



Women's History:
Cuba's Ana Betancourt. Page 5.

ALBERT WOODFOX!

Former Panther free at last

By Gloria Rubac

Feb. 22 — Shouts of jubilation, tears of joy and big hugs were the order of the day on Feb. 19 as Albert Woodfox, the last imprisoned member of the Angola 3, walked out of the West Feliciana Parish Jail in southern Louisiana.

On hand to give this unbreakable political prisoner a warm welcome were his brother, Michael Mabel, and other supporters. Woodfox raised a clenched fist and smiled. It was his 69th birthday, and what a present his release was!

Around the world, from Louisiana to London, from Brooklyn to the Bay Area, from Texas to Tanzania, social media buzzed, phone calls were made and emails were sent. In essence, they all said, “Albert is free! After nearly 44 years in solitary, Albert is really finally free!”

Woodfox, Herman Wallace and Robert King were at Louisiana’s Angola Penitentiary, a former slave plantation, in the early 1970s, organizing against the horrific conditions there and trying to build racial unity. They had joined the Black Panther Party and formed a prison chapter.

After a prison guard was killed in an uprising in 1972, Woodfox and Wallace were charged with his death. Along with King, they were thrown into solitary confinement and became known as the Angola 3. Over the decades, they were forced to live in isolation and were denied basic rights.

Editorial - Tear down the walls! 10

Herman Wallace was released from prison in 2013 just a few days before dying from cancer. His huge funeral in New Orleans drew hundreds of family, friends and supporters from his neighborhood but also many other parts of the U.S. and some from Europe.

A wonderful surprise

A showing of the recent film “The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution” had been planned at the Ashe Cultural Arts Center in New Orleans to honor Woodfox on his birthday. A panel discussion with former Panthers and Angola 3 supporters was to follow, and the organizers were going to mail Woodfox the pictures. Instead, he and his brother walked into the hall.

“You’d have thought that Beyonce had entered,” said Parnell Herbert, an activist, a playwright and a childhood friend of Woodfox. “People were cheering and were absolutely thrilled to see Albert alive, free and in person!”

On the stage was Malik Rahim and other members of the original Black Panther Party in New Orleans, along with Herbert, who had written and produced a play about the Angola 3 while living in Houston after Hurricane Katrina.

In the audience was Robert King, who was at the prison gates when Woodfox walked out. King had been released from Angola in 2001 when his conviction was

Continued on page 4



Harlem rally to honor Malcolm X stands with Flint, Feb. 21.

WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

- **Chicago communities vs. police terror** 2
- **Split them up? No, seize the banks!** 3
- **Wisconsin in struggle** 6
- **Flint’s battle for water** 5, 7



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- **Zika and climate change** 8
- **Obama to Cuba** 9
- **U.S. bombs Libya** 11
- **Walter Rodney** 11

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Illinois meetings discuss Growing the movement against racist terror

By Andy Katz
Chicago

Black Liberation movement veterans Pam Africa and Ramona Africa, along with Workers World Party Vice Presidential candidate Lamont Lilly, met with local activists for political discussions in Chicago and Rockford, Ill., on Feb. 20-21. Dozens of community members gathered to discuss building a movement against police terror, mass incarceration and deportations.

Pam Africa, a member of the MOVE organization and a leader of the International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal, spoke on the current state of the decades-long struggle to free the political prisoner. “The government didn’t just decide to give up on giving Mumia the death penalty,” Africa explained. “It was the power of the movement that pushed for 30 years without compromise.” She also discussed the recent threat to Mumia’s life through medical neglect as he battles hepatitis C.

“As long as you keep fighting, you are victorious,” Ramona Africa told attendees. “As long as you let your enemy know that if they come at you, they can expect a fight, then you are victorious.” She is the only adult survivor of the 1985 Philadelphia police siege and bombing of the MOVE house, which killed six adults and five children and destroyed dozens of surrounding homes.

Lilly outlined his campaign’s 10-point program, which includes demands for reparations for slavery, full liberation and equality for women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and queer people, full rights for all immigrants, an end to the capitalist system and more. (Trans* is used with an asterisk to indicate the spectrum of all the different genders of people who do not conform to the either/or of male/female or of masculine/feminine.)

“We already know there’s a war on Black lives, a war on the poor, the working class,” Lilly said. “What we have to do is get organized, get smart, be proactive and not reactive.”

Discussing ‘brutal realities’

In Chicago, local activists Chairman Fred Hampton Jr., Daphne Jackson, Karen Olowu, Erica Mines, and Patricia Linarez joined the discussion. Hampton Jr. is the son of Chicago Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton, who was murdered while he slept by the Chicago Police Department and the FBI in 1969. “We are subjected to terrorism on a daily basis,” Hampton Jr. said. “They use euphemisms like gentrification to talk about their genocidal



WWP Vice-Presidential candidate Lamont Lilly and other activists demonstrate in front of Cook County court and jail in Chicago.

land grabs. ... What they call penitentiaries, we know are really concentration camps for Black and Brown folk. We have to use brutal terms to describe brutal realities.”

Linarez, a Mexican immigrant and member of the Chicago Branch of Workers World Party, discussed the current crisis of raids and deportations. “In response to the repression and terror by ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement], the immigrant community has fought back,” she said. “It is important to do all we can to support these actions and connect them with the Black Lives Matter movement. The same police state that deports our friends and families also guns down young Black people in the street. Solidarity between our movements can only make both of them stronger.”

Olowu, a founder of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign’s Black Students for Revolution, delivered a powerful performance of Dominique Christina’s poem “Karma.”

Mines, a representative of the Philly REAL Justice Coalition, spoke on the repressive effects of “21st-century policing” in Philadelphia.

Dorothy Pinkney, spouse of Michigan political prisoner Rev. Edward Pinkney, and David Sole, of Detroit Workers World Party, spoke about the movement to free Rev. Pinkney. For more information about this struggle, visit bhbanco.org.

In Rockford, there was also a rich dialogue between the guest panelists and community leaders Pastor Melvin Brown, of Kingdom Authority Church, and Victoria Sockwell. □

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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. □

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WORKERS WORLD this week

★ In the U.S.

Albert Woodfox wins release.....	1
Illinois meetings discuss movement to fight racist terror ...	2
Take over the banks!.....	3
‘Uniting Voices Against State-Sponsored Violence’.....	3
On the picket line	4
Oakland community rallies to stop ICE raids	4
Ana Betancourt: An imperishable Cuban woman	5
Youth: Fight the system that poisoned Flint!	5
Wisconsin Labor-community joint struggles on the rise ...	6
Class struggle in Wisconsin since 2011	6
Flint residents demand water justice	7
Lead in the street, lead in the sink	7
Obama plans unprecedented visit to Cuba	9

★ Around the world

Zika, microcephaly and global climate change	8
U.S. continues endless war in Afghanistan.....	8
Left forces lead protests in Moldova, face repression	9
Truce? Keep your guard up.....	10
U.S. bombs Libya — again	11
Guyana commission: Burnham gov’t murdered Rodney .	11

★ Editorial

Tear down the walls!.....	10
---------------------------	----

★ Noticias en Español

EUA rezagado en salud	12
Tribunal Supremo	12

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Vol. 58, No. 8 • March 3, 2016
Closing date: Feb. 23, 2016

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011.



Take over the banks!



By Stephen Millies

One of the most popular planks of Sen. Bernie Sanders’ presidential campaign platform is to break up the big banks.

Sanders pointed out in a May 6, 2015, release: “The six largest U.S. financial institutions today have assets of some \$10 trillion, an amount equal to almost 60 percent of the gross domestic product. They handle more than two-thirds of all credit card purchases, control nearly 50 percent of all bank deposits, and control over 95 percent of the \$240 trillion in derivatives held by commercial banks.”

These banks tower over society and cause misery to millions. Just from 2008 to 2014, some 5.4 million homes in the U.S. were “repossessed” — that is, stolen from their families. (tinyurl.com/avys5sk)

When the Pentagon invaded Iraq twice, it was serving the interests of these banks and Big Oil to open new areas for investment and exploitation.

But is splitting up trillion-dollar banks like JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citibank and Wells Fargo into mere multibillion-dollar banks going to help? Even smaller financial institutions will still be able to buy both parties in Congress and throw people out of their homes.

Vice President Joseph Biden, then a Democratic senator from Delaware, was a sponsor of the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 2001. That bill would have made it much harder for people to declare bankruptcy if they were unable to pay credit card debts — debts with 23.99 percent interest rates, which are loan-shark rates. This act passed the Senate on the de-

mand of MBNA, a Delaware bank that was the largest issuer of credit cards. This outfit, taken over by Bank of America in 2006, moved from Maryland because state legislators refused to raise an 18 percent interest rate limit. Hunter Biden, a son of Joe Biden, became an MBNA vice president.

President Bill Clinton vetoed similar legislation the year before. Yet then-Sen. Hillary Clinton voted for this “reform act.”

The bill was so unpopular that it was voted down in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. To his credit, then-Rep. Bernie Sanders voted against it. A similar rotten bill passed Congress in 2005.

Stop foreclosures now!

So why doesn’t presidential candidate Bernie Sanders call for a moratorium on all foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs? Hillary Clinton doesn’t either, not to mention the Republicans.

Breaking up the big banks and insurance companies into a thousand pieces won’t stop racist lending practices. Big and small banks economically blockaded the overwhelmingly Black city of Detroit. “From 1988 to 1990, only one building permit for a single-family home was issued in the entire 139-square-mile city of Detroit.” (New York Times, July 5, 1997)

Why don’t we take over the banks instead? JPMorgan’s CEO Jamie Dimon didn’t produce a dime in value for the \$27 million salary he got last year. His bank’s \$2.4 trillion in assets are drained not only from poor and working people in the United States, but from millions of people

in Africa, Asia and Latin America as well.

Like a reverse blood transfusion, the trillions locked in the banks represent unpaid wages heisted from the poor and given to the rich. This wealth was taken from workers paid the minimum wage at the local McDonald’s and Walmart. It was stolen from workers being paid pennies an hour in garment sweatshops in Bangladesh and Honduras and palm oil plantations in Nigeria.

Socialism and banks

Lenin, the leader of the Russian Revolution, was also concerned about big banks. In “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,” Lenin wrote a century ago that “[banks,] concentrated in a few hands and exercising a virtual monopoly, extract enormous and ever-increasing profits ... [and] levy tribute upon the whole of society.”

Banks are supposed to lend money to increase production. That’s hardly happening: Since 2000, six million manufacturing workers have lost their jobs in the United States alone.

Where are bank loans for affordable housing? The bankers have lent billions to build dozens of luxury condominiums instead. The average price of a Manhattan apartment in New York City is now \$1.87 million. (New York Times, July 1)

Fearing an economic collapse, the banks are hoarding their money. So are the world’s super-rich, who have \$32 trillion in offshore tax havens. (Reuters, July 22, 2012)

Revolutionaries led by Lenin, called the Bolsheviks, didn’t just split up the

Russian banks. They organized the people to take them over.

We’re not talking about bailouts or even nationalizing banks whose stockholders are lavishly compensated. The Bolsheviks conducted a people’s takeover in which the capitalist bankers got nothing.

The new socialist banks became a vital part of socialist economic planning that modernized the Soviet Union and allowed it to defeat Hitler’s war machine. Tragically, socialism was overthrown in the Soviet Union by a counterrevolution.

With the help of its socialist banking system, socialist Cuba has been able to survive despite being blockaded.

The capitalist world market has made inroads in the People’s Republic of China. Yet the banks there are still controlled by the socialist state led by a strong 90-million-person Communist Party, which has enabled China to grow despite the 2008 capitalist world economic collapse.

Thousands of miles of high-speed railroad tracks were built in China, financed by socialist banks. In the U.S., capitalist banks refuse to finance replacing Amtrak’s 106-year-old Portal swing bridge over the Hackensack River in New Jersey, whose openings often delay trains.

Unlike Bernie Sanders, Workers World Party Presidential candidate Monica Moorehead and Vice Presidential candidate Lamont Lilly have no plan to preserve capitalist banking. They raise the need to smash the bankers with a socialist revolution.

The writer is a recently retired Amtrak train dispatcher who crossed his fingers whenever Portal Bridge was opened.

‘Uniting Voices Against State-Sponsored Violence’

By Terri Kay
San Jose, Calif.

There was a packed house at the African American Community Service Agency, the gathering place of families with one common cause, on Feb. 20. Families with “Uniting Voices Against State-Sponsored Violence” came together to share their grief and anger at the loss of their loved ones at the hands of the police. Together with their families, friends and supporters, they heard each other testify about their lost loved ones.

Families who testified included those of Antonio Guzman, killed two years ago by San Jose State University Police; Derrick Gaines, killed at 15 by the South San Francisco Police; Yamira Serrano Garcia, killed at 18 by a San Mateo County Sheriff; Richard “Harpo” Jacquez, killed by San Jose Police; Phillip Watkins, killed by San Jose Police; Rudy Cardenas, killed by San Jose Police; Frank Alvarado Jr. killed by Salinas Police; and Alex Nieto, killed by San Francisco Police.

There was also a panel, which addressed some of the questions and issues related to the circumstances that allow police forces across the country to kill Black and Brown people with such callous impunity. Panel members included Cat Brooks from the Anti Police-Terror Project; Tiny (Lisa Gray-Garcia) of Poor Magazine; Charles Fowler, a high school teacher in East Side San Jose and supporter of a youth collective called San Jose Regeneration Against Destruction or R.A.D.; Alexandria Peal Armstrong, a high school senior and member of R.A.D.;

and Gail Noble of Silicon Valley DE-BUG’s Albert Cobarrubias Justice Project.

The event was organized by Laurie Valdez of Justice for Josiah, R.A.D., Silicon Valley DE-BUG and Cephus “Uncle Bobby” Johnson’s Love Not Blood Campaign. The closing included a beautiful release into the night of lanterns for each lost family member. □



Families of victims of killer cops. San Jose, Calif.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

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

Ferguson, Mo., August 2014.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

and 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.

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On the picket line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

Minneapolis janitors stage protests

Thousands of Twin Cities janitors, members of Service Employees Local 26, held picket lines outside the places they normally clean on Feb. 17. Working without a contract since December, the workers are demanding an immediate pay raise for both full-time and part-time janitors to \$15 an hour as well as limits to an “ever-increasing workload.”

Inspired by Local 26, hundreds of nonunion janitors, mostly immigrants hired by contractors to clean stores like Macy’s, Kohl’s and Sears, protested the next day for fair wages and better working conditions. In addition to picketing stores where they work, some protesters blocked traffic leading to downtown Minneapolis to demand an end to racial and economic disparities in Minnesota. (minnesota.cbslocal.com, Feb. 17 and 18)

NLRB files complaint: ATI lockout violates labor law

When Pittsburgh-based defense contractor Allegheny Technologies Inc. and four subsidiaries locked out 2,200 members of the Steelworkers union (USW) at 12 plants in six states on Aug. 15, it violated federal labor laws, according to a 31-page complaint written by Region 6 of the National Labor Relations Board on Feb. 11. ATI was cited for more than 20 instances of bargaining in bad faith, illegally interrogating workers and threatening to fire workers who went on strike. The complaint was based on unfair labor practice charges filed by the USW in early 2016.

Steelworkers President Leo W. Gerard praised the citation: “The company has, since day one, engaged in a pattern of intimidation, manipulation and bad faith bargaining in a blatant attempt to force hardworking people into accepting deep cuts in pay and benefits.” The complaint will be heard by an NLRB administrative law judge on May 23. (usw.org, Feb. 12; cantonrep.com, Feb. 12)

Stay tuned. This case has precedent-setting potential since many companies have resorted to lockouts to curtail strikes in the recent period.

Sea-Tac Airport workers sue for unpaid wages

Despite a 2013 ballot referendum setting the legal minimum wage for transportation and hospitality workers in SeaTac, Wash., at \$15 an hour, an estimated 1,500 airport workers, out of 5,000, are still being paid below the legal minimum. Workers at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, including janitors, baggage handlers, cleaners, refuelers and others, filed class action suits Feb. 17 against more than a dozen employers. The suits accuse the employers of illegally withholding amounts as high as \$20,000 per worker since the minimum wage was raised over two years ago. (It was later adjusted for inflation to \$15.24 by a city ordinance.) One lawyer representing the workers estimates that the total withheld, including benefits and overtime pay, is as high as \$62.5 million.

According to attorney Duncan Turner, though many wage-theft victims have come forward to demand justice, “We talked to a lot of people who were just too afraid” of losing their jobs. (Associated Press, Feb. 17)

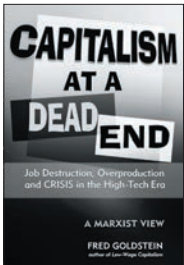
Demand fair contract for U.S./Mexican copper workers

The Steelworkers union in the U.S. and Los Mineros in Mexico filed complaints Feb. 18 accusing Mexican mining conglomerate Grupo Mexico and its U.S. subsidiary, Asarco, of violating workers’ rights on both sides of the border. The unions asked the U.S. National Contact Point for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises to foster dialogue between the parties. Though the specific terms of the complaint are confidential, the USW has accused Tucson, Ariz.-based Asarco of multiple unfair labor practices, including threatening workers, unlawfully implementing changes in workplace conditions and failing to negotiate with the USW and seven other unions at its five U.S. facilities. The National Labor Relations Board has scheduled a hearing on the complaints for March 15.

More than 2,000 USW members in Asarco’s copper mines, smelter and refinery in Arizona and Texas have been working without a contract since June 2013. Even though Asarco’s net income was \$1.5 billion in 2013 — Grupo Mexico’s net income was \$1.7 billion in 2013 — Asarco seeks to divide the workers by offering lower benefits to new employees. The USW, the other U.S. unions and Los Mineros have united against that and other changes. On Dec. 1, Asarco implemented portions of their so-called “last, best and final offer,” changing the workers’ compensation and benefits without their agreement.

The filing comes as workers marked the 10th anniversary of an explosion at the Grupo Mexico mine at Pasta de Conchos in the state of Coahuila that killed 65 workers. The bodies of 63 of those miners remain trapped underground. Representatives of the USW marched with Los Mineros members in Mexico City on Feb. 19 to demand recovery of the bodies, compensation for the families of the victims, and prosecution of responsible company and government officials. The two unions have had a strategic alliance since 2005. (usw.org, Feb. 18) To demand that Asarco/Grupo Mexico offer a fair contract to the workers, sign the petition at tinyurl.com/jigqsep. □

Capitalism at a Dead End
Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era



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WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Oakland community rallies to stop ICE raids

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

On Feb. 17, with the strong support of the Oakland Education Association, students, parents and teachers rallied outside Coliseum College Prep Academy, one of Oakland’s small public schools, to demand “safety” for undocumented students and an end to Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids. On “National Walk-In Day for the Schools Our Students Deserve,” this coalition focused on the demand of “No ICE! Stop the attack on Oakland families!”

“It is our duty to stand up to ICE. We support the teachers and students who are organizing this week all over our city,” said Trish Gorham, president of OEA. The Oakland teachers’ union passed a strong resolution last week opposing deportations and the appearance of ICE in this community.

The rally was a coalition effort of teach-

ers and students from 30 Oakland schools who have committed themselves to informing the community about their rights and to organizing solidarity actions.

María Robles, mother of an Oakland student, spoke about the pain and fear that ICE causes in the immigrant community where she lives. “We live in constant fear of deportation. We are regular families working hard to survive,” Robles stated.

Another speaker introduced as María, a member of “67 Sueños,” a local community organization fighting for the rights of undocumented students, stated proudly, “We are not illegal. We are human beings.”

Edgar Sanchez, a teacher at Coliseum College Prep and the son of undocumented parents, chaired the action and led a march into the school, where many students showed their support and solidarity. Summing up the theme of the rally and march, Sanchez said, “Our students and families have a right to stay together and feel safe.” □

Albert Woodfox, former Panther

Continued from page 1

finally thrown out. After living in solitary for 29 years, King has spent the last 15 years speaking around the world to supporters of the Angola 3 and educating people about the horrors of solitary confinement. His guiding promise when released was: “I may be free from Angola, but Angola will never be free from me!”

In an emotional reunion at the Ashe Cultural Center, King took the stage to the beat of African drums and gave Woodfox a big bear hug.

The next morning Woodfox put roses on the grave of his mother, who had died in the early 1990s. He had been denied permission to attend the funeral. He said he wanted to tell her goodbye.

In an interview with the New Orleans Advocate, Woodfox said one of his first impressions of the world outside prison was having a wide, front-seat view of the landscape as his brother drove him away from jail. “It felt strange because I was sitting in the front of his car rather than the back of a van,” Woodfox said.

Held even after judge ordered his release

Family and supporters had expected Woodfox to be freed last summer, after Judge James J. Brady of the U.S. District

Court for the Middle District of Louisiana ordered him released and forbade a retrial. But the state of Louisiana immediately appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit that stayed the release order.

“Although I was looking forward to proving my innocence at a new trial, concerns about my health and my age have caused me to resolve this case now and obtain my release,” Woodfox said in a statement after he was freed. He pleaded no contest to a couple of lesser charges instead of subjecting himself to another trial, and was released on the basis that he had already served more years than those charges called for.

Woodfox spent nearly 44 years alone in a windowless 6-by-9-foot cell. He was allowed out for only an hour a day. He wasn’t allowed to have a prison job and ate all his meals in the cell, which was separated from a hallway by metal bars.

Amnesty International had launched a worldwide campaign to free the Angola 3 and end their solitary confinement. In a report released in 2011, Amnesty asked that Louisiana release the two men who remained in jail, as there was no physical evidence that they had killed anyone and their confinement was a violation of not only the U.S. Constitution

Ana Betancourt: An imperishable Cuban woman

This guest article was contributed by friends in Cuba.

By Rosa María Oliva Enríquez and Ildefonso Gustavo Díaz Sandoval

Ana Betancourt de Mora was born in Camagüey, Cuba, on Dec. 14, 1832. As with all young, wealthy Cuban women, she took classes in religion, sewing, embroidery, music and home economics.

At the age of 22, she married Ignacio Mora y de la Pera, a young educated man who believed in independence and who was, according to Ana, “her teacher and her best friend.”

At the very beginning of the Ten Years War [against Spain] on Oct. 10, 1868, Mora was one of the first to join the liberating armed forces, while Ana devoted herself to sending materiel and clothes to the rebels, as well as writing and distributing revolutionary propaganda.

Chased by the Spanish authorities, she joined the rebels in Guáimaro on Dec. 4, 1868, exchanging the serenity of her home for the martyrdom of war.

On April 14, 1869, her voice was heard in Guáimaro, headquarters of the Constituent Assembly, when in a speech full of patriotism she proclaimed the redemption of the Cuban woman: “Citizens: the woman, in the dim and quiet corner of the home, was waiting patiently and resigned to this beautiful hour in which a new revolution breaks her yoke and unties her wings.”

And she added: “Citizens: here everything was enslaving: the cradle, the color and the sex. You want to destroy the slavery of the cradle, fighting until death. You have destroyed the slavery of color, emancipating the slave. The moment has arrived to liberate the woman!”

Together with her husband in the jungle, she worked on the newspaper “The Mambí,” which featured interesting articles about the life of the mambises [guerrilla Cuban independence soldiers] in the countryside, as well as the independence ideals of those Cubans committed to the fight.

On July 9, 1871, Betancourt and her husband Ignacio were surprised by enemy guerrilla warfare in Rosalía del Chorrillo. Thanks to a ruse, she saved her husband’s life, but she was taken prisoner, as arthritis in her legs prevented her from fleeing. The [captors] kept her outdoors under a ceiba [tree] for three months in the savanna of Jobabo as bait to attract Colonel Mora.

Pressed to write to her husband to ask him to lay down his arms, Ana answered energetically: “I prefer to be a widow of a man of honor than to be the wife of a man without dignity and tainted.”

In these conditions she had to bear with even a simulated execution. On Oct. 9, 1871, she managed to escape and hid in Havana but was located and deported to Mexico. A short while later she settled in New York.

In 1872 she visited the president of the United States, Ulysses Grant, asking him to intercede in favor of pardoning the medical students imprisoned for the events of November 1871. That same year she went to reside in Kingston, Jamaica, where in November 1875 she received news of the execution of her husband. She returned to Cuba with the signing of the Pact of El Zajón [which ended the Ten Years War].

In 1882 she returned to New York, and in 1889 she went to Spain, where she devoted herself to transcribing the wartime diary of her husband, while also maintaining active correspondence with Gonzalo de Quesada and other Cuban patriots. She converted her sister’s house into a site of revolutionary activity.

On Feb. 7, 1901, during a cold and dark evening in Madrid, the celebrated patriot from Camagüey, Ana Betancourt, died far from her natal soil, which was occupied at the time



Ana Betancourt
1832-1901

by the United States. Seventy-seven years later, her ashes were brought to Cuba and deposited, with well-deserved honor, in the mausoleum of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, before finally being placed in the mausoleum raised to her memory in Guáimaro.

Of her Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, the Father of the Homeland, said: “A woman, ahead of her century, asked for the emancipation of the woman in Cuba.”

Women like Ana multiply in Cuba; imperishable examples have remained in the history, which together with her progressive dreams have also defended the inalienable rights of the woman.

Names like Magdalena Peñaredonda, Amalia Simone, Mariana Grajales, Mel-

ba Hernández, Haydeé Santamaría, Celia Sanchez Manduley, Vilma Espín are, among others, worthy representatives of women’s rights in Cuba, [expressing] the deepest longings of women for social equality.

Since the victory of the Socialist Revolution in January 1959, Cuban women have been present in all fronts: occupying management positions in the different political, labor and social organizations and in departments, as well as fulfilling diverse and dissimilar tasks in health, education, art, sport and agriculture, among other areas.

They grow bolder day after day, raising higher the example of the charisma and the tireless labor of these “Marianas,” who hoist the flag in defense of all the principles to which women have the right as tireless fighters for the solidarity and the unity of the people. □

Stop the War on Women!

Elections will not win FULL liberation for women and our communities—
Only an independent fight back struggle can defeat racist state repression, militarism & all forms of social inequality

**Join us —
Saturday
MARCH 5**

1 pm – 1:30 pm
Rally at Harriet Tubman Statue
@ 122nd St. & St. Nicholas Blvd
(aka Frederick Douglass Blvd) Harlem N.Y.

1:30 – Step off for march
All genders and gender preferences are welcome.
Bring your banners, signs and noise makers.
RSVP if you need childcare at
IWWD.coalition@gmail.com by Monday Feb. 29.
facebook.com/events/1032048016839071/
Sponsored by International Working Women's Coalition

**Commemorate
INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY**
founded on March 8, 1910

**Followed by:
A Celebration of
Puerto Rican Women
Today, Tomorrow, and Always**

@ 4 pm 109 Gallery, 215 E. 99th St. in El Barrio
facebook.com/events/1502737656695501/

free at last

but international law.

Although plans for his life outside prison are still being formed, one thing Woodfox intends to do is fight to end solitary confinement. He, Wallace and King in 2000 filed a federal civil rights suit against the state of Louisiana for its use of solitary. The trial is now set for June. Woodfox is likely to be the person held longest in solitary confinement in U.S. history.

Parnell Herbert told Workers World he plans to spend two months of weekends in April and May producing his play on the Angola 3 so that “Albert can see just one of the many ways people worked together and educated people about who the Angola 3 were and what torture they were living under.”

As of Feb. 22, Woodfox has been out of prison three days. Activists are making plans for many reunions and events. They want supporters to know that “Albert will never be alone and will be surrounded by people who love him and plan to take care of his pressing health needs. And everyone will get the opportunity to meet him and support him on this new road of his life.”

Rubac is a longtime spokesperson for the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement in Houston.

Youth say: Fight the system that poisoned Flint!

The following is a leaflet distributed by Detroit youth activists in FIST -- Fight Imperialism, Stand Together -- at the Feb. 19 mass demonstration demanding water justice in Flint, Mich.

On March 6 the two Democratic Party presidential candidates and nominee hopefuls, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Senator Bernie Sanders, will take part in a televised debate in Flint, Mich. Flint has been the subject of global media attention after it was revealed that the city’s residents have been continually poisoned by the water coming from their faucets.

Flint, along with many other cities in the so-called U.S. “Rust Belt,” has been absolutely decimated by deindustrialization. These cities, primarily in the Midwest and especially in Michigan, were built from the ground up by the working class tied directly to the auto industry. Once hotbeds of militant trade unionism and a burgeoning revolutionary movement, they have been nearly destroyed by the closing of the vast majority of production facilities. Capitalism’s robotization, offshoring and union busting have left these cities devastated. Flint has a 40 percent poverty rate, official unemployment

close to 10 percent (which is an underestimate) and 20,000 vacant homes caused by bank and tax foreclosures.

The decision by the Democratic National Committee to host its debate in Flint is the height of shameless opportunism. Neither the Democratic Party as a whole and certainly neither Sanders nor Clinton have pointed fingers at the source of the crisis: the major banking institutions and the auto manufacturers. Sanders has called for the resignation of Gov. Rick Snyder, and Clinton has complained of his not requesting federal aid for the city. Neither would dare demand reparations from General Motors and finance capital for those who have been lead-poisoned, particularly the 8,000-plus children who will be permanently damaged. They are not calling for criminal charges against those involved in the poisoning and cover-up.

Many in the Democratic Party rightly call for Snyder’s resignation, albeit for political gain, to regain the governor’s office. But if the criminal, anti-people Snyder were to step down and face jail time, would his successor, presumably a Democrat, be any less callous toward the working class? Would [that person] enact a jobs program

to put people back to work with good wages to fix the roads, feed the hungry and educate our next generation? Democratic Gov. Jim Blanchard presided over GM’s mass plant closings, and [Democratic] Gov. Jennifer Granholm did nothing about the racist banks’ mass home foreclosures.

The disaster of Flint and other cities is not an issue of Republican versus Democrat, but rather a fight between the multinational working class and the capitalist class which profits directly from its attacks against us. We need an independent and militant movement, based among the working class and oppressed, separate from the two major imperialist parties and capable of challenging capitalist class rule and its ability to exploit us and put our very lives in danger.

Our goal must be a revolutionary movement with the power to overthrow those who deprive us of homes, decent jobs, food, health care, education and clean water. The resources exist, and it is the task of the majority to seize what we’ve built from the hands of the minority of exploiters who own it!

Visit, follow and contact us at facebook.com/FISTdetroit, twitter.com/FISTdetroit and FIST.det@gmail.com.

Labor-community joint struggles on the rise

A Day without Latinos ¡Día sin Latinos!

In the biggest mass action since the 2011 occupation of the Wisconsin Capitol building, over 50,000 people took to the streets and occupied Madison, the state capital, on Feb. 18. Coming from across Wisconsin in buses and car caravans, Latino/a's flooded the state capital to demand an end to the racist attacks on their communities. The Wisconsin AFL-CIO issued a solidarity message and other labor and community forces lent support.

The protest, sponsored by Voces de la Frontera and Youth Empowered In The Struggle (YES), was in response to a series of attacks on immigrants and two specific anti-immigrant bills. AB 450 would let police and public employees investigate immigration status and detain undocumented people for deportation. SB 533 seeks to block a program created last year to provide local identification cards to Milwaukee residents who cannot obtain Wisconsin state ID because of immigration status or lack of documents or money.

The powerful action was a joint community-labor effort with strikes, business shutdowns and student walkouts. With 40 percent of the workforce on dairy farms being immigrants, the state's dairy industry ran at a far lower capacity. El Rey's, a Milwaukee-based Latino-owned business, closed all their facilities for the first time in 38 years, encouraging workers to attend the Madison protest. YES chapters played a decisive role in mobilizing youth and students at multiple schools and campuses in Madison, Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha and other Wisconsin cities.

There are signs that legislators are now backing off on one of the bills, with the current Senate president stating it's "not a priority."

To support or for more information:
vdlf.org.



State Capitol, Madison, Wis., Feb. 18.

PHOTO: JOE BRUSKY

Stop a Flint disaster in Wisconsin! Stop water privatization!

Due to mass protest across Wisconsin, notorious corporations such as Aqua America and Veolia/Transdev were temporarily stopped from purchasing publicly owned municipal water systems. Current state law forbids majority ownership of water utilities by out-of-state companies.

Public advocates learned in January that a bill to make it easier to privatize public water systems was speeding through the Legislature. The state Assembly passed a measure by voice vote on Jan. 12. It was taken up by the Senate the week of Feb. 14.

After an emergency social media and phone call campaign, and protests at the state Capitol and other locations, the Wisconsin Senate took the vote off their calendar for now. It could be taken up again in March.

To support the fight for

public water and for more information:
facebook.com/ OccupyRiverwest

Hands off our public schools!

On Feb. 17, walk-ins sponsored by the Milwaukee Teacher Education Association took place at over 110 K-12 public schools in the city. Walk-Ins were also held in Green Bay, La Crosse, Racine and elsewhere.



PHOTO: JOE BRUSKY

Students, parents, teachers, staff and community supporters held several events before the start of the school day. They then walked into their respective schools as powerful groups. Similar walk-ins took place at over 900 schools across the U.S.

The MTEA and community forces vowed to continue their defiance of a law signed by Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker in July 2015.

Named the "Opportunity Schools Partnership Program" or OSPP, the law states that a set amount of Milwaukee schools on an annual basis would be deemed "failures" and taken over and run by a commissioner to be appointed by the Milwaukee County executive. A commissioner would have parallel authority with the elected Milwaukee Public School Board but be accountable only to the county executive.

Other outrageous language in the OSPP states that all 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 be represented by a union.

Only mass resistance, including school defense actions, mass walk-ins, packing school board meetings and other resistance

led by the MTEA's social justice orientation and community forces, has stopped the law from being implemented.

The MTEA is also demanding that the state properly fund the district, put an end to charter schools and privatization, and stop starving public schools. The MTEA followed up the walk-in actions with a mass labor and community march to the county courthouse in Milwaukee on 3 Feb. 20. □

Class struggle in Wisconsin since 2011

On Feb. 10, 2011, students and workers began to lead the historic occupation of the state Capitol building in Madison, Wis., to oppose the racist, union busting, Act 10 legislation.

Ushering in one of the largest uprisings in the U.S. since the 1930's, for weeks tens of thousands of workers and oppressed peoples occupied buildings and marched in Madison in efforts to kill Act 10. Dozens of solidarity actions took place worldwide, including a one-day shutdown of the West Coast docks by International Longshore and Warehouse Union members.

Ultimately, moderate or reactionary union leaders tied to the Democratic and Republican parties maneuvered to steer the state Capitol occupation into the electoral arena. They launched a failed recall campaign against Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker to counter various sectors of the working class who wanted direct actions, including shutting down various capitalist industries or engaging in a full-blown general strike. Act 10 was ultimately rammed through the racist, right-wing, Wisconsin legislature and signed into law by Walker.

Since this major defeat for working-class and oppressed peoples, over the past five years Wall Street's political servants in the Legislature and Walker

himself have engaged in vicious Jim Crow capitalist austerity, overturning or eviscerating numerous laws benefiting workers and communities, laws that were won as concessions to the masses through direct class struggle in the 1960's, the 1930's and before.

These included the biggest cuts to K-12 and higher education in Wisconsin history and the expansion of charter schools statewide. Numerous forms of deregulation and privatization were implemented. Environmental protections were reduced.

Most provisions of prevailing wage were reduced, "right-to-work" for less was implemented, tenure for faculty in the University of Wisconsin system was eliminated and civil service protections were gutted. Unemployment benefits were reduced while drug testing for welfare recipients was implemented. Planned Parenthood was defunded.

Capitalist austerity creating gravediggers

But because they've fought back, the masses in Wisconsin are learning.

In his "Lecture On The 1905 Revolution" to a gathering of working-class youth in Zurich, Switzerland, V.I. Lenin wrote: "The real education of the masses can never be separated from the independent, the political and particularly from

the revolutionary struggle of the masses themselves. Only the struggle educates the exploited class. Only the struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizon, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will; and therefore, even reactionaries had to admit that the year 1905, the year of the struggle, the 'mad year,' definitely buried patriarchal Russia." ("The Revolution of 1905," Jan. 1917)

The austerity in Wisconsin has been fought by the masses every step of the way, in particular by those who were youth and students in 2011 but are now militant and class conscious workers. Many are becoming leaders, identify with socialism or are growing into communists.

These emerging leaders have known nothing but austerity and war, and have no future under capitalism. They are beginning to move to offensive battles as they learn that for the working class to achieve any victory and in particular to achieve socialism, the masses must not be locked into a series of unending defensive battles.

This is bolstered by a new wave of militant, oppressed youth and students in Black Lives Matter formations such as Young, Gifted and Black in Madison and the Coalition For Justice in Milwaukee,

immigrant rights organizations such as Youth Empowered in the Struggle (YES) and Indigenous youth fighting for their sacred lands and artifacts. Other highlights of class struggle include the successful Amalgamated Transit Union Local 998 and United Auto Workers Local 833 strikes in 2015.

These developments since 2011 are part of an uneven but ongoing process of longtime workers and oppressed peoples across the state becoming increasingly more skeptical of the Democratic Party's ability to deliver any relief for the masses. They are looking for alternatives to the absolute misery and destruction inflicted on them by the banks, corporations and their political servants. Any illusions that the capitalist system can be reformed have been shattered.

In the "Communist Manifesto," Karl Marx wrote: "What the bourgeoisie produces, above all, are its own gravediggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable."

It's in this spirit that, despite the unrelenting austerity in Wisconsin at the present time, during the first week of the five-year anniversary of the 2011 state Capitol occupation, numerous class battles were raging and erupting, including the 50,000-strong "Day Without Latinos" on Feb. 18 in Madison. □

Flint residents demand water justice

By Martha Grevatt
Flint, Mich.

“Rebuild Flint” was the theme of a mass demonstration Feb. 19 called by TV Judge Greg Mathis, originally from Detroit; the Rev. Jesse Jackson; and Flint’s Concerned Pastors for Social Action. One media source estimated there were “thousands,” mostly Flint residents. (mlive, Feb. 19) The church that hosted the pre-march rally was overflowing.

The strongest message on signs, shirts and hoodies was “Flint Lives Matter,” linking the brutality of trigger-happy police with the environmental racism that contaminated Flint’s drinking water and perpetuated the lie that it was drinkable.

Marchers chanted “Fix the pipes now!” and “No pipes, no peace!” Another popular chant, referring to the criminal governor who allowed this disaster to happen, was “Snyder’s got to go!”

This was the largest action so far in the growing movement to demand justice for this majority-Black city. The whole world now knows how Flint was lead-poisoned by a racist governor, aided by governor-appointed dictators called emergency managers and cronies with no scientific background at the misnamed Department of Environmental Quality.

The main demand of the demonstration was to replace all the corroded pipes and to start right now. “We’re sick and tired of being sick and tired of being sick and tired,” said Pastor Allen Overton of Concerned Pastors. “Today we serve no-

tice that we are sick and tired of bottled water.”

Judge Mathis demanded the \$600 million in federal aid that the U.S. Senate is debating be released. Referring to the state budget surplus, he led the crowd in this chant, “The surplus is for us!” Rev. Jackson demanded lead testing be made available for everyone.

Because toxic Flint water was allowed to go untreated for 18 months, letting lead leach into the water supply, all the pipes are corroded and the water infrastructure needs to be rebuilt to make Flint’s drinking water safe again. Between the budget surplus and the “rainy day” fund, the state has at least \$1 billion and could begin the process now. But the Legislature and Gov. Rick Snyder, who finally acknowledged the lead problem in October and declared a state of emergency in January, are sitting on the funds.

“Today we stand up for environmental justice, we stand up for ourselves, we stand up for our rights,” said Melissa Mays, founder of Water You Fighting For. “At the end of the day we’re sick, we’re tired, we’re broke, we’re fed up, but at the end of this march we will all know we are not victims. We are fighters.” Mays and her three children are all sick as a result of the water contamination.

After the march, which ended at the water plant, there was a second militant rally. Kristin Moore, speaking on behalf of Flint Mayor Karen Weaver, said, “The fight will not be over until we have new pipes.”

The latest water-related tragedy in Flint is the death of two teenagers who died after smoking marijuana through a water-based bong. Lead residue accumulated in the water pipe during the 18 months residents were told the water was safe. Inhaling the metal, unsafe at any level, caused their deaths. The death toll is now at least 11, counting nine people who died from a Legionnaires’ disease outbreak blamed on the water.

Solidarity for Flint’s besieged people

The Baltimore People’s Power Assembly held a Flint solidarity demonstration Feb. 19 and the New York City PPA followed suit on Feb. 21. A demonstration is planned in Los Angeles for Feb. 25. Activists hold weekly pickets of the governor’s condo in Ann Arbor, calling for his arrest. A mass convergence on the state Capitol is planned.

The state is not meeting even the minimal needs of the population for bottled water, despite activating Michigan National Guard troops and using fire stations as water distribution centers. Solidarity donations from churches, mosques, synagogues, unions, schoolchildren, celebrities, individuals and even prisoners are keeping residents alive.

Underserved communities — the undocumented, people with limited mobility and those in the poorest neighborhoods — still depend on dedicated volunteers who go into their homes and do needs assessments.

Flint was already suffering before being

poisoned. The city had the highest poverty rate in Michigan at over 40 percent. Almost 20 percent of the population of “Vehicle City” has no access to a vehicle.

GM and the ‘system that poisoned Flint’

Flint’s job crisis was the subject of a front-page story in the Feb. 21 Detroit Free Press. Every zip code in the city has lost jobs since 1998, with zip code 48505 losing 72 percent. Half the working population must travel over 25 miles to get to work in the suburbs.

General Motors stripped Flint, the city where it was founded, of most of the jobs that made Flint a prosperous working-class city of 200,000. That and the foreclosure crisis drove half the population away. The protest march passed by the former site of the Buick City complex, opened in 1985 with a workforce of 28,000, only to be shuttered and demolished seven years later. More than 150 businesses have closed in Flint, many as a consequence of GM’s pullout.

Members of Detroit’s Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs received many positive comments to a leaflet calling for Snyder’s arrest and demanding GM pay \$4 billion — out of its \$9.7 billion record profits for 2015 — in reparations to Flint.

Activists distributed Workers World newspapers with Flint coverage and analysis, while youth organizers with FIST — Fight Imperialism, Stand Together — passed out 500 flyers entitled “Fight the system that poisoned Flint!” □

Lead in the street, lead in the sink

By Thomas Answeeney
Baltimore

On Feb. 19, protesters with People’s Power Assemblies demonstrated here outside the Margaret Brent Elementary School in solidarity with Flint, Mich. They also spoke out against the ongoing lead problem in Baltimore. Since 2007, all water fountains in Baltimore public schools have been shut off. Students are offered bottled water, but that’s not enough. In many neighborhoods people still drink tap water in their homes. Even carbon filters used in pitchers only remove 52 percent of the lead, according to one study.

Ariane McBride, Baltimore parent of five children, said, “It’s absolutely ridiculous that the city has done nothing to fix this. You think about all the mental and emotional problems lead poisoning causes. It really damns these kids for life. It’s not just new pipes we need. We need social services, counselors.”

Martha Grevatt, who was part of the Detroit Workers World delegation to the Flint rally the same day, spoke via telephone to the Baltimore crowd. Describing conditions in Flint and the demands being made by the people, she noted that at least 11 people have died as a result of the crisis, including two teenagers on Feb. 14. The people there demand the arrest and prosecution of those responsible, including former emergency manager of Flint Darnell Earley (Democrat), as well as Gov. Rick Snyder (Republican).

Elder C.D. Witherspoon, president of the Baltimore Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, gave a riveting condemnation of Gov. Snyder and other officials involved in both cri-

ses: “It’s funny how [Snyder] calls this his ‘Katrina.’ [People] were very, very aware of the state of those levies in New Orleans. But they were even more aware of lead in Flint. There was never any question of being able to evade this. This was not an act of nature! This was an act of genocide!”

New York City: commemorate Malcolm X

Activists in New York with the People’s Power Assembly, Black Lives Matter and environmental justice groups commemorated the 51st anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X with a rally and march to demand justice for the people of Flint and to oppose environmental racism. The march went from the Harlem State Office Building to Harlem Hospital.

“Wake up and fight back! There’s no greater message on this anniversary of the assassination of the most shining, brilliant, brave prince of the Black Liberation Struggle to take to the people,” PPA activist Larry Holmes said. “We say jobs are a right. A decent wage is a right. Clean water is a right, too. That is a part of the struggle against racism.”

Brenda Ryan contributed to this article.



Above, Baltimore. Below, Harlem, New York.

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Zika, microcephaly and global climate change

By Lyn Neeley

Are deforestation and global climate change responsible for the Zika crisis sweeping across equatorial countries in the Western Hemisphere? Are spikes in microcephaly and Guillain-Barre caused by the mosquito-born Zika virus, the insecticide pyriproxyfen or a combination of factors?

“Deforestation has an important part to play in the re-emergence of many ... pathogens” such as Ebola and Zika, claims Robert Wallace, evolutionary biologist and public health expert. His forthcoming book is called “Big Farms Make Big Flu: Dispatches on Infectious Disease, Agribusiness, and the Nature of Science.” Wallace says that many mosquito-borne flaviviruses have re-emerged: Dengue, yellow fever, Chikungunya and malaria. (TheRealNews.com, Feb. 12)

Transnational corporations backed by big finance, and government and private investments by agribusiness, banks and others drive deforestation. Wallace says, “They are all land grabbing, all accelerating the deforestation and development with real world consequences upon the resulting epidemiologies. ... New York and London, among other sources of capital paying for deforestation, [are creating] the world’s worst hot spots.”

Scientists are reluctant to link climate change to Zika, Wallace explained: “It could lead to career suicide. Government agencies are in a tight spot politically, reluctant to fund studies that might ... link [the] broader economy to global warming and deforestation.”

Forests are complex ecosystems that have evolved over millions of years. Mosquito-borne viruses are kept in check by the diversity of forest species. Although the forest can harbor many infections, it is hard for mosquito-borne viruses to find a large number of hosts and multiply.

Deforestation rips out the forest, replacing it with cities and monocultures, which are ripe with hosts for mosquito-borne viruses. In these “wastelands,” mosquitoes can reproduce rapidly, says Wallace. Pools of water allow females to

deposit their eggs and produce billions of offspring.

A virus is a protein shell surrounding RNA. When allowed to proliferate, viruses evolve quickly because they multiply rapidly and because RNA is unstable, they mutate easily. Scientists don’t know how they evolve, which makes developing vaccines difficult.

Deforestation increases global warming. Trees store carbon and contribute to an animal-friendly atmosphere by producing oxygen and removing carbon dioxide through continual photosynthesis. Slashing and burning forests releases stored carbon dioxide and reduces photosynthesis worldwide. “Deforestation in tropical rainforests adds more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere than [all] ... cars and trucks on the world’s roads.” (Scientific American, Oct. 13, 2012)

Many mosquitoes live in warm climates near the equator, but as warmer weather increases toward the poles, so do habitats in which pathogen-carrying mosquitoes can thrive. Infectious pathogens have existed for thousands of years, but have become a critical problem with global climate change.

Women and poor people hit hardest

Zika mutated quickly when it left the forest and island-hopped around the Equator. Today’s Zika virus stems from a relative that infected Polynesia two years ago.

The World Health Organization predicts there will be 4 million cases of Zika in the Americas by the end of 2016. Hit hardest are people living in Brazil, the epicenter, and the surrounding countries with high poverty and unemployment rates. People can’t afford preventative measures like air conditioning, window screens and insect repellants. Some 85 percent of Haitians can’t afford electricity.

Insecticides are controversial in both their possible harmful effects on humans and their ability to wipe out insects that quickly develop resistance to the poisons. Conservatives and some health officials propose using DDT to control Zika. The U.S. government banned DDT in 1972 because it was

harmful to animals and humans.

Health officials in several countries are asking women to delay having babies because of the suspected link between Zika-infected pregnant women and the spike in infants born with microcephaly. Yet contraceptives and abortions are expensive and hard to access in these mostly Catholic countries. Abortions are tightly restricted; women can be imprisoned for having them.

On Feb. 18 the Pope conceded to temporary contraception use, as “the lesser of two evils,” but repudiated abortion. Previously, the church only condoned the often unreliable “rhythm method” of contraception. If Zika can spread through sexual activity, the rhythm method is useless.

What causes microcephaly?

In Brazil, the Zika virus has been found in microcephalic fetuses’ brain tissue and surrounding amniotic fluid. “Before the [Zika] outbreak, the seven states in tropical northeast Brazil where microcephaly first appeared reported about 40 cases [annually]. By Nov. 17, just those seven states had 400 reported cases.” (New York Times, Feb. 19)

Zika has also been linked to Guillain-Barre, a rare disorder in which the immune system attacks nerve cells. It can develop into complete paralysis and lead to death. Twice the usual number of cases have been reported in Colombia since the Zika outbreak there. Brazil, El Salvador and Venezuela have seen similar spikes, which also happened in Polynesia.

Dr. Juan Manuel Anaya believes that Zika is involved in almost all the Guillain-Barre cases seen in Cucuta, Colombia, where the virus has been found in some victims’ blood or urine. Viral infections often trigger Guillain-Barre. Anaya is launching a study at the Universidad del Rosario into the possible link of Guillain-Barre to Zika, which will look at previous exposures to toxins or other viruses. (National Public Radio, Feb. 19)

Pesticides also suspect

Argentinian scientists reported on Feb. 3 that microcephaly may be caused

by the insecticide pyriproxyfen, added to Brazil’s drinking water a year and a half ago to kill Zika-carrying mosquitoes. Dr. Medardo Ávila Vázquez’s team wrote, “Malformations detected in thousands of children from pregnant women living in areas where the Brazilian state added pyriproxyfen to drinking water is not a coincidence.”

These researchers, who call themselves “Physicians in Crop-Sprayed Towns,” noted that previous Zika epidemics did not cause newborn microcephaly, even where 75 percent of the population were infected. Sumitomo Chemical Company, a Monsanto partner, manufactures pyriproxyfen. (tinyurl.com/gqej4br)

The Cuban newspaper Granma noted on Feb. 10, “The most disadvantaged will continue to suffer the consequences of major pharmaceutical companies, which deal with profit, not a viable solution to stop the possible pandemic outbreaks of diseases, especially those affecting poor nations.”

Socialist Cuba, renowned for its public health programs, has prevented a Zika outbreak by monitoring fevers and carrying out an aggressive campaign against Aedes aegypti, the Zika-carrying mosquito. Nonbiodegradable containers, used tires and plastic bags that collect water make ideal habitats for mosquitoes to lay their eggs.

One of the first countries to develop biotechnology companies, Cuba now exports biotech and medical products and vaccines to five continents. Cuban infants are immunized against 13 diseases using mostly Cuban-made vaccines. They have eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV-AIDS and syphilis and paved the way for generations to live free from those diseases.

“Cuba is famously proactive when it comes to fighting tropical diseases — acquiring experience that will be useful now that the whole world is turning into the tropics,” wrote the Feb. 2 Nation magazine. Last year, El Salvador suffered 50,000 cases of dengue and the Dominican Republic had 17,000 with 103 fatalities. But Cuba had 1,641 cases and no deaths. This shows what’s possible in a socialist country. □

present, the number of civilians killed has been 26,000 and 29,000 wounded. Overall, the wars of aggression in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan have killed approximately 210,000 civilians, according to the Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs at Brown University, while other sources estimate this number as being much higher, especially with regard to the casualties in Iraq.

U.S. forces have suffered approximately 2,326 deaths and 20,083 maimed and wounded in Afghanistan. Civilian contractors employed by the U.S. have had 1,173 fatalities. Among both Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans there is an average of 22 suicides a day, besides thousands of veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse. (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, statistical breakdowns for 2014-2015)

Despite the continuation of a U.S. presence, Washington has been losing out in Afghanistan. Units from both the Afghan army and police forces are defecting to the insurgents and some have been turning their weapons on their officers and on U.S. instructors. □

U.S. continues endless war in Afghanistan

By Carl Lewis

Using smoke and mirrors in Afghanistan, the Obama administration is seeking to convince the world that there will be “an eventual drawdown” of U.S. and NATO forces. A closer look at U.S. imperialism’s strategic goals of a “pivot to Asia” reveals that the 15-year war’s goals include obtaining an economic foothold in Central Asia. Afghanistan borders Iran, Pakistan, China and the rich oil and gas resources of the former Soviet republics in Central Asia.

This geopolitical strategy is consistent with the so-called New Silk Road Policy announced by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2011 with the object of gaining economic hegemony over Russia, China and Iran. The U.S. occupation of Afghanistan has always been a profit-driven war of economic conquest and plunder.

Since 2001, U.S. foreign policy has aimed at regime change in that region to bring in governments subservient to U.S. interests. By passing the “Authorization for Use of Military Force” resolu-

tion soon after the Sept. 11, 2001, events, Congress allowed the president to bypass congressional authorization for declaring war. This facilitated U.S. interventions throughout the region against any government it deemed an obstacle to imperialist interests.

In an interview with USA Today on Dec. 29, Army Gen. John Campbell exposed the truth about the so-called withdrawal from Afghanistan: “My intent would be to keep as much as I could for as long as I could.” Campbell said he was confident the Obama administration would go along with his assessments. “Every time I have gone to the President and said, ‘I need X,’ I have been very, very fortunate that he’s provided that. So he has been very flexible.”

This “flexibility” has cost the working class and the oppressed \$1 trillion for 15 years of this unjust and criminal occupation of Afghanistan. Before transferring out of his command, Gen. Campbell testified and told Congress that Afghanistan still needed U.S. support at the same level and would need it for years. The Obama administration reacted by

increasing ground troops and drone attacks in Afghanistan.

Human costs of the war

The enormous waste of human lives, especially among Afghan civilians, is the price paid for continuing this war. In October of 2015, Washington announced a reversal of its “exit strategy.” The Pentagon will keep the level of ground troops, excluding “Special Operation Units,” to approximately 10,000. This was also to be accompanied by greater reliance on air strikes by traditional aircraft and the intensification of the use of drones.

The result of the increase in the use of U.S. airpower was demonstrated with the horrific attack last October on the hospital in Kunduz operated by Doctors Without Borders. There, a U.S. AC-130 Flying Gunship killed 42 patients and staff. Doctors Without Borders demanded an independent investigation of this atrocity, which they described as a war crime.

Overall, the number of civilian deaths and casualties has reached a staggering and numbing amount: from 2001, the beginning of the U.S. invasion, to the

Obama plans unprecedented visit to Cuba

By Cheryl LaBash

President Barack Obama is scheduled to visit Cuba on March 21-22. He is the first sitting U.S. president to do so since Calvin Coolidge, 88 years ago in 1928. Two years after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, Washington first prevented U.S. residents from seeing Cuba for themselves by imposing restrictions — in force except from 1977-1982 — on those who wanted to traverse the fabled 90 miles from Key West, Fla., by ferry or the short plane ride on a charter flight from Miami.

During that period, it took a struggle to confront, circumvent or defy the U.S. regulations banning travel to Cuba. Cuba is still the only place on the globe where a special U.S. government-granted license is required before traveling. The license is still required, even if now the restriction means checking a box and certifying that your personal visit to Cuba falls into one of 12 permitted categories.

Looking back, travel to Cuba has been dangerous, even deadly. The first mid-air bombing of a commercial passenger aircraft was of Cubana 455 in 1976, as it left Barbados. The architect of the plane bombing, anti-Cuban terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, still lives freely in Miami under U.S. protection. Agencies organizing travel to Cuba located in New Jersey and Florida have been bombed by terrorist groups.

The U.S. ban forbids travel and threatens to punish those who dare to go to Cuba. In 1961, soon after the U.S. broke diplomatic relations and initiated the economic, commercial and financial blockade, noted African-American journalist William Worthy was arrested and jailed in Florida for traveling to Cuba



Demonstration against the blockade.

without a passport — the U.S. had refused to renew Worthy's passport after he filed stories from the Soviet Union and People's China.

Beginning in 1969 with the Vencermos Brigades, hundreds of revolutionary youth defied the blockade by traveling through Mexico or Canada to do volunteer work to support the Cuban Revolution. This defiance became a movement. Some even made the trip to Cuba on a converted cattle ship that encountered stormy seas.

In those early years — and every subsequent year — the VB participants openly declared they were traveling to Cuba in defiance of the travel ban. One early brigadista's notes and literature were seized at the Canadian border on her return, but she still proudly displays the machete she used to cut sugarcane.

In one of the most dangerous moments in Cuba's history, counterrevolutions in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe restored capitalism to socialist Cuba's main trading partners. Cuba lost the buffer of partners it traded with on the basis of solidarity. At that time, in the early 1990s, the unprecedented U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade fell full force on Cuba and its people. Those difficult years were re-

ferred to as “the Special Period.”

Despite incredible suffering and shortages caused by the sudden sharp crisis, socialist Cuba closed not a single school or hospital, for which the Cubans are rightly proud. When the Cuban socialist planners decided to expand tourism to relieve the economic crash, CIA-trained, U.S.-based paramilitaries launched a wave of terror bombings on Cuban hotels and restaurants.

At that grave moment, the Rev. Lucius Walker, from the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization, proposed to mobilize Pastors for Peace Friendshipment solidarity caravans. Starting in 1992, these caravans traveled throughout the U.S. and gathered humanitarian aid to take to Cuba to symbolically break the U.S. blockade and travel ban.

Pictures of U.S. Border Patrol agents wrestling — out of the hands of ministers to block the Friendshipment and of the “Little Yellow School Bus,” which was held at the Texas border with hunger strikers on board, are now iconic in the struggle to show solidarity with the Cuban Revolution.

Many who visited Cuba, especially those who took part in solidarity actions with the VB or Friendshipment Caravans, will attest to the enduring personal impact that seeing Cuba had on them.

Even Miami-based attorney Antonio Zamora, who actually took up arms against the Cuban revolution in the 1961 U.S. Bay of Pigs invasion at Playa Girón, was changed by a visit. Zamora was captured in 1961 and served two years in Cuban prisons until he was repatriated to the U.S. He then helped to found the virulently anti-revolution Cuban American National Foundation.

Zamora wrote in his book, “What I Learned about Cuba by Going to Cuba,” that the word in 1995 in Miami was that counterrevolution in Cuba was in full swing, fueled by the privations of the Special Period. Urged by his spouse, Zamora decided to see for himself. He found to his surprise that the right wing in Miami had been lying. Although Cuba was facing great economic stresses, it was a country functioning normally: Cubans attended school and went to work.

Strikingly different from what he saw on visits to other Latin American countries, where armed military and police patrol everywhere, the calm in Cuba was not enforced by state repression against the people. That visit changed Zamora's view of Cuba and his actions.

Now is the time to end the blockade

The National Network on Cuba, the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity and IFCO/Pastors for Peace all issued statements regarding Obama's visit. The statements all called for heightened popular action to end the U.S. blockade of Cuba, to take place on March 21-22 and continue with Days of Action in Washington, D.C., on April 18-22.

The NNOC statement asserts: “The majority of United States people want normal diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba. The majority of United States people see Cuba in a favorable light according to a recent Gallop poll. We must remind our elected officials in Washington that it is time for them to take action to end all aspects of the blockade. Let's show Washington our faces; let's make Washington hear our voices. We are the people who want and demand a just policy toward Cuba.” □

Left forces lead protests in Moldova, face police repression

By Greg Butterfield

On Feb. 15, seven anti-fascist political prisoners in Chisinau, the capital of the eastern European country of Moldova, were brutalized in court by armed riot police, while a three-judge panel looked on. The prisoners are leaders of a popular uprising against a pro-West, oligarch-backed regime.

The movement sweeping Moldova has a powerful left, anti-fascist and anti-imperialist wing. Because of this — and despite the country's modest size — this movement threatens to upset the reactionary tide throughout the region, built up over decades by Washington/Wall Street and the Western European imperialist powers.

Moldova, a former republic of the Soviet Union, is a small country of about 3.5 million people in eastern Europe. To its north and east is Ukraine, where a U.S.-backed coup powered by fascist gangs seized power two years ago, unleashing a war on Russia's western border. To its south is Romania, a member of the NATO military alliance ruled by a U.S. puppet regime.

One of the prisoners, Grigory Petrenko, leader of the leftist Red Bloc party, had his wrists “cut to the bone” by his handcuffs as he was dragged from the courthouse, according to his spouse, Lilia Petrenko. (INews.md, Feb. 16)

Another prisoner, Pavel Grigorchuk, youth leader and editor of the communist news site Grenada.md, was dragged headfirst down a flight of stairs. Others were dragged by their feet.

Outside, more than 1,000 protesters held an angry but peaceful demonstration,



Demonstration surrounding courthouse in Chisinau, Moldova, defends political prisoners.

surrounding the courthouse and blocking traffic. Later, masked riot police, carrying shields and swinging clubs, attacked the action. (MoldNews.md, Feb. 15)

The political prisoners — including Petrenko, Grigorchuk, Mikhail Amerberg, Alexander Roshko, Andrei Druz, Oleg Buzni and Vladimir Zhurata — were violently arrested on Sept. 6, during a protest against the Western-backed government dominated by oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc.

The prisoners, known collectively as the “Petrenko Group,” were denied release by the judicial panel on Feb. 15 — despite four leading European parliamentarians agreeing to serve as their guarantors, which under Moldovan law is sufficient for pretrial release.

After the judges announced their decision, the political prisoners held a sit-down protest. Armed police in riot gear swept the media from the courtroom, pushing reporters, family members and friends of the prisoners down corridors and stairs before brutalizing the prisoners. The attack in the courtroom was captured on a cellphone video.

The prisoners raised their fists outside and chanted in solidarity with the protesters as they were herded into a police van to be returned to jail. Demonstrators surrounded the van, rocking it, until forced back by truncheon-wielding riot cops.

Popular uprising against oligarchy

Moldova is also in the throes of a popular uprising against oligarchy and neo-liberal reforms.

On Jan. 20, dramatic footage was broadcast around the world of protesters entering and occupying the Parliament building in Chisinau, as a new government headed by Prime Minister Pavel Filip was sworn in two days after receiving the U.S. State Department's blessing.

The current wave of protests was sparked in 2015 with the revelation that leading politicians appointed by the country's top oligarch and political kingmaker, Vlad Plahotniuc, had embezzled more than \$1 billion from Moldova's banking system.

At first, in early 2015, the protests were dominated by pro-“Euro-integration” forces, including the ultraright, which seeks the country's merger with Romania. But in the summer of 2015, the recently formed Red Bloc party led a working-class campaign to turn back government-mandated utility-rate and fuel-price hikes. This party includes independent leftists and communists who had

left or been expelled from the old Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova.

Red Bloc leadership turns the tide

The Red Bloc campaign spread like wildfire. Pensioners, students and workers occupied city halls and held mass assemblies in towns and villages across the country. The regime was forced to step back and temporarily halt the rate hikes.

In Chisinau, the Red Bloc erected a tent city outside Plahotniuc's home and staged protests at his businesses and media holdings. At this time, Red Bloc leader Petrenko was cast as “Public Enemy No.1” by oligarch-controlled media.

This mobilization of the working class, rooted in the anti-fascist traditions of Soviet times, began to shift the center of gravity in the protests toward those who favor friendly relations and economic partnership with Russia. They reject the NATO military alliance and oppose unification with pro-West Romania.

The Red Bloc began to build a pole of attraction in the movement of the left, anti-fascist and anti-EU forces. Since a protest of tens of thousands in central Chisinau on Sept. 6, which is where seven Red Bloc activists were arrested, a class-struggle-based movement headed by the Red Bloc has overtaken the pro-Euro-integration forces. The left pole has been playing the leading role in the recent mass demonstrations against the new regime, which, as before, is dominated by protégés of Plahotniuc.

The shift in momentum is clearly visible in the words and actions of the pro-

Continued on page 10

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Tear down the walls!

At last. After 43 years and 10 months banished to a 6-by-9-foot cell by Louisiana prison authorities, Albert Woodfox was released — on Feb. 19, his 69th birthday. Woodfox's bravery, strength and integrity inspired his many supporters worldwide.

The Angola 3 — Woodfox, Robert King and Herman Wallace, all African Americans — were exiled to solitary confinement for decades for protesting racial oppression inside the hellhole known as Angola prison. (See article in this week's WW by Gloria Rubac.) Their case and that of African-American journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, also isolated for decades, among others, put a global spotlight on U.S. prisons' use of this heinous practice and other torturous treatment of prisoners..

Woodfox describes the horrors of prolonged isolation, causing some prisoners to be catatonic, scream or self-mutilate. At times, he suffered from claustrophobia and panic attacks. But Woodfox avidly read newspapers, watched television news and thought about politics. He says prisoners who could not read or write suffered even more, as they had no mental diversions.

"Solitary confinement is the most torturous experience a human being can be put through in prison. It's punishment without ending. It is evil. We have to stop this," Woodfox told the Guardian newspaper on Feb. 20. Woodfox vows to direct all his efforts to "ending the barbarous use of solitary confinement."

The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world, with 2.3 million prisoners. Some 80,000 are held in solitary confinement. This racist criminal (in) justice system disproportionately jails African Americans and Latinos/as, who together make up the majority of inmates and are more likely to be banished for years in isolation.

Not only must solitary confinement be ended, but the entire rotten prison system needs to be uprooted. Decades ago the founder of Workers World Party, Sam Marcy, called prisons "concentration camps for the poor." The poorest and most oppressed people make up the vast majority of those behind bars, victims of both capitalist exploitation of the working class and the added-on national oppression that comes from this country's racist history of slavery and imperialist expansion.

Marcy's understanding of the state was based on Marxism: the repressive appa-



Albert Woodfox walks out of prison.

ratus, including prisons, has been erected to protect capitalist property and ensure that the wealthy can continue to squeeze ever-greater profits out of the labor of the working class. The state's role is also to suppress struggle and resistance. The greater the gap between rich and poor, the more workers and oppressed people end up in prison.

To rebel is justified

WWP set up the Prisoners Solidarity Committee some 45 years ago in solidarity with prisoners rising up against their horrific conditions. During the heroic Attica uprising in 1971, which New York officials brutally repressed, prisoners invited the PSC to come to the prison and tell their story to the world.

This newspaper has supported many prisoners' struggles and rebellions in print and on picket lines throughout our history. This is a cornerstone of our political program. WW has backed the Angola 3, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Native prisoner Leonard Peltier, the Move 9, the Cuban 5, Oscar López Rivera, Lynne Stewart, Russell Maroon Shoatz, and hundreds of other political prisoners over the years.

WW hailed the courageous hunger strikers in California's correctional facilities. Hundreds of prisoners at Pelican Bay State Prison led the first action in July 2011. They sought humane treatment and an end to solitary confinement and other "intense torture." Quickly, more than 6,000 inmates at 11 prisons joined them. Despite repressive policies meant to stop just such resistance and collective action, the will to resist prevailed. Two summers later, 30,000 prisoners in isolation and general population throughout the state's penal system joined two hunger strikes.

This newspaper's editorial page wrote on Sept. 7, 2011, after the first hunger strike: "Prisoners are among the most exploited and repressed workers. ... As the global capitalist economic crisis worsens and jobs disappear, the jail and prison population inside the U.S. will swell with even larger numbers of desperate oppressed workers. In the interest of building the broadest class solidarity, the progressive movement must support the demands and tactics of prisoners, who are an integral sector of the working class."

WW's slogan "Tear down the walls!" was the right one during the Attica rebellion, and it is the right slogan now — with "the new Jim Crow" mass incarceration, warehousing of the jobless, provision of cheap/slave labor for corporations and continuing abuse of prisoners.

We join Albert Woodfox's call to "End solitary confinement in U.S. prisons!" and say: The prisons are the crime! Tear down the walls! □

Commentary

Truce? Keep your guard up

By John Catalinotto

The news that the Obama administration has finally agreed to a partial truce over Syria with Russia did not bring true relief to those concerned about the Syrian people or about the danger of a wider war. The confrontation between nuclear powers was at least postponed, and it may get worse yet. The anti-war and anti-imperialist movement in the United States better stay on the alert.

The Turkish army has been shelling Kurdish areas across the border and threatening invasion. The U.S. neocons are complaining that Bashar al-Assad is still president of Syria. The Saudi Arabian regime is reported to be seeking nuclear weapons. Peace hasn't come yet.

In the corporate media's current coverage of the war on Syria, there is an ongoing attempt to blame the Damascus government for everything that happens to the Syrian people. Stephen Kinzer, a former New York Times correspondent who currently is a senior fellow at the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University, called this coverage "one of the most shameful episodes in the history of the [U.S.] American press." (Boston Globe, Feb. 18)

Since the corporate media's coverage of Syria constantly distorts what is happening there, a review of recent history is necessary. In 2011, after a short period of unarmed protest, a conflict began between the regime on one side and armed reactionary groups of the al-Qaida type on the other. These groups were armed and financed by Saudi Arabia as well as Turkey and other NATO powers, and all were cheered on by the imperialists, including Washington.

The result has been nearly five years of a reactionary international war against Syria's legitimate, sovereign government. Reactionary, sectarian fighters provided the "boots on the ground" against the Damascus government. The warfare has killed more than 250,000 Syrians, about two-thirds of them Syrian soldiers and pro-government civilians, and has driven millions of Syrians into exile, including into Europe, but mostly into the region.

U.S. imperialism and its allies, including the Turkish regime and the Gulf monarchies, are responsible for this horror. It was only in mid-2014, when the Islamic

State group (I.S.) declared a "caliphate" and began to menace imperialist interests in Syria and Iraq, that Washington began to alter its uncritical support for the Syrian opposition.

But even when the U.S. claimed to be attacking the I.S., those in the U.S. establishment who never wanted to relinquish the goal of "regime change" in Syria balked. Despite the propaganda campaign against I.S., little was done to degrade these reactionaries' position in Syria.

It was only last fall, when Russia intervened at Syria's invitation, that the Russian-Iranian-Hezbollah-Syrian offensive began to erode the military position of the Islamic State and al-Qaida-like groups. The neocons and all the imperialist strategists are frustrated by their inability to control events, no matter how much they destroy, as their experience in Iraq, Libya, Yemen and now Syria shows. They are all the more frustrated now that the support of Russia, Iran and Hezbollah for their Syrian ally has improved the chances for a victory over the reactionaries.

In that Boston Globe article, Kinzer argues that only by supporting the Syrian government forces can the Islamic State group be defeated.

Despite Kinzer's rational argument, there is no reason to expect those in power in the U.S. would follow his advice. It would not be the first time in history that militarists overestimated their own ability to control events by using force. Let's not forget that every European imperialist power before World War I believed it could quickly defeat its enemies.

On Jan. 23, while Secretary of State John Kerry was promoting peace talks about Syria, Vice President Joe Biden was in Ankara promising support to the Turkish regime, which had asked the U.S. to be more aggressive in Syria against Russia. Whether this two-sided approach is a negotiating tactic or a sign of a difference in the administration, it leaves the danger of a wider war in place.

Those inside the U.S. who want to fight against war can only take a short breath with the danger of a major war still in view. They had better be ready for whatever happens next, ready to stand up against any U.S., NATO, Turkish or Saudi escalation in their war against Syria and its allies. □

Protests in Moldova

Continued from page 9

Euro-integrationist DA Platform, which at first tried to isolate the left forces. Now, however, the DA Platform has had to adjust its actions in response to mass pressure, and has even joined with the leftists in the Civil Forum coalition calling for unconditional release of the political prisoners, along with early parliamentary elections. (Omega, Feb. 4)

A poll taken after the January protests showed that if parliamentary elections were held soon, the more leftist Party of Socialists and Our Party would win a decisive victory, with the DA Platform coming in third. The current governing parties were far down the list. □



WWPHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Demonstration outside courthouse in Baton Rouge, La., in 2012.

U.S. bombs Libya — again

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

Over 40 people were killed by Pentagon F-15E fighter jets in a bombing operation Feb. 19 in Sabratha, Libya, which was said to have targeted an Islamic State group (I.S.) training camp. The air strike, 50 miles west of Tripoli, was aimed at I.S. operative and Tunisian national Nouredine Chouchane, who had been linked to an attack on the Bardo Museum in neighboring Tunisia in March 2015. He was accused of arranging the arrival of I.S. operatives in Libya.

The Pentagon said Chouchane was killed in the bombing. The attack follows similar airstrikes in June and November aimed at other I.S. leaders.

The Pentagon claimed, “[Chouchane] facilitated the movement of potential [I.S.]-affiliated foreign fighters from Tunisia to Libya and onward to other countries. Destruction of the camp and Chouchane’s removal will eliminate an experienced facilitator and is expected to have an imme-

diate impact on [I.S.]’s ability to facilitate its activities in Libya, including recruiting new [I.S.] members, establishing bases in Libya, and potentially planning external attacks on U.S. interests in the region.” (Associated Press, Feb. 19)

This attack comes amid growing threats by United Nations envoy Martin Kobler to mobilize a 6,000-person military occupation force that would intervene in Libya to impose a proposed unity regime between two rival factions vying for international recognition. The unity accord between the two regimes is designed to pave the way for a deployment of imperialist-led troops with the approval of the militia-backed juntas in both Tripoli and Tobruk.

The proposed United Nations peace-keeping force would be led by Italy and include troops from Britain, France and other allied states. Britain has already said it is planning to launch air strikes inside Libya. (Daily Mail, Jan. 31)

Absent the consolidation of the accord bringing together the two Libyan camps,

the Pentagon will continue to launch air raids and special operations strikes against rebel leaders.

Obama escalates Pentagon role in Africa

The Obama administration has come under criticism for its war against Libya in 2011. Over the last seven years, the U.S. has continued its escalation of military interventions and building bases in various areas throughout Africa.

U.S. Africa Command (Africom) troops number in the thousands in the Horn of Africa state of Djibouti, spreading out operations into Somalia and Ethiopia, along the Indian Ocean basin across Central and West Africa, and into the Gulf of Guinea. Pentagon and CIA personnel work in close cooperation with other imperialist states seeking domination of the continent’s governments through trade, diplomatic maneuvering, intelligence penetration and military “partnerships.”

“We will continue to take actions where we’ve got a clear operation and a clear target in mind,” stated President Barack

Obama. “At the same time, we’re working diligently with the United Nations to try to get a government in place in Libya. And that’s been a problem.” (New York Times, Feb. 16)

However, the interim regime in Libya designed to merge the competing factions based in Tobruk and Tripoli denounced the bombing by the Pentagon, saying the operation took place without the consultation of either faction. The lack of unity and uniformity of action among the regimes is raising doubts about the viability of the imposed government.

Tunisia, which was designated last year as a significant non-NATO state by the Obama administration, has escalated its security operations aimed at keeping armed groups from entering the country from Libya. Although Tunisia is sometimes called “the only democracy to emerge” from the uprisings in the region during 2011, the government in Tunis has maintained close ties with the Pentagon and with one of its principal allies in the Middle East, the monarchy of Saudi Arabia. □

Guyana commission confirms Burnham gov’t murdered Walter Rodney

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

A long-delayed investigation into the assassination of African-Caribbean historian Walter Rodney (1942-1980) has concluded that former President Forbes Burnham of Guyana was behind his murder.

Although that was the assumption after Rodney was killed by an explosive communication device in his brother’s car on June 13, 1980, the Burnham government claimed that the historian, who led the opposition Working People’s Alliance, died during an attempt to bomb a prison near where the incident took place.

The Commission of Inquiry was convened in 2014, some 34 years after the assassination of Dr. Rodney, a leading figure in the intellectual and political affairs of both Guyana, a small South American country east of Venezuela, and the African world as a whole. His comrades in the Working People’s Alliance, along with the Rodney family and colleagues throughout the international community, have long



demand a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death.

It took the commission two years to complete a 155-page report outlining its findings. However, the struggle for full disclosure is ongoing in Guyana, where tremendous

opposition has for decades demanded a probe into the assassination.

The controversial inquiry began under the previous administration of President Donald Ramotar of the Progressive People’s Party. The People’s National Congress, the ruling party at the time of Rodney’s assassination, has been resistant to cooperating fully with the investigation. Forbes Burnham, who held power in Guyana from 1964 until his death in 1985, was said to have felt threatened by Rodney and the WPA, which sought to bridge the political gap between the majority East Indian and African populations.

All three major political parties in Guyana during the late 1970s and early 1980s

— the ruling PNC, the opposition PPP led by Cheddi Jagan and the WPA headed by Rodney — claimed to be socialist, but efforts by the WPA were clearly aimed at the removal of the Burnham government. Prior to Rodney’s assassination in 1980, the historian and politician was charged, along with other WPA members, with an arson attack on a government facility.

Rodney was facing prosecution on these charges even as he continued to organize and speak out against the PNC administration. Those close to Rodney say he believed there was a plot underway to take his life.

Obstacles to making report public

There was a delay in the printing of the commission report, and it has still not been made fully public or presented to Guyana’s legislative body.

Current Guyana President David Granger, a former commander of the Guyana Defense Forces, held that position at the time of Rodney’s assassination. Granger has been a leading figure in the PNC for years.

The COI report concluded: “Prime Minister Burnham knew of the plan and was part of the conspiracy to assassinate Dr. Walter Rodney. Given all the relevant facts, events and circumstances set out in the report, we unhesitatingly conclude that Gregory Smith was not acting alone but had the active and full support, participation and encouragement of, and/or was aided and abetted by the GPF (Guyana Police Force), the GDF (Guyana Defense Force), agencies of the State and the political directorate in the killing of Dr. Walter Rodney.” (Demerara Waves, Feb. 20)

The COI stated that Smith, an operative of the GDF, carried out the assassination of Rodney and was then sent to nearby French Guiana, a colony of France. Smith is said to have died in 2002.

According to the same article, the released COI report concluded: “We accept that Gregory Smith, renamed Cyril Milton Johnson, received State assistance in going to French Guiana. The choice of country was deliberate and was no doubt informed by the fact that (the) French government, of which French Guiana was a Department, had a policy opposed to the death penalty. In short, it would have been difficult, virtually impossible,

to secure the extradition of Smith/Johnson from French Guiana.”

The independent Justice for Walter Rodney Committee is calling for the full report to be submitted to the Guyana National Assembly as well as the family and supporters of the martyred historian.

The Justice for Walter Rodney Committee is demanding, according to the article, that President Granger “must recognize the historical significance of this inquiry, not only as a means of bringing closure to an aspect of Guyana’s sad history over the last 50 years, but as a measure that, if dealt with properly, can aid the beginnings of the long awaited and lofty ideal of reconciliation, and the expectations of Guyanese at home and abroad for a new beginning.”

Rodney’s contributions to socialist thought

Rodney was a well-known and influential Pan-Africanist and Marxist historian as well as a political activist, who studied at the University of the West Indies and the University of London and held a faculty position for years at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

After working in Tanzania and as a visiting scholar in several higher educational institutions, including the University of Michigan in 1972, Rodney was invited by the University of Guyana to take a faculty position. However, the government of Burnham blocked the appointment in an effort to prevent Rodney from teaching in the country of his birth.

Rodney remained and later organized the WPA, bringing together several left and Pan-African organizations. His presence in Guyana politically challenged the image of the Burnham government, which sought to portray itself as a supporter of African liberation movements and socialism.

At the time of his assassination, Rodney was writing a seminal “History of the Guyanese Working People,” published in incomplete form after his death. His book entitled “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,” initially published by the government of Tanzania in 1972, remains a signature text on the role of imperialism in the continuing struggle for genuine liberation and socialism in Africa and internationally. □

WORKERS WORLD
MUNDO OBRERO ★

Sin virus de Zika, EUA rezagado en salud

*C*ontinúa de página 12

Los estudios realizados por respetadas organizaciones de salud internacionales y nacionales y la preocupada cobertura en los principales medios corporativos no pueden cambiar esta dinámica. La clase dominante empresarial en EUA, con su enorme control sobre el aparato político, ha sido capaz de sabotear constantemente iniciativas gubernamentales que podrían revertir seriamente esta falta, por una razón: ganancias. La concentración de la riqueza en cada vez menos manos tiene prioridad sobre las necesidades humanas.

Esta es la única estadística que está aumentando en una tasa nunca antes vista — la concentración de la riqueza en manos de un pequeñísimo grupo de propietarios corporativos y financieros.

Hay que destacar estas cifras sobre la extrema riqueza capitalista una y otra vez cuando se habla de las condiciones de deterioro para millones de personas.

Ignorar la creciente concentración de la riqueza, oculta la esencia del problema. Los 62 multimillonarios más ricos del mundo, muchos de los cuales utilizan su influencia financiera para controlar la política de Estados Unidos, tienen ahora la riqueza que la mitad más pobre de la población mundial. Su riqueza ha aumentado desmesuradamente. Hace solo cinco años, había 388 súper-ricos cuya riqueza igualaba la de la mitad de la humanidad.

Solo para ampliar esto al 1 por ciento de los más ricos del mundo, ellos ahora poseen más que el otro 99 por ciento combinado.

Este es el principal obstáculo para todo desarrollo humano. □



Libertad para Oscar López Rivera, ¡YA!

Editorial 16 de febrero de 2016

Scalia, Tribunal Supremo y democracia

El juez del Tribunal Supremo Antonin Scalia, conocido por sus decisiones reaccionarias, racistas, anti-mujer, anti-gay y contra la clase obrera, las cuales él disfrazó como eruditas y precisas interpretaciones del texto legal, murió repentinamente el 13 de febrero. Recordando su nombramiento a la corte en 1986, algunos pueden decir que su muerte llegó 30 años muy tarde. Teniendo en cuenta el dicho de que se debe decir solo cosas buenas de los muertos o nada en absoluto, no decimos nada.

Pero sí tenemos algo que decir sobre el Tribunal Supremo de los Estados Unidos (TSEU). Reacciones políticas iniciales a la muerte de Scalia sugieren que habrá una batalla real dentro de la clase dominante — en este caso entre los dos partidos políticos capitalistas grandes — sobre el próximo nombramiento. Se espera que las próximas decisiones del TSEU resultarán en votos de 4-4. La batalla puede ser un conflicto tan amargo como las próximas elecciones presidenciales, aunque una sin el voto popular. La pregunta es: ¿Puede la clase trabajadora entrar en esta batalla interna de la clase dominante con demandas independientes?

De las tres ramas del gobierno de EUA — la rama legislativa, el Congreso; la rama ejecutiva, el Presidente; y la rama judicial, el Tribunal Supremo — el Tribunal Supremo es la menos democrática. Sus miembros no son elegidos, son nombrados por vida por el Presidente y son aprobados por el Senado el cual está compuesto de millonarios, y ha sido el baluarte más estable de opresión y explotación de clase. El TS defendió a los dueños de esclavas/os en el siglo 19 y a los grandes capitalistas y banqueros contra la clase trabajadora y los pueblos oprimidos en los siglos 20 y 21, con solo unas pocas excepciones en tiempos de gran lucha de masas.

En un artículo del 20 de julio de 1989, el presidente del Partido Workers World - Mundo Obrero Sam Marcy escribió que a pesar del proceso de ampliación de los derechos de voto a las/os afroamericanas, mujeres y jóvenes desde que fue escrita la Constitución, “ha habido un proceso social y económico simultáneo que es superior en fuerzas. Ese es el proceso de concentración del poder en instituciones no democráticas. Proviene de la concentración de los medios de producción en manos de una clase dominante que tiene el poder y lo distribuye en las zonas más propicias para ella. Así que no es accidental que el poder en última instancia deba ser ejercido por el Tribunal Supremo. Ese es más fiable para ellos, más conservador y que responde solo a aquellos que les han designado” (Para leer el artículo completo, ver tinyurl.com/hqbw146)

Mientras que los partidos Demócrata y Republicano chocan entre ellos sobre si el Tribunal Supremo debe ser un obstáculo flexible o rígido para el progreso social, la clase trabajadora y los pueblos oprimidos deben utilizar la apertura creada por este conflicto para exponer la naturaleza antidemocrática de la corte y exigir el fin de su papel como órgano designado a defender el dominio de la clase de los súper-ricos. □

Sin virus de Zika, EUA rezagado en salud

Por Sara Flounders

Ahora que la atención está en los recientes nacimientos de más de 4.000 bebés con microcefalia - cabezas anormalmente pequeñas - en Brasil, un país en desarrollo con una historia de opresión colonial y profunda pobreza, es hora de examinar la mortalidad infantil y materna, y la longevidad en EUA, uno de los países más desarrollados y ricos del mundo, pero con un gran número de personas muy pobres y una historia de racismo virulento. Mientras los informes sobre microcefalia se convirtieron en noticias internacionales, el New York Times, el Washington Post y otras fuentes de noticias reportaron el 1 de febrero que, de acuerdo con la Academia Americana de Neurología, se estima que 25.000 recién nacidos reciben un diagnóstico de microcefalia cada año en EUA. A diferencia de Brasil, donde se sospecha que el brote del virus Zika sea la posible causa, aquí no existe esa relación. La microcefalia puede ser causada por muchos factores, pero la prevalencia de microcefalia en EUA debe ser evaluada junto a otras noticias devastadoras en el cuidado de la salud infantil y materna en este país.

Racismo y mortalidad infantil

Estados Unidos tiene la peor tasa de mortalidad infantil de los países industrializados o desarrollados, mayor que cualquiera de los otros 27 países desarrollados, según un informe del Centro para el Control de Enfermedades en 2014. El Washington Post llamó al reporte del CDC una “vergüenza nacional”. (29 de septiembre, 2014)

El informe del CDC encontró altas tasas de bebés con bajo peso al nacer y defectos de nacimiento. La mayoría de estos problemas son causados por nacimientos prematuros, que son muy altos en EUA.

En general, la tasa de mortalidad infantil - bebés que mueren antes de su primer año - en EUA se ha reducido de 9 muertes por cada 1.000 nacidos vivos en 1990 a 6 en 2013. Esta cifra, sin embargo, coloca a EUA detrás de otros 25 países industrializados. Incluso Cuba revolucionaria, que ha estado bajo un bloqueo EUA durante más de medio siglo, tiene una tasa de mortalidad infantil más baja: 4,63 muertes por cada 1.000 nacidos vivos.

Sin embargo, esto no es todo. Para la América blanca, la tasa de mortalidad es de 5,2 muertes infantiles por cada 1.000 nacidos vivos, mientras que para la América negra la tasa es más del doble: 11,5 muertes por cada 1.000 nacimientos. Esto significa que los bebés negros en EUA tienen una tasa de supervivencia más baja que los bebés en otros 64 países, poniéndolos aproximadamente al nivel de Tailandia.

Hay que destacar el papel y la responsabilidad de la clase capitalista por este desastroso fracaso aquí en el centro del imperialismo mundial. El obvio impacto del racismo en todos los niveles de la sociedad de EUA y en todos los niveles de los servicios sociales debe ser combatido.

Muertes maternas aumentan en EUA

En la mayor parte del mundo, las estadísticas de salud están mostrando una

mejora constante. Pero no en EUA. Considere las estadísticas sobre el índice de muertes maternas, calculadas durante y hasta 42 días después del parto.

A nivel mundial se ha producido una constante disminución de la tasa de mortalidad materna. EUA es el único entre los países desarrollados, donde lo contrario es cierto.

Un informe de la CNN el 1 de diciembre de 2015, en base a estudios realizados por la revista médica The Lancet y el Centro para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CCPE), declaró: “Es difícil de comprender cómo los Estados Unidos, una de las naciones más ricas del mundo, es ahora uno de los ocho países - entre ellos Afganistán y Sudán del Sur - donde el número de mujeres que mueren como resultado del embarazo y el parto está subiendo. ...

“En primer lugar, los números: Hace más de 25 años, en 1987, hubo 7,2 muertes maternas por cada 100.000 nacidos vivos en EUA, según el CCPE. En 2011, ese número se duplicó, pasando a 17,8 muertes por cada 100.000 nacidos”.

Los totales crecieron peor aún, a 18,5 muertes maternas por cada 100.000 nacidos vivos, en 2014.

Una mujer en EUA tiene más de 10 veces la probabilidad de morir por una causa relacionada con el embarazo que una mujer en Austria, Bielorrusia o Polonia, según el abarcador informe “Estado de las Madres del Mundo 2015”, publicado por Save the Children. El informe advirtió: “Es el peor rendimiento de cualquier país desarrollado en el mundo”.

Casi todos los comentarios sobre este continuo deterioro en EUA explicaron que en cualquier otro país industrializado, todas las mujeres tenían acceso a la atención médica gratuita o de bajo costo, incluida la anticoncepción.

El deterioro se extiende mucho más allá de los problemas de salud inmediatos.

Aumento de pobreza infantil

La pobreza infantil en EUA es también el peor de los casos en el mundo desarrollado y que crece día a día.

Por primera vez en al menos 50 años, la mayoría de las/os estudiantes de escuelas públicas en todo el país se consideran de “bajos ingresos” y con necesidad de nutrición básica, según un estudio de 2015 por la Southern Education Foundation.

Por supuesto, la creciente pobreza de las/os niños está conectado a la creciente pobreza de sus madres y padres. Todas las familias, pero especialmente las encabezadas por madres solteras, se ven afectadas por salarios que han estado cayendo durante casi 30 años, según un informe del Centro de Investigación Pew.

La esperanza de vida en EUA, a pesar de los impresionantes avances en la ciencia médica, no se ha mantenido al día con el resto del mundo desarrollado. Los EUA se ubican por debajo de otros 41 países en la esperanza de vida.

Dos estudios, uno de la Universidad de Wisconsin que evaluó datos de 1992 a 2006, y el otro de la Universidad de Washington que abarca desde 1985 hasta 2010, encontraron que la esperanza de vida femenina se había estancado o disminuido en un 45 por ciento de los condados de EUA. Aunque los avances en la medicina y la tecnología han prolongado la esperanza de vida y han disminuido las muertes prematuras en general, las mujeres en casi la mitad de los condados en los EUA estaban muriendo cinco años antes de lo que lo hicieran sus madres.

Esta caída por debajo del resto del mundo desarrollado respecto a la mortalidad infantil, en el porcentaje de niñas/os nacidos con defectos congénitos graves, en mortalidad materna y en la esperanza de vida es especialmente alarmante, ya que ha estado ocurriendo bajo condiciones que se consideran normales. Pero al alerta detrás de todos estos estudios está la creciente conciencia de que EUA no está preparado para hacer frente a crisis nuevas o extraordinarias, ya sea el brote de un virus nuevo o no estudiado como el Zika, una catástrofe climática o un colapso económico que causaría más estragos en las vidas de millones de personas que están luchando para apenas sobrevivir.

Continúa página 11

Estados Unidos está por detrás de otras países ricos en la mortalidad infantil

Las tasas de mortalidad infantil en los países de la OCDE, 2010

