



Inauguration Day Unions to protest Trump #J20

By Martha Grevatt

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 “endorses and encourages all members to participate in the nationwide call for protest and actions and a reassertion 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

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‘Free Mumia’ after 35 years in prison!



Rev. C.D. Witherspoon, Pam Africa and Erica Mines were among those marching in Philadelphia to free imprisoned journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. Many cities held protests. Page 6.



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Largest BDS mobilization ever Boycott Hewlett Packard!

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, infrastructure, supply chains and technology.

Both also hold extensive contracts with the Israeli government, providing services to its checkpoints, military, population registry, prisons and 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 checkpoint systems that segregate Palestinians and control their movement.

They have also supplied all personal computers purchased by the Israeli military since 2009 — in the immediate aftermath of killing over 1,400 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip — and provide central servers, printers and other systems to Israeli prisons.

Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network organized one of the first actions in New York City, drawing dozens to a protest outside the Best Buy store in Union Square on Nov. 25. Known as “Black Friday,” it is traditionally the busiest shopping day of the year.

On Nov. 26, a United Kingdom-wide day of action, activists held 30 demonstrations across England, northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, ahead of a central protest held three days later at HP Enterprise’s “Discover 2016” trade fair at its opening in London.

Other events unfolded throughout North America, Europe and the Middle East, as well as in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru, Kenya, India and Australia.

The actions included the erection of a mock “apartheid wall” in Osaka, Japan; demonstrations at public univer-

HP provides technology, equipment and services for the checkpoints and ID card system that underpin Israel’s apartheid policies.



sity libraries in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; a rally and the distribution of campaign materials in Khartoum, Sudan; and the stickering of HP products and launch of a campus boycott campaign by students under occupation in Jerusalem, Palestine.

The effort received a significant boost on its eighth day as British-Danish security conglomerate G4S, another major target of the BDS movement, announced on Dec. 2 that it had finalized a deal to sell its Israeli unit and end most operations in the country.

Elsewhere, a conference on “Ethics and Social Responsibility in Information Technology” in Milan, Italy, ousted HP from its program. And in Derry, northern Ireland, five district councillors announced they were returning HP products issued by the council.

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 supporters to sign a pledge at bit.ly/boycotthp to boycott HP products until the companies end their support for Israel.

Samidoun in New York City will hold its next protest of HP at the Best Buy in Union Square, East 14th 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 eepurl.com/XFJr9.

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



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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Capitalism in crisis

What’s behind Trump cabinet choices

By Sara Flounders

Since the election, the corporate media have focused on the president-elect’s cabinet and senior White House staff appointments, often announced by tweets and leaks.

The contention among ruling-class factions over coordinating vast government ministries is still a vicious fight, involving subterfuge, leaks, sudden scandals and personal exposés of past dirty deeds. Enormous profits hang in the balance.

The individuals nominated are overwhelmingly reactionaries and billionaires. Their appointments confirm a new stage of all-out war on poor and working people. This overreach may provoke a new phase of militant class struggle from below.

Departments overseeing public education, health care, housing and environmental protection are in the hands of

administrators committed to their dismantlement and destruction.

The appointments confirm that no section of the working class belongs to Donald Trump’s real base. His cronies are overwhelmingly corporate billionaires and hedge-fund operators, all people from his narrow, privileged strata.

His cabinet will be the wealthiest in U.S. history. Preservation of their positions and personal profit will drive the administration.

Despite his many campaign attacks on Goldman Sachs and on Hillary Clinton’s connections to Wall Street, Trump appointments include three present or former Goldman Sachs bankers and other billionaire investors, plus CEOs of big corporations.

Each of Trump’s appointments will be dealing with government services that dispense billions of dollars in tax reve-

nues to private corporations.

Trump’s cabinet and capitalism

What do Trump’s appointments say about the capitalist system itself?

For three generations the U.S. ruling class has bought social peace at home in order to fight wars abroad. But the decay of capitalism, deindustrialization, a globalized economy and the flight of capital chasing the lowest possible wages has undermined past gains of the U.S. working class.

Even before the Trump election, the United States had fallen behind every other industrialized country on measurable standards of life expectancy, infant mortality and educational levels.

The drive to maximize profits is becoming more ruthless. Every social gain won through decades of class struggle in the U.S. is under attack.

During the election campaign, Trump repeatedly called out Goldman Sachs for hurting the working class. He nevertheless chose the president of Goldman Sachs, Gary Cohn, to head the powerful White House National Economic Council.

He named Steven Mnuchin, who worked at Goldman Sachs for 17 years, as Treasury secretary. Wilbur Ross, CEO of the investment banking company Rothschild Inc. and worth \$2.5 billion, was nominated to head the Department of Commerce.

A New York Times Dec. 10 headline applauded these cabinet choices as “tough-minded.”

Such “tough-minded” choices include multimillionaire Betty DeVos as secretary of the Department of Education. Her goal is to undermine public education and give school vouchers to finance pri-

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By WW Staff

Alameda Labor Council calls for protests

The Alameda Labor Council, representing unions throughout Alameda County, Calif., has passed a resolution encouraging all unions to organize actions on 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 ALC rallying cry goes out to all 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 advancements on Monday and then allow them to be threatened on Friday.” (ALC press release)

The ALC 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 ALC characterizes the actions as a “reassertion of the power of organized labor.”



J20Resist.org: Launching #J20 resistance

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 activists, 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.
- Find 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! □

Unions to protest Trump #J20

Continued from page 1

firm of Hardee’s and Carl’s Jr. fast food chains. Puzder opposes raising the minimum wage, and CKE has been successfully sued for cheating workers in violation of federal wage and hour regulations. Puzder would be in charge of enforcing those regulations.

On the use of automation to reduce workers, Puzder stated that robots are “always polite, they always upsell, they never take a vacation, they never show up late, there’s never a slip-and-fall or an age, sex or race discrimination case.” (New York Times, Dec. 8)

This outrageous nomination came right after Steelworkers Local 1299 President Chuck Jones, who represents Carrier workers in Indianapolis, Ind., tore apart Trump’s phony showmanship as the “savior” of 1,100 jobs slated to go to Mexico. “He lied his ass off,” said Jones. The actual number of jobs retained was between 700 and 800; almost 600 workers at Jones’ plant will still be getting a pink slip.

Unwilling to take criticism, Trump immediately slandered Jones on Twitter as

being responsible for Carrier’s threat to move. This incited Trump’s fascist supporters to send death threats to Jones and his children. This anti-union attack not only threatens Jones but Local 1299’s majority Black executive board.

The labor movement, as it mobilizes to rally against Trump on Jan. 20, must throw its muscle behind this courageous local.

All of the working class must unite. Organized labor must see itself as part of the broader working-class movement. Low-wage workers, including those in precarious work, are a part. Unemployed and underemployed workers are a part. Prisoners are a part. Workers around the globe — super-exploited, often by the same bosses we work for — are a part. Migrant workers, risking their lives to escape war or austerity, are a part. All of us, together, are unstoppable.

Build a united working-class front! All out for Jan. 20!

Grevatt has been an autoworker and United Auto Worker activist at Chrysler for 29 years.

‘Fake news’ covers up domestic propaganda law

By Taryn Fivek

Straight from the pages of publications that passed along lies about Iraq’s alleged “weapons of mass destruction” and that gave Donald Trump at least \$2 billion in free media coverage comes a sudden concern about fake news.

The big-business-owned media narrative that Russia interfered with the U.S. elections by allegedly sponsoring stories more favorable to Trump than Clinton has been omnipresent in the news since late November.

Three other important stories concerning journalists also broke, but they were all published in non-corporate media and you may not have noticed them.

First, Mark Ames wrote for Alternet about how the anonymous group “PropOrNot” — “Prop” meaning propaganda — has ties to Ukrainian fascists. The Washington Post had covered without question this group’s release of a list of some 200 independent news sources that it accused of promulgating Russian state propaganda. Outlets charged as being compromised by the Russian government include far-right websites like Drudge Report as well as left-wing websites such as Black Agenda Report. (Dec. 7)

Then Rania Khalek wrote for Alternet that journalists have been approached to move to Turkey and write pro-war propaganda for those fighting the government in Syria. They were offered \$17,000 a month. (Dec. 8)

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

eign propaganda.”

On Dec. 8 the Senate passed the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Quietly inserted into the NDAA was the “Countering Foreign Propaganda and Disinformation Act,” originally introduced by Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), who had said in a press release that the bill, among other measures, “establishes a fund to help train local journalists and provide grants and contracts to NGOs, civil society organizations, think tanks, private sector companies, media organizations, and other experts outside the U.S. government with experience in identifying and analyzing the latest trends in foreign government disinformation techniques.”

Legalizing domestic propaganda in U.S.

Because these stories were not blown up in the corporate media, you may not have noticed them. Instead you may have noticed stories in the New Yorker and New York Post and all over television and radio reporting that Russia has infiltrated the U.S. journalism landscape and has possibly bought off U.S. media and tampered with the U.S. elections.

The last U.S. government effort toward legalizing domestic propaganda happened in 2013 when the NDAA explicitly repealed parts of the Smith-Mundt Act, which had been passed in 1949 to prevent Voice of America propaganda from being broadcast inside the U.S. This made it possible for VOA (whose employees work at Buzzfeed and the Atlantic Council) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (patrons of supposedly secure

communications software like Tor and Signal) to aim their propaganda at the U.S. domestic 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 government.

The median pay of a U.S. journalist is around \$39,000 a year. (payscale.com) In a city like New York, this makes journalism a nearly impossible endeavor. With freelance journalists making around \$250 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 foreign disinformation and manipulation in their communities” will line more pockets. They will favor those toeing the official line over those engaging in adversarial journalism — exposing and countering the lies of capitalism and imperialism.

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

In this country, corporate-owned media are clearly accountable 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 immigrant 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 rabidly racist and Islamophobic President-elect Donald Trump’s inauguration on Jan. 20, the union has pledged concrete support to both the administration’s potential targets as well as those mounting the fightback.

AFT plans to support organizers seeking to establish or maintain 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’re 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 repealing laws protecting the children of undocumented workers. The National Immigration Law Center and University of California-Davis School of Law’s Legal Services Center are offering practical advice to students and families at risk. (aft.org, Nov. 28)

Growing unity between organized labor and anti-racist organizers, as exemplified by the AFT, is bound to strengthen 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 widespread criticism from organized labor. As CEO of CKE Restaurant Holdings, parent company to fast food chains Carl’s Jr. and Hardee’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 workers aren’t fooled by Trump’s 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 extremism 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 movement 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 will be the advocates that working people need because, sadly, it’s clear that help won’t be coming from the Department of Labor.” (cwa-union.org, Dec. 8)

DC City Council votes on paid leave

The Washington, D.C., City Council 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 families who united across the District 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 scheduled for Dec. 20. Mayor Muriel 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.” (dclabor.org, Dec. 6) □

Capitalism in crisis

What’s behind Trump cabinet choices

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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 fetuses equal protection under the 14th Amendment and is for banning health coverage and all federal funding for abortion.

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

Andrew Puzder as secretary of Labor is a fast food CEO who opposes a federal minimum-wage increase.

Republican Congress member Mike Pompeo, who urged Congress to re-establish bulk collection of domestic calling records, was named director of the CIA.

Trump’s military choices should be a wake-up call for those who had an illusion that Trump would have a less threatening approach than Clinton, who talked of a “no-fly zone” in Syria, expansion of NATO and encirclement of Russia and China.

He named Marine Corps Gen. James “Mad Dog” Mattis as secretary 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 extreme militarists, even by Pentagon standards.

Disbelief in climate change and a strong alliance with the oil and coal industries are the qualifications 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 Protection Agency calls for “freedom for American businesses” and an end to regulations.

To anyone concerned with the environment, climate change and war, the expected nomination of Rex Tillerson, the CEO of Exxon-Mobil — “big oil” — as secretary of State is especially ominous. ExxonMobil is the most powerful force in climate change denial and has multibillion dollar investments 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 order. The Democratic Party will make every effort to steer this into safe, controlled electoral 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 leadership is to help arouse a working-class resistance that fights in its own interests. □

WAR Without Victory

by Sara Flounders

‘By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.’

— Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009; Foreign Minister of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

Available online at major bookstores. PentagonAchillesHeel.com

Syracuse says ‘Stop cop rape!’

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Syracuse, N.Y.

With resounding chants, Black Lives Matter activists demanded “Justice for Maleatra!” at a Nov. 29 protest outside the Hanley Federal Building. The rally demanded an end to cop rape and targeted the Syracuse Police Department and Chief Frank Fowler, Onondaga District Attorney William Fitzpatrick and Mayor Stephanie Miner.

Protesters say Syracuse cop Chester Thompson raped Maleatra Montanez on Valentine’s Day 2015 after she called 911 for help finding her missing 15-year-old daughter. When Thompson arrived, in uniform and armed, he demanded sex and threatened Montanez’s infant son if she did not comply. Other women had previously filed complaints against Thompson for sexual assault. “Counseled” by the SPD, he had always been allowed back to active duty.

Montanez reported the crime immediately and agreed to a rape kit test. But when Thompson was brought to trial in December 2015, he was found guilty only of a “misconduct” misdemeanor and received no jail time. Though fired from the SPD, he was allowed to keep his pension, and continues to live and walk free in the city.

An outrageous loophole in New York state law protects rapist cops unless the “alleged victim” explicitly says no and refuses. This legalizes cop rape. As BLM activists cogently asserted in an open letter to city and county officials, which was read at the rally: “Sex demanded by an officer of the state, wearing a gun, in your house, is never sex given with consent, whether the victim says no, yes, or nothing.”

SeQuoia Kemp of BLM Syracuse spoke on the intersectional impact of racist, anti-woman and anti-LGBTQ state violence directly on the bodies of women of color, trans women and trans people.



Rebecca Fuentes and Nneka Eke at ‘Justice for Maleatra’ protest, Nov. 30. The quote is from Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

Herve Comeau, also of BLM, condemned the “criminalization of people of color and poor people” by a “system that robs us of justice every day.” Comments by BLM organizers Anthony Harper, Yanira Rodriguez and Nikeeta Slade energized ralliers, who stood in line to sign up for information on how to keep protesting.

Maleatra Montanez has valiantly kept alive the fight for justice for herself and other women raped by Thompson. She demonstrated immediately in front of Syracuse City Hall with a few friends after the slap-on-the-hand verdict. When asked her demands, she said she wanted an apology

Continued onn page 8

‘Can’t cage our humanity,’ say LGBTQ prisoners

By Prison Abolition organizers

The second in a series of rallies in solidarity with queer and trans prisoners took place Oct. 12 in Lansing, Mich. The event outside the Michigan Department of Corrections headquarters aimed to educate the public and amplify prisoner voices by reading their statements aloud. Banners read “Can’t cage our humanity,” “Dignity for queer and trans prisoners,” “Freedom will blossom in the ashes of the prisons” and “Queer rage against prisons.”

The campaign stems from the struggle of gay and transgender prisoners at the G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility in Jackson, Mich. They are routinely sexually harassed and demeaned by correctional officers.

Sexual harassment of prisoners is a violation of the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act. When some of the prisoners filed grievances against officers for the illegal behavior, they experienced further mistreatment and retaliation, with officers ganging up against them in coordinated efforts to retaliate against the grievances.

“We may be caged, but we’re not animals,” said a transgender inmate known as Chaz.

A first rally was held on May 26 to publicly support the prisoners. Yet the prob-



lems continue unabated, and no officers have been removed, punished or reprimanded. The Legislative Corrections Ombudsman’s office opened an investigation into the mistreatment, but has not communicated any findings to the public or to the prisoners.

The demands expressed by the prisoners largely ask MDOC to enforce its own employee policies. They include:

- Zero tolerance for harassment or brutality by prison staff
- No retaliation for filing grievances
- Guards who sexually harass prisoners should be removed from their units when they’re under investigation, per MDOC’s own policy. They should also be prohibited from forming cliques for purposes of retaliation.
- Staff should be required to follow MDOC’s own policies and federal poli-

cies that protect the rights of prisoners. Guards should be disciplined for violations, per MDOC policy.

- MDOC must provide better training for staff on professional, nondiscriminatory treatment of LGBTQ people.
- LGBTQ prisoners should have the voluntary option of a designated unit or facility and yard where they are safe from sexual harassment and assault.
- All prisoners should receive appropriate medical care.
- Transgender prisoners should be able to keep hormones in their quarters.

Protester Hannah Shaughnessy-Mogill said, “When a prison guard can harass prisoners in a homophobic or transphobic way and then retaliate against anyone who files a grievance, the system is built upon the denial of human rights.”

Prisoners inside the Cotton facility saw media coverage of the protest. The national LGBTQ prisoner support organization Black and Pink featured the rally in its newspaper, which reaches over 10,000 prisoners across the country. Black and Pink has been in the news for its “On the Inside Art Show” in New York City, demonstrating how queer and trans prisoners use art in their lives and struggles.

Recently one of the trans prisoners who filed grievances against correctional officers was physically assaulted by another prisoner. Although she was not at fault, when she was transferred to another facility, officers destroyed most of her property in what was believed to be another retaliatory act.

News of Chelsea Manning’s second suicide attempt came out in early November. Her attorneys said that the discipline she faced after her first attempt, including solitary confinement, further shattered her mental health. This is the “logic” of a system of incarceration that relentlessly assaults the humanity of all prisoners, and queer and trans prisoners especially. When queer and trans prisoners in Michigan stand up for their humanity, they are literally fighting for their lives.

Falsely convicted lesbians exonerated

By Gloria Rubac
San Antonio

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

In 1994, Ramirez’s two young nieces accused the women of “gang-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 2012 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 reg-

ister 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 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 pa-



perwork 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, or the racist and homophobic terror put upon each of these four women, their partners and friends, and their families.

Rallies demand ‘Free Mumia’

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

Hundreds of people braved bitter cold weather to come out here for Mumia Abu-Jamal on Dec. 9, the 35th anniversary of his incarceration. Some traveled from New York, New Jersey, Maryland and North Carolina to save Mumia’s life and demand his freedom.

At a kickoff rally at Municipal Plaza, Rufus Farmer, from the Philadelphia Racial, Economic and Legal (REAL) Justice Coalition, discussed the group’s campaign to tear down a bronze statue there 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 and calling out Rizzo’s crimes.

Farmer led the crowd chanting “Take it down!” and encouraged everyone to sign a petition on Facebook at #FrankRizzoDown.

Pam Africa, 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 Janie Blackwell 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 Cointelpro 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 Erica 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, “What this government failed to do Dec. 9, 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!”

Protesters 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.



WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

Town hall on hep C and water crisis

At an evening town hall at the Arch Street United Methodist Church, panels discussed the health care and water crises; 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 Akilah, community health care advocates, said hep C has surpassed HIV/AIDS as a leading cause of death in Philadelphia. Pennsylvania prisoner and environmental advocate Bryant Arroyo called in from SCI Frackville to discuss the ongoing crisis of contaminated water plaguing Pennsylvania prisons. Dr. Michelle Strongfields, a graduate of Cuba’s Latin America School of Medicine, connected the health care crisis with Philadelphia’s deep rates of poverty.

Attorney Robert Boyle gave an update on legal actions against the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections for violating prisoners’ Eighth Amendment protection against “cruel and unusual punishment” by refusing to provide antiviral drugs that could cure Abu-Jamal and other prisoners. Attorney Rachel Wolkenstein reported on a new appeal filed on Abu-Jamal’s behalf based on the precedent-setting 2016 U.S. Supreme Court decision Williams v. Pennsylvania. The court overturned Terry Williams’s conviction on the grounds that Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Ronald D. Castile held a dual role as prosecutor and then judge in his case. The Williams case applies fully and directly to Abu-Jamal’s.

Other speakers included immigrant activist Carmen Guerrero and representatives of struggles to free political prisoners Leonard Peltier, Oscar López Rivera, the MOVE 9 and Dequi Kioni-Sa-



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

diki. Larry Hamm, chairman of the New Jersey Peoples Organization for Progress, gave a rousing call for struggle and movement building in the face of the ultraright Trump administration.

The session included a prerecorded message from Abu-Jamal reminding people of our collective power. “When we come together, we are a force to be reckoned with. It doesn’t matter if we’re talking about the death penalty, the hepatitis C crisis or freedom. When we come together, when we rumble together, we make things happen. We can open the prison gates. Trust yourself. Trust in the movement. Trust in the people. The people united will never be defeated.”

Below are reports on several other Mumia protests that day.

HOUSTON

Houston activists held a militant demonstration demanding freedom for Mumia, clean water and treatment for all prisoners with hep C.

Liliana Castellon, with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, speaking in English and Spanish, said Mumia should never have been arrested and must be treated humanely. She reported on a demonstration for Mumia in Mexico City that day.

Participating in the Houston action were members of the Black Panther Party Alumni Association, the National Black United Front, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Workers World Party and other activists.

— Gloria Rubac

‘Justice for Kionte Spencer’

By **Workers World Staff**
Roanoke, Va.

Dozens of community members from numerous cities across Virginia joined in solidarity here on Dec. 10 for a People’s Rally Against Police Violence. The Justice For Kionte Spencer Coalition, named after an 18-year-old Black youth murdered by Roanoke County cops in February, sponsored the rally. (facebook.com/JusticeforKionte)

Multinational supporters of all ages traveled to the rally from Lexington, Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, Salem, Blacksburg and Richmond, as well as Baltimore. Students from local Hollins University and distant Michigan State participated.

After Spencer was killed, the Roanoke County Police Department “investigated” itself and claimed its officers did nothing wrong. A Virginia Commonwealth’s Attorney rubber-stamped the investigation. Then the U.S. Attorney’s office refused to recommend any federal charges against the cops who killed Spencer. His family is currently looking into civil litigation.

To date, neither the dashcam video nor

names of the police who did the killing have been released publicly. This despite repeated demands by the Justice For Kionte Coalition, the Roanoke and Virginia NAACP, and many individuals and organizations in Virginia and beyond.

Since Spencer was killed, there have been protests, educationals and other events to demand justice and support his family. Awareness of the case has grown at the local and regional levels. Spencer’s brother, Carl Spencer, raised the case at the Fight For \$15 August 2016 national conference in Richmond and at the Workers World Party November 2016 national conference in New York City.

On Dec. 10, speakers from a range of organizations, from Fight For \$15 Roanoke to the Community Anti-Racism Initiative (CARE) from Lexington, spoke out in front of banners reading “Justice For Kionte” and “Roanoke to Charlotte: Stop Killing Black People.”

During the open mic session, speakers exposed violence inflicted on poor and working people in Virginia and elsewhere, including bank evictions and



WW PHOTO: WW STAFF

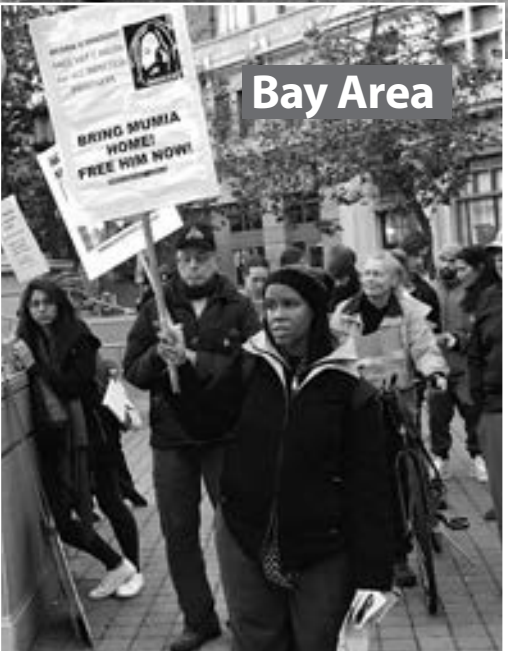
People’s Rally Against Police Violence, Dec. 10.

foreclosures, employers who pay low wages, cuts to public education and other public services, as well as exorbitant rent and unfit housing by slumlords. All African-American and other speakers of color testified to the historical and present atrocities inflicted on their people by the police.

A Filipina speaker from Charlottesville raised connections between the U.S. military occupying her country and other nations such as Puerto Rico, and the

police occupying communities of color and brutalizing LGBTQ people within the U.S. Many speakers also demanded money for people’s needs, not for more police and jails.

The rally concluded with all present pledging to continue the fight for justice for Kionte Spencer, to fight police violence, and to attend and/or promote community events, such as the first ever MLK Community Parade in Lexington, Va., set for Jan. 14, 2017. (carerockbridge.org) □



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

OAKLAND, CALIF.

Ras Ceylon, hip-hop artist and activist, emceed a rally of several hundred people at Oscar Grant Plaza. Speakers were Mumia Abu-Jamal on tape; Pierre La-Bossiere, Haiti Action Committee; Cristina Gutierrez, Frisco 5 hunger striker; Derrick Muhammad, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 secretary-treasurer; Carole Seligman, Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia; Gerald Smith, Oscar Grant Committee; and Michael Sandoval, Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, just back from Standing Rock.

The protestors marched to Oakland Police Department headquarters, chanting “Brick by brick, wall by wall, we’re going to free Mumia Abu-Jamal!” Speakers there included Richard Becker, Answer Coalition; Judy Greenspan, Workers World Party; and Dave Welsh, who sang a solidarity song.

— 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 water in prisons; and that prisons, which are nothing but concentration camps for the poor and oppressed, be torn down.

— Ellie Dorritie



Three high school students who testified before Texas Board of Ed.

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

The role of artists in revolutionary struggle

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 Rebecka Jackson-Moeser

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 comforted 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 Juliano 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 defunded 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.

Che 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.

The reality is that everyone deserves 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 spouted 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



REBECKA JACKSON-MOESER

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 of my life. And with them everything made sense.

Communism as a practice was the means to enact the principles I valued 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 inherent worth, as a woman, as a Black woman.

Why Workers World? Because at my first [WWP] 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 revolutionaries 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, femme 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 imperialism 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. □

Board of Ed rejects racist textbook

By Gloria Rubac
Austin, Texas

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 Latinos 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 they omit or 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 “mañana.”

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, university professors, high school students and activists, as well as one of the members of the board, spoke out against the textbook. A busload of students, educators and parents left Houston at dawn to arrive for the 9 a.m. hearing.

Following the press conference, public comments were received by the board. More than 50 people had signed up to give their opinions, with only two supporting 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 public elementary and high schools are Latinx, most of them Mexican-American. According to Jesús Medel, a professor of Mexican-American history at Houston Community College, “There is a long history of frustration among Mexican-American educators and activists who say our culture and history is often unrepresented or misrepresented in the public education system.”

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

Many 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 legitimate textbook saying that Chicanos are violent. ... It just seems like it’s open season 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.” □

The ICC: an imperialist farce

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

A Nov. 14 article in the New York Times suggests that the Netherlands-based International Criminal Court may 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. ... [T]he 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 [U.S.] is not a party to the court, which was established to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. But Afghanistan is a member of the court, so allegations of crimes committed in its territory, no matter the nationality of the perpetrators, are widely considered to be fair game.”

Even though Washington, under Bill Clinton, was initially a signatory in 2000, the Rome Statute, which ostensibly guides the operations of the ICC, has never been ratified by the U.S. Congress. This statute set the stage for the creation of the ICC, which the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations have refused to recognize as a body to which U.S. citizens are subject.

The Rome Statute went into effect in 2003. Successive U.S. administrations have sought to use this legal body most notably against the Republic of Sudan, headed by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, and the Libyan Jamahiriya formerly led by assassinated Col. Muammar Gaddafi. The ICC has also brought cases against the Republic of Kenya under President Uhuru Kenyatta and Vice President William Ruto.

For years these leaders were accused of gross human rights violations, crimes against humanity and even genocide. They were subjected to corporate and governmental media campaigns aimed at undermining their legitimacy both domestically and internationally.

The ICC has never examined the genocide the U.S., Britain, France, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands have carried out. The ICC or similar entities never acknowledged the crimes of forced removal of Indigenous peoples, the enslavement of millions and the systematic mass extermination of untold millions of people on all populated continents over the last five to six centuries.

African governments respond to ICC

Many African states and regional institutions consider the ICC biased. During the May 2013 Jubilee celebrations of the formation of the Organization of African Unity, sponsored by the successor African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, discussions were held about withdrawal from the ICC.

Nine of the 10 situations under ICC investigation, with three others under pre-

liminary investigation, involve African countries.

The Republic of South Africa, Burundi and Gambia announced this year they would no longer recognize the Rome Statute. Other African states that could withdraw include the Republic of Namibia, Kenya and Uganda — dealing the ICC a major blow.

The European Union and the U.S. routinely bypass the AU, a violation of diplomatic protocol, in order to hold summits that exclude key African states.

Zimbabwe, Sudan and Eritrea, among others, are not invited to these gatherings in Brussels and Washington. Other African governments have refused to attend because of the neocolonial efforts by European and North American states aimed to create divisions among members of these regional blocs.

Prosecute imperialist war crimes

Just over the last decade and a half, the U.S., Britain, France and other imperialist states have committed horrendous war crimes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Haiti and other geopolitical regions. The wars and interventions in these areas are aimed at eliminating independent governments and seizing their resources.

As a direct result of these massive bombings, invasions, occupations and partitions, tens of millions of people have been displaced, impoverished and disenfranchised, and millions have died.

At some point these crimes must be legally addressed, along with the development of the Atlantic slave trade, colonialism and neocolonialism. The abolition of the effectiveness of the ICC should pave the way for a broader discussion on the creation of a genuine world body to pursue imperialism’s war crimes and violations of the fundamental human rights of the majority of the world’s population. □

Fraud, false promises and Haitian election

By **G. Dunkel**

The Haitian presidential election was held on Nov. 20 in such a serene fashion that the country’s ruling class, with the blessings of their international “observers,” decided to count the vote. Candidates for the Senate 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 this year than last, despite 300,000 more registered voters.

The parties that came in second, third and fourth have all filed formal objections to the count, which gave the Party of Bald-Headed Haitians (PHTK), whose candidate was Moïse Jovenel, 55.7 percent of the vote.

Over 10 percent of the ballot tally sheets were submitted incorrectly and 118 were never turned in. Hundreds of thousands of citizens lost their IDs during Hurricane Matthew in the early part of October and couldn’t get them reissued. There were major bureaucratic snafus in relation to voting lists and sites.

Wendy Lерisse, a videographer in Port-au-Prince, has posted 17 videos of Fanmi Lavalas marches on YouTube.

On Nov. 29, the day after the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) announced the preliminary results, some smaller, more militant groups erected barricades of burning tires, burnt a few cars and broke some windows.

How U.S. deposed Aristide

On Feb. 7, 1986, 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 struggle as well as contradictions of voting in a bourgeois democratic election. The U.S. ruling class has been very active in trying to shape the outcome of these elections/struggles. They don’t want Haiti, 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 head U.S. monitor in these elections, tried to get Jean-Bertrand Aristide to concede. Instead, Aristide won with 67 percent of the votes.

Aristide was deposed by a Haitian army coup in 1991, which got at least tacit U.S. endorsement, and several thousand Fanmi Lavalas supporters were killed.

Aristide successfully ran again in November 2000 with 92 percent of the vote. Since he had disbanded the Haitian army in 1995, 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, forcing him to board a U.S. Air Force jet and flew him to the Central African Republic.

The next week, people from the International Action Center and the Haiti Support Network in the U.S. went to the Central African Republic and held a press 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 Haïti-Liberté and Batay Ouvriye, say the boycott was a rejection of elections as part of the solution to Haiti’s desperate problems. As Haïti-Liberté put it, the people are “not thirsty for elections but for a social transformation.” (Nov. 23-29) □

Revolted by Trump?

READY TO FIGHT BACK?

Workers and oppressed people need a fighting voice for the big struggles ahead! We asking you to contribute now to help counter Trump with a people’s agenda. Write one-time checks to Workers World, or join the Workers World Supporter Program with either a yearly lump sum or monthly donations. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free trial subscriptions to give to friends — all for a

donation of \$75 a year. For \$100 you also get any book from World View Forum. For \$300 a year (only \$25 a month) you get your pick of five books or PVN videos. And you can always contribute more. We won’t complain.

We invite you — sign up today! Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/.

‘Stop cop rape!’

Continued from page 5

from the city for herself and her son and “for this never to happen again to anyone else.” (Syracuse Post-Standard, Dec. 22, 2015)

Because of her perseverance, other women have come forward with accounts of cop rape by Thompson. In a July 2015 essay posted on the website of the Love & Rage Media Collective, Liz El Bayadi recounted how 20 years earlier, when she was only 18, Thompson threatened her with arrest for underage drinking to make her submit to rape.

Rape culture prevalent among police

Cop rape, like murder-by-cop, is not committed by just a “few bad apples.”

BLM activist Vani Kannan gave statistics during the rally documenting that the second most common civilian complaint

against police, after excessive force, is for sexual assault, which is 1.5 times more prevalent in cops than in men in the general population.

There are hundreds if not thousands of rapist cops unidentified for every Daniel Holtzclaw, the Oklahoma City cop sentenced to 263 years in prison in 2015 for using his police database to locate and then rape vulnerable women of color.

For people in the grip of the so-called “justice system,” who are disproportionately poor and of color, cops are not the only people sexually assaulting them. Besides rape by prison guard after sentencing, there are also judges.

The same day as the Syracuse BLM rally, a local newspaper ran a story with this headline: “North Country judge accused of reducing and paying traffic fines for sexual favors.” (Syracuse Post-Standard, Nov. 30) The euphemism “sexual favors” means rape, since no consent is possible.

Continued on the next page

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. Their advances are forcing the retreat of the U.S.-supported “rebel” forces into small areas of the city.

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

Heavy fighting continues in Aleppo. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry was forced to admit 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], and in some cases prevented humanitarian assistance from being delivered.” (U.S. Dept. of State website, Dec. 10)

Although the Syrian government has offered truces if the opposition forces agree to withdraw from Aleppo, the rebel groups have refused. And showing that the jihadist Islamic State group (IS) is 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 overturn the elected government. Reactionary “rebel” forces seized and have held parts of Aleppo since 2012. But this year, with the assistance of Russian forces and Iranian-backed militias, the Syrian government has taken back most of the city.

Some 386,000 people have been killed in the Syrian conflict. Another 4.8 million Syrians have been forced to flee their country, 6.1 million more are homeless within their own country, and a once modern infrastructure has been largely destroyed. (worlddivision.org, Nov. 15) But all this suffering means nothing to the CIA masterminds of war and the corporate merchants of death. The CIA’s goal is to overturn by force the Bashar al-Assad government, not to benefit the suffering 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 million to arm and train the so-called “mod-

erate rebels” in Syria, supplying them with anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons. This is only one piece of the huge military aid package given by the Pentagon and the CIA to their rebel proxies in order to overturn the Syrian government.

U.S. Congress member Tulsi Gabbard from Hawai’i introduced the “Stop Arming Terrorists Act” on Dec. 8, which would stop the Pentagon and CIA from

The war against Syria is not just another 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 facilitating and empowering the most reactionary, supremacist ideologies and organizations in the region.

Simultaneously the imperialist powers began the arduous process of redrawing the Middle East and Northern Africa on the basis of a secret Sykes-Picot 2.0. [The original Sykes-Picot was a secret 1916 agreement between Great Britain and France (the Russian Empire also agreed to it) that defined mutually agreed spheres of influence and control in Southwestern Asia.] Its aim was to destabilize independent states and halt any force from gaining any semblance of independence. The war against Syria would be impossible without the destruction of Iraq, the continued occupation of Afghanistan and the total devastation of Libya.

Many people contend that the goal of this war is so-called regime change.

This phrase creates an illusion of one set of interests leaving a state and another set entering. This could not be further from the truth — and don’t let anyone tell you otherwise. The aim of imperialism in Syria is the complete liquidation of the Syrian state and Syrian society.

After Syrians won their independence from French colonialists [in 1946], they built a pluralistic state on the basis of self-determination and anti-Zionism. If the imperialists have their cake and eat

providing “funding, weapons, training, and intelligence support to groups like the Levant Front, Fursan al Ha and other allies of Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, al-Qaeda and ISIS, or to countries who are providing direct or indirect support to those same groups.” (informationclearinghouse.info, Dec.8)

This legislation would cut off the supply of U.S. arms to the Syrian opposition.

it in Syria, we are looking at the prospect of a global war between the United States and Russia, which will not back down from its support for Syrian self-determination. We are also looking at a situation where most colonized countries are at risk of complete Balkanization [breakup of a region into smaller, often hostile units].

Despite Trump’s empty promises, he has no power or intent to step back the U.S. role in Syria. There is no turning back for imperialism in Syria.

Thousands of mercenaries, heavy weapons and toxic reactionary ideologies have been funneled into Syria. This is not something you turn on or off like a switch when you come into office. This is something that Syrians are actively resisting; it is up to us to support their resistance by any means necessary.

Allow me to be absolutely clear about an important facet of this conflict: The U.S. is not fighting the Islamic State group or al-Qaida in Syria. Supposedly imperialists have been fighting a 15-year war on terrorism; yet this terrorism has become a thousand times stronger, a thousand times more fierce. In many ways these reactionary terrorist groups are direct proxies of the imperialist powers.

The imperialists might not have the ability to dictate every action, but they have consistently given their proxies material support and continue to share their aims across the entire region.

We must be vigilant of more than just U.S. escalations in Syria. Turkey, NATO’s Middle Eastern nuclear weapons base, has played a large role in the war against Syria. Turkey is tottering down a path of civil war on its own streets while simultaneously furthering its imperial ambitions in Syria and Iraq. It is almost a certainty that Turkey will be utilized to expand the NATO role in Syria, widening the scope of the war.

“If you or I gave money, weapons or support to al-Qaeda or ISIS, we would be thrown in jail,” Gabbard said. “Yet the U.S. government has been violating this law for years, quietly supporting allies and partners of al-Qaeda, ISIL, Jabhat Fateh al Sham and other terrorist groups with money, weapons and intelligence support, in their fight to overthrow the Syrian government.” □

‘War against Syria defines today’s imperialism’

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 another 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.

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Simultaneously the imperialist powers began the arduous process of redrawing the Middle East and Northern Africa on the basis of a secret Sykes-Picot 2.0. [The original Sykes-Picot was a secret 1916 agreement between Great Britain and France (the Russian Empire also agreed to it) that defined mutually agreed spheres of influence and control in Southwestern Asia.] Its aim was to destabilize independent states and halt any force from gaining any semblance of independence. The war against Syria would be impossible without the destruction of Iraq, the continued occupation of Afghanistan and the total devastation of Libya.

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This phrase creates an illusion of one set of interests leaving a state and another set entering. This could not be further from the truth — and don’t let anyone tell you otherwise. The aim of imperialism in Syria is the complete liquidation of the Syrian state and Syrian society.

After Syrians won their independence from French colonialists [in 1946], 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 prospect of a global war between the United States and Russia, which will not back down from its support for Syrian self-determination. We are also looking at a situation where most colonized countries are at risk of complete Balkanization [breakup of a region into smaller, often hostile units].

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We must be vigilant of more than just U.S. escalations in Syria. Turkey, NATO’s Middle Eastern nuclear weapons base, has played a large role in the war against Syria. Turkey is tottering down a path of civil war on its own streets while simultaneously furthering its imperial ambitions in Syria and Iraq. It is almost a certainty that Turkey will be utilized to expand the NATO role in Syria, widening the scope of the war.

Self-determination for Syrians comes above all else right now. Attacks on the Syrian state and their military allies from some Western anti-war groups accomplish nothing progressive. On the contrary, they support the argument for a stronger role for U.S. imperialism.

The cause of Syrian self-determination now extends past the borders of Syria into Europe. Millions of Syrians have been forced into Europe and are living in genocidal conditions among other peoples from the Middle East and Africa. Trump’s victory and the rising ultraright pose an existential threat to Syrians in their homeland and in the streets of Europe.

Workers World Party and our allies have always been strong proponents of self-determination. We must continue to build and organize around this principle while also consciously challenging the propaganda war being waged against Syria. It is imperative that everyone get organizations and struggles they know involved in the new Hands Off Syria Coalition.

The nature of the war against Syria mirrors many imperialist methods of oppression in the West, and these ties can actively be made. Just like the pigs are out here on these streets every day lynching people of color, reactionary death squads in Syria are committing genocide against Kurds, Christians, Druze, Shia and Sunnis who will not submit! Standing Rock and the movement against war in Syria need to actively build together. Both are fighting a struggle for self-determination against the same enemy!

A country that oppresses others will never be free. The only road to peace: U.S. out of the Middle East! □

ble when the person demanding sex is a judge with a gavel in his hand, ready to hammer punishment into your life.

Fighting back and winning against this abuse are possible. In a recent victory, a massive coalition of Oakland, Calif., groups in the Anti Police-Terror Project and the Take Back Oakland Coalition have been unrelenting in exposing police violence and abuse, including rape.

Three Oakland police chiefs were fired in a span of nine days in June because of revelations of a departmental “sex scandal.” Numerous Bay Area cops across several cities and counties have been indicted on felony charges for rape and sexual assault.

On June 17, activists hung a banner across the OPD headquarters with the indictment: “OPD Guilty of Human Trafficking & Statutory Rape #OPDGuiltyasCharged.” (Workers World, June 23) □

Voters reject anti-union move VIRGINIA

By Workers World Staff

A ballot initiative that would have made the state’s “right-to-work” (for less!) law part of the state constitution was defeated in Virginia on Nov. 8. It was an important victory for poor and working people everywhere.

The measure, known as Constitutional Amendment No. 1, would have amended the state constitution to keep Virginia a “right-to-work” state forever, unless another change were made to the constitution. A governor cannot veto a referendum.

The Virginia AFL-CIO and its affiliates, along with community supporters, including members of the Southern

Workers Assembly, worked across the state for months to defeat Amendment 1, even as millions of dollars were poured into the state by anti-union, racist, Wall Street forces such as the Koch brothers’ American Legislative Exchange Council.

“Strong unions can be a cultural force that sets standards on the job and encourages public officials to set policies that benefit all workers. As part of a broader movement, unions help create norms for fair treatment, safety, decent wages and benefits,” wrote Doris Crouse-Mays, president of the Virginia AFL-CIO, in an op-ed article days before the vote.

Crouse-Mays added that the anti-union “right-to-work” law “has been

on the books for nearly 70 years and takes aim at workers’ rights to stand together and speak out in the workplace. I’ve personally worked in both union and nonunion facilities and I have seen the difference a collective bargaining agreement can make in the lives of working people — not always in wages, but in dignity and respect for one another. ...

“Any attempt to weaken dignity and respect does nothing to improve our communities. Our elected officials should be focused on improving our local economies by investing in infrastructure, fully funding our schools, raising wages and creating good jobs right here in Virginia.” □

Russia didn't do it

The CIA's allegation that Russia intervened 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 machines in the Midwest? That's the sort of stuff U.S. spy agencies would brag about discovering. But no.

Russia is accused of hacking the computer of Hillary Clinton's campaign manager John Podesta and giving embarrassing information to WikiLeaks. But Julian Assange, WikiLeaks' editor-in-chief, denied Russia was the source. (Politico, Nov. 3)

Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina nonetheless declared, "I'm going after Russia in every way you can go after Russia. ... 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 Electoral College that's sending Trump to the White House, even though he got 2.8 million 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 evidentiary connection to any Russian intelligence service and WikiLeaks — none," said one U.S. official. That's what the Washington Post reported back on July 27.

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

Attacking Russia for allegedly aiding Trump is also a way to attack this super-bigot from the right.

Millions of people may be coming to

Washington, D.C., on Jan. 20 to protest Trump's inauguration. Blaming Russia is an attempt to divert the struggle.

It's easier to knock Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson, Trump's apparent secretary of state nominee, for deals with Russia than to attack the oil giant for, say, exploiting Yemen.

Democrats like New York Sen. Charles Schumer are yelling the loudest against Russia, while capitulating to Trump's nomination of a virtual junta of generals in his cabinet.

During the election campaign the ruling class and its capitalist state were split. The biggest banks and the CIA supported Clinton. Most of the small banks, oil frackers like Harold Hamm — the sort of forces that backed Barry Goldwater in 1964 — were for Trump.

The FBI was also for Trump, and FBI Director James Comey may have helped tilt the elections by raising Clinton's emails late in the campaign.

The split between these two Gestapo-like agencies — the CIA and the FBI — has continued, with the FBI discounting the CIA's claims about Russia. (CNN, Dec. 11)

What's ironic about the CIA's "fake news" is that U.S. election consultants boasted about how they helped re-elect Russian President Boris Yeltsin in 1996. (Los Angeles Times, July 9, 1996) Wall Street used Yeltsin to help overthrow the Soviet Union, a tragic defeat for poor people and workers everywhere.

Russia today has a capitalist government, but it's not a vassal state like Saudi Arabia. To U.S. generals like "Mad Dog" James Mattis — Trump's choice for defense secretary — Russia is 6 million square miles to attack and occupy.

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



PHOTOS: IFCO/PASTORS FOR PEACE
Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) class of 2015 in white coats at Karl Marx Theater, Havana; inset 2015 U.S. graduates.



Cuba's fundamental human rights

By Cheryl LaBash

What is a "human right"? Working-class and oppressed people define the term "human rights" differently than the capitalists, businesses, banks and multinational corporations that exploit human labor for profit.

For International Human Rights Day, Dec. 10, the U.S.-based National Network on Cuba wrote a statement, "Cuba: Where real human rights are the foundation of society."

The NNOC contrasted the global respect for the well-lived life of socialist Cuba's historic leader Fidel Castro with the insulting reactions from the U.S. president-elect and others who wrongly assert that the Cuban leader's legacy was the denial of "human rights." The NNOC also condemned the U.S. blockade of Cuba, in itself a massive genocidal human rights violation.

The NNOC pointed out that in the U.S., unlike in Cuba, "the president-elect will lead a country where police kill Black and Latin people — men, women, children, transgender — with impunity. ...

"As winter begins to bite ... over 500,000 will be sleeping on U.S. streets, under bridges, families with children will be living in cars. Not in Cuba.

"The average U.S. 2016 college graduate owes \$37,172 in student loans. Not in Cuba.

"In the U.S., millions are evicted from their homes because of skyrocketing rents and mortgages. Not in Cuba.

"According to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey ... in 2016, 83 percent of [U.S.] workers have a deductible — an amount that they have to pay themselves for medical care before insurance covers it — with an average of \$1,478. For the first time since 1999, more than half of workers must pay more than \$1,000 in

medical costs before insurance coverage begins. Not in Cuba.

"According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute of Literacy, in an April 2016 study, 14 percent, or 32 million adults, can't read in [the U.S.]. Not in Cuba.

"Trump openly advocates waterboarding and other forms of torture. ... Since 2002, torture has been taking place at one location on the island: the territory illegally occupied by the U.S. military base in Guantánamo.

"We assert that the Cuban Revolution is an excellent example of the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights today. Cuba is a small, island country, with development hampered by centuries of colonialism and slavery. And despite having to endure to this day an economic, financial and commercial blockade that has lasted for over 56 years, one designed to impose hunger and privation on its people, the island remains a bright example of humanity to the world.

"The full resources of Cuba are used to develop each individual Cuban to their fullest potential. Universal health care, free education through university, the right to employment, to housing — to dignity — is not only guaranteed but implemented.

"Over \$4 billion was wasted this year on the presidential campaign in the U.S. Just imagine for a moment what that money could have been spent on in terms of social improvements. Meanwhile, the people of Cuba enjoy free and fair elections untainted by financial influence. Every Cuban is registered to vote on their 16th birthday. Every vote is counted under the honest and watchful eyes of children. In addition to representation, the Cuban people are directly consulted about the direction of their society through community, union, women's, agricultural, youth and other organizations. Their views are heeded. Transgender individuals have been elected to represent their area. ...

"On Saturday, Dec. 10, remember the fundamental human rights enjoyed in Cuba, where the 1959 Revolution converted military barracks into schools. One of them is the Latin American School of Medicine, where youth from underserved communities around the world — including some from the U.S. — learn to be doctors for free, then go home to serve the people.

"Yes, that is real human rights."

LaBash is one of five co-chairs of the National Network on Cuba.

Letter to the editor 'My sister and Fidel'

To the editor:

My older sister is a tour guide in Brazil. In the 1990s, 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 conference with a group from another country. Almost at the end, she asked the Comandante for a picture with her. Fidel promptly said yes and, while they were posing for it, asked her how she was doing. 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 intervened, saying to let her in because she

was his guest.

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

Jefferson Azevedo
Los Angeles

Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

Available at major online booksellers.

By Leslie Feinberg author of 'Stone Butch Blues'

Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba documents revolutionary Cuba's inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes. This ground-breaking book reveals how the Cuban Revolution has grappled with the pre-revolutionary legacy of 450 years of persecution and exploitation of homosexuality. Rainbow Solidarity answers the demonization of the 1959 Cuban Revolution by Washington and the CIA, Wall Street and Hollywood.



Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba is an edited compilation of 25 articles from the *Workers World* newspaper series by Feinberg entitled *Lavender & Red*, online at workers.org.

Protesters at U.N.: ‘Stop war on children’

By Workers World Staff
New York

Parents, teachers, youth and anti-war activists rallied outside U.N. headquarters in New York on Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day, in solidarity with children in the embattled Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. The action was organized by the International Action Center.

For more than 2.5 years, the U.S.-backed regime in Ukraine has waged a brutal war against the civilian population of Donbass. People in Donetsk and Lugansk declared independence following 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 children. Hundreds more youths have been wounded, thousands orphaned and tens of thousands forced to flee as refugees.

Since June, the Komsomol (Communist 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 blockade. The letters will be presented to U.N. representatives in Europe.

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

Greg Butterfield, an IAC organizer and parent, stated, “The February 2014 coup in Ukraine, which brought to power oli-

garchs, nationalist demagogues and outright neo-Nazis, received financing and bipartisan political support from Washington.

“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 brutality, Islamophobia and jailing of immigrants, 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 refuses 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, gripped with war, were taken to Crimea. There we met many other children who survived terrible bombardments. Their stories were eerie. Upon recalling them, many would begin crying and trembling.

— Aleksey, 17 years old,
Molodogvardeysk

We hope that war will no longer return to our cities, villages, towns. We would like to forget the word “war” forever. What has been happening here is

now taking place in Syria. People are fleeing to Europe, as their houses are in ruins; there are no conditions for living whatsoever.

— Vlada, 13 years old

I am very sorry that the authorities of Ukraine have forgotten that there are peaceful people living in Donbass.

— Inna, 2nd grade, Krasnodon

When shootings started here, my mother, sister and I left. But when we were crossing the border, we came under attack. We were led into a building, and then let out and told to run. We were running, and behind us the customs station was under fire. Then someone shouted at us to lie down; a woman covered me. It was very scary. A car drove up and my mother, sister and I, and some other girl, were put into the car and driven away. When we were in the car, the girl was crying a lot because her mother stayed behind.

— Anonymous 3rd grade student,
Krasnodon

It was called a “road of death” because cars that drove on it were constantly fired

at by Ukrainian military. But in fact, it was the “road of life,” since peaceful residents tried to leave an unsafe region. But all could not leave! Afterwards we were affected by an economic blockade. But we survived.

— 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 or kill each other. We are children for peace in the whole world and for a happy life!

— Polina, 2nd grade

War is the hardest trial for an entire population. But the most defenseless and vulnerable in this time are children. We have seen the stern face of the war, its cold, pitiless 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 will never forget it.

— Anastasia, 9th grade



WW PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

Solidarity with children of Donetsk and Lugansk.

One cheer for Italian referendum vote

By John Catalinotto

Nearly 70 percent of eligible voters in Italy turned out to vote on a referendum on changes to the constitution on Dec. 5 that would strengthen the executive office and the larger parties. Nearly 60 percent voted “No,” which both rejected the proposed changes and forced the young Democratic Party Prime Minister Matteo Renzi to resign.

Workers’ organizations and reactionary parties had urged a “No” vote during the campaign. The big bosses’ organizations, bankers and pro-European Union politicians, including Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Barack Obama, urged a “Yes” vote.

Most left and communist organizations in Italy agree that the “No” vote was better than a “Yes.” They also agree that while this prevented a defeat, it is only the beginning of a struggle to defend workers’ rights.

While the referendum has some surface similarities to last June’s Brexit vote, it has a different political content. In Britain, a major focus of the Brexit victory was a reactionary, anti-immigrant appeal. Not so in Italy.

Renzi is a politician similar to Bill Clinton in the 1990s in the U.S. and the Labor Party’s Tony Blair in the 2000s in Britain. These three politicians all chipped away at gains that the working class had made when unions and other working-class organizations were relatively stronger. Also, Renzi was cooperating with NATO militarization in Italy.

When Renzi introduced the referendum last year, he staked his own political

survival on its approval. At that point, all of Renzi’s opponents — especially those from the right — seized on the referendum as a way to attack Renzi and the Democratic Party. These included the anti-immigrant Northern League and Silvio Berlusconi’s Forza Italia. The anti-corruption and eurosceptic Five-Star Movement — which can’t be called right or left at this point — played a leading role.

It was only with a general strike and a national demonstration on Oct. 21 and 22, called by the United Rank-and-File Union, that the working class began to show some independent leadership re-

jecting Renzi’s proposals. Some grassroots organizations continued working for a “No” in the referendum.

This resulted in the large working-class rejection of Renzi’s changes. Especially large rejections came from young people and the poorer regions of the country, such as the islands of Sardinia and Sicily.

The Italian pro-communist organization Fronte Popolare reported in the Nov. 4 Workers World on the October strike and demonstration. This group draws the following positive but sober conclusion regarding how to proceed after the “No” vote:

“The Italian working classes, youth, the more conscious sectors of our society have given a clear message at the polls of the urgent need for a radical change of the present state of things.

“To live up to their expectations and avoid a new qualitative leap in the reactionary drift — which with a ‘Yes’ victory would have been certain, but that the ‘No’ does not in itself stop — is the responsibility that the moment hands us. Let us be up to the task ahead!” (frontepopolare.net, Dec. 5) □

‘For Peltier and Standing Rock!’



Led by a colorful banner demanding freedom for imprisoned Native leader Leonard Peltier, over 500 #NoDAPL activists and Indigenous warriors and leaders rallied and marched in Washington, D.C., on Human Rights Day, Dec. 10. Peltier’s eldest son, Chauncey Peltier, speaking on the dangers of corporate power over water, demanded President Obama put an end to the Dakota Access Pipeline and also grant executive clemency to his father.

From the stage next to the reflecting pool in front of the U.S. Capitol, participants carrying banners and many homemade signs marched on a bitter cold day to the national headquarters of the Environmental Protection Agency at 12th Street and Constitution Avenue, pausing en route in front of the Trump Hotel for particularly loud chants.

Later, dozens of participants joined the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee in a candlelight vigil on the south side of the White House demanding that Peltier be released.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette



Libertad para Oscar López Rivera, ¡YA!

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 estacionados en Irak y Afganistán, encabezaron una marcha el 5 de diciembre por la carretera 1806 hacia el puente Backwater en solidaridad con las naciones Lakota, Dakota y Nakota de Standing Rock. El puente es el sitio donde el 20 de noviembre, la policía utilizó viciousamente granadas de concusión, gases lacrimógenos, cañones de agua y otras armas contra las/os protectores de agua desarmados.

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 unas 20.000 personas.

El Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército [ACoE por las siglas en inglés] del gobierno federal, que controla algunas de las tierras y permisos para construir el ducto, 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 bajo el Río Misuri en el lago Oahe, que es parte de los terrenos no cedidos del tratado de Standing Rock. El gobierno de Obama, en gran medida mudo 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 sufrimos repetidamente las/os protectores de agua.

Muchas/os en el movimiento de protectores del agua se alegraron al oír esta noticia del ACoE, pero su celebración fue efímera. Energy Transfer Partners (ETP) y Sunoco Logistics Partners (SXL), las corporaciones de Wall Street que patrocinan el ducto, anunciaron varias horas más tarde que no estaban obligadas a la declaración de ACoE y que planeaban perforar bajo el lago Oahe sin importar que una prohibición había sido impuesta.

ETP 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 directiva de la Casa Blanca hoy al ACoE para retrasar más, es sólo la última de una serie de acciones políticas abiertas 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 comprometidas a asegurar que este vital proyecto se complete y esperan completar la construcción de la tubería sin ningún cambio adicional en y alrededor del lago Oahe. Nada que esta Administración haya hecho hoy cambia 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 a cientos de otras naciones indígenas de las Américas para detener este oleoducto que amenaza con profanar sus tierras ancestrales, violando los tratados de 1851 y 1868 - que defienden el derecho del pueblo siux a la soberanía de la tierra - firmados entre ellos y 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 del Sheriff del Condado de Morton, junto con la de la firma privada de seguridad G4S (matones mercenarios armados), miles de protectoras/es de agua han enfrentado

gases lacrimógenos, hipotermia causada por el agua helada disparada por cañones de agua en temperaturas bajo cero, mordeduras de viciosos perros de ataque, balas de goma y más agresiones del estado represivo.

Cómplices de esta violencia han sido los medios corporativos como CNN, MSNBC, Washington Post y el New York Times que han blanqueado cualquier cobertura significativa de este importante desarrollo que brillantemente expone el racismo ambiental con ánimos de ganancias. Cuando hubo cobertura por éstos medios de comunicación, sus reportajes eran a menudo vergonzosamente sesgados acusando falsamente a las/os protectores de agua desarmados de perpetuar la violencia contra la policía estatal altamente militarizada y los mercenarios.

Pero en los medios de comunicación social, especialmente Twitter y Facebook, hubo informes de cada delegación que llegaba a Standing Rock de dos en dos, por centenares o incluso por miles. Eso dio lugar a entre 8.000 y 20.000 o más personas en los diversos campamentos, todas dedicadas a detener la construcción del oleoducto. Salvo esa comunicación, esta importante lucha podría haber sucumbido al aislamiento y la alienación que siempre favorecen históricamente los intereses del 1%.

La firme resistencia al DAPL por la Nación Sioux y otras naciones indígenas que luchan por sus tierras y recursos y contra de los poderes del establecimiento, ha inspirado a organizaciones e individuos a viajar a Standing Rock para mostrar solidaridad.

Esto incluye delegaciones que representan al Movimiento Las Vidas Negras Importan, solidaridad palestina, y grupos laborales y ambientales, junto con figuras políticas como Cornel West y Rev. Jesse Jackson; artistas del hip-hop; actores Shailene Woodley, Mark Ruffalo, Jane Fonda y James Cromwell; y el jugador de baloncesto de la Universidad de Wisconsin Bronson Koenig. Acciones de Solidaridad #NoDAPL en todo los EUA continúan atrayendo a miles de activistas desde Boston a Nueva York, Detroit y Los Ángeles. Además, el apoyo internacional ha sido sustancial.

Disculpa de veteranos

Y luego están los veteranos liderados por Wesley Clark Jr., quienes viajaron a Standing Rock desde muchos estados en autos y camionetas para oponerse a la DAPL. Los veteranos construyeron cuarteles en los campamentos para resguardarse de las temperaturas bajo cero.

Antes de que la marcha del 5 de diciembre hacia el Puente Backwater tuviera lugar, los veteranos participaron en un servicio de oración donde Clark, hablando en nombre de los veteranos, se disculpó públicamente frente a los venerables indígenas mayores por los crímenes genocidas cometidos por los EUA contra los Pueblos Indígenas, su tierra, su cultura y sus recursos. Una danza ceremonial de Fuego Sagrado dirigida por veteranos indígenas tuvo lugar en el campamento Oceti Sakowin cerca del puente.

Indicando que se trata de una fase de la lucha #NoDAPL a pesar de las temperaturas de invierno, John Bigelow, líder del Comité de medios de comunicación del campamento Oceti Sakowin y miembro de la Nación Sioux de Standing Rock, dijo, “como protectores del agua, tenemos la responsabilidad de ser guardianes del agua. Declaramos aquí hoy, que no nos vamos a ninguna parte”. (tinyurl.com/je3l4km)

Loan Tran, miembro del colectivo de Durham del Partido Workers World-Mundo Obrero que recientemente viajó a Standing Rock como parte de una delegación de Carolina del Norte, dijo a WW-MO: “Lo que vimos en Standing Rock no fue sólo una lucha para detener un oleoducto, sino la lucha por la soberanía que los pueblos indígenas llevan siglos realizando. Con decenas de miles de personas trabajando y viviendo en el campamento, la lucha en Standing Rock es un recordatorio y un ejemplo para todas/os nosotros del poder y la necesidad de solidaridad con los movimientos de liberación nacional en todas partes”.

Mahtowin Munro contribuyó a este artículo.

‘Perro rabioso’ en el Pentágono

Editorial WW-Mundo Obrero
11 de diciembre de 2016.

“Es divertido dispararle a algunas personas”, declaró “Mad Dog” (Perro Rabioso) James Mattis en el año 2005 a una alborozada audiencia de militares estadounidenses en Irak. (ABC News, 1 de diciembre)

Donald Trump acaba de elegir a este general de cuatro estrellas jubilado de la Marina para ser Secretario de Defensa.

Si alguien pensaba que el peligro de guerra disminuiría con el multimillonario Trump en la Casa Blanca, su selección para dirigir el Pentágono debería ser un llamado de atención.

Mattis es un súper halcón obsesionado con Irán. Mattis dijo el 22 de abril en una reunión en el Centro de Estudios Estratégicos e Internacionales, que las tres mayores amenazas que enfrentan los EUA son “Irán, Irán, Irán”. (Político, 4 de diciembre)

Mattis negó que los 80 millones de habitantes de Irán pertenezcan a un país, calificando a Irán de “una causa revolucionaria dedicada al caos”. Este oficial de alto rango incluso hizo la afirmación absurda de que Irán está en connivencia con el grupo del Estado Islámico.

El derrocamiento del gobierno electo de Siria y la confrontación con Rusia están también en la agenda del “Mad Dog”.

El curriculum vitae del futuro jefe del Pentágono incluye crímenes de guerra. En mayo del 2004 Mattis dio la orden de bombardear una fiesta de bodas en la aldea iraquí de Mukareeb. Cuarenta y dos niñas/os y adultas/os fueron sacrificados. (London Telegraph, 2 de diciembre)

Un mes antes, las fuerzas bajo el mando de Mattis atacaron la gran ciudad iraquí de Faluya en represalia por la muerte de cuatro mercenarios de Blackwater. De las/os 736 iraquíes asesinados, al menos el 60 por ciento eran niños y mujeres, según el periodista Dahr Jamail, quien habló con médicos locales. (Huffington Post, 3 de diciembre)

Así que no sorprende que Mattis quiera mantener abierto el campo de concentración estadounidense en Guantánamo. Sus puntos de vista fanáticos y llenos de odio se pueden ver en el libro “Warriors and Citizens: American Views of Our Military” (“Guerreros y ciudadanos: puntos de vista americanos de nuestro ejército”), que co-editó con Kori N. Schake.

Él y Schake criticaron “permitir que los homosexuales declarados sirvan y que las mujeres entren en combate”. También alegaron que se estaba creando una cultura de “victimización” dentro del ejército debido a la atención prestada a las víctimas, los suicidios y a los veteranos que sufren trastorno de estrés postraumático.

Mattis y Schake incluso atacaron al presidente Barack Obama por ser más propenso a visitar heridos en el Hospital Naval de Bethesda que ir a una base militar. Afirmaron que gran parte del presupuesto de guerra se gastaba en “salarios y beneficios en detrimento de la capacitación, el equipo y los números en la fuerza”.

Ni sus crímenes de guerra ni sus opiniones reaccionarias han detenido a los periódicos y comentaristas, incluyendo a los que se oponían a Trump, de exaltar a Mattis como un “guerrero intelectual”.

Ya que Mattis estuvo activo hace menos de siete años, necesitará una dispensa por el Congreso para convertirse en Secretario de Defensa. Hace menos de cuatro años, el Presidente Obama le despidió del Comando Central del Pentágono.

Pero el control civil sobre los militares se ha convertido en un mito, como señaló Sam Marcy, Secretario General del Partido Workers World - Mundo Obrero, en su libro “Generales sobre la Casa Blanca”.

“Dondequiera que los militares pongan sus manos, mientras más invierte su campo de operaciones con medidas represivas, antidemocráticas y totalitarias”, escribió Marcy, “nada escapa de su largo y férreo alcance”.

Sólo el pueblo puede detener a los dos perros rabiosos, Mattis y Trump.

¡Todas y todos a la Contra-Inauguración J20Resist!

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