



¡El Coqui Libre!

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The Newsletter of The ProLibertad Freedom Campaign-Published in New York City

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THE MOST DANGEROUS SPY YOU NEVER HEARD OF: ANA BELEN MONTES!

by Susan Babbitt, CounterPunch May 2017

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/05/23/the-most-dangerous-spy-youve-never-heard-of-ana-belen-montes/>

Ana Belén Montes gave classified information to Cuba for 17 years before her arrest in 2001 for espionage. Pleading guilty, she avoided conviction for treason, which carries the death sentence. She is called “the most dangerous spy you’ve never heard of.”[i] She deserves to be known now.

Her story shows the personal cost of some truths. I don’t mean the suffering endured in prison, a predictable result of breaking US law. I mean the cost of believing, as US citizen and government employee, truths about US state terror, supported by evidence. The truths are well-known, or at least readily available. But they’re not easily believed, even when known to be true.

By the time Montes began spying for the Cubans, the US had been carrying out a ruthless “war against subversion” across Latin America for decades. The targets were anyone who resisted, or might resist, US hegemony in the region. Operation Condor, formed in the early seventies, enabled multinational death squads to carry out state-sponsored cross-border political repression.

Unionists, peasant leaders, party activists, students, teachers, priests, nuns – indeed, whole social sectors – were targets. The CIA provided new forms of torture. In Uruguay, for example, a “parallel apparatus” used homeless beggars for torture training. In a soundproof room, instructors demonstrated the effects on the body of electric voltage and chemical substances. The test subjects died.[ii]

In 2005, a special conference was organized in Havana on terrorism. Speakers from Latin America, the US and Europe presented research, often drawing upon declassified US documents, about CIA-inspired terror tactics of Operation Condor. The recurring theme, in presentation after presentation, was impunity: The data piles up. It is widely diffused. Yet somehow, in the public mind, it doesn’t matter.

The occasion for the conference was the entrance into the US of Louis Posada Carriles, jailed in Venezuela (he escaped) for



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master-minding the shooting down of a Cuban plane, killing all aboard (1976). Posada confessed his responsibility to Ann Louise Bardach (New York Times). He walks free in the US despite the evidence. He celebrates his birthdays on camera, before the media.

In John Pilger's documentary, *War on Democracy*, Pilger interviews Sister Diana Ortiz, a US citizen raped and beaten by US servicemen protecting the dictatorship in El Salvador. Ortiz says, "When I hear people express surprise about Abu Ghraib [site of US torture in Iraq], I ask myself 'What planet are they living on? Don't they know the history of our country?'"

It's not that they don't know the history. It is that they possess the facts, know they are true, and don't assimilate them. They want to think the US is "leader of the free world". It is not hard to see – thanks to books, documentaries, declassified documents, journal articles, and conferences – that US foreign policy has nothing to do with freedom and democracy. However, we have to care to know.

Ana Belén Montes says she doesn't want to be treated as a hero. True, she shouldn't have to be a hero. What she did was believe the obvious. She told the sentencing judge, "I engaged in the activity that brought me before you because I obeyed my conscience".

In 1960, apolitical Beat poet, Leroi Jones, went to Cuba "determined not to be 'taken'". Returning to the US, in his famous "Cuba Libre", he denounced the "thin crust of lie that we cannot even detect in our own thinking".

Jones detected that "crust of lie" because of what he felt, in Cuba. He expected Cubans to be indoctrinated, even evil. Instead, he experienced them as happy, interesting and smart. He describes a feeling, a human connection. It contradicted his beliefs. He gave up the beliefs.

Jones could have dismissed his feelings as crazy, and maintained his web of beliefs. That would have been more comfortable, even praiseworthy. Instead, Jones returned to the US radicalized. The "thin crust of lie" was just that: a thin crust. There was more. Jones didn't want to be living the entire hidden iceberg of lies.

The "thin crust of lie", undetectable, explains a slogan of the anti-war movement: "There are no innocents". It means that a comfortable white life was collusion in the slaughter in Vietnam. Lifestyles generate and nurture values and beliefs. They support myths making it easy to explain away truths, even obvious ones. We offer our daily consent, quietly, comfortably.

Ana Belén Montes could have dismissed what she knew to be true about the US war on democracy. She is, in the end, a hero just because of what she believed, because she has believed it, and because she continues to do so.

Fidel Castro said about Che Guevara after his death that Guevara insisted on the power of example. There's a philosophical point here: We are interdependent creatures, always giving to and receiving from the beings, human and non-human, with whom we interact. It was Marx's naturalistic vision of who we are as human beings: part of nature, dependent upon others even for thinking.

Such naturalism is expressed also by smart, sensitive thinkers across the ages. The Buddha was one, as was José Martí, leader of Cuba's last independence war against Spain. It is simply a scientific fact that how we think depends, in ways we often do not know, on the people and stories we surround ourselves with. They speak to us silently, continually, at myriad levels. We don't think alone, contrary to the liberal/libertarian myth that we live "from within", hearing an "inner voice".

That "inner voice" is always the voice of others, indeed whole histories of others.

It's why certain examples matter so much and why they're worth working for. They may be all we have to see through the lies, well-known lies that they are. The hidden histories matter to what can be imagined, morally. It's no surprise we haven't heard about Ana Belén Montes. Such a significant example is hidden deliberately. The press, without evidence, suggests she was mentally ill.

Ana Belén Montes must no longer be hidden.

Speaking truth to power is relatively easy. Believing it is more challenging. Murdered Honduran activist Berta Cáceres said North Americans are too attached to our comfort. It affects moral imagination. For those of us who benefit from the US Empire, it is not possible to believe what is clearly true about that Empire without personal cost. It's just the nature of reason and its dependence on surroundings.

The "thin crust of lie" gets ever thicker. We need the example of Ana Belén Montes more than ever. [iii]

Notes.

[i] Jim Popkin The Washington Post http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/feature/wp/2013/04/18/ana-montes-did-much-harm-spying-for-cuba-chances-are-you-havent-heard-of-her/?utm_term=.d3e99f7d9503

[ii] J. Patrice McSherry, "Death squads as parallel forces: Uruguay, Operation Condor, and the United States"

Journal of Third World Studies. 24.1 (Spring 2007): 23



DYLCIA PAGAN NEEDS OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT!



By Marina Ortiz, VirtualBoricua.org, October 2017

Former political prisoner Dylcia Pagan needs your financial support due to major damage to her home in Loiza, Puerto Rico sustained during Hurricane Irma and Maria.

Dylcia is asking the Puerto Rican Diaspora to help with funds to clear debris all around her home. There was also damage to her roof and she has no electricity.

Dylcia and her companion dog Toa are fine; they are staying with friends nearby.

Dylcia is asking for financial support to purchase a generator and materials to repair her home.

**You can make a donation through
Dylcia Pagan's PayPal account to:
dpatrialibre@gmail.com**

IS DIY DISASTER RELIEF THE NEW NORMAL?

**Sunday, December 31, 2017 By Clara Herzberg,
Truthout | Op-Ed**

For many Americans, 2017 is set to go down as the year of disaster, with three massive hurricanes and new wildfires in California together slamming areas with more than 8 percent of the United States population. With natural disasters on the rise and the resources available to respond to them fast diminishing, vigilante rescue efforts and private-driven initiatives have been stepping up to help rebalance this fatal equation and provide disaster relief.

In Louisiana, for example, a group calling themselves the Cajun Navy took their boats to Texas and started ferrying people to safety amidst the destruction wrought by Hurricane Harvey. The outfit first formed more than 10 years ago in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and has provided critical first-response support every hurricane season since then, ferrying desperately needed food and equipment to-and-fro and bringing stranded people to dry land.

Their story -- one of driven citizens braving the storm to help their most vulnerable neighbors -- is an inspiring one. But it also speaks to the dangers of what can happen without adequately-funded public institutions and infrastructure. Heroic as they may be, citizens' outfits like the Cajun Navy can't be expected to compensate for severely underfunded emergency



Mother Isamar holds her baby Saniel, 9 months, at their makeshift home, under reconstruction, after being mostly destroyed by Hurricane Maria, on December 23, 2017, in San Isidro, Puerto Rico. Their neighborhood remains without electricity. (Photo: Mario Tama / Getty Images)

prevention and disaster response systems.

Every year in the US, floods devastate the South and fires rage in the West. But this year, natural disasters have hit an all-time high in terms of severity and fatalities. Days after Hurricane

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Harvey laid waste to Houston, Irma began forming in the Atlantic, coalescing into the strongest Atlantic storm in recorded history. Then came another first, as Puerto Rico's worst natural disaster in more than 80 years, Hurricane Maria, caused catastrophic damage on the island.

These hurricanes may have passed, but the communities they destroyed are still trying to pick up the pieces. Months later, the humanitarian crisis in Puerto Rico is ongoing, with more than one-third of homes still lacking electricity. In California, the state's worst fire season on record is raging on, with fires burning across more than 83,000 acres in the south.

Aside from causing catastrophic human and economic damage, this year's disasters have one other thing in common: Their severity is undeniably linked to climate change.

Warming oceans provide the fuel for hurricanes through more intense evaporation. Meanwhile, higher air temperatures increase the amount of water that the air can hold. This combi-

nation increases the amount of energy and moisture available to storms, with the result that this year's hurricanes let loose record amounts of water at an unprecedented rate. Similarly, global warming increases the likelihood and severity of wildfires, with each degree of warming turning California into an even more potent tinderbox.

Although it's been years that scientists have been sounding the alarm about the capacity for warmer weather to trigger stronger storms, our country remains massively underprepared for this reality, with key disaster relief programs chronically underfunded.

In response to this relief deficit, numerous citizen-driven movements have sprung up across the country -- not only in Louisiana and Texas, but in Puerto Rico and California too, where thousands of people have joined community relief efforts, ferrying aid directly to survivors and assisting with rebuilding.

Private actors have also stepped up to the plate. While Trump

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Call to Action on Puerto Rico

Llamado a la Acción por Puerto Rico

The State of Puerto Rican Schools Public Education under threat of Privatization

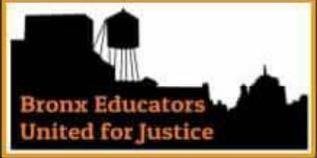


Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico
Mercedes Martinez- President
Edwin Morales- Laboy- Vice President

Thursday, January 17th 2018
from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
at
Cornerstone Academy for Social Action, CASA,
3441 Steenwick Avenue, Bronx, NY 10475









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was taking to Twitter after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, Tesla was ramping up its battery production in an effort to restore power to the hurricane-stricken island. Private planes and the fixed based operators that service them have also played a key role in running rescue operations, assisting evacuations and delivering supplies to areas in need. In Puerto Rico, for instance, one of the operators at Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport helped handle roughly 1,000 humanitarian flights at a time when public airports were stymied by the storm.

Yet these efforts, though admirable, cannot compensate for government incompetence and negligence. Even when it comes to private-driven response efforts, government support has been found wanting. For instance, with the Federal Aviation Administration set to enact new restrictions on fixed based operators that could stymie their ability to continue running, even private aviation may soon find its hands tied, unable to play a role in the inevitable next disaster.

Such failures are nothing, however, compared to the government's inability to even ensure basic common goods, such as functioning disaster-prevention infrastructure or relief programs. After all, no GoFundMe campaign can cover the \$180 billion of damages caused by Hurricane Harvey, or the \$95 billion needed to reconstruct Puerto Rico. Large-scale, dependable infrastructure and disaster relief systems are needed, and these can only be government-funded. In an age when natural crises will only become more frequent, Washington needs to step it up.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

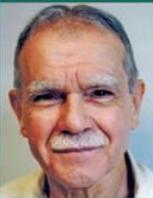
For more events, check out ProLibertad's website: www.ProLibertad.org

Rev. Dr. Samuel Cruz and Trinity Lutheran Church proudly invites you to

International Capital, Debt and Puerto Rico Reconstruction

Oscar Lopez Rivera

With Honored Guest Panelists



February 2, 2018
5:30pm Reception
6:30pm Panel discussion
8:00pm Music presentation

411 46th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11220
RSVP: 718-854-6040 or email at trinitysunsetparkoffice@gmail.com

A Celebration of Black History and The Puerto Rican Diaspora

Dr. Yarimar Bonilla



Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan



A Call to Action on Puerto Rico

Public Education vs. Privatization in Puerto Rico!

Speakers:
Mercedes Martinez
President, FMPR
and
Edwin Morales Laboy
Vice President, FMPR





Saturday, January 20, 2018
6:30 pm to 9:00pm | Suggested Donation: \$10
NYSNA (New York State Nurses Association)
131 West 33rd Street, New York, NY 10001 (2nd floor)

Getting there: Take the Manhattan bound  or  trains to 34th Street.

A Call to Action on Puerto Rico is a collective of groups and individuals of the Puerto Rican diaspora seeking solutions to the crisis in Puerto Rico from an anti-colonial perspective. Through educational activities and demonstrations the group promotes real action emerging from the communities for the wellbeing of our people on the island.
Like Our Page: "A Call to Action on Puerto Rico" on Facebook. Twitter: @PRCalltoAction





JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO FREE ANA BELEN MONTES!



MAKE A DONATION TO PROLIBERTAD

ProLibertad can only do the work it does through the support of all of our allies. Make your tax deductible donation out to IFCO/ProLibertad and then mail it to:

IFCO/ProLibertad
418 w145th St.
New York, N.Y. 10031

JOIN THE PROLIBERTAD FREEDOM CAMPAIGN!

You have the power to free Oscar Lopez Rivera.
Join ProLibertad and help us:

- Organize a community workshop;
- Put together a letter writing night;
- Dedicate a mass to the prisoners.

Come to one of our meetings!
Contact us at 718-601-4751!



ProLibertad Freedom Campaign

For over 20 years, the ProLibertad Freedom Campaign has been working for the release of the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners. With the release of 11 of the Political Prisoners in September 1999, we re-dedicated our efforts to securing the freedom of the remaining Puerto Rican political prisoners. Through educational events, lobbying and public pressure work and activities it is our goal to secure the freedom of these patriots whose only "crime" has been the love of their home land, Puerto Rico. We support the release of All U.S. held Political Prisoners, oppose the U.S. colonial control of Puerto Rico, oppose U.S. imperialism throughout the world, and the U.S. military presence in Vieques. For more information **Contact us at:**
ProLibertad@Hotmail.com, at 718-601-4751, or our website www.ProLibertad.org