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20,000 march to protest anti-immigrant sheriff

By George Mores & Joe Bernick

Brown, black and white, young and old, more than 20,000 people marched here Jan. 16 to protest the indiscriminate attacks and race-based raids conducted by Sheriff Joe Arpaio against residents of Maricopa County. United Farm Workers union leader Dolores Huerta and singer Linda Ronstadt were among the participants.

The sheriff has conducted these raids based upon the hated “287(g)” regulation that allows his county officers to work with federal officials based upon phony allegations of terrorism. “These raids are criminalizing entire communities,” Salvador Reza, president of the committee that organized the march here, said at a press conference Saturday before the event. “We cannot move forward on immigration rights unless we address human rights,” he said.

It was a national day of action. Buses and vans arrived from all over the country for the noontime march. In addition to places like Los Angeles, San Diego and San Jose, Calif., El Paso, Texas, Las Cruces N.M., and Tucson, Ariz., contingents came from as far away as New York, Chicago, Washington D.C., Oregon, New Orleans and Miami.

After a rally at Falcon Park marchers proceeded past the sheriff’s prison, which has been



condemned by Amnesty International for its brutal treatment of prisoners. Marchers carried signs reading, “No More Hate,” “We are Human” “and Si Se Puede.” Another rally was held across from the prison.

Maricopa County Board of Supervisors member Mary Rose Wilcox pointed out that “our com-

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munity is more important than Joe Arpaio” and vowed, “We will stop him!”

Linda Ronstadt told the crowd that Arpaio only breeds divisiveness and “it’s time for him to go.”

Legendary Farm Workers leader Dolores Huerta called for a halt to the incarceration of

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children and said the money needs to be spent on education instead. She called for the defeat and removal of public officials like Arpaio and those who support his policies.

Former Phoenix City Councilman Calvin Goode called on President Obama to do something about the human rights situation in Maricopa County.

Sheriff Arpaio is currently under federal grand jury investigation on charges that include abuse of power in targeting and retaliating against government officials who oppose his policies. Two years ago he offended the bordering city of Mesa when he raided City Hall unannounced. The nearby town of Guadalupe has suffered economically since the sheriff's raids because people are afraid to go out shopping.

"He's out of control, said Arizona Peace Council and march committee member Rob McElwain. "There is no accountability for his actions."

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As usual, corporate media are dwelling on an incident at the end of the march, when young anarchists reportedly threw rocks at police horses and the police rode horses into the crowd and pepper-sprayed people. One report said women and children were overcome by the spray.

But the real story was the mass peaceful march of 20,000. It was much like the big immigrant rights marches of 2006 when millions marched across the country, including the Phoenix 200,000 person march of April 6, 2006 on "Somos America (We are America) Day," where "Today we march, tomorrow we vote" was the slogan.



George Mores & Joe Bernick live in Arizona.

Solidarity with Haiti, now more than ever

By PW Editorial Board

The world grieves as images of the beleaguered and dying Haitian people find their way into our homes. Despite the outrageous statements of Pat Robertson, Rush Limbaugh, David Brooks and miscellaneous right-wing Republicans, the world is responding.

Governments, including our own, social organizations and ordinary people are sending aid to the Haitian people. Thank goodness moments like this evoke people's better angels. It's good to see Americans opening up their pocketbooks and volunteering their skills to help in this horrendous situation.

Americans have a special responsibility to respond. The scope of this human tragedy is connected to Haiti's history of underdevelopment, which is explained, first of all, by the division of the capitalist world from its very beginning into a few developed capitalist states and a majority of states on the margins of development.

Moreover, this initial division of the world has been sustained and reinforced by military

coercion, unfair economic advantage and racism over the past three centuries, locking countries like Haiti into a state of permanent poverty and underdevelopment.

So let's press ahead with our effort and let's press our leaders to do more to assist the people of Haiti. At the same, let's join in the dialogue (already under way in the countries of the South) on the larger reality in the background of this tragedy. People can't control earthquakes, hurricanes and other natural disasters, but we can better prepare for them and the world, if it is to survive and peacefully prosper, has no choice but to construct a different developmental path that is sustainable and just for everyone inhabiting this planet.

Not only are the people of Haiti and the other people and states of the South insisting on it, but the American people in our own interest, in the interest of our children and grandchildren, should do likewise.



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Earthquake in Haiti: Cuba responds

By W.T. Whitney

By Jan. 13, less than a day after the earthquake struck Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, 30 Cuban doctors were caring for the wounded in a fully equipped field hospital. Over the next 24 hours they saw 1,000 patients and performed dozens of operations. They were followed shortly by 30 more doctors bringing additional medical supplies. By the week's end the Cuban doctors were working in two of their field hospitals, plus two relatively undamaged existing hospitals.

Some 6,000 Cuban doctors have provided medical care in Haiti since 1998, and almost 400 were on hand there when the earthquake hit. Those in Port-au-Prince, 152 of them, were available to work with the doctors newly arrived from Cuba.

Cuban medical help took the form also of Haitian young people trained as doctors in Cuba, 551 so far. They studied at Havana's famous Latin American School of Medicine (LASM), and in December, 67 of them returned to Haiti for their last student year to work as interns. LASM students petitioned the school asking to be sent to Haiti to help.

Cuba is far from alone in helping stricken Haiti. Countries from every corner of the world have sent medical providers, food, medical and surgical supplies, and much more. The first planes to arrive on Jan. 13 were those of Venezuela, China and Cuba.

Cuban doctors are accustomed to a worldwide beat. The Henry Reeve Brigade, composed of Cuban disaster relief specialists, has responded to floods and hurricanes in Latin America and to the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. There 2,500 Cuban medical professionals working out of 32 field hospitals spent six months caring for a million sick



and wounded. Within days of the New Orleans Hurricane Katrina catastrophe, 1,600 members of the Henry Reeve Brigade were ready to go. The Bush administration didn't respond to the offer.

The U.S. government announced plans to send 10,000 troops and two aircraft carriers to Haiti. President Obama announced \$100 million in aid. Whether or not that includes the \$2 million a day cost of moving an aircraft carrier was unclear. Former U.S. presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush were commissioned to mobilize private aid money for Haiti.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed appreciation to authorities in Havana for opening up Cuban air space to U.S. military planes traveling to and from Haiti, thereby saving 90 minutes in flying time.

Born in Brooklyn, Henry Reeve died in Cuba in 1876, fighting for the island's independence from Spain. On graduating as doctors, Cuban medical students repeat a pledge that says in part: "True medicine is not that which cures, but that which prevents, whether in an isolated community on our island or in any sister country of the world, where we will always be the standard bearers of solidarity and internationalism."

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Autoworkers find little comfort in industry show

By John Rummel

The Ford Motor Company is celebrating. Its Fusion Hybrid was named “car of the year” by Motor Trend. But the award will bring little comfort to unemployed autoworkers. The Fusion is not made in the United States.

“What’s ironic to me, as the years go by, there’s less and less union production on the cars being exhibited in the center of this union industry,” said United Auto Workers retiree Frank Hammer, protesting outside the industry’s annual North American International Auto Show here. “All of them (GM, Ford and Chrysler) are more and more non-union.”

The protesters had this message: the auto industry and government must address workers’ concerns on jobs, health care, climate change and the need to build the mass transit industry.

The autoworkers also came to counter “tea-baggers” who showed up to protest the appearance of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the government’s intervention, and use of tax money, to save the auto industry.

“They are not speaking for autoworkers,” said Hammer, who supports the loans to GM and Chrysler, added that the money should be used “for a much faster transformation addressing climate change.”

The tea-baggers, he noted, are not talking about climate change - “they don’t even know it exists.”

Autoworkers began chanting, “Union jobs for you and me, not some lousy cup of tea.”

El Gobernador de California propone un presupuesto ‘exterminador’

Por Marilyn Bechtel

La propuestas finales de presupuesto del gobernador Schwarzenegger, emitidas el 8 de enero, aseguran que cuando deje la administración al final de este año, él sera por siempre conocido como el “exterminador” tanto en la vida real como en la pantalla.

Schwarzenegger propuso alcanzar lo que él dijo es un deficit del presupuesto de 19.9 billones en los próximos 18 meses con cortes draconianos a programas de servicios humanos, compensaciones a trabajadores estatales, etc.

Las propuestas de alza de ingresos no incluyeron ningún tipo de incremento de impuestos. Más bien ellas se enfocaron en ganar casi 7 billones de dólares en un mayor financiamiento federal de programas federalmente obligatorios-dinero que Schwarzenegger sostiene el gobierno federal “debe” al estado. Otras medidas están sujetas al desafío de cortes, uniones y el voto popular, incluyendo redirigir dineros con medidas aprobadas por los votantes, un recargo en el seguro a propiedades comerciales y residenciales, y un corte de un 5 por ciento a los salarios de los trabajadores del estado.

Schwarzenegger descartó la idea de un segundo paquete de estímulo federal, diciendo que no está interesado en “ingresos de una sola vez”.

Declarando una emergencia fiscal, el gobernador convocó a la legislatura a sesión especial, advirtiendo que los retrasos en la aprobación del presupuesto, solamente causarían el acrecentamiento del deficit.

Incluso si el estado recibe un in-

cremento de financiamiento federal, Schwarzenegger exige reducir el programa Servicio de Apoyo en el Hogar (In Home Supportive Services program, que beneficia a los ancianos y discapacitados de California a permanecer en sus hogares) por sobre los 900 millones, incluyendo cortes al salario mínimo de cuidadores de la salud. El programa de bienestar social, CalWORKS, sería recortado en 130 millones.

Si es que los fondos federales no llegan -algo que los analistas consideran lo más probable- el gobernador eliminaría por complete IHSS (In Home Supportive Services), conjuntamente con CalWORKS y el seguro de salud de 900.000 niños pobres.

A pesar de las promesas durante su discurso, “estado del estado” en enero 6, que no recortaría educación, el gobernador propone formulas de ajuste al financiamiento del estado de manera que reduciría pagos a escuelas en 2.4 billones.

Los beneficios de Medi-Cal (el seguro de enfermedad del estado-Medicaid) serían recortados , a la vez que pacientes de escasos recursos pagarían más en primas y co-pagos, y los beneficios para inmigrantes documentados terminarían en menos de cinco años.

El cuidado de salud en las cárceles sería recortado en 811 millones.

Una coalición de organizaciones que representan a californianos impactados por las propuestas de recorte sostuvieron manifestaciones en las oficinas del gobernador alrededor del estado.