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California labor: “There are no jobs on a dead planet”



By: Michelle Kern & Alex Farr

The streets of downtown Oakland were filled by an 8,000-strong crowd marching for Real Climate Leadership, the largest march against fracking in U.S. history.

Police, both local Oakland Police Department and California Highway Patrol officers, blocked traffic on major downtown streets to accommodate the crowd, which represented labor, indigenous rights, climate activists and many other groups.

The March for Real Climate Leadership, began at around 11:30 am as crowds gathered in Frank Ogawa Plaza, also locally referred to as Oscar Grant Plaza, in honor of the young African American man killed by BART police at the Fruitvale BART station in 2009.

As crowds of the various groups gathered, speakers from a number of organizations voiced concerns about climate change. More specifically, they called not only for California Governor Jerry Brown to halt the expansion of fracking in the state - but to ban fracking altogether.

For instance, a contingent of union members and labor organizers gathered around the fountain under the banner of “Labor Against Fracking,” with representatives from three ASFCME locals, UNITE HERE, United Educators of San Francis-

co, U.S. Labor Against the War, Jobs With Justice, East Bay Up the Pay, OURWalmart, and EBASE (East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy).

Speakers mounted the ledge of the fountain to highlight the urgency of labor’s presence in the fight for environmental justice.

“The planet is our workplace,” stated Michael Eisenscher, the representative from U.S. Labor Against the War, setting the tone.

Union members rejected the corporate lie

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that fracking is done to benefit labor, or brings needed jobs to communities which they should be grateful to have.

Fracking, though, is found in working-class communities, near the children - often children of color - living in underserved neighborhoods.

Health care workers bore witness to the devastation of fracking chemicals to children's health, bringing disease to children and also causing birth defects and disorders.

Fracking is not found in wealthy communities.

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Educators attested to the placement of fracking wells so close to schools that children can see them from the playground. Corporations have also attempted to bring pro-fracking propaganda into classrooms, attempting to minimize the dangers of the process and the chemical damage that can result to community water supplies.

"There are no jobs on a dead planet," said Brooke Anderson of Climate Workers.

As the energy of the assembled crowds mounted, a flash mob appeared in attractive bug costumes, performing a dance number. The show over, the crowds poured out of the plaza and onto Broadway, filling the street as the various groups merged and jockeyed to find space on the street. The rear ranks were still filling the street even as the lead marchers were diverted onto Telegraph Ave., turning at Grand Ave. as they continued to march, apparently having outstripped police

expectations for numbers as motorists seemed caught by surprise where no police were present to block traffic.

The march continued as police maneuvered to catch up, winding its way beside Lake Merritt as it finished its circuit of downtown, before reaching Lake Merritt Overlook Park.

Despite a brief downpour, the crowd mingled with the tented tables to hear speakers and spoken word pieces. Flyers circulated calling for a California Climate platform, containing a push for green jobs, developing renewable energy sources, and investment in public programs to reduce emissions, among other points. Meanwhile, a petition circulating on social media called upon Gov. Jerry Brown to end fracking in California, as Gov. Andrew Cuomo did in New York.



Michelle Kern and Alex Farr contributes to Peoples-world.org

African American history writer: Alice Walker

Special to PeoplesWorld.org

The writer and activist Alice Walker was born in 1944 in Putnam County, Georgia. Her parents were a sharecropping farmer and a housemaid who firmly believed in education for her children.

After high school, Walker went to Spelman College in Atlanta on a full scholarship. There she met Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. She became interested in the U.S. civil rights movement in part due to the influence of activist Howard Zinn, who was one of her professors. She later transferred to Sarah Lawrence College, graduating in 1965.

Continuing the activism that she participated in during her college years, Walker returned to the South, where she became involved with voter registration drives, campaigns for welfare rights, and children's programs in Mississippi. Her second novel, *Meridian*, is set in the civil rights struggle.

Alice Walker's 1975 article "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston," published in *Ms.* magazine, helped revive interest in the work of that pioneer African American writer.

In 1982, Walker published what has become her best-known work, *The Color Purple*. The novel follows a young troubled black woman fighting her way through not just racist white culture but patriarchal black culture as well. The book became a bestseller, adapted into a critically acclaimed 1985 movie as well as a 2005 Broadway musical.

Walker demonstrated against the launching of the Iraq War in 2003 and was arrested on International Women's Day. In an interview with *Democracy Now*, Walker said, "I was with other women who believe that the women and children of Iraq are just as dear as the women and children in our families, and that, in fact, we are one family. And so it would have felt to me that we were going over to actually bomb ourselves." Walker wrote about the experience in her essay, "We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For."

In recent years Walker has been a leading global voice against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

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A letter of hope to a nephew in prison

By Juan Lopez

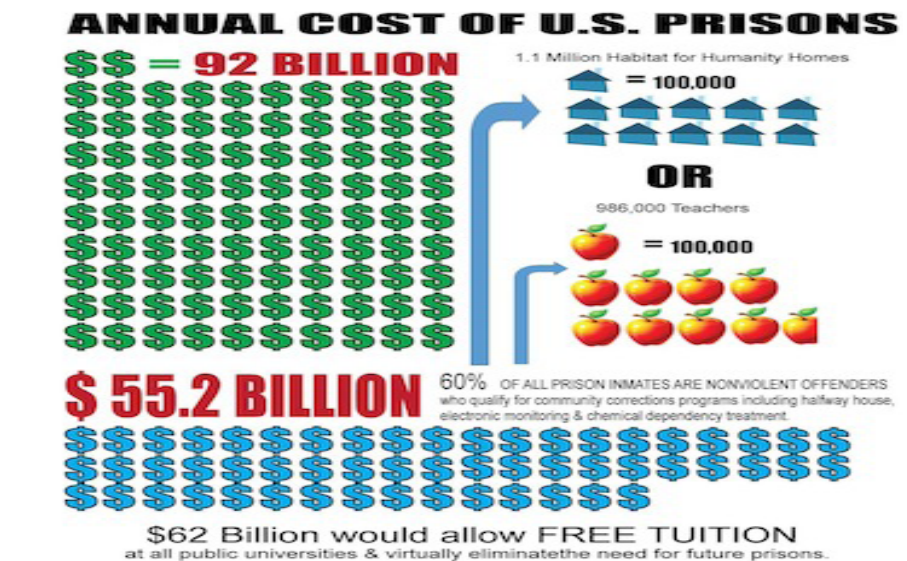
Dear Neph,
I guess it's better late than never. I apologize for not writing (I've never been one to write personal letters; never know what to say). In any case, Auntie Cassie shows me the letters you have been writing (I hope you're ok with that).

To start off, I want to say how proud I am of you! You have developed into a very thoughtful person with high moral values, one who cares about your loved ones and your fellow human beings. One who despises injustice wherever it might be, including and especially in the criminal "justice" system. Your development is all the more admirable given the difficult conditions of incarceration you have had to endure.

I think about you often. I think about the times you spent with us, how you loved it here and how we loved you in return. Though, in my case, I did not express openly the love I've always had for you. Thinking back now, I wish I had.

I also think of you when injustice rears its ugly head, especially when it's related to the treatment of our youth on the street, in the courts and the prisons. I admire your determination. I can only imagine how hard it must be. But, you rise above the fray and do things to stay positive!

Since the drive to privatize prisons some years



back, the prison population has grown rapidly because there are big corporate profits to be made. The more prisoners in private prisons, the more money the state taxpayers have to dish out to these private sharks. Makes one wonder who are the real criminals? The worst ones come in fancy suits.

But it's encouraging that a good number of people are in favor of reforming the criminal "justice" system, including the prisons. You must have heard the majority of California voters supported the ballot proposition last November that called for reclassifying a lot of felony drug and property offenses to misdemeanor. This is resulting in the release of a lot of brothers and sisters. It's a small but significant step. Life has taught me that change usually comes in small incremental steps, but over time these steps add up. Then comes a time of big changes like those that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led in the 1960s. So there is hope, and hope is what keeps us going. Dear nephew, I hope that when you receive this letter you are doing well.

Things are going generally well with the family, though not without our own challenges.

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Tens of thousands join Podemos rally in Madrid

By Morning Star

Around a quarter of a million people marched through Madrid on Saturday in a show of strength by the populist Podemos party.

Podemos supporters from across Spain converged around the Cibeles fountain before packing the avenue leading to Puerta del Sol square in what was the party's largest rally to date.

Police said at least 100,000 people participated in the march while Podemos put the figure at 300,000.

Podemos aims to shatter the country's predominantly two-party system and the March for Change gathered crowds in the same place where sit-in protests against political and financial corruption laid the party's foundations in 2011.

The party hopes to emulate the success of Greece's Syriza party in the Spanish general election later this year.

Its rise is due in part to party leader Pablo Iglesias, a 36-year-old political science professor.

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said he didn't accept the bleak picture of Spain that Podemos propagated.

However, in only a year, Podemos has leap-frogged from being the dream of a handful of university professors and activists to a political party.

Opinion polls show the party could possibly take the No 1 spot in coming elections and thus trigger one of the biggest political shake-ups in Spain since democracy was restored in 1978.

This year, Spain holds elections in 15 of its 17 regions followed by general elections.

Venezolanos, sabotaje y el acaparamiento

Librerred.net

El 84 por ciento de los venezolanos está de acuerdo con que se ponga "mano dura al acaparamiento de productos de la canasta básica alimentaria", según el más reciente estudio de la encuestadora Hinterlaces.

Así lo informó este domingo el periodista venezolano José Vicente Rangel, en su programa José Vicente Hoy, transmitido en un canal local de Venezuela.

Al citar el estudio, precisó que en la pregunta "¿Usted estaría de acuerdo con quienes dicen que el Gobierno debe poner mano dura para combatir el acaparamiento y la especulación", 84 por ciento de los encuestados respondió que Sí y 14 por ciento dijo que No; mientras los que no saben o no contestaron se ubican en 2 por ciento.

Ante la pregunta "¿Usted está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con quienes dicen que los comerciantes y empresarios están aprovechando la crisis económica para acaparar productos y especular con los precios?", Rangel señaló que el estudio revela que 53 por ciento está de acuerdo, mientras que 45 por ciento está en desacuerdo y 2 por ciento no sabe o no contestó.

Por otra parte, 78 por ciento de los encuestados está de acuerdo con que establecer un modelo económico productivo socialista con participación de la empresa privada es la solución para los problemas económicos, mientras 20 por ciento se muestra en desacuerdo y 2 por ciento de los encuestados no sabe o no contestó.

Oposición "muy dividida"

A la pregunta "¿Está usted de acuerdo con quienes dicen que hoy la oposición está muy dividida?", 73 por ciento de los encuestados respondió que está de acuerdo y 23 por ciento en desacuerdo, mientras que 4 por ciento no sabe o no contestó.

"Son diferencias irreconciliables (entre la dirigencia opositora) razón por la cual se considera que la MUD (Mesa de la Unidad Democrática) es inútil, que muestra una imagen de falsa unidad y que la consecuencia que deriva de tal hecho es la parálisis", expresó Rangel.

La encuesta fue realizada del 21 al 27 de enero de 2015 y contempló 1.200 entrevistas a nivel nacional.

El presidente de Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, denunció el pasado 13 de enero que sectores de la derecha están intentando llevar a cabo un golpe económico gestado desde febrero de 2014 para desestabilizar al país.

En ese sentido, el Ejecutivo bolivariano articuló un plan contra la guerra económica y el contrabando, que incluye la instalación de patrullas anti-tráfico de alimentos de la cesta básica en zonas fronterizas con Colombia, país donde son trasladados ilegalmente como parte de la estrategia de la derecha para sembrar el caos en el país suramericano