San Francisco

People’s power defeats new jail

By Dave Welsh
San Francisco

Dec. 18 – Against all odds, a grassroots coalition has defeated a plan to build a new, 384-bed downtown jail at a cost of between $240 million and $465 million, with 30 years of debt financing. In what the No New SF Jail Coalition called “an historic moment in our long and difficult fight against jail expansion,” the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted on Dec. 15 to reject the new jail plan.

“I am not going to support another stand-alone jail to continue to lock up African Americans and Latinos in this city. We are not going to continue to lock up people who have mental illness and substance abuse problems and clearly need to be treated,” said Board President London Breed, reported the Dec. 14 San Francisco Examiner.

Activists shut down budget meeting

The decisive moment in the two-year No New SF Jail campaign may have come earlier on Dec. 2, when about 100 people took over the Board of Supervisors chambers in City Hall to demand “Stop the jail project now!” As five young organizers deployed a lockdown, the crowd unfurled a banner and shut down a Budget Committee meeting that had been expected to rubber-stamp the jail proposal.

Meanwhile, three young Black women led nonstop chanting and dancing for more than two hours until police cleared the room. They chanted, “Lift us up, don’t lock us up,” “Kids not caged,” “Affordable housing, not jail beds,” “Superior Two,” “Do the right thang” and “House keys, not handcuffs.” Protesters shook their keys in time with the chant. When an official tried to stop the chanting, saying, “So we can get on with public comments,” an older man shouted, “This is public comment!”

Last-minute vote was unanimous

The fate of the jail proposal was touch and go, right up until the last minute. Many people thought the plan would pass, as it was backed by the sheriff, the mayor or other movers and shakers in the city. As a No New SF Jail coalition statement said, “This just goes to show that when we use our power we actually shift our political conditions and realities.” (Dec. 16)

In the end, the board vote on Dec. 15 was a unanimous “No!”

Community members had testified at the public hearing and made key points: Some 85 percent of people in the San Francisco jail are simply awaiting trial — in order to show that when we use our people power we actually shift our political conditions and realities.” (Dec. 16)

Hundredsof people from the various communities and organizations that reflect New York City’s working class gathered at Fifth Avenue and 56th Street at the Trump Towers on Dec. 20 to say “No to Trump, no to racism and immigrant bashing, no to Islamophobia, no to war.”

Donald Trump has focused on a racist message in his public statements and his campaign rallies have opened their doors to some of the most reactionary fascist elements in the country.

If there was one central message of the protest, it was the call for unity in the struggle against racism. For two hours people representing the different groups came to the microphone and gave a shout out for unity of the working class and all oppressed communities. Many Muslims were present, with their mosques or organizations, and gave a strong message that they could stand up proudly without having to apologize before the attacks of Islamophobes like Trump.

Following the rally, the demonstrators marched to Sixth Avenue and then downtown to protest at the headquarters of Fox News, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Post. They targeted these corporate media for the support they have given to Trump’s reactionary and racist ideas. The organizers from the International Action Center and other organizations said at the rally they consider today’s action “just a beginning” in the mobilization to stop Trump and others like him.
If finding a new copy of Workers World in your mailbox or on your computer every week excites you, it’s time you started giving back to WW.

This weekly delivery of class truth — an infusion of socialist thought — is vital to building a revolutionary party of the working class and the liberation movements worldwide.

We hope you’ll give as generously as you can so WW can begin a new year of struggle on a sound financial footing. Keeping the paper strong during the coming election year is essential to showing what our socialist candidates apart from other third parties, let alone the two ruling-class parties. Write checks to Workers World Fund Drive, and send them to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor, New York, NY 10011. Include your name and address. Or donate online at workersworld.org/articles/donate/

If you’d like to help build the paper throughout the whole year, you can join the Workers World Supporter Program and give either a lump sum or a monthly donation. We set up the Workers World Supporter Program 18 years ago to invite our subscribers to join in building WW. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues or new publications from World View Forum, and five free trial subscriptions to give to friends — all for a donation of $75 a year. For $150 a year 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. You can always contribute more.

Take the time today to keep the voice of struggle for revolutionary socialism loud and clear by mailing a check to Workers World and indicate how you wish to contribute — either to the Fall Fund Drive or by joining the Workers World Supporter Program.

We’re taking a break

In order to see that our staff of volunteers gets to take a well-earned break, Workers World skips one issue a year. Our next issue will be dated Jan. 14, 2016, and will be mailed out on Jan. 7.

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 feel oppressed, you know they’re robbing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet.

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 56 years WW has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism, degradation 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. WW builds unity among all workers while supporting the right to self-defense when workers organize in defense of a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

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

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

workers.org/wwp

Start the new year right!

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Mumia Abu-Jamal gets hep C hearing in court

By Betsey Piette
Scranton, Pa.

It was a full-court press by supporters of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal as he brought his case seeking proper medical care for the hepatitis C Virus against the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections to U.S. District Court in Scranton, Pa., on Dec. 18. Abu-Jamal is suing the DOC and doctors at SCI-Mahanoy for intentional medical neglect and malpractice, violations of the Eighth Amendment’s protection against cruel and unusual punishment.

Nearly 80 people packed the main courtroom where the evidentiary hearing was held. U.S. District Court Judge Robert Mariani. Dozens more supporters watched the proceedings in an overflow courtroom. Around 40 people maintained an all-day demonstration outside in the cold, handing out fliers and explaining what was happening inside the court to residents of this economically depressed town.

Abu-Jamal testified via video hookup from SCI-Mahanoy, assisted by attorneys Ashley Henderson and Nikki Grant, of the Amistad Law Project. It was the first time Abu-Jamal has been able to speak in court on his own behalf in decades. In court Bret Grote, of the Abolitionist Law Center, questioned Abu-Jamal. Attorney Robert Boyle questioned Dr. Joseph Harris, who gave expert medical testimony, stating that most of Mumia’s health problems can be linked to untreated acute hepatitis C, which is curable with new antiviral drugs.

Early in the day, Judge Mariani denied a motion by Laura Neal, the DOC’s legal counsel, requesting dismissal of the hearing. Neal claimed Abu-Jamal had failed to exhaust all of the prison’s grievance procedure requirements and that he hadn’t specifically asked for HCV treatment. The judge reminded Neal that the DOC had all of Abu-Jamal’s health information in May of 2015 and called Neal’s argument “a tortured view of what is required of an inmate in a grievance.”

The hearing will continue on Dec. 22. It starts at 9:30 a.m. at the U.S. Court house located at 735 W. Washington Ave. in Scranton. For transportation information from Philadelphia, call 484-543-2172 or from New York, call 212-330-8029.

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By David Sole
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As the Rev. Edward Pinkney approached the start of his second year in prison, a powerful show of support was displayed in Detroit on Dec. 12 for Michigan’s political prisoner. The Emergency Conference to Save Rev. Pinkney drew over 70 participants from across Michigan and several other states.

Longtime supporters of Rev. Pinkney were joined by many who had only recently heard about the jailed Benton Harbor civil rights activist. Many were meeting each other for the first time.

Dorothy Pinkney opened the conference. This is the second time in eight years that she has been separated from her spouse due to wholly outrageous frame-ups charges. She inspired the crowd by reading from Rev. Pinkney’s message to the conference: “They tried to destroy me, but I am still standing. They attempted to silence me by taking away my telephone rights, but I am still standing. They tried to harm me, they tried to intimidate me, they tried to threaten me, but I am still standing.”

Attorney Tim Holloway, Rev. Pinkney’s appeals lawyer, exposed the wildly unconstitutional procedures used by the prosecutor, Michael Sepic, and allowed by Berrien County judge, Sterling R. Srock, to get the all-white jury to convict Rev. Pinkney despite having, admittedly, “no evidence” linking him to the charges of altering five dates on a mayoral recall petition.

Longtime supporter and organizer Marcina Cole linked Rev. Pinkney’s ordeal to the regime of racism, police misconduct and incarceration of African Americans across the country.

A call to elevate the profile of Michigan’s political prisoner in the media nationally and internationally was made by Abayomi Azikiwe, a leader of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition and the Michigan Political Prisoners Support Network. Azikiwe hoped that such inquiries will, at the very least, make officials more cautious about how they treat this embattled political prisoner.

Rev. Pinkney: ‘I am still standing’ Emergency conference held for Mich. political prisoner

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For decades, the United Auto Workers has been unable to organize a single non-union “transplant” — plants of Asian and European auto companies, most of them in the southeastern United States. On Dec. 4, the National Labor Relations Board announced that the UAW won the right to represent 164 skilled trades workers who repair and maintain equipment at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tenn. The vote was 108-44 for the union.

In 2014, under a barrage of anti-union scare tactics, the UAW narrowly lost an NLRB-conducted representation election. A win would have been a huge boost to the union’s efforts to organize the transplants. The loss was particularly stunning given the neutrality agreement between the UAW and VW that should have made the election an easy win.

On the eve of the February 2014 election, U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) dropped a bombshell, claiming that if the UAW won, VW would not build the next generation of SUVs in Chattanooga. Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam also campaigned against the union, along with anti-union worker groups funded by right-wingers like Grover Norquist. After the negative vote, VW confirmed that Corker’s claim was a lie.

This latest win, while significant, leaves 89 percent of the hourly VW workforce — those who actually build the vehicles — outside of the collective bargaining process. Although the UAW claims a majority of VW workers as members, it has not filed for a plantwide election. Perhaps it fears it doesn’t have enough to beat back another round of anti-union propaganda. Volkswagen recognizes the UAW as a “members-only” organization for those it signed up, but grants similar status to the American Council of Employers.

ACE is not a rival “anti-UAW union,” as it has been portrayed, but a union-busting formation funded by the same companies that represent “micro-units” in a climate of severe anti-union legislation. In the wake of the union’s gains in Chattanooga, another delegation in December of 24/7. Numerous small business sisters and brothers the day before the strike went on strike Nov. 30 in support of Local 833 — in a climate of severe union-busting austerity in Wisconsin and nationwide — went on strike Dec. 5. She returned with another delegation, this time of Rockford “Fight Imperialism, Stand Together” solidarity delegation from Milwaukee, the United Steelworkers Local 833, the Autoworkers Caravan and the School of the Americas Watch Labor Caucus.

Food and kids’ toy drives for striking workers were demanding “no more apathy from our public officials” and “a roundtable meeting on the record” with the incoming Mayor Jim Kenny and other officials.

Labor-community solidarity

Anticipating a strike vote, labor and community supporters started mobilizing solidarity actions for their Local 833 sisters and brothers the day before the vote.

During the strike, ongoing support kept spirits up and the union hall in operation 24/7. Numerous small businesses — from welders to rickshaw drivers — turned in a variety of ways and unions from around the United States and beyond, along with a variety of student and community organizations, lent dynamic support. Numerous solidarity resolutions came from unions such as the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 526 in Milwaukee, the United Steelworkers Local 833, the Autoworkers Caravan and the School of the Americas Watch Labor Caucus.

Food and kids’ toy drives for striking members and their families were organized by a variety of union and community organizations, including the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, the United Worker Organization, the Wisconsin AFL-CIO and the Wisconsin Education Association Council. Tens of thousands of dollars were sent by many unions to Local 833’s strike fund.

Babette Grunow of the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement called Strike Local 833; facebook.com/defeatright-side; uibailoutpeople.org and facebook.com/wisajfico

Babette Grunow of Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement that represents the UAW Local 833 Emil Mazey Hall with striker, Dec. 13.

By Workers World Milwaukee Bureau

After a 39-day strike against the Kohler Co., on Dec. 16, the fighting members of United Auto Workers Local 833 voted 91 percent in favor accepting a four-year tentative contract agreement. They returned to work the next day.

“We worked very hard to reach an agreement that addresses all of the key areas crucial to the future of our members,” said Tim Taylor, Local 833 president in a UAW press release. Taylor said the agreement would “significantly” close the wage gap between newer and older workers, “while also providing substantial wage increases in each year of the contract.”

Encouraging the labor movement and community struggles, members of Local 833 — in a climate of severe union-busting austerity in Wisconsin and nationwide — went on strike Nov. 15 after voting by a margin of 94 percent to reject a tentative contract offer from Kohler that kept a two-tier system in place, with “Tier B” workers making on average $10 an hour less than “Tier A” workers. Health care costs were also a major issue.

Although the tentative agreement didn’t eliminate two-tier entirely, advances towards wage equality will be marked during the life of the contract.

UAW Local see gains in Kohler strike

By Martha Grevatt

The company, especially now, is in no mood to raise wages. Its current diesel emissions scandal will cost VW an estimated $10 billion in repair costs, as well as fines and legal costs. The workers, however, need a union desperately, and not just for better wages. Plant management is demanding workers be hyper-productive, and that is causing a rise in injuries and job-related stress.

Yet the UAW has not dropped its push for a German-style works council built around the class-collaborationist concept of “co-determination.” The resolution that came out of the UAW’s March Special Bargaining Convention seeks to expand the model beyond Volkswagen.

However, the UAW cannot rely on VW’s professed neutrality. Now is the time to build on the win among the skilled trades and organize the production workers.

Southern workers need the labor movement. The labor movement needs the South. Class-struggle unionism in the tradition of the 1937 Flint sit-down strike and the 1968 Memphis sanitation strike is the only way forward.

Grevatt is a 28-year Chrysler worker and UAW member.

VW: UAW advances organizing in South

By Workers World Milwaukee Bureau

Hundreds of Philadelphia taxi and limousine drivers blocked traffic around City Hall and started Center City traffic for an hour and a half as they honked their horns Dec. 16. They were protesting the failure of city officials to properly enforce licensing and insurance laws against UberX and Lyft drivers, allowing those illegally unregulated businesses to undermine the ability of taxi drivers to make a living. They were demanding “no more apathy from our public officials” and “a roundtable meeting on the record” with the district attorney, current Mayor Michael Nutter, incoming Mayor Jim Kenney and other officials. The protest was organized by a coalition of UBERBLACK drivers, taxicab drivers, and other members of the taxi and limousine industry.

Photo and caption by Joe Piette

Taxi drivers demand a living
Federal Reserve rate hikes: What impact for workers?

By G. Dunkel

Major decisions about the economy are often buried on the financial pages with news about business shenanigans, corruption, mergers and acquisitions — news that doesn't directly affect workers unless they work for the corporations involved.

But a decision by the Open Market Committee of the Federal Reserve System to raise the basic interest rate on short-term loans, for the first time in nearly 10 years, could have a major impact on workers, and its repercussions are larger than the size of the increase announced on Dec. 16, which is just a quarter of 1 percent, is the promise of future increases.

The Federal Reserve Bank's charter proclaims it has two priorities in managing the U.S. money supply: keeping inflation manageable low and promoting employment.

The real priority of this institution, however, is to guarantee that the big private U.S. banks continue to dominate the economy and get the lion's share of the profits. This was apparent after the 2007-08 crisis, when the Fed poured $29 trillion into bailing out these and other institutions that declared themselves "too big to fail," while millions of homeowners lost everything. (Levy Economics Inst., Dec. 16, 2015)

"Official" inflation is so low in the Unit ed States that the Social Security Admin istration didn't even bother to raise the $36 million retirees plus dependents, suffering spouses and people with disabilities — will get no cost of living increase in 2016. They unfairly decided this even though people on a low income trying to buy food and medical care while paying rent or a mortgage know their living expenses have indeed gone up.

According to Fed Chair Janet Yellen, the emphasis is on "normalizing" mon etary policy. Yellen's assumption is that the economy has improved, inflation is on target and employment is getting stronger.

But the latest report of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, part of the Com merce Department, puts the inflation rate of Personal Consumption Expenses — which the Fed says it prefers to use — at 2.5 percent, far below the Fed's target. The real unemployment rate, taking into account discouraged workers, is around 13 percent. A lot of economic analysts al leged unemployed workers now dependent on disability checks might also seek jobs if they were available. Wages have stagnated for more than a decade, basically due to high unemployment.

Not all pro-capitalist economists agree with the Fed's decision. The Economic Policy Institute's Josh Bivens said: "To day's actions are a worrisome backwards step. Despite years of steady progress restoring the damage inflicted by the Great Recession, a full economic recovery remains incomplete. ... The potential benefits to holding off on further rate increases and allowing further improve ments in unemployment are enormous: greater work opportunities for millions of Americans and higher wages for tens of millions more." (op-ed, Dec. 16)

Bivens emphasized that inflation is well below the target, the U.S. economy is certainly not at full employment, and the wages of workers have not recovered, although corporate profits have.

Threat of deflation

Deflation is a general fall in prices, sometimes called negative inflation. One of its hallmarks for workers is a cut in wages, often drastic. It is accompanied by growth in unemployment.

Prices have fallen in Greece, for exam ple, for the last 33 months, and wages, which often go unpaid, have fallen by 30 to 40 percent. Greece is the only country in Europe where the minimum wage fell between 2008 and 2015. Behind deflation in the U.S. and world wide is capitalist overproduction. The drop in production causes falling commodity prices for raw materials, especially oil, but also metals like gold, copper and nickel, as well as products like coffee, cotton and cocoa.

The Wall Street Journal in its Dec. 18 issue addresses the threat of deflation in the U.S. by pointing out that even though the Fed hiked interest rates, driving up the costs for banks that needed short-term credits to drive other U.S. interest rates down.

Banks have not raised the interest they pay depositors, though they have indeed hiked the rate they charge borrowers. The Fed doesn't have a simple way to force rates up. It has to rely on complex financial transactions. It takes some time for rate hikes to have an impact on the money economy, and if the Fed goes too far, cor rective action can be difficult.

The function of central banks, like the Federal Reserve, is to stabilize the money supply that the banks have centralized and to smooth out the inevitable fluctua tions of economies based on greedy, com peting interests. A stable, growing economy lets the capitalists more efficiently exploit workers. But the destabilizing effects of central bank policies have accelerated the state of capitalism at a dead end, it's fairly certain that sooner or later, when the next bust comes, the workers will once again take the biggest hit.

‘We shall not be moved!’

Across the street from Gracie Mansion, New York Mayor William de Blas sio's home, were hundreds of demonstrators on Dec. 16. Led by the Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the Lower East Side, speakers exposed polit icians for selling out the working class and the oppressed communities in the interests of big real estate developers. This comes at a time when Assemblyper son Sheldon Silver was convicted Nov. 30 for kickbacks to real estate develop ers, whose main objective is to gentrify working-class and oppressed communi ties. Activists are mobilizing town hall meetings to decide on a rezoning plan that is best for them, based on the prin timent, "Shut up and play" — is a direct attack on the personhood of these Black workers. Though the bill was withdrawn, it is a clear indication of the way-out agenda that Missouri's legislature was so eager to rule out college athletics as an arena of class struggle. Similarly, the Northwestern players were ultimately de nied the right to form a union by the Na tional Labor Relations Board in August. In defense of Bill 1743, Brattin stated, “I sincerely believe students should be able to express their viewpoints, but I also believe our flagship state university has to keep and maintain the order that is expected from such an esteemed edu cational institution.” (Huffington Post, Dec. 16) Brattin's sentiments reek of the oppressive resistance politicians often use to police Black voices. His need for “institutional order” mirrors the his toric repression of Black resistance at the expense of workers and middle-class care concerning Black self-expression is limited to what fits the confines of system atic silencing and erasure.

While we celebrate the victory of Wolfe's resignation and the withdrawal of the bill, we must not forget that it will take a new wave of student militancy against racist terrorism on campus colleges and to also recognize that student athletes are the first Black graduate student, Gus Mizzou football team lock arms in show of solidarity in November. Mizzou students proved that they were dedi cated to fighting against the systems of oppression on their campus.

But the latest report of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, part of the Commerce Department, puts the inflation rate of Personal Consumption Expenses — which the Fed says it prefers to use — at 2.5 percent, far below the Fed’s target. The real unemployment rate, taking into account discouraged workers, is around 13 percent. A lot of economic analysts allege unemployed workers now dependent on disability checks might also seek jobs if they were available. Wages have stagnated for more than a decade, basically due to high unemployment.

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‘We shall not be moved!’

Across the street from Gracie Mansion, New York Mayor William de Blasio’s home, were hundreds of demonstrators on Dec. 16. Led by the Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the Lower East Side, speakers exposed politicians for selling out the working class and the oppressed communities in the interests of big real estate developers. This comes at a time when Assemblyperson Sheldon Silver was convicted Nov. 30 for kickbacks to real estate developers, whose main objective is to gentrify working-class and oppressed communities. Activists are mobilizing town hall meetings to decide on a rezoning plan that is best for them, based on the principle of affordable housing for all.

Speakers, besides those from Chinatown, included Black and Latino/a organizers from Brooklyn and the Bronx. They encouraged plans for unity and solidarity, as all of us have the same community needs. Demands were raised in different languages, along with chants against discrimination and displacement. Class consciousness grows as forces unite and make follow-up action plans, including another protest at the governor's residence. The fact that the evening was “We shall not be moved!”

— Photo and caption by Anne Pruden
People pack court as Sandra Bland’s family seeks justice

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

“Sandra Bland, Say Her Name!” rang out in downtown Houston on Dec. 17 as hundreds of African-American activists and their supporters rallied, marched, drummed and chanted. Two hours later they packed the courtroom for a status hearing on the federal civil rights lawsuit filed by Sandra Bland’s family.

Bland was found dead in a Waller County jail cell last July 13, three days after being arrested for failing to signal a lane change. Led by the National Black United Front, the protest- ers demanded answers and decried a signal a lane change. Led by the Na- tional Black United Front, the protest- ers demanded answers and decried a signal a lane change. Led by the Na- tional Black United Front, the protest- ers demanded answers and decried

“We demand answers, not a cov- er-up,” said Kofi Taharka, the national chair of NBUF. Other activists were with the New Black Panther Party. Out of the Flames of Ferguson, the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, the National of Islam, Justice or Else, as well as many youth with the Black Lives Matter movement.

Bland’s death just 60 miles from Hous- ton added fuel to the anger and outrage burning in Black communities in Tex- as and around the country where police murders of unarmed Blacks and Latinos/ as happen so often that activists struggle to fight all the injustices.

Geseca Reed-Veal, Bland’s mother, and Sandra Bland’s estate filed a wrong- ful death suit last August against the so-called Texas Department of Public Safe- ty, arresting DPS Officer Brian Encinia, Waller County and county jail staff- ers Elsa Magnus and Oscar Prudente.

According to the Mapping Police Vio- lence website, over 321 African Ameri- cans have been killed by police in 2015, and one-third of them were unarmed.

Texas and county officials have de- clared Bland’s death a suicide by hang- ing. Bland family lawyers say that as of- ficials have not made public.

Houston activists were joined by peo- ple from around the state for the first hearing in the Bland family’s civil rights suit. Unlike the usually massive court- rooms in the federal courthouse, a small room was the venue for this hearing, so only around 80 people could cram in- side to hear the hour-long proceedings. Another 100 people stood outside in the hallway,straining to hear. Security was oppressively tight, and many people left rather than be subjected to it.

‘Pray the truth loose’

U.S. District Judge David Hittner pre- sided over the hearing and set jury se- lection for the trial for Jan. 23, 2017. He ruled that all discovery in the case must be completed by Sept. 30, 2016.

Hannah Adair Bonner is the curator of The Shout: a spoken-word, poetry-fo- cused, “activism” movement seeking to nurture a community of multi-ethnic, multigenerational, justice-seeking, soli- darity-building people. She serves on the staff of St. John’s Downtown in Houston and has been working on the case daily since Bland’s death.

In her blog at soulhound.com, Bonner chronicled the hearing, saying in part: “Let me know if I need to pray it loose,’ Judge David Hittner said at the status hearing for the Civil Trial brought by the family of Sandra Bland. ‘Pray it loose.’ It must have been the third time at least that he used that par- ticular combination of words in his remarks that day.”

Bonner continued: “As the pro- ceedings ended, it was clear that at least for today, whatever the de- fense for the State and County had behind their back, they were not going to tell us.

“Judge David Hittner made it clear, however, that he did plan to pray those fingers loose. So dates were set for the coming year for Summary Judgement, for the Ranger report, for expert witness- es, for the end of motions, for the end of discovery, and for the end of introducing new parties.

After the hearing ended, Bland’s family, attorney and protesters outside of hearing, Dec. 18. (The Coalition for Justice in Milwau- kee held a press conference at the federal courthouse on Dec. 17 to demand justice for Dontre Hamilton and all other vic- tims of police terror. A wide variety of labor and community forces participated. Dontre Hamilton, a 31-year-old Black man, was fatally shot 14 times at Red Ar- row Park in Milwaukee by Christopher Manney, a white Milwaukee police offi- cer, on April 30, 2014. Manney, who was fired, has not been charged with Hamil- ton’s murder.

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### Jailed women forge solidarity

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Women prisoners in the Yuba County Jail in Marysville, Calif., are on hunger strike in solidarity with detained immi- grants. In the first such unified prisoner action on behalf of the U.S. men and women in criminal custody are fasting in solidarity with women in immigration custody. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) rents space in the Yuba County Jail to incarcerate undocumented immi- grants. (San Francisco Bay View, Dec. 16)

The Yuba County Jail strike is in support of Rajashree Roy, an immigrant de- portee facing deportation to Fiji, where she has not lived since she was eight. Roy has been detained for over a year. She is allowed to see her children only through plastic walls.

The women in criminal custody who are hunger striking in solidarity with Roy are Jutara Thomas and Ana Marquez. Anoop Prasad, a lawyer with Asian Americans Advancing Justice who is rep- resenting Roy, said, “What’s happening in Yuba County is historic and unprecedent- ed. In terms of people physically putting their bodies on the line (together), this is the first time.” (tinyurl.com/q7c9w96)

The Yuba County women released this
Baltimore activists decry hung jury for killer cop

Baltimore activists erupted in anger Dec. 16 when they heard that the policy was hung in the case of William Porter, the first of six police officers who are charged in the death of Freddie Gray. The Peoples Power Assembly staged daily protests both early in the morning and in the evenings throughout the trial. The decision to retry Porter and when it is still to be determined. The next trial begins in early January.

The Rev. C.D. Witherspoon, president of the Baltimore chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and an organizer with the Peoples Power Assembly, declared early on that the people want indictments and jail time for all six police officers. He also pointed out the larger problem of structural racism, not only in the police department but in the conditions that most people who live in the city suffer under.

The city has been in virtual lockdown with squads of tactical and riot police stationed throughout Baltimore’s various communities. Baltimore School Board CEO Gregory Thornton sent a letter out to all public school students threatening them against protesting. Helicopters were on patrol and the sheriff’s office deployed SWAT teams and phalanxes of police around demonstrators at the courthouse. Two activists were arrested, Kwame Rose, a local Baltimore activist, and a 16-year-old high school student.

— Baltimore WW Bureau

Baltimore youth answer schools CEO, say ‘No police terror’

Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), a group of young revolutionaries struggling for justice in Baltimore and around the country, condemns the hypocrysical letter from Baltimore Public Schools CEO Gregory Thornton.

This letter makes repeated allusions to the safety of students while threatening consequences to anyone who would take part in protests resulting from an acquittal of the officer who murdered Freddie Gray. If the school system truly cares about the safety of students, they would be doing everything in their power to work to end the epidemic of police violence in Baltimore City. Inside the schools themselves, the police have a record of harassment and abuse of students that far outweighs any possible benefit from their presence. We demand the removal of all police officers from our schools!

Thornton’s letter talks about “appropriate ways to express dissent” and how “we need to make it clear … student walk-outs, vandalism, civil disorder, and any other form of violence are not acceptable” — the removal of all police officers from schools themselves, the police have a record of harassment and abuse of students that far outweighs any possible benefit from their presence. We demand the removal of all police officers from our schools!

A solidarity demonstration with immigrant hunger strikers across the country in fasting to force recognition of our humanity.” (San Francisco Bay View, Dec. 16)

One Etowah striker, Mahbubar Raham, said: “When we started this hunger strike, we thought this was only our problem. But when we heard so many other centers also joined the hunger strike, we realized that detention is a national problem. We started to shake the walls of these prisons.” (tinyurl.com/gnjw59t/)

For information on sending support messages to the Yuba County Jail striking women, go to tinyurl.com/qdhre4w. You can support the #FreedomGivers by signing their petition: tinyurl.com/q7h6cew.

solidarity with detained immigrants

statement: “We are locked up together and refuse to be divided into immigrants and citizens. None of us belong in this cage separated from our families. We join the brave immigrant hunger strikers across the country in fasting to force recognition of our humanity.” (San Francisco Bay View, Dec. 16)

Their strike began Dec. 14 before dawn and the sheriff’s office deployed SWAT teams and phalanxes of police around demonstrators at the courthouse. Two activists were arrested, Kwame Rose, a local Balti more activist, and a 16-year-old high school student.

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— Baltimore WW Bureau

inmates of the rich and to keep capitalism. They exist primarily to protect the property of the rich and to keep the rest of us “in line.” We believe that the police must be immediately forced under complete democratic community control before their eventual total abolishment. The people, and especially youth, need jobs and education, not police terror. We urge the youth of Baltimore to join us in the streets and continue the struggle to overturn this rotten system! Check us out at Facebook.com/BmoreFIST or call 410-914-8280.
Clarence Moses El’s 28-year quest for justice

By Eric Struch

Clarence Moses El’s 28-year quest for justice
criminal acts committed by Denver officials that in a just society would lead to an investigation — not only of the police department that was responsible for maintaining and storing evidence, but of the District Attorney’s office that refused to try the case after the de-struction of the evidence. There was later the convic- tion of L.C. Jackson for another rape (though he was the first person mentioned by the victim), and for failing to reopen the case after L.C. Jackson, in late 2013, confessed to the attack on the victim. The DA’s of- fice even tried to suppress the confession by L.C. Jackson and intimidate him into changing his statement.

Free him now!

Now the entire unbelievable and un-fortunate torture of Clarence Moses El, the interminable 28 years of time, ap- pears to be coming to an end. On Dec. 14, Denver District Judge Kandace Gerdes freed Moses El after 28 months of an evidentiary hearing where L.C. Jackson’s statement was entered into evidence along with new blood evidence — vacated the original conviction of L.C. Jackson, and opened IRD — of men whom she thought may have had a connection to the crime. Imagine being under the above circumstances, having been arrested in front of your three-year-old son, charged, tried and convicted without having been able to see his father in 3 years. Imagine the image of your son being placed under arrest after a bike ride with his three-year-old, without your loving pa- rental guidance.

This is what life has been like for Clar- ence Moses El since he was convicted in Denver in 1988 because of a premonition, despite there being no other evidence attributed to the act. It was a brutal assa ult and rape of a victim who initially said the victim was — L.C. Earl and Donald — of men as whom she thought may have attacked and raped her. None of the three was ever arrested or interviewed. But Moses El didn’t defend himself, but the victim claimed to see his face in “a dream” she had a few days afterwards.

Semen was analyzed, but it was not a match to Clarence’s and should have ruled him out. It was more of a match to L.C. Jackson’s. However, the DNA evi-dence was stored, as the science was new and not very frequently used, not by the prosecution or defense.

When Clarence Moses El, through Barry Scheck’s Innocence Project, won a court order to have the DNA evidence tested, the material, stored in a box marked “Do Not Destroy,” was tossed into a trash bin.

This would be one of many callous, Homeless people needed to congregate in there. Sometimes in that lot, they had little boxing matches and carrying on in there, but you could come through there, and they were like, “Power to the people, Black Pan-thers! Power to the peo- ple, Black Panthers!”

Chairman Fred Jr. spoke about his experiences as a political prisoner and the state’s involvement in violence in the Black neocolony. Sol-idarity statements were read from indi- viduals and organizations from all over North America and from as far away as Venezuela. After a visit to the mural of Chairman Fred Sr. by the Rebel Daz Arts Collective at The Wall at Madison and California, the program continued at a venue in Bronxville on the South Side. The program ended with a call to support the Black national liberation movement at this crucial time of escalating state and al- lied fascist violence against the oppressed Black nation, especially the youth.

The POCO/BPP has extended its reach across North America, working with Black Panther Party veterans and reuniting Black youth from Oakland to Detroit and has made contact with revolutionaries from Venezuela to the United Kingdom. Because of this growth, Chairman Fred Jr. and the POCO/BPP are trying to purchase a building in Chicago so they can open an office. Chairman Fred Jr. has started a GoFundMe account to raise the money. Donations can be made at gos-fundme.com/blackpanthercubs.

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Rival regimes in Libya sign agreement paving way for NATO troop intervention

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Workers World Party condemns the Dec. 16 Kiev District Administrative Court ruling banning the activities of the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU) throughout the country. We stand with the members of the KPU, and with all Ukrainian communists and anti-fascists, in their struggle against the U.S.-backed ultraright regime.

The court’s ruling, affirming a lawsuit brought by the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice, was a foregone conclusion. But it cements Ukraine’s role as a laboratory for the testing of imperialist war. The court issued a temporary order banning Communist Party symbols prior to the 70th anniversary of the victory over fascism in Europe, and other Marxist groups; the banning of the victory flag and communist symbols prior to the 70th anniversary of the victory over fascism in Europe.

By ordering the KPU to liquidate its organizational and public activity, the court’s decision marks a shift toward increased violence against the left in Ukraine and Donbass. We must do all in our power to aid the workers of the world who are fighting against these fascist regimes.

No to the ban on Communist Party of Ukraine!

The Kiev District Administrative Court’s ban on the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU), which was ratified on Dec. 7-8, where he spoke before the Parliament. Since the February 2014 coup that overthrew the legally elected regime of President Viktor Yanukovych, government has taken on the role of colonial governor, delivering money, talking points and marching orders to the junta headed by oligarch President Petro Poroshenko and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

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CUBA

No country on earth is more brutal and oppressive in its treatment of women than Saudi Arabia. The Saudi state, which is officially controlled by men of the royal family, has kept women enslaved and immobilized in a poisonous web of binding religious and legal restrictions, like the monsters of a monstrous spider.

This December, the monarchy that rules this rich and powerful oil kingdom made a concession. For the very first time in modern Saudi history, women were allowed to vote and run for office in local elections to municipal councils.

It was a very small concession. A mountain of restrictions on women’s lives and actions remains. But Saudi women have had to fight hard to get even this far. Out of a total population of 20 million, only 30 percent are women. Mothers are not allowed to register their children for the first time in the election, but some 82 percent of them cast their ballots. Some 19 women won seats in municipal councils, which, like all political bodies in Saudi Arabia, have only an “advisory” role — decisions are made by the princes.

The candidates could not campaign directly — they were not allowed to show their faces to men, who had to speak for them. They could not drive to the polls or to meetings about their campaigns. Women are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia.

Despite all the restrictions, 1,797 women had the courage to run for office. The reaction of Saudi women to the election was mixed. Some saw it as a great victory; others were skeptical and saw it as mere show on the part of the rulers. The opening to women was expected; it had been decreed in 2011 by then-King Abdullah, who has since died.

An important thing to keep in mind: This electoral change involved only Saudi citizens. There are millions of immigrant workers in Saudi Arabia, most from Africa and Asia, who have absolutely no rights. Many of them are women who do domestic work for pitiful wages, if they are paid at all. Many are sexually abused by their employers and have no legal recourse. This election had no direct effect on their lives.

Saudi Arabia is one of the U.S.’s main partners in the Middle East. Between 1990 and 2006, one-fifth of all U.S. arms sales went to Saudi Arabia. Billions of dollars in military equipment and other reparations to the war profiteers. More recently, the Pentagon has provided drones, special forces and military coordination for the murderous Saudi offensive against rebel forces in Yemen, the president of Yemen, the poorest country in the region.

While capitalist politicians in the U.S. like to claim they have helped pressure Saudi Arabia to grant more human rights to its people, the truth is actually the opposite. It has been support from Washington and other imperialist capitals that has built up a clique of despotic Saudi aristocrats into a military and economic power that opposes all progressive change in the region.

Revolution holds firm on principles

By Cheryl LaBash

One year ago, U.S. President Barack Obama admitted what the world already knew. In five decades, the genocidal blockade of Cuba had failed to achieve the stated U.S. objective: overturning the Cuban socialist revolution. The Cuban people, their mass organizations and unions, with the leading role of the Cuban Communist Party, have held firmly to their principles of solidarity, internationalism and the priority of developing human beings as the goal and purpose of society.

Since the Jan. 1, 1959, revolution overthrew the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship, those principles have reigned at the bedrock of the Cuban revolution. Now Cuban officials calmly reiterate that socialism, sovereignty and self-determination are not negotiable. The Cuban people have overwhelmingly voted, supported and defended these principles.

The advances in Cuba-U.S. relations this past year happened only because the U.S. released the three Cuban state security agents. The Cuban 5 are now fully reunited with their families. This includes Gerardo Hernández, whom U.S. courts had sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years.

The recent book “Back Channel to Cuba,” by Peter Kornbluh and William M. LeoGrande (University of North Carolina Press, 204.), documents that Cuba has forged better relations with the U.S. rather than concede on a matter of principle.

Certainly Cuba’s internationalist aid that 40 years ago ensured the independence of Angola and the later defeat of racist apartheid in South Africa and the release of Nelson Mandela.

Normal relations? Not with blockade in place

Cuba cannot simply insist on the complete lifting of the U.S. embargo against Cuba and then send them back home. The reality is that the U.S. embargo is illegal and cannot be imposed at will.

Recognizing that the people of Cuba are the true sovereign of their country, no matter what propaganda in the world, the U.S. government continues its brain-drain policy of Cuba for Cubans who reach U.S. soil will remain — regardless of how they arrive. The Cuban Adjustment Act’s “wet-foot, dry-foot” provisions reward dangerous migration from Cuba either by sending the progressive movements that have begun moving in an anti-capitalist direction.

Workers World relations after one year

Workers World Party is running two Black candidates in 2016 — Monica Moorehead for president and lamont Lilly for vice president — to put forward the socialist alternative to the Democratic administrations, which also bailed out the billionaires with trillions of dollars of U.S. taxpayer money.

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By Abayomi Azikiwe

Dec. 19 - A Saudi-led coalition support- ing the UAE, its cornerstone ally, has become a danger to the whole of the Middle East and to the world as its was launched by the United Arab Emirates and its Saudi-American ally on December 19, 2014. The UAE’s decision to contract Colombian mercenaries to fight as full-fledged combatants in the war against the Ansarullah movement has its origins among the Shiite population in Yemen and in the US’s well-known and well-fought war in Iraq which saw the occupation of Iraq in 2003-2004, when the US-led coalition led by the US and other western powers seized over the last 15 months, the UAE has recruited and deployed troops from the Colombian military in Yemen on behalf of the Arab Emirates. This is a new and grave threat to the stability and security of the whole Middle East region. The UAE’s decision to contract Colombian mercenaries to fight as full-fledged combatants in the war against the Ansarullah movement has its origins among the Shiite population in Yemen and in the US’s well-known and well-fought war in Iraq which saw the occupation of Iraq in 2003-2004, when the US-led coalition led by the US and other western powers seized over the last 15 months, the UAE has recruited and deployed troops from the Colombian military in Yemen on behalf of the Arab Emirates. This is a new and grave threat to the stability and security of the whole Middle East region.

The Ansarullah movement is the main political and ideological force of the South of Yemen and the third-largest destination of Shiite Pakistanis. The movement’s leadership announced a ceasefire as a result of the UAE’s decision to use Colombia’s military intervention in Yemen to fight against the Ansarullah movement.

The Ansarullah movement announced its decision to cease fighting on December 20, 2014, after the United Arab Emirates signed an agreement with Colombia to provide military assistance to the UAE to fight against the Ansarullah movement.

The UAE has signed an agreement with Colombia to provide military assistance to the UAE to fight against the Ansarullah movement. The UAE announced that it will provide financial and material support to the Colombian military to help them fight against the Ansarullah movement in Yemen.

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El "синдикат" que no es tal

EDITORIAL WW-Mundo Obrero

15 de diciembre 2015

La historia de los sindicatos se remonta al siglo 18 y la Revolución Industrial. Muchos no existieron antes de los sindicatos y trabajadores parecían existir ante el mercado de los patronos, quienes les hacían trabajar hasta morir a la vez que les hacían pasar hambre a sus familias. Pero a medida que el número de trabajadores asalariados en las fábricas comenzó a aumentar, y aumentaron, se formaron sindicatos. Los sindicatos y los patronos son como el agua y el fuego – no mezcan.

La derecha viene Donald Trump, el epítome del opositor súper rico de las/os trabajadores, con una cuenta bancaria más grande que una montaña de oro. Y está diciendo que tiene apoyo sindical. ¿Qué sindicato podrá ser?

"Trump respaldado por el sindicato de policías" declara un titular de US News & World Report. Ah, es la Asociación Be-nevolente de Policía de Nueva Inglaterra. Sí, son dos mujeres. No es un "sindicato", ni es "benevolente". Parece que estas policías les gusta mucho lo que dijo Trump sobre restringir a las/os musulmanes de EUA. ¿Cómo no les gusta su plan para extender la pena de muerte – como si no fuera ya una de las más duras del mundo - a cualquier persona que mata a un policía, por cual-

El caso federal enumera muchos comuni-des de vestir y artefactos racistas dentro de la estación de policía, incluyendo una representación de un presidente Barack Obama carbonizado y linchado. (tinyurl.com/blaine)

Existe el racismo en el sistema jurídi-co local. El procurador general Doug Valeska, del Vigésimo Circuito Judicial, ha tenido casos impugnados en apelación debido a su exclusión sistemática de negros en los jurados, así como vere-dictos eliminados por "prueba ilícita y comentarios inapropiados a los jurados. (Washington Post, 3 de diciembre)

Hay una profunda historia de racismo entre la policía local en Alabama - desde los "patrulleros de esclavos" que apre-hendían y golpeaban para volverlos a la esclavitud a las/os negros que escap-aban, hasta el programa "arrendamiento de condenados" del tiempo de la era de Reconstrucción que reesclavizaba a los trabajadores negros liberados y pagando sus salarios al Estado, en vez de a los trabajadores. Hoy día, en las "prisiones de trabajadores" de EUA se ganan inmensos beneficios en el sistema de derecho que a las/os prisioneros, principalmente gente de color.

Tal fue el caso en 1993, cuando un fis-cal federal que estaba exigiendo cientos de casos de servidumbre involuntaria en Alabama recibió una desesperada llama-da de un abogado de Dothan. Su cliente, Enoe Patterson, estaba retenido como "trabajador de línea" en una fábrica de dobladura de materiales blancos. (Elloot Jaspin, "Agua Amarilla: la historia ocult-a de liderazgo racial en Estados Unidos")

Este espantoso racismo no es una cosa del pasado en Dothan. En 2009 y 2013, paralelo a una ola en EUA de reclutamiento racial, volantes del Ku Klux Klan fueron distribuidos en la ciudad, y en el 2009 el KKK había prendido fuego a una cruz en un barrio negro en la ciudad con-tigua de Ozark. (Dothan Eagle)

El ex senador Robert Sen. Col-lins dice que sus fuerzas estaban enviadas para investigar el racismo actual en el sistema legal y en el Departamento de Policía de Dothan. Sin lugar a dudas, el racismo existe, dada la situación racial de Dothan, y en los recientes casos de la corte federal - como existe en todo EUA. Quinton Parrish, un hombre afroamericano en la mira de la policía de Dothan, ha solicitado que intervenga el Departa-miento de Justicia de EUA. Describe las acciones de la policía de Dothan como "una forma de terrorismo doméstico que debe detenerse." (Henry County Report, 7 de diciembre)

Collins dice que las fuerzas aún anón-imas que filtraron los documentos espe-ran que "el estado de ánimo del país" es ahora tal que se pueda llamar la atención sobre injusticia en EUA.

Al entrar EUA en un periodo de mayor crisis económica y bélica, aumenta el poder de la gente de color, especialmente las/os inmigrantes y musulmanes, se con-vierten en chiavos expiatorios.

La policía se creat para proteger los intereses de la clase propietaria. La función de la policía es mantener a las/os trabajadoras y trabajadores y todos/as los oprimidos – mujeres, personas de color, personas con discapacidad y personas de géneros y sexualidades no conformistas – de levantarse juntas/os contra las bru-cicias, de elevar sus demandas a sus/por no-x/por la explotación capitalista.

Una de las fuerzas que cambian el "es-tado de ánimo del país" ha sido el activis-mo consistente contra la brutalidad polici-a y el terror estatal. Es una complicada relación entre un sindicato de ciudadanos y la policía, con el correr de los años.

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las tensiones de la acumulación del capitalismo de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué es inevitable el movimiento obrero, y cómo está siendo finalmente un punto de inflexión.

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