Inauguration Day
Unions to protest Trump #J20

By Martha Grewatt

A call for mass, militant protests on Inauguration Day is getting a favorable response from all sectors of the working class. This includes organized labor — notwithstanding the conciliatory, “Give Trump a chance” tone set by AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka and other major union heads right after the presidential election results came out.

The Oregon AFL-CIO and Alameda Labor Council have passed strong resolutions calling their members out on Jan. 20. The Oregon resolution called for “a united front of all those threatened by the Trump presidency.” The Alc “endorse and encourages all members to participate in the nationwide call for protest and actions and a reaffirmation of the power of organized labor on Friday, Jan. 20, the day of the inauguration of President Donald Trump.”

A joint resolution passed by Community and Labor United for Postal Jobs and Services and Communities and Postal Workers United pointed out that “a Trump presidency threatens the deportation of millions of undocumented workers; the exclusion, surveillance, profiling and incarceration of our Muslim sisters and brothers; major restrictions on women’s reproductive rights; the return of anti-LGBTQ laws; and increased harassment, brutalizing and incarceration of Black and Brown people by local police departments. It threatens to support environmentally dangerous projects like the Dakota pipeline, and repression of the Indigenous Nations who are fighting it.”

United Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, voted to send a bus of its members to the counterinaugural in D.C. They are not alone. J20 is all the buzz among AFSCME members in Maryland, United Electrical-represented grocery workers in Vermont, Longshore Workers in California, Communications Workers in New York City and public sector workers in North Carolina.

There will definitely be a strong and very visible labor contingent in D.C.

Don’t give racist Trump a chance!

Some unions, including the United Auto Workers, estimate that a third of their members actually voted for the union-hating bigot who captured the U.S. presidency. That figure was cited by UAW International President Dennis Williams to justify his plans to have a friendly meeting with President-elect Trump. After Williams publicized his intentions — almost immediately after the election results were announced — AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka and other union heads sent Trump letters of congratulations.

These placaters, however, did not score any brownie points for their members with the future president — quite the contrary. Trump has bared his fangs toward organized labor. His nominee for Secretary of Labor Andrew Puzder is CEO of CKE Holdings, the parent

Continued on page 3
By Joe Catron

Between Nov. 25 and Dec. 3, Palestinian and solidarity activists organized over 150 demonstrations, spanning more than 100 cities, 30 countries and six continents, against Hewlett Packard Co., based in Palo Alto, Calif.

The week of action, coordinated by the International Boycott HP Network and the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee, was the largest mobilization of the BDS movement since its founding in 2005.

HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise split last year, but continue to share interlocking branding, governance, supply chains and technology.

Both also hold extensive contracts with the Israeli government, providing services to its checkpoints, military, police and military settlements.

HP companies run the Israeli Navy’s information technology infrastructure used to maintain Israel’s blockade of the Gaza Strip and to manage the population and population registry, prisons and settlements.

In the Gaza Strip — and provide central servers, printers and technology.

But continue to share interlocking branding, governance, supply chains and technology.

The HP boycott also saw immediate gains, as the Peace United Church of Christ in Santa Cruz, Calif., voted Dec. 6 to become the “first HP-free church” in the United States.

As the campaign continues, its organizers ask support to sign a pledge to watch HP goods during their second support their end for Israel.

Samidoun in New York City will hold its protest of HP at the Best Buy in Union Square, East 4th Street and 4th Avenue, starting at 4 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 16.

For more information and announcements, visit Samidoun’s website at samidoun.net and subscribe to its newsletter at epupl.com/X5FkY.

Catron is a member of Al-Awna New York: The Palestinian Right to Return Coalition and an organizer with Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network.

Largest BDS mobilization ever: Boycott Hewlett Packard!

Who are we & 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 workers’ living standards while taking billions out of their jobs. If you’re young, you know they’re stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unrelenting, profit-driven stranglehold on 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 against oppression. Racism, sexism, degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling classes use 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 imperialism’s wars and aggressions.

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Workers World weekly

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Vol. 98, No. 30 • Dec. 22, 2016
Closing Date: Nov. 13, 2016

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Download digest 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, 47 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, N.Y. 10011.
Alameda Labor Council calls for protests

By WW Staff

The Alameda Labor Council, representing unions throughout Alameda County, Calif., has passed a resolution encouraging all unions to organize actions on Jan. 20, the day Donald Trump takes office as U.S. president. The resolution calls for protests to begin on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. 16, and continue until there’s a massive day of action on Inauguration Day, Jan. 20. Citing Trump’s attacks on “the most marginalized” and stressing that it is “the obligation of organized labor to defend our members from attack,” the ACL rally is going to all of members of all affiliated unions in the U.S.

Emily Chen, an Oakland-based union electrician, said of the call, “The presidency of Donald Trump poses a threat to both labor and marginalized communities, including immigrants, people of color, women, disabled and LGBTQ communities. So it is especially offensive that he will be sworn into office in the same week that we celebrate the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights Movement. It is wrong to celebrate these achievements on the one hand and then allow them to be threatened on Friday.” (ACL press release)

The ACL resolution emphasized that the “power of labor is not reliant on the occupant of any political office, up to and including the President of the United States.” The proposed inauguration actions are intended to demonstrate that, regardless of election outcomes and of Trump’s anti-labor cabinet appointments, labor’s real power is in its membership — the power of workers. The ACL characterizes the actions as a “reassertion of the power of organized labor.”

Commenting on the call, labor journalist Sohrab Lari said: “Historically, unions did not rely on elected officials, but instead on organizing and mobilizing workers to act. In recent decades unions became more invested in elections. This year union households did not turn out for the Democratic candidate after the Democrats have repeatedly failed to deliver. Unions must reposition themselves ... as forces of power that are independent of the electoral process.” (ACL press release)

Unions to protest Trump #J20

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Workers World Party announces the launch of J20resist.org — an online resource to help build resistance against racist, sexist Trump and the capitalist system he represents.

Trump’s election has moved thousands of people to take to the streets in anger and disgust. This new wave of activism, drawing its leadership from young people and the most oppressed, has no illusion of being saved by the Democrats. And they’re not willing to “give Trump a chance”!

From city to city, from Standing Rock, N.D., to Charlotte, N.C., people know that struggle and solidarity are the only way out of this capitalist nightmare. So as Trump prepares for his inauguration on Jan. 20, hundreds of thousands of people are preparing to march on Washington, D.C., to shut it down!

J20resist.org is a resource and a tool for building this historic moment of resistance.

J20resist.org is a way for people all over the country to coordinate pushback against Trump and those who enabled his rise to power.

At J20resist.org, groups and individuals can:

Connect up.

Coordinate travel to the D.C. counter-inauguration actions.

Dozens of student walkouts, stayaways, shutdowns, rallies in the U.S. and around the world.

Locate community protests and marches everywhere.

Download templates for protest signs, printable and free.

Organizing an action of your own to coincide with the Jan. 20 inauguration? Post it to J20resist.org to spread the word!

Need help finding a ride to and from D.C.? Check J20resist.org! Don’t want to go to the #J20 protest alone? Use J20resist.org to find on-the-ground resources and a support network!

Want to support others who want to go to #J20?

Make a donation to help even more people travel to D.C. to participate.

On Jan. 20, let’s shut down D.C. with a historic mobilization of the people, united against Trump’s assault on workers and the oppressed.

Let’s fight for the revolution we really need. Now is our time to be in the streets in defense of the most vulnerable.

We say NO to Trump, NO to Clinton, NO to racism, NO to capitalism, NO to war and NO to the two-party system that supports all the above.

On Friday, Jan. 20, we will make sure our collective voice is heard throughout the halls of power and across the world.

Join us at J20resist.org!
Capitalism in crisis

What’s behind Trump cabinet choices

Continued from page 3

vate and religious schools.

Tom Price as secretary of Health and Human Services wants to gut the Affordable Care Act. He is co-sponsor of a bill to grant fetus- es equal protection under the 14th Amendment and is for banning abortion.

Jeff Sessions, as attorney general, is a Republican sen- ator from Alabama whose focus is on ruthless immigration policies. He is a racist advocate of mass incarceration, with the excuse of fighting addictive drugs.

Alien吕ent is a hallmark of Trump cabinet picks. Labor is a fast food CEO who op- oses a federal minimum-wage increase.

Republican Congress member Mike Pompeo, who urged Con- gress to re-establish bulk collec- tion through the National Defense Authorization Act, was named director of the CIA.

Trump’s military choices should be a wake-up call for those who had any illusions that he intended to reverse cuts. There is a less threatening approach than Clinton, who talked of a “no- fly” zone in Syria, expansion of NATO and enticement of Russia and China.

He named Marine Corps Gen. James “Mad Dog” Mattis as sec- retary of Defense, retired Marine Corps Gen. John Kelly as secretary of Homeland Security and retired Army Gen. Michael Flynn as his national security adviser. All of these generals are considered ex- treme militarists, even by Penta- gon standards.

Disbelief in climate change and a strong alliance with the oil and coal industries are the qualifica- tions of Cathy McMorris Rodgers, to head the Interior Department. She supports drilling on Native American treaty lands and opening untouched federal lands. Scott Pruitt as administrator of the Environmental ProtectionAgency is a “friend of American business” and an end to regulations.

To anyone concerned with the environment, the warmongering, the climate change denial and the attack on government institutions in the Middle East, Russia, China, Venezuela and beyond.

The way forward

The fierce struggle in the ruling class that is emerging among contending corporate interests will further destabilize the political process and undercut confidence in capitalist democracy.

The Democratic Party will make every effort to steer this into safe, controlled elec- toral channels.

The sheer scale of the assault on the working class projected by these nominations will awaken an unprecedented resistance from the most oppressed.

The role of revolutionary lead- ership is to help arouse a working class resistance that fights in its own interests.

Available online at major bookstores.

‘Fake news’ covers up domestic propaganda law

By Taryn Fievé

Straight from the pages of publications that passed along lies about Iraq’s alleged “weapons of mass destruction,” “PropOrNot” — “Prop” meaning propaganda — has ties to Israeli fascists. The Washing- ton Post had covered without questions the FBI’s list of a number of 201 independent news sources that it accused of promul- gating Russian state propaganda.

Outlets charged as being compri- mised by the Russian government include far-right websites like the “Alt- Right” website and sites that they use for links to the left such as the websites such as Black Agenda Re- port.

Then Rania Khaleq wrote for Alternet that journalists have been approached to move to Turkey and write pro-war propaganda for those fighting the government in Syria. She offered $87,000 a month. (Dec. 8)

Now comes another step to pro- mote pro-war propaganda — under the guise of “countering for-

eign propaganda.”

On Dec. 8 the Senate passed the 2017 National Defense Authoriza- tion Act. Quietly inserted into the NDAA was the “Countering For- eign Propaganda and Disinforma- tion Act,” originally introduced by Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), who had in a press release that the bill, among other measures, “es- tablishes a fund to help train local journalists and provide grants and contracts to NGOs, civil society or- ganizations, private sector companies, media organiza- tions, and other experts outside the government to help the Amer- ica in identifying and analyzing the latest trends in foreign govern- ment disinformation techniques.”

Legalizing domestic propaganda in U.S.

Because these stories were not blown up in the corporate media, you may have not noticed them. Instead you may have noticed sto- ries in New York Times and New York Post and all over television and radio reporting that Russia has infiltrated the U.S. journalism landscape and has provided money to influential media outlets.

The last government effort toward legalizing domestic propa- ganda happened in 2013 when the NDAA explicitly repealed parts of the Smith-Mundt Act, which had in 1949 to pre- vent Voice of America propaganda from being broadcast inside the U.S. This made it possible for VOA (whose employees work at Buzz- feed the Atlantic and the Federal Communications) and the Broadcasting Board of Gover- nors (patrons of supposedly secure communications software like Tor and Signal) to aim their propagan- das at the Russian population.

As a result, 2014 saw an incredible uptick in editorials encouraging people in the U.S. to support U.S. war and intervention in the Middle East, whether against the Islamic State group (IS) or the Syrian gov- ernment.

The median pay of a U.S. journ- alist is around $39,000 a year. (paycale.com) In a city like New York City newspapers journalists can only imagine a nearly impossible existence.

With freelance journalists mak- ing good on an article, this means quantity is key, not quality.

A well-thought-out article may cost the journalist more time and energy than it’s worth. Grants from the U.S. government that are supposed to “support local independent media to refute for- eign disinformation and manipu- lation in their communities” will line more pockets. They will favor the New York papers and the few elite voices who engage in adversarial journ- alism — exposing and counter- ining the lies of capitalism and imperi- alism.

The new bill also offers grants to “collect and store examples of disinformation and propaganda di- rected at the United States and its allies.” This is clearly a call for a hit list, such as was seen in the pag- es of the Washington Post when it covered the anonymous “PropOrNot” list of supposedly unreliable news websites.

In this country, corporate- owned media are clearly account- able to the government and private interests, not the public they are supposed to serve.

Teacher solidarity counters Trump racism

The American Federation of Teachers will “do everything in our power to stop any kind of action against our immi- grant families, our Muslim families, our Latino families and especially our undocumented students,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten during a Nov. 22 telephone town hall in advance of madly racist and Islamophobic President-elect Donald Trump’s inauguration on Jan. 20, the union had pledged concrete support to both the administration’s poten- tial targets as well as those mounting the fightback.

AFT plans to support organizers seeking to establish or main- tain sanctuary cities, schools and campuses, where Immigration and Customs Enforcement cops would be denied entry without a warrant. Teachers and faculty will be equipped with “Know Your Rights” training so they are prepared to deal with raids and deportations. Lesson plans will promote diversity and acceptance to counteract Trump’s hate mongering. Also, the union will lobby against repeal of laws protecting the children of undocumented workers. The National Immigration Law Center and University of Califor- nia-Davis School of Law’s Legal Services Center are offering practical advice to students and families at risk. (aft.org, Nov. 28)

Growing unity among organized labor and anti-racist organizers, as exemplified by the AFT, is bound to strength- en both movements.

Trump’s pick for labor secretary sparks outrage

President-elect Trump nominated fast food CEO Andrew Puzder on Dec. 8 to head the Labor Department, drawing a backlash from labor activists.

The National Restaurant Association’s Restaurant Hold- ings, parent company to fast food chains Carl’s Jr. and Harder’s, Purzder spent $29 million from 2004 to 2014 settling employee lawsuit after lawsuit alleging wage theft. He advocates rolling back the minimum wage and using automation to eliminate jobs. (usatoday.com, Dec. 8)

A Dec. 8 Common Dreams article quoted California fast food worker Rogelio Hernandez, representing Fight for $15, “Putting one of the worst-fast food CEOs in charge of national labor policy sends a signal that the Trump years are going to be about low pay, wage theft, sexual harassment and racial discrimination.” ... Fight for $15 won’t back down for one minute in our demands for $15 an hour and union rights for all workers.”

In the same article Service Employees Union President Mary Kay Henry said that a union has to “be prepared to play hard ball, to move. ’They know it threatens their ability to have a voice and to provide for their families. ‘SEIU members ... will stay in the streets to fight back against anti-worker extrem- istm and we will not stop until all work is valued and every community has the opportunity to thrive.’

Chris Shelton, president of the Communication Workers, issued a statement: “My union and the entire labor move- ment are more committed than ever to fight employer wage theft, make sure workers can be safe on their jobs, stand up against poverty-level wages and challenge employer abuse. We believe that when working people need because, sadly, it’s clear that help won’t come from the Depart- ment of Labor.” (cwa-union.org, Dec. 8)

DC City Council votes on paid leave

The Washington, D.C. City Council did not only moved the Universal Paid Leave bill forward on Dec. 6, but restored medical leave to the program. The proposal now includes eight weeks of parental leave, six weeks of family leave and two weeks of medical leave, making it one of the nation’s most generous packages of such benefits. “Today’s vote [11-2 by the “committee of the whole”) demonstrates the power of broad-based alliances around the shared need for vital benefits,” said Ward 7 resident Dyana Forester, of Food and Commercial Workers Local 400, which represents grocery and retail workers. The final vote is sched- uled for Dec. 20. Mayor Bowser has still not indicated if she will ultimately support the bill. “We are not done yet,” said Jaime Contreras of SEIU 32BJ. “Workers are counting on the Council and Mayor to keep their commitment to low- wage workers and communities of color during the final vote so it can become law.” (ddlc.org, Dec. 6)
Can’t cage our humanity, say LGBTQ prisoners

By Gloria Rubac
San Antonio

Elizabeth Ramirez, Cassandra Rivera, Kristie Marshugh and Anna Vasquez, four working-class, self-identified Chicana lesbians from San Antonio, have fought for two decades to prove they were innocent of the 1994 conviction for rape. At 9:01 a.m. on Nov. 23, they were formally and fully exonerated by Texas’ highest criminal court, which declared the four women “have unquestionably established that they are innocent.”

In 1994, Ramirez’s two young nieces—elves in the family’s game of “elf-raping” them—Ramirez, a fast food worker, often babysat the girls for her sister, and the other three women occasionally helped her with the 7- and 9-year-olds.

What really happened was the father of the girls convinced them to tell his made-up story about rape because he was trying to get custody from their mother, Ramirez’s sister. Subsequently, the women were convicted in a trial whipped up by the most outrageous kind of bigotry, filled with false accusations of them being “witches” and conducting “satanic lesbian rituals.”

The women spent from 13 to 17 years in prison until the Innocence Project of Texas took up their appeals. In 2002 one of the nieces, who is now 25 and a mother herself, told the project that she had lied, that her father made up the story and the girls went along with it. The project was also able to discredit the medical evidence, using new scientific techniques.

Now the four women can begin to rebuild their lives. On their release from prison in 2013, the four women had to register as sex offenders. They are still working on reestablishing relationships with family and children. Ramirez had given birth only three days before she was arrested in 1994. “My son was only two weeks old when I went to prison, and now he’s getting ready to go to college. I didn’t ever see him for 17 years,” Ramirez told media after the exoneration. Mayhugh had two young children.

A film about the case, “Southwest of Salem: The Story of the San Antonio Four,” made its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival last April and has been aired on television.

“The women’s attorneys will file the paperwork with the state of Texas for compensation: $80,000 for every year wrongfully incarcerated. Though each woman should receive over $1 million, no amount will ever make up for the lost years, the children raised without their mothers, the racist and homophbic terror put upon each of these four women, their partners and friends, and their families.
By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Hundreds of people braved bitter cold weather to come out here for Mumia Abu-Jamal on the thirteenth anniversary of his incarceration. Some traveled from New York, New Jersey, Maryland and other states, to show Mumia’s life and demand his freedom.

At a kickoff rally at Municipal Plaza, Rufus Farmer, from the Philadelphia Radical Action Legal (REAL) Justice Coalition, discussed the group’s campaign to tear down a bronze statue that of Frank Rizzo, former Philadelphia mayor and police commissioner. Farmer detailed Rizzo’s history of brutality against Black and Brown communities, especially his assaults on the Black Panther Party and the MOVE organization. As a journalist in Philadelphia, Abu-Jamal became a target of the state for exposing police violence.

Farmer led the crowd chanting “Take it down!” and encouraged everyone to sign a petition on Facebook at #FrankRizzoDown. Rizzo, as mayor, minister of confrontation for the MOVE organization, called on people to support Leon Williams, a Mumia and MOVE supporter, who hopes to defeat District Attorney Seth Williams in the next general election. She also thanked City Council members Cindy Bass and Helen Gym for getting the entire council to vote for a resolution calling on Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf to ensure that individuals incarcerated and working in state prisons have access to clean water and proper health services.

Abu-Jamal and 7,000 other prisoners in Pennsylvania suffer from untreated hepatitis C. SCI Graterford prisoner Jose Varios died in early December from hep C complications stemming from the state’s year-long delay in giving him life-saving drugs.

Lamont Lilly, activist and organizer from North Carolina and the 2016 Workers World Party vice presidential candidate, paid tribute to Abu-Jamal for inspiring him and other young Black journalists. “The Philadelphia police and Centopietro thought they had silenced Mumia by putting him on death row, but he kept writing.”

The Rev. C.D. Witherspoon, a community organizer with the Baltimore People’s Power Assembly and president of that city’s chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, said: “The movement is stronger because of Mumia. We understand that when the state was forced to take him off death row, their strategy was for him to die sick behind bars. We want our brother released now!”

REAL Justice Coalition organizer Er- ica Mines described Abu-Jamal as “the epitome of Fred Hampton’s slogan that ‘you can jail the revolutionary but you can’t jail the revolution.’” Mines was seven years old when she watched the bombing of MOVE take place in 1985.

Orie Lumumba, of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, said, “The state has failed to do Dec. 6, 1981, they are trying to do now, and that is to murder Mumia through medical neglect. New York and other states have treated prisoners with hepatitis C, but Pennsylvania wants to make Mumia an example. We won’t let them!”

Other speakers marched to the Philadelphia office of Gov. Wolf, while pushing two large shopping carts with boxes of petitions calling on Wolf to give Abu-Jamal the drugs that can cure him and provide clean water for all Pennsylvania prisoners.

Outside the governor’s office, Keith Cook, Abu-Jamal’s older brother, read the City Council resolution. He and Suzanne Ross announced they would take the petitions into the building accompanied by a videographer. Police blocked their access. As the crowd chanted, “Take our petitions!” Wolf’s staff finally agreed to post cell phone pictures as proof that they had accepted the petitions.

Abu-Jamal, said, “What this government has been doing to Mumia is inhumane. What this government has been doing to Mumia is torture.” Abu-Jamal called on the entire council to vote for a resolution calling on Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf to ensure the state’s year-long delay in giving him life-saving drugs.

Donovan at the Arch Street United Methodist Church, panels discussed the health care and water cri- ses; legal updates on Mumia’s case; and the next steps for Mumia and other political prisoners in the toxic atmosphere created by Trump’s election.

Teresa Sullivan and Shani Akialah, com- mitted health care advocates, said hep C has surpassed HIV/AIDS as a leading cause of death in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania prison and environmental advocate Bryant Arroyo called in from SCI Frack- ville to discuss the ongoing crisis of contami- nated water plaguing Pennsylvania prisons. Dr. Michelle Strongfield, a gradu- ate of Cuba’s Latin America School of Medicine, connected the health care crisis with Philadelphia’s deep rates of poverty.

At an evening town hall at the Arch Street United Methodist Church, panels discussed the health care and water cri- ses; legal updates on Mumia’s case; and the next steps for Mumia and other politi- cal prisoners in the toxic atmosphere created by Trump’s election.

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The role of artists in revolutionary struggle

By Rebeca Jackson-Moosier

Artists who I never thought would make the jump to direct activism are filling the streets, getting arrested and laying on the line to stop Trump. This shows how deplorable and detestable this man is. It also makes this the perfect time to recruit artists and encourage them to make revolutionary art. So, what is art? What art is NOT is entertainment. An entertainer distracts. An artist’s job is to challenge. To make you uncomfortable, to make you question. For those who say art is not political, they don’t know shit about art. Art was always, and still is, a space to critique the ruling class.

Cesar Cruz said the role of art is to disturb the comfort and comfort the disturbed. But now it goes deeper. It is time to instigate the disturbed, to give them strength and focus in their purpose, to connect and lead in the movement against capitalism and imperialism. Art is a weapon. You can use it to protect yourself from the ugliness of the world and fight against those who mean to squash you. When I was in Palestine, I worked with the youth of Julian Khamis’s Freedom Theater and saw art save lives and give life to generations of people under the terror of Israel. Art was so dangerous there that they murdered Khamis. There is a reason art programs are the first thing to be defended in schools.

As artists, our job is to show people the grim, deadly reality that we could face. As artists, it is our job to break down socialism into something visceral and accessible. I knew, as he said his dying words, “Shoot, coward, you are only going to kill a man.” Che knew that revolutionary ideas, like art, are the living incarnation of a knowledge much bigger than the artist or the person.

Art teaches you how to think and it gives voice to the voiceless. [Through art] you can discover the terms with which you are connected to other lives. This is a very great liberation for the suffering, struggling person who always thinks they are alone.

Life is that quality that exists despite life and empathy and space to be their truest selves: That is art and that is communism.

As an artist, as a Black woman, I am home.

I was recently asked a very important question, which made me think deeply: “As a Black woman, why Workers World Party?”

I grew up in a house of neutral political and religious identity that encouraged expansive free thought. I was allowed to read and study whatever I chose. By seven years old, I was a vegetarian and an atheist. I espoused equality and revolution, so my grandmother always jokingly called me a communist.

Still too young to understand the depth or history of communism, I firmly maintained I was an anarchist and remained so most of my life. I believed in anarchy because I always felt absolutely alone. I’d never met anyone who believed what I did or felt what I did about the world. I was certain they had all been assassinated, and I was resigned to T-shirts with inspirational quotes. I never trusted anyone politically, and I never joined in anything overtly political.

Finally, I was beat by the [Los Angeles Police Department] in 2014 – a tragic event, I’m sure, but an event that brought me [to Workers World], to a group of people who embodied all the things I had felt all my life. And with them everything made sense.

Communism as a practice was the means to enact the principles need from anarchy. I could see communism as a framework for freedom, for building a world in which the individual is protected from oppression by a united whole. Communism is a vehicle to defend lives of color and defeat imperialism.

It is people literally fighting for your life with their lives. Who saw your inher- ent worth, as a woman, as a Black woman.

Why Workers World? Because at my first [NWWP] conference I saw a Black woman being announced as a presidential candidate. And in that woman I saw myself and my value.

Why Workers World? Because I see rev- olutionaries who have fought for decades and still go weeks without real sleep to keep the movement going.

Why Workers World? Because trans lives, youth lives, queer lives, female lives, Black and Brown lives lead.

Why Workers World? Because in a world of uncertainty, I know this is the group that will ride or die. If some shit goes down, a Black life stolen by police, Native lives attacked at Standing Rock, oppressed lives being snatched by impe- rialism anywhere on this globe, Workers World is pissed, and they are about to take it to the streets.

So, as an artist, as a Black woman, I am home.

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By Gloria Rubac

Austin, Texas

After an outcry by community activists and academics, the Texas State Board of Education on Nov. 16 rejected by a 14-0 vote a textbook submitted for teaching Mexican-American history. The book characterizes Mexican-Americans as “lazy” and defines Chicanos as violent and LatinX as uneducated, arguing that nothing of importance ever came to the U.S. from south of the Texas border.

“‘It’s a racist textbook,’” said Tony Díaz, one of the educators who pressed the state board to create a new Mexican-American studies course in 2015. “I’m not sure what’s more insulting — the way they talk about Mexican-Americans, the history of the way they talk about Chicanos.” Díaz began a campaign, called Librotraficante, to take banned textbooks into Arizona after the Tucson district there cancelled all Mexican-American history classes.

The textbook voted down in Texas contains racist stereotypes and historical errors. It says Mexican laborers “were not reared to put in a full day’s work so vigorously” and that they had a culture of “mishandling.

Days before the final vote was taken, people from around the state gathered in Austin and held a press conference to condemn the text. Politicians, universi- ty professors, high school students and activists, as well as one of the members of the board, spoke out against the textbook.

A瀑布 of students, educators and parents left Houston at dawn to ar- rive for the 9 a.m. hearing.

For weeks the press conference, public comments were received by the board.

More than 50 people had signed up to give their opinions, with only two sup- porting the textbook.

The book, which contained racist caricatures and factual mistakes, was the only submission to the board’s 2015 request for a new Mexican-American Studies textbook. The board has now announced a second call for submissions.

In Texas, over half the students in pub- lic elementary and high schools are Lat- inx, most of them Mexican-American. According to Jesús Medel, a professor of Mexican-American history at Houston Community College, “There is a long his- tory of frustration among Mexican-Amer- ican educators and activists who say our culture and history is often underrepresent- ed or misrepresented in the public education sys- tem.”

In a surprising twist during the open hearing, one of the board members, Thomas Katrliff, commented, “I’m not a scientist, but I know enough to know that communism does not cause natural di- sasters,” referring to a passage in the text- book that links the two.

Activists said they feared that, with the election of Donald Trump, the racism in this text would have prompted even more public displays of racist bullying and violence in schools. “We have the Republican president-elect talking about Mexicans being rapists, and now you have what some people may mistake as a legit- imization of the book saying that Chicanos are violent... It just seems like it’s open sea- son on Latinos,” said one participant.

After the final vote against the text, Díaz said, “Today is a very good day. We are very pleased with the results.”

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By Terri Kay

Buffalo, N.Y.

A demonstration for Mumia outside the notorious Erie County Holding Center jail was co-sponsored by the Buffalo Anti-Racism Coalition, Burning Books, the International Action Center and Workers World Party.

The crowd demanded treatment for prisoners with hepatitis C; clean, safe wa- ter in prisons; and that prisons, which are notorious Erie County Holding Center jail ter in prisons; and that prisons, which are notorious Erie County Holding Center jail in 2014 — a tragic event, I’m sure, but an event that brought me [to Workers World], to a group of people who embodied all the things I had felt all my life. And with them everything made sense.

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By Ellie Darritte
The ICC: an imperialist farce

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A Nov. 4 article in the New York Times suggests that the Netherlands-based International Criminal Court (ICC) will investigate the United States for committing torture against captives in Afghanistan. That would go against the history of the ICC.

The ICC has almost exclusively focused its attention on alleged war crimes and acts of genocide taking place in Africa, with many cases serving U.S. imperialist interests. Governments targeted for destabilization and regime-change are indicted by the ICC in order to isolate their leaders by threatening illegal arrests and seizures.

According to the Times: “The international prosecutor has been considering whether to begin a full-fledged investigation into potential war crimes in Afghanistan. …” [The prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, signaled that a full investigation was likely. Still, the prosecutor did not announce a final decision on an investigation, which would have to be approved by judges, and it is unlikely that the United States will cooperate.

The Haitian presidential election was held on Nov. 20 in such a serene fashion that the country’s ruling class enjoyed the blessings of their international “observers,” decided to count the vote. Candidate Fanmi Lavalas and Chamber of Deputies were also on the ballot. It wasn’t until the results of the count were provisionally announced that the manipulations were exposed. The overall voter turnout was very low, at 17.3 percent. There were nearly 500,000 fewer votes than expected, possibly due to a massive undercount.

The parties that came in second, third and fourth have all filed formal objections, whichrow that the majority of ballot boxes were stolen. Michael Martelly, the opposition candidate, has meanwhile called for new elections in the Central African Republic and held a warning conference exposing Washington’s maneuvers, which drew international attention. A week later, U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, a progressive African-American legislator from Los Angeles, rented a jet and escorted Aristide to Jamaica.

On Feb. 7, 1996, the Haitian masses removed the dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier from power. He was then flown to southern France on a plane provided by the U.S. government. Since then, elections in Haiti have involved mass struggles as well as contradictions of voting in a bourgeois democratic election. The ruling class has been very active in trying to shape the outcome of these elections. They don’t want Haiti to be the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, to provide the rest of the Caribbean and Latin America with an example of successful resistance.

In the December 1990 election, the U.S. directed millions of dollars to its candidate, Marc Bazin. Jimmy Carter, the U.S. president at that time, tried to get Jean-Bertrand Aristide to concede. Instead, Aristide won with 67 percent of the vote.

Aristide was replaced by a Haitian army coup in 1991, which got at least tacit U.S. endorsement, and several thousand Fanmi Lavalas supporters were killed. Aristide was exiled to Jamaica. Aristide succeeded in returning to Haiti from Jamaica on Nov. 20, 2000 with 92 percent of the vote. Since he had disbanded the Haitian army in 1991, at the end of his first term, it took longer for the right-wing Haitian forces, even with the support of the U.S., to carry out a coup. But on Feb. 29, 2004, U.S.-paid mercenaries kidnapped Aristide and forced him to board a U.S. Air Force jet and flew him to the Central African Republic.

The next week, people from the Haitian Civic National Assembly and Haitian Support Network in the U.S. went to the Central African Republic and held a mass conference exposing Washington’s maneuvers, which drew international attention. A week later, U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, a progressive African-American legislator from Los Angeles, rented a jet and escorted Aristide to Jamaica. Some progressive Haitian political tendencies, like Haiti Liberté and Batay Ouvrière, say the boycott was a rejection of elections as part of the solution to Haiti’s desperate problems. As Haiti Liberté put it: “We are people and have a desire for elections but for a social transformation.”

Aristide is now in exile in Europe, and the ICC is looking into the circumstances of his arrest and seizures.
Syrian army wins control of most of Aleppo

By Chris Fry

Syrian government forces now control up to 93 percent of the city of Aleppo, at one time the country’s most populous city. These successes are forcing a retreat of the U.S.-supported “rebels” forces in small areas of the city.

The Syrian army has captured the al-Asila and Aajam districts, southeast of Aleppo’s ancient citadel, as well as the southern portion of the Karam al-Deefa neighborhood. They also seized the al Maadi district on Dec. 11.

Heavy fighting continues in Aleppo, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry was quoted as admitting that opposition forces in Aleppo were hampering humanitarian efforts to aid thousands of civilians. In response to a reporter’s question, Kerry said, “It is true that there have been some occasions where certain elements of the opposition have threatened people who were going to leave [Aleppo]. Violence has prevented humanitarian assistance from being deliv- ered.” (U.S. Dept. of State website, Dec. 10)

After the Syrian government has offered truces if the opposition forces agree to withdraw from Aleppo, the rebel groups have refused. And showing that the ảnh image is still in sync with the opposition militia, IS used the battle in Aleppo to retake the city of Palmyra to the south. The Syrian government has been forced to shift some of its forces to retake that town, which contains historic ruins.

Back in 2011, the U.S. envisioned a path to convert a series of anti-government demonstrations in Syria into a U.S.-supplied armed uprising to over- turn the elected government. Reactionary “rebels” forces seized and have held parts of Aleppo since 2012. But this year, with the assistance of the fake “Iranian-backed militias, the Syrian govern- ment has taken back most of the city.

Some 386,000 people have been killed in the Syrian conflict. Another 4.8 mil- lion Syrians have been forced to flee their country, 6.1 million more are homeless within their own country, and a once modern city has been utterly destroyed. (worlddivision.org, Nov. 15) But all this suffering means nothing to the CIA masterminds of war and the cor- porate-controlled media. Their goal is to overturn by force the Bashar al-As sad government, not to benefit the suffer- ing Syrian people or to accept their right to determine their own leadership.

U.S. armed ‘moderate rebels’ against Syria

Last year, the U.S. Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act for 2016, which provides almost $500 mil- lion Syrian “rebel” forces seized and have held parts of Syria or to accept their right to self-determination. If we attempt to support the so-called “rebel” groups, we will be throwing in jail, Gallab said. “Yet the U.S. government has been violating this law for years, quietly supporting allies and providing arms to al-Qaeda, ISIS, Jabhat Fateh al Shams and other terrorist groups with money, weapons and intelligence support, in their fight to overthrow the Syrian sovereignty.”

“If you or I gave money, weapons or support to al-Qaeda or ISIS, we would be thrown in jail,” Gallab said. “The U.S. government has been violating this law for years, quietly supporting allies and providing arms to al-Qaeda, ISIS, Jabhat Fateh al Shams and other terrorist groups with money, weapons and intelligence support, in their fight to overthrow the Syrian sovereignty.”

The article below is from a speech given at the Nov. 11-13, 2016 Workers World Party National Conference at the Shabazz Center in Washington Heights, N.Y.

By Joe Mchahwar

The war against Syria is not just an- other imperialist adventure. It is not just some pirate ships leaving the port to plunder another nation for a little while.

The war against Syria is the defining war in this period of imperialism.

The war against Syria is a war led by the U.S., CIA, imperialist proxies and their so- called allies. In some ways the war against Syria has been decades in the making. The imperialist powers have a long history of playing代理人, using reactionary, supremacist ideologies and organizations in the region.

After Syrians won their independence in 1945, they built a pluralistic state on the basis of self-determination and anti-Zionism. If the imperialists have their cake and eat it in Syria, we are looking at the pros- pect of a global war between the Unit- ed States and Russia, which will not back down from its support for Syr- ian self-determination. We are also looking at a situation where not only denom- inations of a department “sex assault.” Numerous Bay Area cops across several cities and counties have been indicted on federal charges of sexual misconduct, forcible rape and other crimes.

On June 7, activists hung a banner across the OPD headquarters with the indict- ment: “OPD Guilty of Human Trafficking & Statutory Rape 3rd Degree & Incest. It is true! (Workers World, June 23)

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Some 386,000 people have been killed in the Syrian conflict. Another 4.8 mil- lion Syrians have been forced to flee their country, 6.1 million more are homeless within their own country, and a once modern city has been utterly destroyed. (worlddivision.org, Nov. 15) But all this suffering means nothing to the CIA masterminds of war and the cor- porate-controlled media. Their goal is to overturn by force the Bashar al-As sad government, not to benefit the suffer- ing Syrian people or to accept their right to determine their own leadership.

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Last year, the U.S. Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act for 2016, which provides almost $500 mil-
The CIA's allegation that Russia inter- 
vened in the U.S. presidential election to 
help Donald Trump is "fake news" being 
peddled by the Washington Post and New 
York Times.

Did the Russians sabotage voting ma-
chines in the Midwest? That's the sort of 
things S.P.avy agencies would brug 
about discovering. But no.

Russia is accused of hacking the com-
puter of Hillary Clinton's campaign 
manager John Podesta and giving embarrass-
ing information to WikiLeaks. But Julian 
Assange, WikiLeaks' editor-in-chief, 
denied Russia was the source. (Politico, Nov. 12)

Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Caroli-
na nonetheless declared, “I’m going after 
Russia every way you can go after Rus-
sia. ... I think they did interfere with our 
elections, and I want Putin personally to 
pay the price.” (Washington Post, Dec. 10)

It wasn’t Russia that set up the Elec-
toral College that’s sending Trump to the 
White House, even though he got 2.8 mil-
lion fewer votes than Clinton. As Yale law 
professor Akhil Reed Amar has pointed out, 
the Electoral College was established to 
protect slavery. (Vox, Nov. 12)

And it was not Russia that suppressed 
African-American and Latinx votes.

The CIA claims against Russia are old 
news. “We have not drawn any evidence-
ously from very sophisticated Russian intelligence service and WikiLeaks—none, said one U.S. offi cial,” That’s what the Washington Post reported back in July 27.

So why the clamor now? It probably has 
something to do with most of Aleppo 
being liberated by Syria’s elected govern-
ment, which is aided by Russia and Iran. 
It’s a big defeat for the CIA.

Russia’s image in the U.S. is not so 
bad. Russia’s New York Times article 
explained, “Russia is recognized for its 
human rights.”

But is it not a vassal state like Saudi 
Arabia? To U.S. generals like “Mad Dog” 
Mattis — Trump’s choice for de-
fense secretary — Russia is 6 million 
square miles to attack and occupy.

Our enemies are in the corporate 
boardrooms and the Pentagon, not in 
Moscow.

To the editor:

My older sister is a tour guide in Bra-
zil. In the 90’s, a conference attended 
by Fidel Castro plus the then president of 
Brazil, the governor of Rio de Janeiro and 
other dignitaries was taking place in a 
hotel in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

My sister was working in that confer-
ence with a group from another country. 
Almost at the end, she asked the Co-
mandante in a picture with her. Fidel 
promptly said yes and, while they were pos-
ing for a photo, asked her how she was do-
ing. She replied, “I am very tired for I have 
been working here all day long.” He asked her if she had already had dinner, 
to which she replied, “I have not eaten 
anything all day.”

Fidel then asked my sister if she would 
like to join him and his delegation for 
dinner. She said, “Of course! It will be an 
honor.”

As she walked behind him, a security 
guard stopped her. The Comandante in-
tervened, saying to let her in because she 
was his guest.

My sister was touched by the kindness 
and solidarity shown by Fidel. She said 
what a wonderful man he was. Fidel 
Castro is "presente" in every act of 
solidarity.

Jefferson Azevedo

Los Angeles

The Cuban people have never 
been allowed to have a 
leader of their own. 
Fidel Castro was 
that leader.

The Cuban Revolution has grappled with the pre-revolutionary legacy of 450 years of 
persecution and exploitation of homosexuality.

Rainbow Solidarity answers the 
demands of the 1959 Cuban Revolution by 

For more than 2.5 years, the U.S.-backed regime in Ukraine has waged a brutal war against the civilian popula- tion of Donbass. People in Donetsk and Lugansk declared independence follow- ing the far-right government takeover in Kiev, Ukraine’s capital, in February 2014.

According to a Dec. 8 report by the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, nearly 10,000 people have been killed and more than 22,000 wounded in Ukraine’s war on Donbass.

Among the dead are at least 101 chil- dren. Hundreds more youths have been wounded, thousands orphaned and tens of thousands forced to flee as refugees.

Since June, the Komsomol (Commu- nist Youth) of Lugansk has carried out a campaign called “Children of Donbass Write to the World,” gathering hundreds of letters from children and teens about living under conditions of war and block- ade. The letters will be presented to U.N. representatives in Europe.

Recently, participants in a New York read excerpts from the letters’ youths, which were translated by student activist Anna Rehbi.

Greg Butterfield, an IAC organizer and parent, stated, “The February 2014 coup in Ukraine, which brought to power di- garehs, nationalist demagogues and out- right neo-Nazis, received financing and the Ukrainian political support from Wash- ington.

On behalf of Wall Street and Big Oil, Washington is carrying out a war against children in Donbass and other regions and countries. This war is here at home too, through cutbacks, racist police bru- tality, Idaho’s Idaho and just insult to immi- grants, including children, fleeing U.S. military and economic crimes in Central America.”

Butterfield noted that the IAC has no confidence in president-elect billionaire Donald Trump to change things for the better. “Trump has already declared open war on children and families in the U.S. In fact, Trump first became a celebrity by persecuting children: the Central Park 5, Black and Brown youths in New York who were framed by the police. Trump called for their execution, and even today, long after they have been exonerated, he re- fuses to acknowledge their innocence.”

‘Children of Donbass Write to the World’

Following are excerpts from some of the letters written by Donbass youth:

In May 2014, my sister and I, among many other children from ... other cities, were taken to Crimea. There we met many other children who survived terrible bombings. Their stories were eerie. Upon recalling them, many would begin crying and trembling.

— Anastasia, 17 years old, Molodogvardeysk

We hope that war will no longer return to our cities, towns, ... We would like to forget the word “war” forever.

— Inna, 9th grade

“Better than a ‘Yes.’ They also agree that the political content of the referendum — which can’t be called right or left — played a leading role.

“Any parties had urged a ‘No’ vote during election and demonstration. This group draws the following positive but sober conclu- sion regarding how to proceed after the ‘No’ vote:

“It’s a tragedy that the moment hands us. Let us take care of the world around us; let’s not fight or kill each oth- er. We are children for peace in the whole world and a happy life!”

— Andrey, 6th grade, Molodogvardeysk

Greetings, people of the whole world! An ordinary girl is writing to you, a second grade pupil. I have a request. Let’s take care of the world around us; let’s not contaminate the woods, seas, rivers. Let’s be friendly; let’s not fight for kill each oth- er. We are children for peace in the whole world and a happy life!”

— Poolina, 2nd grade

War is the hardest trial for an entire population. But the most defendless and vul- nerable in this time are children. We have seen the stern face of the war, its cold, pitless eyes. Our childhood passes by irretrievably; it is replaced by pain, suffering, losses of relatives and close ones, privations. Children who lived through a war never forgive it.

— Anastasia, 9th grade
En Standing Rock: 'No vamos a ninguna parte'

Por Monica Moorehead

Bajo una fuerte tormenta de nieve típica de Dakota del Norte, miles de veteranos, muchos de los cuales estuvieron activos en Irak y Afganistán, encabezaron una marcha el 5 de diciembre de la caravana por el 1986 hacia el puente Backwater en solidaridad con las naciones Lakota y Dakota de Standing Rock. El puente es un púlpito turístico, pero la policía utilizó gases lacrimógenos, cañones de agua y otras armas contra las/os protectores de agua custodiados.

Los veteranos movilizaron delegaciones de miles de personas para ir a Standing Rock el primer fin de semana de diciembre para actuar como escudos humanos en protesta contra la construcción ilegal del oleoducto Dakota Access (DAPL) en terrenos Sioux. Éste oleoducto de 3,700 millones de dólares abarcaría cuatro estados. Las filas de las/os que estaban en solidaridad con Standing Rock aumentaron a 40,000 personas.

El Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército (ACoE por las siglas en inglés) del gobierno federal, que controla al menos las tierras y permisos para construir el oleoducto, había emitido un “aviso de desalojo” el 5 de diciembre para que las/os protectores de agua abandonaran sus campamentos.

A medida que las/os veteranos - muchos de ellos indígenas, junto con cientos de veteranos no nativos - descendieron sobre Standing Rock, el ACoE repentinamente emitió una declaración el 4 de diciembre diciendo que otorgarían una acción prohibiendo que el ducto fuera perforado en el Río Misuri en el lado Oeste, que es parte de los terrenos no cedidos del tratado de Standing Rock. 'El gobierno de Obama, en una medida muda sobre la crisis en Standing Rock durante meses, anunció que estaba enviando un mediador federal para vigilar la “violencia” potencial - habiendo fracasado desde agosto en tomar alguna medida para detener la violencia que sufrieron repetidamente las/os protectores de agua.

Muchas/os en el movimiento de protectores del agua se alegraron al oir esta noticia del ACoE, pero el clima fue efímero. Energy Transfer Partners (ETP) y Sunoco Logistix Partners (SXL), las corporaciones de Wall Street que patrocinan el ducto, anunciaron varias horas después que ‘las/os que estaban obligadas a la declaración de ACoE y que planeaban perforar bajo el lado Oeste no importa que una prohibición había sido impuesta.

ETF y SXL habían presentado una acción en una corte federal el 14 de noviembre y emitieron un comunicado de prensa el 4 de diciembre, declarando: “La dirección del 19 de noviembre de hoy al ACoE para retirar las medidas represivas, más es la última de una serie de acciones proactivas y transparentes por una administración que ha abandonado el estado de derecho a favor de un electorado político estrecho y extremo.”

“Como ya se dijo, ETP y SXL, están totalmente comprometidos a asegurar que este vital proyecto se completa y esperan completar la construcción de la tubería sin ningún cambio adicional en y alrededor del lado Oeste. Nada que esta Administración haya hecho hoy cambiaría eso de ninguna manera”.

Naciones Indígenas inspiran amplia solidaridad

Desde el pasado mes de abril, miembros de la Nación Sioux de Standing Rock han estado en la vanguardia uniendo la lucha contra el oleoducto Dakota Access en Estados Unidos para detener este oleoducto que amenaza con profanar sus tierras ancestrales, violando tratados de 1851 y 1866 - que definen el derecho del pueblo sioux a la tierra y al agua que fluye a través de los acuíferos - firmados con el gobierno estadounidense, y plantea una amenaza real de envenenar el suministro de agua para al menos 17 millones de personas con la posibilidad de las inevitables fugas de los oleoductos.

Desafiando la horrible violencia del Departamento de Defensa, centenares de protectores se mantuvieron a la caravana por calles en una protesta de envenenar el suministro de agua. "Mad Dog" (Perro rabioso) de Defensa, el oficial de la Guerra de los Estados Unidos, y plantea una amenaza real de envenenar el suministro de agua para al menos 17 millones de personas con la posibilidad de las inevitables fugas de los oleoductos.

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