his appeals.

The call to “Free Rev. Pinkney” is growing! □

Treat hep C in Philly jails!

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

Supporters of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal took their campaign demanding life-saving drugs for him and 10,000 other Pennsylvania prisoners suffering from chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) to Philadelphia’s City Council on Jan. 21.

The protesters carried signs urging the Council, and newly elected Mayor James Kenney, to investigate the obstacles and inequities people face in accessing the costly antiviral medications that cure the deadly disease. Demonstrators also called on city officials to end their multimillion dollar contract with Corizon Health to manage health care in Philadelphia’s jails.

The group distributed a flier to city officials and audience members on the dan-

gers of untreated HCV. It also addressed Corizon’s deadly pattern and practice of withholding medical care in order to save money and maximize profits.

The denial of health care to the state’s prisoners eventually impacts urban communities as prisoners return home. An estimated 45,000 people in Philadelphia already have hep C. Left untreated, the virus causes liver disease and other complications that are fatal.

In 2013, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Sovaldi, a new direct-acting antiviral drug. However, it costs \$84,000 for a 12-week treatment course. Gilead Sciences, which controls sale of the drug, subsequently marketed Harvoni, Sovaldi’s successor, at \$94,000 per treatment course.

Because of the high costs, less than 3



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

percent of Medicaid enrollees are able to receive the new cures. Very few prisoners with hep C can get these medications.

While not allowed to raise their demands from the floor of the Council meeting, protesters arranged for a meet-

ing with some of its members. They also received broad support from members of Philadelphia’s Muslim community who were at the Council meeting to push for the city’s school district to recognize and observe Muslim holidays. □



MLK Day marked by protests vs police brutality & gentrification

Several events celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. took place throughout **Southwest Virginia** Jan. 16-18. This area of Appalachia has a long history of people's resistance against Wall Street barons and bankers, most notably from the United Mine Workers union, but also from many other labor and community organizations. Some highlights of solidarity with Dr. King's ideas and tactics were practiced during the 1989-1990 UMW strike against the Pittston Coal Co.

In **Abingdon, Va.**, on Jan. 16, a diverse array of labor, community and student organizations participated in the 30th annual King holiday parade and march sponsored by the Appalachian Peace Education Center. Speakers made connections between King's historic resistance to poverty, racism and war, and today's Black Lives Matter movement and the fight for living wages.

On Jan. 18 in **Roanoke, Va.**, the King Day parade and program was sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and endorsed by the NAACP Youth Council and other organizations. Many community members participated to demand an end to racism, union-busting and police brutality. Other 2016 MLK holiday events in Southwest Virginia took place in Bristol, Wise, Wytheville and other locations.

A huge Black Lives Matter contingent behind the banner "Death by Cop Is Lynching" led the Martin Luther King Jr. march in **Denver**. Attended by over 20,000, the multicultural and multiracial event included people from churches, Jewish groups, peace groups and schools. They carried signs about the recent multiple police killings of youth of color, including Jessica Hernandez and Michael Marshall, by the Denver police.

Local supporters joined the Interfaith Committee in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter — **Bay Area** for a vigil and candlelight funeral procession on Jan. 15 in

Oakland, Calif.'s Oscar Grant Plaza as part of the Anti Police-Terror Project's "96 Hours of Direct Action to Reclaim King's Radical Legacy."

Organizers called on Oakland city officials and residents alike to see, connect with, and mourn the Black and Brown lives lost to police violence as well as the losses born by communities of color in Oakland as a result of over-policing, displacement and gentrification.

Protesters called out the Oakland mayor, Libby Schaaf, for inaction on racist police killings. Called by "Showing Up for Racial Justice" as part of the 96 hours of direct action, over 50 people marched on Schaaf's home with signs in the shape of coffins and real estate "sold" signs. SURJ stated that "since Mayor Schaaf took office in January 2015, at least seven Black people have been murdered at the hands of Oakland police. Schaaf and other civic officials have also encouraged massive increases in commercial development that is resulting in the traumatic displacement of Black, Brown and work-



Houston

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC



Denver

PHOTO: VIVIAN WEINSTEIN



Oakland, Calif.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY



Abingdon, Va.

New York City

Black & Brown unite to reclaim MLK

New York WW Bureau

The bold, dynamic street actions which have characterized the Black Lives Matter movement are being adopted in the struggle against mass deportations of refugees — most notably in the Jan. 8 shutdown of Manhattan traffic, a fierce, militant action carried out by ICE-Free NYC.

This Martin Luther King Day in New York, the two struggles united: ICE-Free NYC joined forces with Black Lives Matter activists in a Black-Brown "Reclaim MLK Day" rally which protested outside — and disrupted — Mayor Bill de Blasio's reading of Dr. Martin Luther King's last speech, "I Have Been to the Mountaintop."

De Blasio was attempting to do what so many capitalist politicians do on MLK Day: Use the revered mantle of King to establish a phony connection with the very communities they are oppressing.

De Blasio chose St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Brooklyn for this desecration. But New York activists weren't having it. As de Blasio began reading King's words, KaLisa Moore of the People's Power Assembly stood up and said, "No! Do not



WW PHOTO: BRENDA SANDBURG

use the words of Dr. Martin Luther King!"

As two rows of Black, Brown and white activists stood up, Moore then mic-checked over de Blasio, saying, "In the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we, the Black-Brown community, stand together to reclaim Black and Brown power! We will continue to fight our oppressors!"

Moore continued, "The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency and the New York Police Department continue to terrorize our communities," and

here she pointed a finger at de Blasio as she said, "at the hands of you!"

Demonstrators called out the collaboration between the NYPD and other New York agencies to deport migrant workers, a practice that has long predated 2016's mass raids of refugees. Also, the mayor backs New York's Police Commissioner Bratton's racist "Broken Windows" policy, known as "de Blasio's Stop-and-Frisk."

As the NYPD rushed to usher out the protesters, Mike Bento of "NYC Shut it Down" said, "Broken Windows' policing is not in the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King! Deportation of immigrant children that are fleeing violence is not in the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King!"

Outside, a militant crowd of 250 rallied with placards that read, "End ICE/Police Terror Against Black and Brown People," "There Are No Borders in the Workers' Struggle," "No Human Being is Illegal" and "Stop Police Terror" — among other placards bearing the names of people whose lives were cut short by racist police killings. Despite the evening's frigid temperatures, the activists then marched through Brooklyn, accompanied by the people's band, The Rude Mechanical Orchestra. □

ing-class folks across Oakland." The coffin and real estate signs, mounted on stakes, were pounded into Schaaf's lawn.

The 96 hours of direct action continued on the evening of Jan. 16, when over 100 protesters gathered inside the Oakland airport terminals in the evening to read aloud the names of dozens of Black and Brown people killed by Bay Area police in the past few years. They marched between terminals carrying a banner which read "Welcome to Oakland."

As passengers exited the gate areas, they were greeted with a "mic check" statement, led by the APTP's Cat Brooks, welcoming them to Oakland, but not the pretty one in the travel brochures: "Under the mayorship of Libby Schaaf, a mandate has been issued to make the city pretty for tourists and developers. This has meant an upsurge in police terror and murders in Oakland. In what we have dubbed 'Libby's Bloody Era,' a string of Black men were murdered in Oakland in 2015. All of them declared 'justifiable.'" The airport action was so successful, it was repeated the next night at the San Francisco International Airport.

On Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, Jan. 15, a protest was called in **Buffalo, N.Y.**, to address racist hiring practices, low wages and the lack of job opportunities at recent development projects in the city. The speakout targeted the Roswell Park Health Center along with other publicly funded projects. Many of these projects are part of the gentrification process in Buffalo that has pushed people from oppressed communities out of their homes and jobs to make way for luxury apartments and other projects.

The protest and march were called by Charley H. Fisher III, president of B.U.I.L.D. Inc., Erie County legislator Betty Jean Grant and Alberto O. Cappas, president of the Puerto Rican and African American Association, as well as the Buffalo Committee for a Racial Discrimination Free Healthcare System. Protesters vowed to return again and again until victory is won.

Between 5,000 to 10,000 demonstrators marched in the 34th annual Martin Luther King Day Celebration March in **Seattle**. Following an opening rally that included many speakers and cultural performers, marchers went from Garfield High School in the Black community to the downtown federal building for an ending rally. The march was preceded by 22 social justice and community organizing workshops.

Another contingent of 400 activists organized by Black Lives Matter in Seattle marched from Garfield High School to a site of neighborhood gentrification. They targeted a large, white-owned marijuana store called Ike's, which has a dominating presence in the Black community. While marijuana sales are legal in the state, Ike's big operation has eliminated community participation in the enterprise. Later in the day, an Information and Opportunity Fair was held at Garfield and a chicken dinner was provided for all the marchers.

Vivian Weinstein, Terri Kay, Garrett Dicembre, Ellie Dorritie and James McMahan contributed to this article, which Betsey Piette edited.

Criticism grows of racism surrounding Oscar snubs

By Monica Moorehead

The shutout of Black and other actors of color from the Oscars nominations announced on Jan. 14 has intensified a debate about the entrenched racism inside the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Prominent Black artists, such as director Spike Lee, actor and producer Jada Pinkett Smith and actor Will Smith, have publicly stated their plans to boycott this year's Feb. 28 Academy Awards ceremony in protest of the lack of nominations for Black artists in front of and behind the camera.

Chris Rock, the Black comedian and host of the Oscars telecast, has already publicly said that he will address this is-

sue during his opening monologue and throughout the program.

Some white actors, such as Dustin Hoffman, Mark Ruffalo and George Clooney, have also called out racism within the academy and throughout the film industry in light of this recent controversy.

There has been strong criticism for decades about the lack of "diversity" in Hollywood when it comes to quality, non-stereotypical roles for African-American and other actors of color, female and male, due to the gross underrepresentation of Black screenwriters, directors and producers.

However, this year's Academy Award nominations, coupled with last year's snubs of Black actors like David Oyelowo for "Selma" and the film's Black director,

Ava DuVernay, have just exacerbated this injustice to an unprecedented level for those inside the industry and for filmgoers.

DuVernay tweeted on Jan. 22, "Marginalized artists have advocated for academy change for DECADES. Actual campaigns. Calls voiced FROM THE STAGE. Deaf ears. Closed minds." (twitter.com/AVAETC)

April Reign, a managing editor of BroadwayBlack.com, which promotes Black artists on Broadway, created #Oscarssowhite on Twitter in 2014. The hashtag continues to provide an outlet for anger and criticism from activists and people from every walk of life.

The Los Angeles Times interviewed Reign on Jan. 14 about her reaction to the nominations. She illuminated the fact that the academy's insensitivity toward people of color is just a mere reflection of the entrenched white supremacist policies within the Hollywood industry from top to bottom.

Reign commented: "I'm disappointed, but not surprised. While I appreciated the fact that academy president, Cheryl Boone Isaacs, attempted to make some changes by inviting over 300 new members into the academy this year, we see that that is not enough, that there's still the erasure of marginalized communities — not just with respect to the academy but also in Hollywood overall."

Additionally, Reign said: "The academy understandably can only do so much, and they do need to do more, but we also need to focus on the heads of the studios who make the decisions with respect to green-lighting films so that we see more people of color and more LGBTQ people and more people who are differently abled up



on the screen telling their stories as well."

**Hollywood:
"a private club"**

It has been reported that inactive academy members have been allowed to have a voice and vote on who gets nominated and who wins the awards.

Todd Boyd wrote in his Jan. 24 Daily News column, entitled "Full-color movies: Not nearly here yet": "Turns out, the industry, with precious few exceptions, is white, from top to bottom and side to side. The studio heads and the people who have the power to greenlight movies are overwhelmingly white and male. The same is true of the casting directors, the heads of the various guilds and the people who run the talent agencies."

The article continues: "Hollywood is basically a private club. And this particular private club has a liberal reputation in the larger culture. In many ways this makes things worse — because liberals can be very defensive when challenged about their own acts of bias. ... Being charged with racism is not a good red-carpet look; no doubt an image-obsessed industry will react defensively to contain the public relations damage it is now suffering."

Boyd concludes: "But the type of change that is needed now is not a desperate, defensive announcement like that made on Friday — that the academy will attempt to double the number of minorities and women in its ranks by 2020. What we need instead is the type of slow but lasting structural change that transforms the entire industry. ... Unless this happens, the announced changes are cosmetic, akin to putting a Band-Aid on a bullet wound." □

Detroit teachers beat back injunction



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Jan. 25 — Teachers in the Detroit Public Schools scored a major legal victory today when, for the second time, Judge Cynthia Stephens of the Michigan Court of Claims, a division of the Court of Appeals, denied DPS's request for a temporary restraining order to force teachers to stop their sick-outs over deplorable and unsafe working conditions. Stephens on Jan. 21 denied DPS's motion for an injunction against the teachers and ordered today's hearing.

Stephens said there is no proof that the union, the Detroit Federation of Teachers, or its interim president instigated the sick-outs. Under Michigan law it is illegal for public school teachers to strike.

The Operating Engineers union also won a victory in a separate court hearing today when Wayne County Judge David Allen ruled DPS could not cut costs by having 15 instead of 75 licensed boiler operators, or one per five schools. Allen cited the lead water crisis in Flint and wrote, "[W]hen we place financial expediency over basic and critical public health needs, we reap what we sow. ... Let us not have the next headline to go national be: 'Detroit Schoolchildren Injured and Killed in Unattended Boiler Explosion.'"

The DPS, led by emergency manager Darnell Earley, infamous for the Flint wa-

ter poisoning scandal, filed suit Jan. 21 against more than two dozen defendants, including individual teachers, various community groups, the union, DFT interim president Ivy Bailey and ousted president Steve Conn.

The previous day, Jan. 20, President Barack Obama visited the North American International Auto Show in Detroit while 500 teachers and Flint protesters amassed outside Cobo Hall in bitterly cold weather. The president's visit coincided with a coordinated sick-out by DPS teachers that closed 88 of the district's schools — virtually all of them.

Hundreds of teachers, parents, students and community supporters rallied outside Cadillac Place, site of the Court of Appeals, as today's hearing took place inside. In a display of unity, about three dozen teachers, wearing red, packed the courtroom.

Stephens ordered another hearing on Feb. 16 and instructed both sides to submit briefs and witness lists.

DPS teachers have engaged in rolling sick-outs for several months to bring attention to wretched conditions, including overcrowded classrooms, dilapidated buildings, 50-degree indoor temperatures, rodent infestations, bathroom plumbing leaks, cuts in pay and benefits, lack of supplies, and widespread black mold, fungi and other toxins. □

Solidarity brings water to Flint

Continued from page 1

ple demonstrated in bitter cold outside Snyder's annual speech, making enough noise to be heard inside the Capitol. Some protesters carried torches and pitchforks.

Activists are also demanding the firing of former Flint Emergency Manager Darnell Earley, who now oversees the Detroit Public Schools system and who carried out the decision to draw water from the Flint River. On Jan. 20, the day President Barack Obama visited the North American International Auto Show, another teacher sick-out over cuts, huge class sizes and dangerous building conditions closed most Detroit public schools. Some 500 DPS teachers, along with Flint residents, picketed the auto show. The main demand was that these two criminals, Earley and Snyder, be punished.

Emergency Management & water justice

The movement is fighting for more than the ousting of a few perpetrators, however, and calls for an end to Emergency Management. Public Act 436 allows the governor to appoint an Emergency Manager as dictator over a city or school district deemed to be in financial distress — rendering elected local and school officials powerless. PA 436 makes paying the banks the first budgetary priority.

All but one of the cities and school boards in Michigan that have had an Emergency Manager are majority African American. Half of Michigan's Afri-

can-American population — compared to 2 percent of the white population — has been under Emergency Management.

Flint Democracy Defense League, formed to oppose Emergency Management, is now deep in the fight for water justice. League representative Nayyirah Shariff has called for Snyder's arrest, saying that "he can take his apology and flush it down the toilet." (Democracy Now!, Jan. 8) The FDDL and WYFF have formed the Coalition for Clean Water.

Water justice groups in Detroit and Flint have been supporting each other, reminding the public that tens of thousands of households in Detroit remain without water after a brutal shutoff policy was instituted in 2014 under Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr. A People's Tribunal Jan. 23 drew 200 people and found Snyder and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan guilty of depriving people of water.

Thanks to heroes like Mays and Shariff, Flint has gained the world's solidarity. Donations of money, water and supplies have come from celebrities like Cher, Michael Moore, Meek Mill, Big Sean and Pearl Jam; Muslim communities in Detroit suburbs of Troy and Dearborn; the Little River Band tribe; Teamsters in Minneapolis; and of course United Auto Workers locals around the country. It was in Flint in 1937 that the heroic 44-day sit-down strike won the first UAW contract with General Motors.

People all over the U.S. have joined the people of Flint in saying, "Water is a human right — fight, fight, fight!" □

1966 murder prompted SNCC's anti-war stance

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Samuel “Sammy” Leamon Younge Jr., a 21-year-old activist from Tuskegee, Ala., was shot and killed at a Standard Oil gas station as he was attempting to use a whites-only restroom in Macon County on Jan. 3, 1966. His racist murder occurred during the time when he was a voter registration volunteer.

For many decades prior to the mid-1960s, African Americans were by law denied equal access to public and private accommodations in the U.S. South. It was not until the summer of 1964 that a comprehensive Civil Rights bill was passed aimed at ending the Jim Crow system of strict racial segregation.

The Voting Rights Act was signed in August 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson in the aftermath of the repression meted out against the people of Alabama. They were merely attempting to enforce previous legislation and the 14th and 15th Amendments of the U.S. Constitution, which ostensibly guarantees due process and the right to vote to all born and naturalized U.S. citizens.

Sammy Younge: Civil Rights hero

Younge's parents were African-American professionals connected with Tuskegee Institute and the segregated public school system.

The Black Past website reports that prior to Younge's intervention in the Civil Rights Movement: “Between September 1957 and January 1960 Younge attended Cornwall Academy, a college preparatory school for boys in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, a town famous as the birthplace of W.E.B. DuBois. Younge graduated from Tuskegee Institute High School in 1962 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy.”

The article continues: “Soon after his enlistment Younge served on the aircraft carrier USS Independence during the Cuban Missile Crisis when the vessel participated in the United States blockade of Cuba. After a year in the Navy, Young developed a failing kidney that had to be surgically removed. He was given a medical discharge from the Navy in July 1964.”

After returning from the Navy, Younge

enrolled in Tuskegee Institute and joined both the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the university-based Tuskegee Institute Advancement League, which led many campaigns in Alabama for voting rights and independent political organization in 1965.

Both SNCC and TIAL not only were engaged in voter registration efforts, but were challenging segregated facilities that proliferated even after passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts. Younge saw SNCC and TIAL as avenues of expression designed to win full equality and self-determination for African-American people. He participated in the Selma-to-Montgomery March from March 21 to 26, 1965.

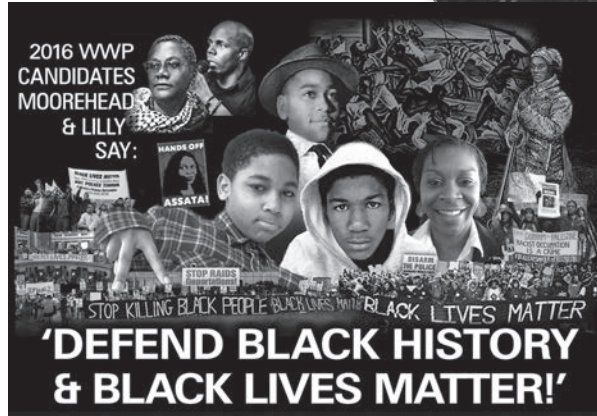
After the campaign in Selma, an area where SNCC had worked since 1962, organizers spread out to neighboring Lowndes County. There, the first Black Panther organization was formed by the soon-to-be SNCC Chairman Stokely Carmichael — later known as Kwame Turé — and his comrades, working in close collaboration with local activists.

Martyrdom sparked more resistance

Sammy Younge's murder in nearby Macon County led to a variety of protests. His death symbolized why people had to intensify the struggle to expose the false notion of “fighting for freedoms” abroad that were routinely denied in the U.S.

Student protests erupted in Tuskegee when white county officials initially declined to indict Marvin Segrest, the elderly, white gas station attendant who shot Younge. Yet, when there was a show trial in December 1966, the all-white jury, in a majority African-American county, deliberated for only one hour and 10 minutes and then acquitted Segrest.

SNCC was in the process of transitioning its program to Black Power and revolutionary nationalism in 1965-66. The blatant killing of Sammy Younge Jr. prompted SNCC to issue its historic statement against the war in Vietnam three days after his murder. SNCC was the first major Civil Rights organization to do so.



SNCC's statement reads, in part, “The murder of Samuel Younge in Tuskegee, Alabama, is no different than the murder of peasants in Vietnam. For both Younge and the Vietnamese sought and are seeking to secure the rights guaranteed them by law. In each case, the United States government bears a great part of the responsibility for these deaths.

“Samuel Younge was murdered because United States law is not being enforced. Vietnamese are murdered because the United States is pursuing an aggressive policy in violation of international law. The United States is no respecter of persons or law when such persons or laws run counter to its needs or desires.” (tinyurl.com/ZR4ornq)

The organization's views on the war drew widespread attacks on its activists across the South. Its anti-war statement drew the ire of the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a wide spectrum of politicians in the Democratic and Republican parties.

SNCC activist Julian Bond was elected to the Georgia Legislature in late 1965 and was slated to take office in early 1966. He was denied his seat for two years because he refused to distance himself from SNCC's position on the war.

SNCC's call for an end to the U.S. war against Vietnam and abolition of the draft sent shock waves through the ruling class, particularly as dozens of urban rebellions erupted during the spring and summer of 1966.

In June 1966, during the “March Against Fear” through Mississippi, SNCC Field Secretary Willie Ricks — now known as Mukasa Dada — and newly

elected SNCC Chairman Carmichael advanced the slogan “Black Power.”

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., leader and co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, left the emerging Chicago Freedom Movement to march to Jackson, the state capital, alongside SNCC; Floyd McKissick, executive secretary of the Congress on Racial Equality — which had also adopted the Black Power slogan — and in solidarity with the youth and farmers of Mississippi.

Opposing the Vietnam war

The SCLC had not taken a formal position against the war even after SNCC issued its statement on Jan. 6, 1966. Nonetheless, King admitted in March and April of 1967 that he could no longer refrain from speaking out against what the Johnson administration was doing to the people of Vietnam and Washington's failure to adequately address poverty and racism in the U.S.

On March 25, 1967, King and other anti-war activists, including Dr. Benjamin Spock, noted pediatrician and author, led a demonstration of hundreds of thousands of people in Chicago. They called for a comprehensive halt to hostilities against North Vietnam and the revolutionaries fighting for national liberation of the South. Just 10 days later, the SCLC leader delivered his historic speech, “Why I Oppose the War in Vietnam,” at Riverside Church in New York City.

A cacophony of condemnation poured in opposing King's views on the Vietnam War. On April 15, he participated in a march from Central Park to the United Nations in New York condemning the bombing of Hanoi and calling for U.S. forces to be withdrawn from the country.

Just one year later King was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968, while assisting a strike of African-American sanitation workers seeking recognition as a labor organization affiliated with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. His combined efforts for Civil Rights and the elimination of poverty, along with his opposition to U.S. militarism and imperialism, sealed his fate with the ruling class.

For more information, see “Sammy Younge, Jr.: The First Black College Student to Die in the Black Liberation Movement” by James Foreman, Grove Press, 1968.

Black History Month Matters: SUPPORT WW

The heroic Black Lives Matter movement is the latest chapter in the centuries-long struggle to end the brutal, genocidal history of racism, starting with slavery, that permeates every aspect of U.S. life. However, that continuing history of vicious oppression and criminal exploitation is not common knowledge today.

That's why Workers World makes a big deal of Black History Month, as we commemorate the many sacrifices and valiant struggles of African Americans from slavery to the present day to eradicate institutionalized racism, root and branch, in this country.

But, as you know from reading this newspaper, Workers World doesn't just cover the Black struggle one month a year. We write about it in depth all year, every year. Our coverage includes the racist poisoning of water in the majority African-American city of Flint, Mich., as well as the daily cop murders of Black and

Ferguson, Mo., August 2014.
WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Brown people all around the country. We also expose the criminal injustice system that allows killer cops to walk free — like the one who arrested Sandra Bland in Texas and the one who executed 12-year-old Tamir Rice while he was playing with a toy gun in the park in Cleveland. Even if the cop who murdered Laquan McDonald in 2014 in Chicago was indicted, he might get a slap on the wrist like the cop who only served 11 months for killing Oscar Grant in Oakland in 2009 in cold blood.

WW bases our weekly coverage of the ongoing Black struggle here, and the one in Africa to throw off imperialist chains, on the principle of self-determination: that oppressed people have the right to fight to end all forms of inequality and injustice — by any means necessary.



If you appreciate that coverage and more, it's time to join the Workers World Supporter Program. We established it in 1977 so readers could help us publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build the many campaigns needed to make qualitative, revolutionary change that crushes capitalism and ushers in socialism.

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/. We are grateful for your help in building the revolutionary press in the U.S. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes

Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy

Black Youth: Repression & Resistance LeiLani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

Domestic Workers Demand a Bill of Rights Imani Henry

Black & Brown Unity Saladin Muhammad

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal

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Alabama's Black Belt Consuela Lee

Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

Available at major online booksellers.

Say his name!

Anthony Hill’s killer cop indicted

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Jan. 21 — After a four-day, round-the-clock vigil was held in front of the DeKalb County Courthouse — despite frigid temperatures and driving rain — more than 100 protesters cheered the news that a criminal grand jury had brought a six-count indictment against police officer Robert Olsen in the March 9, 2015, shooting of Anthony Hill. The charges include felony murder, aggravated assault, violating oath of office and making false statements.

The encampment was initiated by Rise Up Georgia, a social and economic justice group, and was composed of a dozen or more tents set up on the front lawn of the DeKalb County Courthouse in the center of Decatur. It brought out youth, veterans, clergy, union workers and college students from across Atlanta. The four-day action, which garnered daily media coverage, was a constant reminder of the widespread outrage at the undisguised impunity given to police who kill.

Hill, a 27-year-old African American, was shot twice in the chest as he walked erratically and naked around his Chamblee, Ga., apartment complex. Several neighbors called 911, seeking help for the Afghanistan war veteran, whom they knew as a gentle, friendly man. No one alleged that he had hurt anyone or was acting in a threatening manner.

Witnesses say that when DeKalb County Officer Olsen pulled up in his squad car, Hill was in a prayerful position on the ground, and then he began approaching the uniformed officer with his hands up and outstretched. Olsen drew his gun and ordered Hill to stop. The officer claimed that Hill “charged” him — and that, in fear of his life, he fired twice, striking the clearly unarmed man. Hill had been released from the Air



Crowd before Dekalb County Courthouse, Jan. 21.

PHOTO: RISE UP GEORGIA

Force after being given a bipolar disorder diagnosis and was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. He had sought help from the Veterans Administration, without much success. Yet, despite all the obstacles he faced, he remained optimistic about the future and was passionate about his music. He was especially well-liked by the children in his complex, always willing to play at sports with them.

The young man and his partner had planned to celebrate their third anniversary the night he was killed. Hill reportedly had stopped taking his prescription medication, as it brought about sleeplessness and caused his jaw to lock and his tongue to swell.

Just months earlier, Kevin Davis, a popular restaurant worker, called 911, requesting help for his partner, who had been stabbed by a roommate. Upon arriving at the apartment, DeKalb County Officer Joseph Pitts shot and killed Davis’ beloved, three-legged dog. Davis

thought that his partner’s assailant had returned and grabbed his unloaded pistol, holding it at his side.

When Davis saw his dead dog, he yelled at Pitts several times, “Why did you shoot my dog?” Pitts then shot Davis multiple times. He died two days later in the hospital in ankle restraints, having been denied family visits and even charged with aggravated assault on a police officer.

Atlantans: ‘Stop racist police killings’

Numerous militant demonstrations were organized, demanding justice for Anthony Hill, Kevin Davis and others killed by Atlanta area police. Thousands of Atlantans, particularly African-American youth, had already become engaged in the struggle against racist police and vigilante killings after the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown and Eric Garner, among others.

Around the country, and particularly in Georgia, it is unlikely that police of-

ficers who have shot people are brought before a grand jury, regardless of how suspicious the circumstances might be. Georgia law allows a police officer and his lawyer to sit through the entire proceedings, hearing all the witness testimony. The officer is allowed to make the last presentation, which cannot be challenged or cross-examined.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution published a study in December which revealed that of the 184 fatal police shootings since 2010, half of the victims were either unarmed or shot in the back. More than one-third were killed in their own homes or that of a loved one, following a call for help. African Americans were more than twice as likely as whites to be killed. A police officer was indicted only once by a grand jury, but in that case, the district attorney persuaded a judge to drop the charges the next day.

Following several police killings of African-American men in 2015, DeKalb County District Attorney Robert James brought the cases before civil grand juries for review in October. Neither Davis’ nor Hill’s killers were indicted, but the jurors requested that James further investigate Hill’s shooting. This led to the criminal grand jury hearing eight hours of testimony about Olsen’s shooting of Davis, and then indicting him.

Hill’s family, his partner Bridget Anderson and the many activists who are fighting for justice for Hill want the public to know him — not as he has been portrayed in the media or by police, but as the genuinely thoughtful, talented and kind young man he was. He had shared his thoughts on Facebook and Twitter about living his life, despite having a mental illness, and encouraged other people deemed not “normal” to “Love your Life.”

No trial date is set for Olsen, who has been released on \$110,200 bond. □

Upstate drones:

State terror and the ‘Drone Economy’

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Syracuse, N.Y.

Mary Ann Grady Flores, a Catholic Worker movement, anti-drone activist, was taken into custody in the DeWitt, N.Y., Town Court on Jan. 20 to serve a six-month jail sentence for her 2013 nonviolent protest at nearby Hancock Air Force Base in Syracuse.

Grady Flores was part of a five-year stretch of activists’ unrelenting Central and Upstate New York opposition to U.S. drone warfare, anchored by the Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars. (upstatedroneaction.org)

GIs in the 174th Attack Wing, New York National Guard, direct Reaper MQ-9 “Hellfire” drones out of Hancock AFB. These drones target and kill people in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen. The attacks are part of Washington’s “endless wars” to ensure capitalist profits worldwide.

Grady Flores’ only crime was to briefly step on base property while taking photographs of an anti-drone demonstration. She was subsequently arrested and charged with violating an “order of protection” filed by the Hancock base commander against drone protesters — none of whom he had met. At Grady Flores’ ini-



WWW PHOTO: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

Mary Ann Grady Flores holds photos she was arrested for taking at Hancock AFB anti-drone protest.

tial trial, he admitted: “No, I don’t know Mary Anne Grady. No, I’ve never had a conversation with her. I’m not afraid of her. That’s just a piece of paper. I want — I just want these protesters away from my base.” (Democracy Now! Jan. 19)

A court typically issues an “order of protection” to prevent abusers from getting close to and/or killing victims of domestic violence — most usually women being beaten by male partners. Yet, no Hancock soldiers, officers or property had been hurt or damaged by anti-drone protesters during the five-year anti-drone

campaign. The U.S. repressive state and its military are cynically using a law meant to protect women to shut down protest against drone attacks.

An unnamed whistleblower leaked classified Department of Defense documents that reveal that nearly 90 percent of people killed by drones in one five-month period were noncombatants who were close to intended “targets.” (The Intercept, Oct. 15) U.S. drone warfare in Afghanistan, in 2015 alone, killed between 795 to 1,217 people, according to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, and already another 144-147 people killed in 2016. (tinyurl.com/hbr2eug)

Before she was jailed, Grady Flores zeroed in on another underlying reason for the state’s targeting anti-drone activists: “Drones are just one part of the endless wars and U.S. profiteering off of war-making.” (Huffington Post, Jan. 19)

The drone economy

The Albany-to-Syracuse corridor is becoming a “Silicon Valley” of drone military-industrial development. In December, the Central New York region, centered in Syracuse, won Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s “Hunger Games” competition

for a half-billion dollars in grants for “upstate revitalization.” The region pledged half the money, \$250 million, to “a center for research and development of unmanned aerial and ground vehicles.” (Syracuse Post Standard, Dec. 10)

A key player in the plan is NUAIR, a consortium of Central New York state businesses and universities specializing in drone technology and testing. The Federal Aviation Administration designated nearby Griffiss Air Base as one of six U.S. sites for drone tests. NASA has committed to building a drone test facility. (Atlantic Monthly, Nov. 13)

Though publicity touts the drone boom as benefiting “private” or “civilian” uses, the primary backers of NUAIR have been military-industrial corporations like SRC, Saab Sensis and Lockheed Martin, as well as energy giant National Grid. Saab Sensis develops military radar and air-traffic systems out of East Syracuse. Lockheed Martin — the largest for-profit employer in Syracuse’s home county of Onondaga — creates warfare electronics in suburban Salina. SRC Inc., which started up at Syracuse University, designs drone radar for military use.

The Department of Defense will be the major user of new drone technologies un-

Continued on the next page

What’s driving shocks to the economy

By Sara Flounders

Jan. 25 — The working class in the U.S. has suffered devastating blows since the 2007 capitalist economic crisis. Now the threat of a new downturn is rumbling through the financial markets.

City and state budgets have already been cut in the name of austerity. Government services, including those in hospitals, schools, libraries, water works and maintenance, have been privatized — sold to generate immediate revenue needed to pay the interest on bank loans. The impact of these criminal policies can be seen in Flint’s poisoned water and in decaying schools, from Los Angeles to Detroit and Philadelphia.

Even as a new round of layoffs is pending, the number of people participating in the workforce has reached its lowest level in 30 years, despite population growth. Real wages, stagnant since 1979 according to an Economic Policy Institute report of Feb. 19, 2015, have not improved since then.

The workers whose labor produces all wealth have been receiving a smaller and smaller portion of the value they produce. Some 56.3 percent of the U.S. population is now living paycheck to paycheck, with less than \$1,000 in checking and savings accounts combined. And 24.8 percent have under \$100 in their accounts. (Forbes, Jan. 6)

Drone economy

Continued from page 8

derway at NUAIR. The DOD has spent \$200 million in the last 13 years on the “sense and avoid” drone technology that the Syracuse firms specialize in. (Syracuse.com, Jan. 5, 2014)

Drone boosters say that the drone boom will bring jobs. Syracuse has the highest rate of “concentrated” extreme poverty for Blacks and Latinos/as among the hundred largest U.S. metropolitan areas. (Paul Jagowsky, “Architecture of Segregation”)

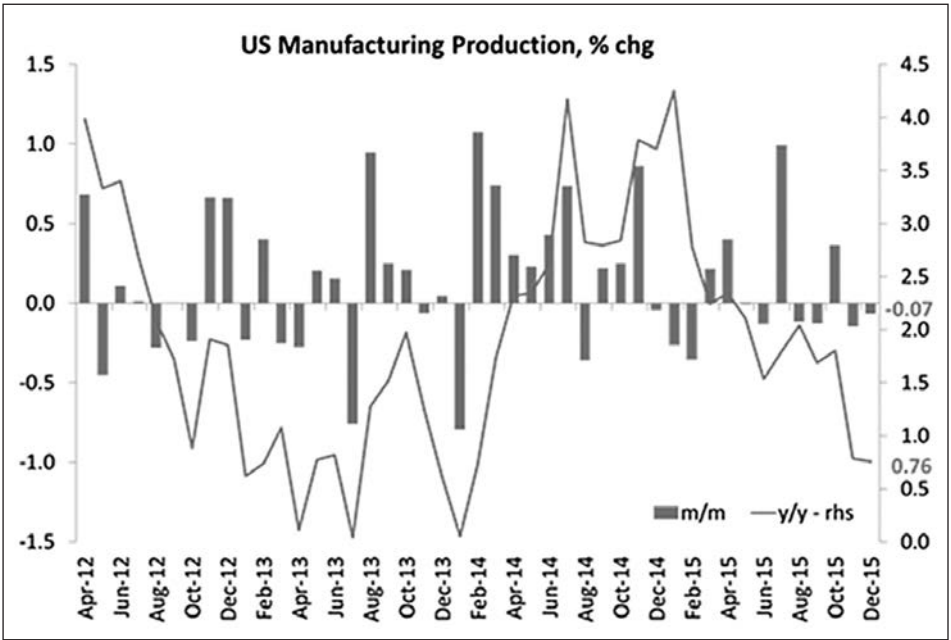
Anti-drone activists disagree with the “more jobs” assertion. Dave Kashmer, a U.S. Navy veteran, says: “It’s not going to produce jobs for a Syracusan. It’s all high-tech engineer jobs, and for that you need a high-tech education.” Only a quarter of the residents of Syracuse have a bachelor’s degree, even though Syracuse University is there. ((Atlantic Monthly, Nov. 13)

When the local Post Standard ran a page one headline: “Reaper Drone Makes History in Syracuse” in December 2015, the story emphasized that this was “the first unmanned aircraft in the [U.S.] to launch from a commercial airport.”

But the Reaper MQ “Hellfire” drone is used only as a battlefield remote-controlled bomber by the U.S. military — and for surveillance against immigrants at the U.S. borders. This is a far cry from corporate ads of a cute commercial drone delivering holiday packages from Amazon.

Syracuse anti-drone activist Ed Kinane says: “I think once the drones are normalized, then you bring them home and who are the targets? They’re going to be dissenters, they’re going to be demonstrators, they’re going to be minorities. It doesn’t bode well.” (Atlantic Monthly)

Kinane emphasizes that hyped commercial uses of drones are a diversion from military uses. Meanwhile, the domestic drone industry provides an industrial base — research, engineering expertise and production — for the Pentagon. □



Industrial production and manufacturing output have slowed to a trickle.

Stagnant and falling wages, alongside the increasing productivity of labor, have led, under capitalism, to the concentration of extreme wealth in private hands at a scale unknown in history. The 62 richest people on earth now hold as much wealth as the poorest 3.5 billion. (Oxfam, Jan. 17)

Five years ago, 388 super-rich held this criminal status. The staggering concentration of wealth continues unabated.

One-fifth of paper value wiped out

The other feature endemic to capitalism that Karl Marx explained 165 years ago is asserting itself yet again. Capitalism — the economic system built on social production but private expropriation — has never been able to solve the lurching cycles of boom and bust caused by overproduction. The overproduction of every commodity is again shaking financial markets.

The fall in the price of oil from more than \$110 a barrel in June 2014 to below \$30 today has received great attention. But a similar collapse has happened in industrial goods, steel, piping, sheet metal, coal, gold, aluminum, zinc and major food crops.

Since the New Year, stock markets around the world have been dropping inexorably. From New York’s Dow Jones and the S&P 500 to the main European stock exchanges in London, Paris and Berlin; to markets in Dubai, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai; together they have lost more than 20 percent of their value, entering what is called a “bear market.”

A fifth of all stock market wealth in the world has been wiped out. This may not immediately affect most workers. But the capitalists’ way of dealing with the loss of their speculative wealth is to immediately turn on workers who have less than \$1,000 or \$100 to their name.

President Barack Obama’s State of the Union address highlighted a modest increase in service jobs at the lowest pay — from call centers to fast food restaurants. However, hundreds of thousands of workers in heavy industry, energy production, banking and financial services — from DuPont, Alcoa, John Deere and BP to Morgan Stanley — have already been laid off over the last year.

Bailout deepened the crisis

Capitalist economists, hesitant to use the term recession, have come up with a new term for such a long period without economic growth: “secular stagnation.” International conferences and numerous academic papers have been held on this topic. Secular stagnation is a nicely vague term that hides the reality. Capitalism, in order to expand, must find markets in which to sell its products at a profit.

When it cannot do this, the entire global system goes into a spiral of crisis.

Bailouts have not succeeded in jump starting the economy. Years of almost zero interest rates to encourage giant loans supposedly to stimulate production may instead have made this capitalist downturn much worse.

A British paper quotes an official of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development: “‘The situation is worse than it was in 2007. The world faces a wave of epic debt defaults. Our macroeconomic ammunition to fight downturns is essentially all used up,’ said William White, the Swiss-based chairman of the OECD’s review committee and former chief economist of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).” (Telegraph, Jan. 19)

‘Zombie’ ships

There is overproduction in commodities, from oil to finished products like toys, clothing and cars. There is even a glut of the huge container ships that move more than 95 percent of the world’s manufactured goods.

The shipping industry is facing its worst crisis in living memory after years of rapid expansion fueled by cheap debt. The world fleet doubled in size from 2010 to 2013. (Reuters Business Insider, Jan. 20)

Competition among shipping companies has pushed the building of a new generation of super freighters that can carry 19,000 containers, compared to earlier ships that carried just 5,600. It takes years to build such ships. Orders were placed when a full global recovery was expected after 2009.

Shipping corporations that financed their fleets with 60 percent debt and 40 percent equity have seen that equity become worthless.

Now “zombie” fleets accept freight at maverick prices just to keep going. But the owners have no hope of repaying the capital on their loans. Banks are afraid to pull the plug on these loans because then they would be forced to list the losses on their books.

The Baltic Exchange, which has set shipping rates for more than two and a half centuries, says the situation its members face now is grim.

Giants felled by debt

Even giant multinational corporations that survived decades of past capitalist turmoil are now tottering. Years of almost zero interest spurred many of the world’s largest commodity corporations to take out huge debts to invest in further expansion and mergers. But now that the price of commodities has crashed to one-half or even one-third of a year ago, the market value of these corporations has gone into free fall.

One of the largest and oldest gold and copper mining corporations, Freeport McMoRan, is in crisis after taking out big loans about three years ago to buy into oil and gas. Now, with the oil glut, the company’s stock has fallen from \$60 a share to below \$4. Freeport McMoRan, now valued at \$4.8 billion, is carrying a debt of \$20 billion, so it is slashing jobs and all capital spending. But in order to meet its debt payments, it is continuing to pump oil, even at extremely depressed prices. (New York Times, Jan. 22)

In previous price slumps, commodities producers immediately cut back. But this time, due to their enormous debt, they continue to flood the market, making their situation worse.

Capitalists blame their woes on China

The global glut of all commodities is currently being blamed on a slowdown in the growth of People’s China — the world’s second-largest and most rapidly growing economy.

The chaos and ruthless competition of the capitalist system itself are never blamed. For example, both U.S. and German corporations have exacerbated conditions in China at plants that are joint ventures. A decision by Volkswagen, GM and other major automakers to rein in their production in China due to a global glut in autos meant they first canceled workers’ bonuses at their plants. “The bonuses being scrapped typically amount to more than half of the assembly-line workers’ take-home pay.” (Reuters, Sept. 15, 2015)

These international corporate giants not only cut assembly-line workers’ take-home pay, hours, break times and number of shifts, but they and other major Western firms also cut billions of dollars from major expansion plans they had in China. Of course, all these cuts in investments, announced more than three months ago, impacted on the Chinese stock market.

These abrupt cuts have spurred increasing efforts to further develop more stable links and trade among China, Russia, Latin America and Africa. A Cuban article titled “Weathering the storms of the 21st century,” written days ago, said this rapidly developing trade was mutually beneficial. By 2014, the value of bilateral trade between China and Latin America was 22 times what it had been in 2000. (Granma, Jan. 19)

How deep and intractable the coming crisis will be, or what will spark it, can’t be predicted. But the urgency for workers of sounding the alarm and organizing a determined fightback is beyond dispute. □



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WORKERS WORLD

Campaign Statement

Why people of Flint deserve reparations

Continued from page 1

on police violence and state repression. The capitalist state, especially the police and mass incarceration, is carrying out a genocidal war of brutality and killings against Black, Brown and Indigenous youth in grossly disproportionate numbers. The current stage of the capitalist economic crisis of overproduction provides nothing more than low-wage jobs and no future for youth of color or less privileged white youth.

The BLM movement has broadened its view of the struggle to fight racist repression by showing solidarity with the embattled people of Flint, especially the Black community. The Black Lives Matter National Network posted a solidarity statement with Flint, which has a 14-point program. It includes a moratorium on all water shutoffs; a refund of all water bills since the switch to the Flint water system; creation of a holistic medical care facility for Flint residents that will offer chelation therapy as treatment for lead poisoning; and creation of a Flint Citizen Civilian Corps to train local workers to repair the infrastructure. In introducing these demands, the BLMNN states: “The water crisis in Flint is one of many ways state agencies and elected officials have sanctioned violence against Black people.” (See full statement at workers.org.)

These demands and more should be framed as calls for reparations for the people of Flint, much like the call for “40 acres and a mule” that formerly enslaved people demanded following the end of chattel slavery. The demand for reparations is a political right, an indispensable step on the path to self-determination for people of color oppressed by colonialism, neocolonialism and present-day imperi-

alism. This right can come in different forms, paid for by public or private funds.

Both Malcolm X and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. demanded reparations for Black people to compensate for their labor and resources, stolen by corporations like GM.

In fact, it should be GM that pays reparations to Flint’s people. For decades it dumped acid chemicals into the Flint River that eventually caused lead in the city’s water pipes to leach into the drinking water. (Truthout, Jan. 26) GM owes reparations for its genocidal poisoning of the Flint community and infrastructure, and GM should pay for completely replacing the lead pipes, estimated to cost \$1.5 billion. It should be GM that pays reparations for the devastating loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs that forced half of the Flint population to leave over 30 years.

Demanding reparations for the people of Flint should be a main issue in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections. But that is pie in the sky. The Republican and Democratic candidates are either hostile or indifferent to empowering the people of Flint because these candidates do the bidding of corporations like GM.

The people’s organizations already in motion to provide clean water for Flint, from around the country and locally, could play an instrumental role in organizing for reparations.

Workers World Party sees this effort as a vital part of the broader struggle to abolish capitalism, which will commit any crime to boost the profits of the few. It must be replaced with socialism, where the economy belongs to the people and can be planned to satisfy all basic human needs, including clean water. □

Anti-racists support Islamic Community Center

By Sara Flounders
Bayonne, N.J.

More than 200 people came out here on Jan. 19 to stand in solidarity with the Muslim community in the face of a right-wing, racist attack on their application to build an Islamic community center on the site of an old warehouse.

A racist group, announcing they were supporters of Donald Trump and Pamela Geller, had said they would hold a protest at the Bayonne Zoning Board meeting to oppose an Islamic community center. The board had called the special session to take up the Muslim community’s zoning application for the center. The group’s letterhead and many neighborhood signs have attempted, through use of 9/11 and Twin Tower images, to frighten Bayonne residents.

The media in New Jersey had reported this opposition as if it represented the whole community.

But the strong, unified response to this threatening, anti-Muslim rally clearly exposed them as a narrow, bigoted grouping without community support.

The rally showing support for the Is-

lamic community center, although organized in only three days, was far larger, very multinational and drew community support from Bayonne and other parts of Hudson County, including Jersey City, which borders Bayonne.

The Jersey City Peace Movement and the International Action Center set up a Facebook event page, “Stand with our Muslim Neighbors,” and began making calls to area community activists two days before the rally. Veterans For Peace Chapter 21, N.J. Peace Action, Action 21 and Food Not Bombs immediately responded with their own round of calls and emails.

Gene Forrest, a Bayonne high school teacher and lifelong resident of Bayonne, also started reaching out in Bayonne with a Facebook page message to “Show Our Solidarity.”

At the rally, some 50 signs with the slogan “No to racism and anti-Muslim bigotry” were quickly distributed.

Both sides packed into the zoning board hearing. The zoning application



Mega snow storm buries East Coast

Baltimore poor abandoned by capitalist government

Special to Workers World

The winter storm, driven by extra energy typical of this climate-change era, dropped 1 to 3 feet of snow from Tennessee to Connecticut between Jan. 22 and 24 as it jammed interstate highways, flooded Atlantic beach towns and closed cities along the Eastern Seaboard.

Storm Jonas was no equal-opportunity disaster. The snow landed everywhere, but like 2005 Hurricane Katrina, the impact of this storm hit hardest the workers, the poor and the most oppressed communities. An example of disaster inequality? Look at the mostly African-American and very poor city of Baltimore, the home of the unpunished cop killing of Freddie Gray and last spring’s rebellion.

One of the organizations that has been demonstrating regularly against police “impunity,” the People’s Power Assembly, knew that the storm would wreak havoc on the residents of Freddie Gray’s neighborhood. When the snow stopped at 30 inches on Jan. 24, the Baltimore People’s Power Assembly and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference organized People’s Emergency Snow Brigades.

The organizers called people to check on the health and safety of public housing residents. Young people went out to clear snow where residents needed help digging out. The PPA and volunteers from the Maryland Art Institute and Johns Hopkins University discovered conditions building toward a frozen version of Hurricane Katrina.

They found that residents both on the east side and in the community on the west side where police killed Freddy Gray had no food at home and no way to get out to get it. Many of the children depended on food served in school — and schools were closed on Monday, Jan. 25. Residents who reached the corner store found its shelves already empty. Even the Food Bank was closed.



PHOTO: BALTIMORE PPA

Only popular organizations aided the community after massive snowfall.

The state and city had enough funds in their budgets to put National Guard humvees and cops on the streets. But the “authorities” were doing exactly what they are meant to do in capitalist USA: Protect the property of those who own — that is, the capitalists. There were no deliveries of emergency food, nor were urgent cases transported to hospitals.

After late night listening to and helping the residents of Gilmor Homes, the PPA and SCLC reacted Jan. 25 by calling a press conference at the Harriet Tubman Solidarity Center to issue four immediate demands:

“We are calling on the mayor and the governor to provide emergency food relief immediately.

“We are demanding that the government reorder priorities and organize door-to-door checks to make sure our elderly, those with health problems and young children are OK.

“We demand that the mayor enact an emergency jobs program to hire unemployed youth and members of our community to help with clean up in the community itself, not just downtown.

“We need a People’s Emergency Plan: Where do people go for food? What do workers do about lost wages?

“Our members can speak directly to what is happening in the neighborhoods as we were in Gilmor Homes until late last night and have taken calls all day and night from desperate housing project residents.”

An hour before the PPA/SCLC demand for food distribution, Baltimore’s Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake announced at a briefing that although the city schools would remain closed on Jan. 26, recreation centers would distribute meals to youngsters. She touted a mayoral program that hired young workers to clear public sidewalks for seniors and people with disabilities who were unable to do so themselves and said the Baltimore city website had emergency numbers and instructions on how to get help.

What the mayor did not announce was a plan to ensure that everyone who needed help received it. Both the New York Times and Baltimore Sun reported that top city officials could not say when the snow would be cleared.

Sharon Black, of the PPA, told Workers World, “The storm exposed the failure of capitalist society to look after the needs of the people. The power of the state was used not to protect and serve the people, but to protect the property of the capitalists.” □

MLK Day in

On Jan. 18, some 3,000 people marched 4.6 miles from downtown Oakland, Calif., through West Oakland, ending at the Bay Street Mall in Emeryville.

Additionally, BlackSeed, a Black queer liberation collective, shut down the Bay Bridge.

Flounders is a 25-year resident of Jersey City, N.J.

Haiti in turmoil as masses reject corrupt election

By G. Dunkel

Tens of thousands of Haitians took to the streets Jan. 22 to protest the scheduled second round of corrupt presidential elections. The demonstrators could hardly contain their glee when word spread that it had been canceled. They had defied both the vicious brutality of the cops and the “assurances” of U.S. diplomats that the first round had been fair. Protests were held throughout the country, the largest of them in Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) canceled the round without setting a new date.

The protesters raised new demands on Jan. 24. They now want President Michel Martelly to leave office immediately, even before his term ends on Feb. 7. Fanmi Lavalas, a progressive mass party in Haiti whose leader is former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, called the decision of the CEP a victory for democracy and the Haitian people. The electoral council has been openly tied to the United States and the so-called “core” group of France, Canada, the Organization of American States, the United Nations and the European Union. Fanmi Lavalas said in a statement on its Facebook page Jan. 23 that it will continue to support struggles throughout the country.

Massive protest inspires international support

The march on Jan. 22 went along the Delmas Road from the poorest neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince to Petionville, where many of the rich and powerful live in sumptuous luxury. It then flowed back to the Champ de Mars, a large space in the center of Port-au-Prince.

The march was shadowed by the Company for Intervention and the Maintenance of Order of the National Police. CIMO is Haiti’s heavily armed national SWAT team, but that day it limited itself to firing in the air and using tear gas. CIMO also cleared the streets of burning barricades and put out fires set in some fancy cars. Whenever CIMO set up a barricade, the protesters — with enthusiastic support from neighborhood people — split up and went around the cops. (Kim Ives and Tercier Daniel, Facebook) The protesters were so charged up that when CIMO personnel carriers pushed through the crowds, they pushed back, according to videos circulating on Facebook. This massive protest by the people, firmly rejecting pressures from U.S. imperialism and the Core Group that dictate how and who is chosen to lead the Haitian state, has inspired international support. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) issued a statement Jan. 21 denouncing electoral fraud in Haiti, calling for the withdrawal of the U.N. forces known as Minustah and for the “cessation of any external interference from the international community against the will of the Haitian people.” The Argentine Solidarity Committee issued a call the same day, noting, “The Haitian people are in a critical battle at this moment fighting for sovereignty and the right of self-determination.” What makes this especially important is that Argentinian soldiers make up a significant portion of Minustah.

Ending electoral crisis while economy totters

There are two contending political positions in the Haitian opposition over how to resolve this electoral crisis. There is no support for extending Martelly’s term af-



'We oppose all: Stolen elections, stolen water, stolen gas, any interference. Down with 1-24-16 [election]!'

ter Feb. 7. It is not going to be possible to organize elections before he is gone, and there are grave doubts about the fairness and validity of the parliamentary elections, even though the Haitian Parliament is meeting. Jovenel Moïse, the candidate for Martelly’s PHTK party and his imperialist backers like the U.N., the Core Group and the U.S., would like a brief, cleaned-up and widely accepted second round against Jude Célestin, candidate of the Alternative League for Haitian Progress and Empowerment (LAPEH). These two candidates came in first and second in the “official” counts. They’ve already spent over \$100 million on this election and want to be done with it. Pitit Desalin and Fanmi Lavalas, the parties that came in third and fourth in the “official” counts, take the position that the first round of the election was fraudulent. They want to repeat the whole election

cycle, including parliamentary elections, where there were also serious problems. Some political currents in this camp feel it is impossible to have fair and free elections when the country is militarily occupied by the U.N.’s Minustah troops. During this very sharp and serious struggle over the political direction of Haiti, its economy is tottering. The neighboring Dominican Republic has expelled 129,000 people because they are Haitians or the children of Haitians. They have been cooped up in totally dilapidated, nearly waterless camps on the border. Many spent their lives in the DR and are more comfortable speaking Spanish than Creole. Jovenel Moïse illustrates another economic problem plaguing Haiti. He is a banana exporter who, using \$6 million in state loans, plus favorable rulings from local officials, was able to seize 2,371 acres by driving 800 farm families off their land. His plantation currently ships 40 truck-size containers of bananas to Germany each week and must begin shipping 160 a week within the next three years. That will mean more land grabbed and less production of food for domestic consumption, plus a higher import bill and less need for farm labor. (otherworld-sarepossible.org, Jan. 21) Currently only 13 percent of Haiti’s workforce is in formal, regular jobs. Its economy, never fully recovered from the earthquake of six years ago and in bad shape before the earthquake, is being squeezed by global austerity. Since their revolution against French colonial rule more than two centuries ago, the Haitian people have never stopped struggling as hard as they can for real independence. Their struggle deserves our support. □

Pentagon, NATO plan renewed war on Libya

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Jan. 23 that the United States is preparing a renewed military campaign in Libya with its imperialist allies. Dunford’s narrative provides a rationale and political justification for a permanent imperialist occupation of the region, thus negating the right of self-determination for the states involved. Dunford referred to deepening interventions: “You want to take decisive military action to check [the Islamic State group’s] expansion and ... do it in such a way that’s supportive of a long-term political process. ... I think it’s pretty clear to all of us — French, U.S. alike — that whatever we do [will] be in conjunction with the new government,” referring to the neo-colonial-dominated regime that U.N. envoy Martin Kobler is attempting to mold together in Libya. Dunford stresses: “My perspective is we need to do more. Quickly is weeks not hours.” (Reuters, Jan. 23)

Speaking as if the U.S. had a limited or

even non-existent role in the North African state’s military and security crisis, Pentagon officials and other NATO members, including France, Britain and Italy, say they are motivated by the instability and “threat of terrorism” posed by the Islamic State group. Pentagon and State Department efforts are aimed against the group’s growing influence: I.S. now controls several cities and towns on the Mediterranean coast. Washington has been fighting a low-level war against I.S. in Iraq, Syria and now Libya. The Obama administration rejected the Russian Federation’s intervention in Syria last year as unwarranted interference designed to bolster Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s government. “Unity” under neocolonialism Two rival regimes in Libya stem from a split in the political forces installed by Washington and Brussels after the 2011 war of regime change. Rebel organizations, including many labelled as “terrorists,” were funded, armed and given diplomatic support by the U.S. State De-

partment, the British Foreign Office and others in an effort to impose them as “legitimate” leaders of the oil-rich country. Setting the stage for an intervention depends on securing a “unity accord” between these two rival factions. Although a peace agreement has been announced, ranking elements in Tripoli’s General National Congress and Tobruk’s House of Representatives have rejected its terms. Some elements reject a foreign military occupation. If they maintain their position, it could signal a much more complicated and contentious tenure for the proposed force of 6,000 troops led by Italy, Libya’s former colonizer prior to its independence in 1951. Colin Freeman wrote in the Jan. 21 British Telegraph that Ahmed Mateeq, deputy prime minister in Libya’s new “unity” government, “warned that the country may be unwilling to accept British troops in its fight against [I.S.’s] growing presence. [He] said that Libya ‘did not need’ to take up the offer from Britain of 1,000 soldiers to train Libyan troops,” and that while Western “logistical and technical support” was welcome, “most Libyans would not accept the presence of foreign troops on their soil.” Despite these remarks, Freeman wrote, “[D]iplomats close to the UN negotiations on the new unity government said last weekend that they thought [that government] was likely to accept the British offer [of indefinite foreign occupation], as long as the troops were confined to a training role.” Mateeq’s statement following an an-

nounced “unity accord” aimed at ending 1.5 years of civil war between the opposing installed forces could signal the entire scheme’s unravelling. If imperialist forces are fired upon by Libyan groups — supposedly parties to the U.N.-brokered agreement — this could create more instability in the country and the region. A new ministerial regime was established in January, after lengthy, heated talks mediated by Kobler, a career German diplomat with experience in other imperialist war scenarios. Even if Kobler and his Western backers can pressure the rival regimes into accepting the “unity accord,” that still leaves the hundreds of armed militias roaming the country outside the agreement. The region is far more unstable than at any time over the last four decades: The 1973 war fought between Egypt and Israel prompted an oil embargo and an economic crisis in the U.S. In 1978-79, President Anwar Sadat’s regime in Egypt, under U.S. pressure, signed a separate peace agreement with Tel Aviv, which neutralized Cairo’s role in the Palestinian independence struggle. Currently, discussion around North African and Middle Eastern affairs focuses on the roles of I.S., al-Qaida and other so-called “Islamist extremist organizations.” Whatever the purported rationale, the imperialist countries are planning further intervention in Libya and the surrounding region. Anti-war and other progressive forces in the U.S. and NATO countries should oppose all such moves. □



Report and photo by Terri Kay



Libertad para Oscar López Rivera, ¡YA!

Tiempo de definición del estatus en Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Recién comienza el año 2016 y ya promete ser uno lleno de definiciones políticas para Puerto Rico. La gigantesca deuda pública de \$73 miles de millones y su impago sigue siendo el problema en que se centran los medios noticiosos corporativos a nivel internacional. Sin embargo, a pesar de que por tratar de pagar esa deuda, el gobierno colonial de PR ha recortado servicios esenciales y ha hundido en la miseria a la mayoría de las familias boricuas, es otro el centro de atención y acción en Puerto Rico: el estatus político.

Por muchos años se ha hablado del estatus e incluso se han celebrado referendos que, por el hecho de haber sido encuadrados dentro de un estado colonial, impuestos en cierta medida por la metrópolis (EUA), han sido realmente ilegítimos e inconsecuentes. Sin embargo, las discusiones actuales, resultado de la enorme crisis a todos niveles que sufre el país, conllevan la legitimidad de que sólo la definición del estatus podrá conducir al camino de una verdadera solución a esta profunda crisis.

Después de más de 100 años de un proceso de coloniaje que afecta incluso el modo de pensar y razonar, una verdad, aunque sea de Perogrullo, puede ser disfrazada e incluso presentada como su antípoda. Este ha sido el caso en PR. Desde el salón de clases hasta la radio y la televisión, pasando por todas las esferas de la vida social, han servido de plataformas utilizadas por el imperio para transfigurar la realidad patente de una colonia, dando aparentar que es un país con autonomía.

Esto precisamente era lo que Lolita Lebrón, Irving Flores, Andrés Figueroa Cordero y Rafael Cancel Miranda intentaron exponer al mundo cuando abrieron fuego en el Congreso estadounidense ese 1º de marzo de 1954.

Para ocultar ante la comunidad internacional su terrible papel como subyugador

de un pueblo que pudiera opacar el avance de su guerra fría contra la URSS, EUA impuso una imagen de “autonomía puerторriqueña” mediante una constitución en Puerto Rico que otorgaba limitados e irrisorios derechos bajo el eufemismo del ‘Estado Libre Asociado’, concepto en sí contradictorio. A partir del 1953, ya los imperialistas no tendrían que dar cuenta de su colonia en las asambleas de las Naciones Unidas, puesto que PR era un país ‘casi’ soberano y tenía su propio gobernador puerторriqueño elegido por el pueblo, no un yanqui nominado por EUA. La colonia se había ‘perfumado’ y EUA podía seguir obteniendo todas las riquezas necesarias sin mayor objeción internacional.

Momento de definición

Esa farsa terminó hace pocos días cuando el Procurador General de EUA, Donald Verrilli Jr., manifestó claramente que el ELA no tiene soberanía propia. Es interesante saber que estas declaraciones surgieron durante una comparecencia del PG como ‘amigo de la corte’ para vistas frente al Tribunal Supremo estadounidense en un caso que nada tiene que ver con la crisis económica isleña e ilustra la urgencia del tema del estatus.

El caso conocido como Puerto Rico vs Sánchez Valle se trata de uno sobre doble exposición (Double Jeopardy) en el que un sujeto fue procesado en tribunales en EUA por posesión y venta ilegal de armas y expone que no puede ser procesado por el mismo delito por tribunales locales puerторriqueños. El Departamento de Justicia de PR sin embargo, afirma que sí tiene el poder de acusar a personas por el mismo delito puesto que PR tiene soberanía propia, sometiendo el caso ante el Tribunal Supremo de EUA.

El gobernador Alejandro García Padilla, del Partido Popular Democrático, proponente y defensor del ELA colonial, inmediatamente respondió con la ficticia

indignación de los corruptos y traidores de su propio pueblo. Si no fuera algo tan trágico, sería material irrisorio para una comedia. Señalando que EUA “cambió de opinión”, AGP escribió que “las leyes y la Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado emanan del poder del pueblo de Puerto Rico en el ejercicio de su poder inherente a organizarse políticamente en un gobierno propio. Así lo han reconocido también los Estados Unidos durante décadas ante la comunidad internacional”.

El gobierno del presidente Obama sin embargo, a través de su procuradora general adjunta, Nicole Saharsky, se pronunció claramente durante la vista del 13 de enero en el Tribunal Supremo. Saharsky dijo: “El Congreso puede, de hecho, revisar el arreglo actual que tiene con Puerto Rico. Eso es así porque Puerto Rico es un territorio de Estados Unidos. Los territorios pertenecen a Estados Unidos lo que significa que están bajo la soberanía de Estados Unidos. Y la segunda es que es el Congreso el que hace las reglas....”. (noticel.com) En resumen, que PR es propiedad, no parte, de EUA y puede hacer lo que quiera a través del Congreso.

Se espera una decisión del caso en los próximos meses.

Esto tiene gran relevancia ahora cuando como resultado de una serie de vistas en el Congreso estadounidense sobre la crisis en PR y el pedido del gobierno de PR para tener acceso a una ley de bancarrota para reestructurar la deuda, hay una propuesta congresional de imponer una Junta Fiscal Federal independiente para supervisar las finanzas en PR. Esta realmente sería una junta para asegurar el pago a los bonistas de Wall Street y actuaría fuera de los marcos legales y gubernamentales isleños. Una verdadera junta colonial.

Respuesta del Movimiento en PR

Esta situación está ayudando a incrementar la unidad dentro del movimiento

independentista. Un ejemplo fue la Asamblea del Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño el pasado mes donde se proclamó la candidata a la gobernación por el PIP, María de Lourdes Santiago, actualmente senadora por el mismo partido. En esa asamblea acudieron partidos, organizaciones y personalidades de la izquierda y el movimiento de liberación que no están afiliadas al PIP, en una muestra de acercamientos que podría significar la búsqueda de un consenso tan necesario en este tiempo de lucha independentista.

Muchas figuras del independentismo han manifestado que este es el año crucial para la lucha por la soberanía e independencia. De hecho, nunca antes se han dado coordinadas tan perfectas para facilitar la discusión amplia y abierta con el pueblo sobre la independencia. Es imprescindible una campaña de educación popular sobre la necesidad de autodeterminación y liberación del yugo imperialista y demostrar que la independencia, no la estadidad, es el único estatus que puede garantizar un futuro de justicia social y económica para el pueblo. La crisis ha sido la gran escuela que está ayudando a quitar el velo de obnubilación colonial impuesto por el imperio.

Oscar López Rivera, prisionero político que lleva ya 34 años en cárceles yanquis por luchar por la independencia, está jugando un papel muy importante. Recientemente escribió desde prisión un mensaje al pueblo para que su hija Clarisa López lo leyera en ocasión de la celebración de su cumpleaños el 6 de enero. En él exhortaba al pueblo entero a unirse para que rechazaran el pago de la deuda y la boicotearan, pidiendo además la unión y la colaboración del movimiento independentista en una lucha conjunta.

Joubert-Ceci es miembro del Comité Boricua Filadelfia-Camden recientemente formado, integrado por boricuas en la diáspora para colaborar en la lucha por la independenciade PR.

¡Crisis escolar de Detroit!

Por Kris Hamel

Una serie de ausencias por enfermedad durante varios meses por las/os maestros del sistema de Escuelas Públicas de Detroit (DPS siglas en inglés), culminó el lunes 11 de enero con el cierre de prácticamente todas las escuelas. Las ausencias continuaron durante el resto de la semana escolar, mientras que cientos de maestras/os y simpatizantes marchaban hacia la sede de las Escuelas Públicas de Detroit y hacia el Capitolio estatal en Lansing-Michigan.

Las acciones de las/os maestros pusieron en claro la crisis que enfrentan maestras/os, personal y estudiantado en todas las escuelas públicas de la ciudad y las condiciones deplorables que enfrentan.

Con más de quinientos mil millones de dólares en deuda, el sistema de DPS ha estado gestionado durante años por un administrador de emergencia nombrado por el estado, que ha usurpado toda toma de decisiones de la junta escolar electa. El magisterio, que ha sufrido recortes de salarios y beneficios, está severamente falto de personal. A menudo hay 50 o más estudiantes por clase, sin tener suficientes libros de texto y en medio de terribles condiciones.

Las/os maestros y las/os estudiantes en aulas atestadas se apiñan con sus abrigos a causa de la inadecuada calefacción en edificios dilapidados, cuya infraestructura está en severo deterioro y que además contienen moho negro y otras toxinas. No son infrecuentes los hongos en las paredes e infestaciones de roedores. En los baños, a veces ni plomería hay o está deficiente y no hay papel higiénico. Los suministros escolares son pocos o inexistentes.

Hasta el alcalde Mike Duggan vio un ratón muerto y condiciones “profundamente inquietantes”, cuando él hizo una presentación a la prensa durante una visita a algunas de las escuelas el 12 de enero, el día después de que 64 escuelas fueran cerradas debido a la ausencia por ‘enfermedad’ de las/os maestros.

Las escuelas de Detroit perdieron 84.000 estudiantes - o dos tercios de la matrícula del DPS - entre 2005 y 2012. Esto se debió en gran parte a la falta de empleos y la crisis de ejecución hipotecaria que azotó esta ciudad con mayoría afroamericana con préstamos hipotecarios fraudulentos de alto riesgo, junto con la proliferación de las escuelas charter privadas y la apertura de los distritos escolares suburbanos para robar a Detroit de sus estudiantes de más alto

logro académico.

El gobernador Rick Snyder, un reaccionario capitalista, nombró a un administrador de emergencias que llevó la ciudad de Detroit a la bancarrota. El administrador de emergencias, nombrado en virtud de una ley que garantiza el pago de servicio de la deuda a los bancos, colocó a las Escuelas Públicas de Detroit en bonos impagables.

Prioridad No. 1: Pagar a los bancos
 Ahora, la principal partida en el presupuesto del DPS es el pago del préstamo y el servicio de la deuda a los bancos e instituciones financieras. En febrero, el servicio de la deuda se disparará, con un aumento de hasta 74 por ciento del año pasado, y con pagos de la deuda que representan la friolera de un 97 por ciento del costo de la nómina del DPS. Un pago de deudas del 10 por ciento del costo de la nómina ya se considera alarmante.

Snyder está ahora bajo fuego por ignorar información y no tomar medidas mientras las/os niños y las/os residentes de Flint-Michigan – iel administrador de emergencia de Flint cuando la crisis comenzó, era el [actual] administrador de emergencia del DPS! – están siendo envenenados/os por plomo y otros metales tóxicos en el sistema de agua de la ciudad.

¿La solución de \$715 millones de Snyder a la crisis del DPS? Crear un nuevo sistema libre de deudas junto al actual, para gestionar las escuelas que pagan la deuda.

Sin embargo, la cuestión es que las escuelas seguirán siendo dirigidas por una junta directiva dominada por personas nombradas por Snyder. Las escuelas de Detroit no volverán al control de una junta elegida hasta el año 2017, y aún entonces la junta elegida estará excluida de elegir a un superintendente.

Además, la nueva junta escolar no tendrá supervisión de las muchas escuelas charter que han proliferado en Detroit, ni de la Autoridad de Logro Educativo (EAA por siglas en inglés) un distrito especial que administra las “escuelas con bajo rendimiento”. La EAA ha estado plagada de corrupción y ha fracasado en proporcionar al menos un mínimo de educación a las/os estudiantes.

Acciones de masas por parte de las/os maestros, después de años de quejas que no tenían respuesta, finalmente han traído esta crisis a la luz del día. Maestras/os, madres y padres, estudiantes y miembros de la comunidad, incluyendo el Consejo Escolar de Detroit en el exilio, continúan luchando contra el estado por el control de las escuelas de Detroit y el fin de la crisis financiera y la austeridad que han traído sufrimiento a tantas personas. □