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★ The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it. —Karl Marx ★

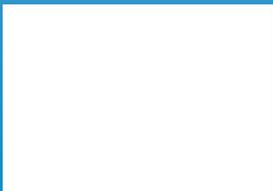
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Medical Care Needed for Chelsea Manning!

ACLU files lawsuit against Army demanding medical care for Manning

BY THE CHELSEA MANNING SUPPORT NETWORK

Yesterday, the ACLU and Chelsea Manning filed a lawsuit against the Army demanding the necessary medical treatment for Manning's previously diagnosed gender dysphoria.

By continuing to deny Manning treatment, the Army is directly violating Chelsea's constitutional rights under the 8th amendment. Chase Strangio, attorney in the ACLU Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender project and co-counsel on Ms. Manning's case, notes "such clear disregard of well-established medical protocols constitutes cruel and unusual punishment."

Due to a full year of neglecting Manning's medical care, the ACLU had previously announced a Sept 4th deadline for the Army to provide treatment. After continued failure to provide treatment, the ACLU filed a lawsuit yesterday and released the following statement:

ACLU Demands Government Provide Chelsea Manning Necessary Medical Care

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 23, 2014

CONTACT: Crystal Cooper, ACLU National, 212-549-2666; media@aclu.org

WASHINGTON—Today, Chelsea Manning filed a lawsuit in federal court in the District of Columbia against Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and other Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of the Army officials for their failure to provide necessary medical treatment for her gender dysphoria, a condition with which she was originally diagnosed by Army doctors more than four years ago.

The complaint is accompanied by a motion for preliminary injunction

demanding that Ms. Manning be provided hormone therapy, permission to follow female grooming standards, and access to treatment by a medical provider qualified to treat her condition. Ms. Manning is currently serving a thirty-five year prison sentence at the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Ft. Leavenworth Kansas, and though the military recognizes that she has gender dysphoria requiring treatment, critical care has been withheld without any medical basis.

"The government continues to deny Ms. Manning's access to necessary medical treatment for gender dysphoria, without which she will continue to suffer severe psychological harms," said Chase Strangio, attorney in the ACLU Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender project and co-counsel on Ms. Manning's case. "Such clear disregard of well-established medical protocols constitutes cruel and unusual punishment."

Ms. Manning is represented by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the ACLU of the Nation's Capital, the ACLU of Kansas and civilian defense counsel David E. Coombs. Last month, Ms. Manning's legal team sent a letter to the DOD and Army officials demanding that she receive treatment for gender dysphoria in accordance with medical standards of care, including hormone therapy and permission to follow female grooming standards. Her treatment needs have continued to be unmet and her distress has escalated.

"I am proud to be standing with the ACLU behind Chelsea on this very important issue," said David E. Coombs, "It is my hope that through this action, Chelsea will receive the medical care that she needs without having to suffer any further anguish."

Gender dysphoria is a serious medical condition that requires hormone therapy and changes to gender expression, like growing hair, to live consistently with one's gender identity as part of accepted standards of care.

Without necessary treatment, gender dysphoria can cause severe psychological distress, anxiety, and suicidality. For this reason, the National Commission on Correctional Health Care and the American Psychological Association have issued policy statements that support providing treatment to prisoners diagnosed with the condition in accordance with established standards of care, as the Federal Bureau of Prisons and many state corrections agencies are already doing.

A copy of the complaint is available at:

aclu.org/lgbt-rights-prisoners-rights/manning-v-hagel-et-al-complaint-declaratory-and-injunctive-relief

The motion for preliminary injunction is available at:

aclu.org/lgbt-rights-prisoners-rights/manning-v-hagel-et-al-plaintiffs-motion-preliminary-injunction

This press release is available at:

aclu.org/lgbt-rights-prisoners-rights/aclu-demands-government-provide-chelsea-manning-necessary-medical-care

—Free Chelsea Manning, September 24, 2014

<http://www.chelseamanning.org/press/aclu-files-lawsuit-against-army-demands-medical-care-for-manning>

Write to Chelsea Manning:

Mail must be addressed exactly as follows:

CHELSEA E. MANNING 89289
1300 NORTH WAREHOUSE ROAD
FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS 66027-2304

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Their Crimes and Our Punishments

By BONNIE WEINSTEIN

To state that there is a double standard of justice for the wealthy, capitalist elite (a tiny minority of the world's population) and the rest of us is a monumental understatement. Corporations and their executives get away with murder and grand theft routinely, while the rest of us—the vast majority of humanity—sometimes pay, literally, with our lives for the “crime” of being poor.

Capitalist society equates poverty with stupidity and general unworthiness while, ironically, the possession of wealth—even when simply inherited—insures a place among the ruling elite and immunity to punishment.

There is method to the madness of capitalism. The method is “law and order”—their laws, their order. The madness is tyranny—our enslavement by those commanders of capital—by any and all means necessary.

Capitalists get away with murder and mayhem

According to a September 11, 2014 *New York Times* article by Hiroko Tabuchi titled, “Air Bag Flaw, Long Known to Honda and Takata, Led to Recalls,”

“Today, more than 14 million vehicles have been recalled by 11 automakers over rupture risks involving air bags manufactured by the supplier, Takata. That is about five times the number of vehicles recalled this year by General Motors for its deadly ignition switch defect....

“The danger of exploding air bags was not disclosed for years after the first reported incident in 2004, despite red flags—including three additional ruptures reported to

Honda in 2007, according to interviews, regulatory filings and court records.”¹

Clearly, these auto manufacturers did nothing to prevent injury and death to motorists. Millions of us are still in danger while paying for the privilege of driving around in these defective vehicles. But have any of these corporate bosses been arrested? Hell, no! And they won't be!

They get away with grand theft, too

According to a August 28, 2014 article by David Gelles titled, “Businesses Are Winning Cat-and-Mouse Tax Game,”

“By exploiting existing loopholes and devising new ones, some of the country's best-known companies are making it harder than ever for the federal government to replenish its already depleted coffers. As a result, business income tax revenue remains stagnant at about two percent of gross domestic product even as corporate profits hit records. Business taxes now make up less than ten percent of federal revenue, and in some years as little as 6.6 percent. That is sharply down from the years after World War II, when about 30 percent of federal revenue came from corporate taxes....”²

Corporations hire giant law firms whose job it is to devise laws and buy politicians to allow corporations to get out of paying taxes and/or to hide trillions of dollars in profits off shore in “private banks” in order to avoid taxes.

Everybody knows if *we* try to cheat on our taxes we go to jail. Basically, the capitalist class owns and controls the laws while we have to find ways to abide by them, or else!

Getting robbed in Missouri and in your home town

In an August 26, 2014 article by Campbell Roberts and Joseph Goldstein titled, “In Aftermath of Missouri Protests, Skepticism About the Prospects for Change” that appeared in the *New York Times*, reported that,

“...just a few hours after Michael Brown was laid to rest, an amiable judge sat in the City Council chambers here and weighed in on the traffic violations and petty crimes, one by one, of more than a hundred people. At least two-thirds of those waiting were Black, roughly a reverse racial image of the demographics of Maplewood itself...

“Young Black men, who in many towns in St. Louis County are pulled over at a rate greater than whites, routinely find themselves in the patchwork of municipal courts here, without lawyers and unable to pay the fines levied for their traffic violations. Many end up being passed from jail to jail around the county until they can pay their fines and in some cases other administrative fees, a revenue source on which some towns are growing increasingly reliant.

“It angers people, because it seems like they're just messing with you,” said Cameron Lester, a 22-year-old college student who knew Mr. Brown, and days earlier was protesting his death. He described how an unpaid \$75 ticket once turned into days behind bars in two different police stations and hundreds-of-dollars in fees...

“When a person fails to appear and pay, here as in many other places, a warrant is issued and that person's license is suspended....In Ferguson, more than one-and-a-

half warrants have been issued for every resident. And as the warrants stack up, so do the fines: Not showing up to pay a \$90 taillight violation means a failure-to-appear warrant with its own fee of \$100 or more; each successive failure-to-appear warrant adds to that; and if there is a stop, there are incarceration fees and towing fees.

“In the end, said Brendan Roediger, an assistant professor at St. Louis University Law School, a person who had trouble coming up with \$90 might owe a jurisdiction well over a thousand dollars.”³

These practices aren’t limited to Missouri; they are routine in poor communities across the country and common experiences for all working people.

What could we do with the money spent on incarceration and fines?

Consider this, tuition and expenses for the 2014-2015 academic year at Harvard is \$43,938; room and board is \$14,669; estimated personal expenses (including \$800-\$1200 for books) is \$3,643; estimated travel costs range from \$0-\$5800; for total billed and unbilled costs of \$62,250-\$68,050 for the year. In addition, health insurance is required at a cost of \$2,366 unless you are covered under your family’s plan.⁴

It would be cheaper to send inmates to Harvard!

It would make much more sense to utilize the billions of dollars spent to incarcerate inmates, instead, to provide free healthcare, education and housing and to create jobs for those in poverty. It would make much more sense to have progressive taxation, *i.e.*, to get rid of the tax loopholes for the rich and tax them at a progressive rate—the more money they have the higher rate of taxes they pay.

Why do they do what they do?

It makes no sense to jail someone for an unpaid taillight ticket unless you are a capitalist.

The purpose of inflicting fines, mass incarceration and regressive taxes (the poor pay more), is not only to fund the capitalist class’s government—the police, military and jails—but to weigh-down and oppress the working class in order to prevent revolution.

They make the rules; they make the exceptions for themselves; they keep the profits we create; they control the police and military apparatus—all to convince us there’s nothing we can do about it.

Putting our money at work for us

But there are many things we can do about it. We can demand a progressive tax structure where the wealthy pay more with no cut-off at the high-end, and no taxes at all on working class people. We can demand free, universal healthcare and education from cradle to grave. We can demand a living wage for all—as determined by us, not them. We can demand a ceiling on profits and CEO pay—determined by us. We can demand a shorter workweek with no cuts in pay in order to put everyone who needs a full-time job to work.

We must find a way to exercise our right to determine, freely and democratically, how our tax dollars will be spent. Tax money is our money and we

should have the ultimate say on what we want to spend it on.

We must insist on democratically determining all of the policies that we feel should be carried out for the good of all of us.

Democracy isn’t being free to vote for one privately well-financed liar over another. Democracy is the right to determine how we—the overwhelming majority—want to live and how we want to distribute and use our common resources. We can do this. We *are* the majority. All it takes is our solidarity and our determination to make these decisions for ourselves—that’s socialism.

1 <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/12/business/air-bag-flaw-long-known-led-to-recalls.html>

2 http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2014/08/28/businesses-find-ways-to-avoid-corporate-taxes-but-a-fix-seems-unlikely/?_php=true&_type=blog&hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=c-column-middle-span-region®ion=c-column-middle-span-region&src=dayp&r=0

3 <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/27/us/in-aftermath-of-missouri-protests-skepticism-about-the-prospects-for-change.html?ref=us>

4 <https://college.harvard.edu/financial-aid/how-aid-works/cost-attendance>



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Police Terror: The Legacy of Slavery

By CHRIS KINDER

Police murders of Black and brown young men has sparked a mounting outrage throughout the U.S. and the world. The Ferguson, Missouri shooting of Michael Brown, in which Brown was shot while his hands were up, and his body was left lying in the street for almost five hours, led to immediate mass protests. Ferguson's overwhelmingly white police force treated the protestors of Brown's murder with utter contempt and terror. The cops pointed weapons, shouted racist epithets, and threatened protestors with armored vehicles, sparking protests even in the mainstream bourgeois press. Brown's brutal murder—as well as several subsequent police killings in the St Louis area—sparked a national mobilization of thousands in October.

The Ferguson events fed into a growing awareness of police shoot-first-ask-questions-later atrocities. Police shootings are just the most damning edge of a criminal “justice” system that is racist and corrupt to the core. The death penalty and life without the possibility of parole (LWOP), stop-and-frisk policies, blatant frame-ups and barbaric brutality; as well as mass incarceration and the school-to-prison pipeline, are all disproportionately targeted on Black and brown men through racial profiling.

Add to this the militarization of police, which was highlighted in a June 2014 ACLU report titled, “War Comes Home, the Excessive Militarization of American Policing.” In recent years, police forces across the U.S. have been gobbling up surplus materials from the Iraq War at low cost, pushed on them by the defense department, Homeland Security, and the manufacturers of “security” utensils of all sorts. These can range from armored vehicles “hardened” against land mines, to the latest in sub-machine gun technology.

Special bodies of armed men

But while this militarization and criminal actions of police are certainly shocking, are they surprising or “excessive,” in terms of normal police practice? Or are they just the latest manifestation of a capitalist imperialist state in the agony of its groaning decline? Police are just the first line of defense of a system, which has always been racist, capitalist and colonialist/imperialist. “Special bodies of armed men” were identified by Marx, Engels and Lenin as the essence of the state; and the state only exists because there is an irreconcilable conflict between classes in society. One must rule the other; hence the need for militarized use of force against the working class and all oppressed and exploited groups within it.

Although much of the equipment and technology being used today is obviously modern, American policing has always exhibited a link with the imperialist military. Use of the National Guard to smash the Watts uprising of 1965, against a Teamsters wildcat strike in Ohio in 1970, and in the killing of antiwar protestors at Kent State in the same year; and now in Ferguson, are just some examples. Thirty-eight Black Panthers were murdered in the 1970s, many in cold blood, by police using overwhelming force and working hand-in-hand with federal agencies to set up (and in other cases frame-up) their victims. Police have long been an occupying army in Black ghettos, and they still are in Black and brown areas today.

But the origin of policing in the U.S. goes back much further, and its history illustrates its true nature clearly. The question to ask is, what were police and their antecedents created to do exactly?

Slave patrols

Like all the other European mercantile colonialist states, Britain used slav-

ery and indentured servitude in the “new world” to acquire the great wealth used to build capitalism, in a process that Marx called primitive accumulation. In the Seventeenth Century, there was a period in which the “transportation” of criminals, indentured servitude and the enslavement of Native Americans were virtually indistinguishable as sources of labor in the colonies. The first Blacks from Africa were treated as indentured servants or “apprentices for life;” but by the mid 17th Century slaves became a racial caste, as the labor force of preference became Blacks brought from Africa, particularly for use on large plantations.

The economies of the southern planter colonies were based primarily on slavery, as well as on the maritime and related port industries, which were needed for trade in goods produced by the slaves. White settler colonists (farmers), merchants and tradesmen of various sorts also proliferated. In the North free labor was generally predominant, but the mercantile economy profited and grew rich from slavery. Slaves, being essentially prisoners for life, needed guarding; and in order to protect their human property, slaveholders developed policing. The first slave patrol in the British North American colonies was established in Carolina Province in 1704, and they continued to be the primary policing agency in the slaveholding states right up through the Civil War.

“Beware the pattyrollers”

Slave patrols, called paddy rollers (or pattyrollers) by the slaves, patrolled the roads, checked for and pursued escaped slaves, and had the power to come into slave quarters on the plantations to conduct searches for fugitives or stolen goods. Slaves being sent on errands, such as to procure supplies in

town, had to have passes issued by their overseer or master to show to the patrollers; otherwise they might be beaten, whipped or even killed. The slave patrols tended to have great extra-legal authority to take whatever measures they deemed necessary, a pattern that persists today as police have the power to play judge, jury and executioner, particularly in Black and brown neighborhoods.

Interviews with former slaves, compiled in a Federal Writers Project book in the late 1930s called *On Jordan's Stormy Banks*, contained personal stories from those who were children on slave plantations in the last years of slavery: stories of good masters and bad, small farms and large, even stories of longing for the relative security of plantation life as a child compared with horrendous conditions in the South since the Civil War. But every single one of the interviewees had the same warning—"beware the pattyrollers."

Slave patrols in the Old South were sometimes independently set up by the planters (state authorized private policing), but often were organized directly by the state as militias. Although state militias fought in the Revolutionary War, and would fight the British again in the War of 1812, their main function was to patrol slaves, repress their revolts, repress any other revolts (such as Shay's Rebellion in 1786) and slaughter Indians.

Slavery—mainstay of the U.S.

Indeed, maintaining slavery was a chief motivation for the formation of the U.S. in the first place, as Thomas Jefferson made clear with the following line in the Declaration of Independence: "He [King George] has incited domestic insurrections among us..." This was a reference to the crown's threat to incite a slave revolt if the colonists didn't fall into line! The promise given in the constitution of 1787 that the federal government would "call forth a militia" to protect any state facing

"insurrection" was critical in getting the slave states to stay in the Union. The same point was reiterated in the Second Amendment, which provided for "the right to bear arms" directly in connection to the need for "a well-regulated militia." Needless to say, the "right" to bear arms was never meant to include Indians or slaves, whether chattel or wage!

The role of the slave patrols expanded considerably with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, an antebellum "compromise" between slave states and "free," which required non-slaveholding states of the North to return escaped slaves to their masters. An older, 1793 Fugitive Slave Act was also on the books, but it was loosely enforced, and allowed free states to pass laws requiring trials for accused fugitives. Now, slave catchers could come into northern states and grab "fugitives" with impunity—sometimes they were actually freedmen—and return them or sell them back into slavery (as portrayed in the book and movie, *Twelve Years a Slave*).

Conductors on the Underground Railroad, as well as those sheltering runaway slaves, were committing a federal crime. The entire ruling class of the U.S., not just the Southern planters, profited hand-over-fist from slavery, and the Fugitive Slave Act showed once again how they were all complicit in the preservation and policing of slavery. These slave patrols, militias, slave-catchers, *etc.* were the police in the antebellum period. Urban constabularies did not even exist, until they began to be set up in the 1840s.

The German coast revolt

The largest slave revolt in U.S. history shows the intimate connections between slavery, policing, and militarization. The revolt took place in 1811 among slaves of the hugely profitable sugar plantations along the German Coast, just upriver from New Orleans, only a few years after the Louisiana

Purchase had brought this area into the U.S. The slaves were keenly aware of the slave revolution in Saint Domingue (Haiti), which had just secured independence from France; and they had the benefit of a German Coast tradition that allowed the slaves to congregate on their own in New Orleans on weekends, where leaders could meet in secret to plot revolt.

Some 500 slaves rose up, armed themselves as best they could, killed slave owners they could find, and started a long march down along the Mississippi to New Orleans, a several-day journey undertaken mostly at night. They benefitted from the fact that much of the local militia had been sent off to try to grab West Florida from the Spanish, whose colonial possession at that time extended all the way along the Gulf Coast to Louisiana. Unfortunately their advantages weren't enough, as the slaves were totally untrained, lacked sufficient arms, and had lost the element of surprise due to the mistake of having let one of the slave owners escape early in their march. They were brutally crushed before getting to the city (many escaped by fleeing into swamps or returning to their plantations).

The governor of Orleans Territory used the experience of this revolt to whip the French planters into line to support and participate in a "well regulated militia," something they had been reluctant to do under an American governor earlier. Now, the elite were eager to promote this militarization, which included stationing of U.S. troops in the Territory for protection against both slaves and Spanish colonial rivals. The city of New Orleans passed laws against slaves being able to rent rooms or congregate in town; while the federal government offered slave owners compensation for lost slaves or other "property." As British troops soon advanced on Louisiana in the second war with Britain, the planters, Frenchmen and local militia rallied

to General Andrew Jackson's call to defend "liberty" mainly because they feared the potential of another slave revolt, inspired by British promises of "liberation." (The British had pursued the same tactic in the Revolutionary War in the South, by offering freedom to any slave who would fight with them against the rebels.)

Following the revolt, many captured slave rebels were given mock trials organized by the planters themselves as well as by territorial officials; most of them were then beheaded and their heads displayed on pikes set up along the road into the city as a warning to others. One can only be reminded here of how Ferguson cops left Mike Brown's body in the street for hours, and later drove over the memorial people had erected for him. The German Coast slaves, however, never forgot their heroic revolt, and at the start of the Civil War, they were among the first in the South to abandon the plantations and seek freedom near Union army encampments.¹

The Civil War, and beyond

In the Civil War, the Confederacy scooped up most males of fighting age for its army, but it couldn't forget the slave patrol function, particularly since slaves increasingly sought to flee to the North during the war. Boys and old men were recruited into a Home Guard to patrol for runaways and for deserters from the army, which was a much bigger problem than the myths about Confederate soldiers indicate. Indeed there were huge areas of the South—the more mountainous regions and generally impoverished areas with no plantations—where there were no slaves at all. Poor whites generally had no love for the privileged planter class, and some of these areas produced bands of men who migrated north to fight with the Union, as well as places of refuge for Confederate deserters.

With the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863—but mainly

after the final defeat of the Confederacy in 1865—slaves left the plantations in droves, forcing many planters to break up their estates into smaller units. Lack of labor wasn't their only problem however: many discovered that it was only the slaves who actually knew how to raise cotton! The plantation economy in the South collapsed drastically; agricultural production would take decades to fully recover. Meanwhile, as former slaves were roaming free and riding the rails (those few that were still operating) looking for paid work, the Southern states immediately began attempts to put Blacks "in their place" through criminalization, a process which persists in full force today.

"Black Codes"

In 1865-66, Southern states adopted "Black Codes," laws specifically designed to intimidate Blacks, such as bans on vagrancy, changing jobs without permission of previous employer, riding freight cars without a ticket, *etc.* This quickly led to the beginnings of a re-enslavement policy that would simmer all through Reconstruction and flame into full force afterwards: convict leasing. Meanwhile, violence, lawlessness and chaos raged throughout the South, as the Home Guard continued to pursue deserters, and former Confederates formed vigilante groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Almost all the violence in this period was committed by whites. A myth of Black violence was carefully promoted over time to hide the white chaos, and support criminalization and re-enslavement of Blacks.

The federal government was conflicted about how to handle the defeated states. Vice President Andrew Johnson, a Democrat, took over after Lincoln's assassination, and pursued Lincoln's policy of moderation: Southern states could be readmitted to the Union if they rejected secession and ratified the 13th amendment of December 1865, which rejected slavery

and involuntary servitude "except as punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." This language fit with Southern plans to subordinate Blacks through criminalization, and thus contributed to re-enslavement.

Reconstruction

Radical Republicans and abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, who warned against counterrevolution well before the end of the war, insisted on a thoroughgoing reconstruction enforced by the federal government. Supported by the Northern capitalists and most of the population, the Radicals obtained two-thirds Republican majorities in Congress in 1866 elections, and moved on their plans, which included sending troops to the South. The election of Ulysses S. Grant as president in 1869 continued these policies.

Reconstruction, based on the 14th and 15th amendments and use of Union troops, helped abolish the initial round of Black Codes, and ensure that Blacks got to vote, which led to Black delegates in state legislatures. Blacks also got public schools, which were equally funded with white schools. Union troops were specifically assigned to combat the Klan, and a federal Freedmen's Bureau was set up to help Blacks get jobs. The Bureau recommended going back to plantations and farms to seek rentals, or paid work. In some cases, units of the military guaranteed paid labor contracts to former slaves in certain areas to cultivate the land; although these programs were denounced by abolitionists as little better than serfdom.

Sherman's promise: "forty acres and a mule"

All of this worked well enough so that in a little more than ten years, the former slaves and their families were approximately as well off as the poor whites. The second revolution in the

U.S. appeared to be consolidating, at first. But Reconstruction had plenty of weaknesses. First of all, the “40 acres and a mule” promise made by General Sherman during his march to the sea was fulfilled only in a few places, such as the Georgia Sea Islands, which white owners had abandoned during the war. The Freedman’s bureau worked on getting abandoned land to Blacks as well, but there was never a broad federal policy to supply land to Blacks, much less to expropriate existing white owners. While about a quarter of Black farmers had their own land by 1900, most of this had been purchased; and throughout the last decades of the 19th Century, Black landowners were constantly threatened by fraud and outright vigilante violence to get them off their land.

The white Southern ruling class kept up efforts to undermine Reconstruction every step of the way. On the plantations that remained (which were considerable, despite many that were broken into smaller units), they managed to undermine ideas of wage-labor or tenancy by Blacks. Within a few years after the war, they established a share-cropping system which forced Black farmers to accept annual contracts that tied them to the land, preventing them from selling their labor elsewhere when the opportunity arose. The key was that the landlord extracted the entire product (usually cotton) directly from the cropper, and paid bare subsistence to him in the form of food and shelter. This generally represented all of the cropper’s “share” from sale of the crop! The similarity to chattel slavery could hardly be clearer.

Besides sharecropping, the main tactic for re-enslavement took place through the criminal “justice” system: convict leasing. Just as in antebellum days, much of the policing and judgmental system existed with only the barest connection to the official “legal” system, yet it all worked in tandem.

While more serious crimes would be handled by state courts, the vast majority of so-called “crimes” were petty violations of one of the endlessly expanding Black Codes. These were handled by local magistrates and sheriffs, many with only tenuous connection to an official appointment, and most of whom were connected to some small-time white employer looking for cheap labor.

The convict labor racket

The racket worked like this: just about any white person could stop a Black person on the street, challenge him (or her), and haul him before a local magistrate on some charge that was based on broadly written code, or even on pure invention. A hearing, complete with conviction and fine, could be over within a couple hours. Lawyers were never involved, and trials were discouraged by intimidating the victim to “confess judgment.” This was the antecedent of today’s “plea bargain” rigmarole, which entraps so many people of color and poor people now. As in today’s racket, “confessing judgment” would be encouraged by threats of even more severe punishment than what the victim already faced, such as being sent to work in a mine where the death rate was extremely high.

Unable to pay the “fine”—which could include fees to officials or even to “witnesses” for their “services”—the victim’s labor would immediately be bought by some small-time agent, right there in “court,” in exchange for his paying the victim’s “fine.” Sometimes these “agents” were front companies for big enterprises that had a constant need for forced labor. The agent would then immediately sell or “lease” the convict to some farmer who needed to clear his land, or a local industrial establishment that needed labor. The purchaser got to keep the victim for a certain amount of time, until his debt was paid off. The forced worker might

receive token pay in the form of scrip good only at the company store.

While the “court” system complied with laws against slavery by setting a time limit that the convict had to work, this limit could, and usually was, extended for months or years as the employer added his own charges to the “debt,” to pay for medical services, broken tools, room and board, or money owed to the company store. This system was used during the 1860’s, but was heavily ramped up as Reconstruction wound down, in the mid- late-1870s. This coincided with a rise in iron and coal production and related industries in the South, and with farm expansion into new, previously unsettled and uncultivated areas, all of which raised the demand for cheap labor.²

Reconstruction axed

It is noteworthy that while big plantation owners and farmers benefitted from the convict labor system, most of them relied mainly on sharecroppers to do their work. In the post war period, a growing *coterie* of smaller businessmen and poor white farmers in non-plantation areas who had never had slaves, and often resented the wealthy plantation owners, were the chief beneficiaries of re-enslaved Black labor. This system, along with rampant vigilantism, fed into a hardening of anti-Black racism among masses of whites.

Reconstruction wound down over several years, then came to an abrupt end with the so-called “compromise” of 1877. Conservative Republican Rutherford B. Hayes was elected amid widespread ballot stuffing and intimidation of Black voters in the South, in which racist terrorist groups like the Klan and White League played a big role. The “compromise” came into it because Southern Democrats, who were mostly white, and who had come into power in state legislatures largely through similar vigilante intimidation

of voters, accepted Hayes' election on the basis of his promise to remove Union troops from the South, which he did.

The Radical Republicans and abolitionists were defeated mainly due to the change in strategy by the big capitalist industrialists who controlled the Republican Party. Their interest no longer lay in defeating their planter-class rivals: now it lay in investing in Southern industry to benefit both from the cheap labor of re-enslaved Blacks, and from the expanding extractive industries in the South such as coal and other mining operations, which provided needed resources for growing Northern industrial development.

Blacks are still victimized to this day by the betrayal and failure of Reconstruction, due to the pattern of criminalization that was established, and to the illusions, which were sown in the federal government as the friend or ally of Black people.

Racism explodes nation-wide

In the wake of their 1865 defeat, Southern elites had pumped up white racism among all classes in the South, and eventually in the North as well, in order to retain their control. In the 1870s and '80s, "Social Darwinism" and other racist claptrap added an ideological layer to the effective criminalization of Blacks, making them increasingly seen as unfit for citizenship. They were allegedly shown to be unable to handle the freedom they had been given, which most Southern whites thought to have been an historic mistake. In this context, the U.S. Supreme Court stepped in with a decision in 1883 gutting the both the Civil Rights Act of 1875 and the 14th and 15th amendments, by rendering civil rights into a local, not federal, issue.

Legal segregation then proceeded apace. Funding for Black public schools was slashed to virtually nothing, by putting local authorities in charge of

fund allocation—a "neighborhood schools" policy; and new Black Code laws were passed that mandated separation of whites and Blacks in public facilities. This "separate but equal" mythology was endorsed by the Supreme Court in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling. During all this time, racist vigilante action against Blacks escalated without control, except for a few instances in which Blacks exercised

“Special bodies of armed men” were identified by Marx, Engels and Lenin as the essence of the state; and the state only exists because there is an irreconcilable conflict between classes in society. One must rule the other; hence the need for militarized use of force against the working class and all oppressed and exploited groups within it.

armed self-defense. More lynchings of Blacks took place in the South in 1892 than in any other year, in excess of 250. Finally, by about 1900, all remnants of Black civil rights, including the right to vote, had been completely obliterated in the South.

The racism of this long era—from 1877 through the 1960s—infected the entire country by demonizing Blacks, but also affected Chinese, brought in for cheap labor building railroads, as well as Mexican farmworkers, Japanese during World War II, and other immigrants. Racist vigilante "justice" also exploded in the North as well as the South, with massive white "race riots" that often wiped out entire prosperous

Black communities and towns on slim provocations. These peaked in 1919. Effective, if not legal, segregation also permeated the North in housing and through other forms of discrimination.

Racism and labor

Pervasive racism also hobbled the labor movement. The foundation for this was laid in the antebellum South, in which employers provoked white worker anger by bringing slaves into growing industries, particularly in the 1850s, which kept workers' wages down. This pattern continued after the war, with employers managing to break workers' strikes, and staff entire industries using Black forced labor. In a few situations, such as the docks of Charleston and other ports, the long-shore workers, having once been slaves, became strong and proud union members. Overall however, the racial divide weakened the labor movement in the South, which remained a cheap labor, non-union area right down to today.

But there were exceptions. The Knights of Labor were notoriously predisposed toward compromise with employers, even to the extent of admitting industrialists into the union! But they also admitted Black members, and apparently did quite a good job at organizing Black sugar cane workers in Louisiana, in the area close to the German Coast, where the 1811 slave rebellion had taken place. In 1887, some 10,000 mostly Black but including many white plantation workers went on strike for better pay, and to abolish the company (plantation) scrip form of payment, which forced workers owing money to the store to stay on the job to pay the debt.

The Thibodaux Massacre

Lasting for three weeks, and with winter frost approaching, the strike was threatening to ruin the crop; so the Governor, also a sugar planter, called out the army and militia to break the strike. This resulted in displaced strik-

ers seeking refuge in the City of Thibodaux, where they soon became the target of white racist mobs. State district judge Taylor Beattie, a former slave owner, ex-Confederate, and member of the Knights of the White Camellia, organized vigilante groups which took the strikers by surprise, and proceeded to massacre probably close to 100 of the Black workers before they could defend themselves. The Thibodaux Massacre was one of the bloodiest in U.S. labor history.³

The unity of Black and white workers manifested itself elsewhere however, including in the Great Strike—really a mass labor uprising—of 1877. Called both “extensive” and “deplorable” by the liberal *Nation* in July of 1877, this upsurge started out as a strike of railroad workers in West Virginia against an escalating round of wage cuts by a cabal of railroad bosses. It very quickly mushroomed into spontaneous strikes in cities all across the Northeast, involving nine states and most industries (many of which were also cutting wages). Traitorous “leaders” eventually emerged to slow down and kill the strike in the end, but for over a week, general strike, and even the prospect of communist revolution loomed.

Workers, unite!

Many observers were surprised with how quickly the lines separating workers of different national and ethnic identities melted away. In Chicago, masses of Irish packinghouse workers brandishing their meat cleavers marched defiantly down Archer Avenue toward Halsted, closing down lumberyards and other businesses, and forcing employers to raise wages. In St.

Louis, workers shut down almost all industries, leaving a bakery open so people could eat. When Black river boat workers from East St. Louis came to a meeting and asked if they could join the strike—perhaps anticipating the racist rejection they were used to—the assembled workers roared a hearty “yes!”⁴

Policing in the service of protecting the capitalist ruling class, already much in evidence in the North, showed its militarized fangs in 1877. In St. Louis, masses of police, led by police cavalry and foot cops bearing bayoneted rifles, and backed up by ranks of soldiers also with fixed bayonets, marched on the strikers and proceeded to beat everyone in their path. The pattern was set: northern police, having adapted the militarization and other tactics of the paddy rollers and state militia of the South to the modern tasks of repressing the working class, had been defined as the first line of defense of the capitalist system. Standing by while white racist mobs burned Black communities in the 1920s and beyond, repressing and even killing antiwar protestors, rounding up communists and murdering Black Panthers, was all just part of the job. The multi-ethnic workers

of 1877 got it right: from its police repression to exploitation and imperialism, this system can only be dealt with by a mass, and revolutionary, workers upsurge.

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Order-Givers and Order-Takers

Challenging the employer's right to rule

BY MICHAEL D. YATES

In the summer of 2001, I worked as a front desk clerk—we were called guest service agents—at the Lake Hotel in Yellowstone National Park. The work was hard. We spent long hours on our feet, dealing with a steady stream of demanding guests and a constant barrage of problems. The pay was low, six-dollars-an-hour, from which was deducted a significant charge for bad food and small shabby living quarters. The one saving grace was the camaraderie of the clerks. We'd gossip about coworkers in other departments, talk about our lives, and especially express anger and amazement at the often-bad behavior of the guests.

As in all workplaces, there was a hierarchy of command: a front desk manager, his assistant, and the director of the entire hotel. About a week after the hotel opened for the season, the manager said that three new jobs were available, and that any of us could apply. The new position was "senior clerk." A person who took the new job would be like a factory foreman, the front-line face of management. The senior clerks would have extra duties and would be given certain powers to do things the rest of us could not.

My manager asked me to consider the new job, but I said no. I wasn't interested in more work. The senior clerks would have to begin early and leave late, filling out reports and attending meetings. I had already experienced problem reservations and rude, obnoxious guests. The thought of longer shifts could not have been more unappealing. I didn't think anyone would want these jobs, especially when we learned that the senior clerks would be earning a grand 25-cents-an-hour more than an ordinary guest service agent. Who in their right mind would do a lot more work for a quarter-an-

hour raise? The economist in me said no one. The desire for free time in a national park would surely outweigh such a pathetic monetary incentive.

I was wrong. Several clerks applied for the jobs, and three were chosen, all college students, a man and two women. Besides the time it took to perform their extra labor, at least one of them was on duty between 6:00 A.M. and 10:30 P.M., the hours in which we worked. They stood at a large lectern behind us, observing what we did, reviewing room availability, examining logs, and helping us deal with any difficulties that might arise.

If the senior clerks had been facilitators, whose job was to make ours easier, we would have been grateful to them. However, it soon became apparent that they had allied themselves completely with the management. They immediately noticed minor infractions, things they had done just days before. "You're talking too much with the guests at check-in." "Someone was drinking too much last night." They noted when you clocked in a bit late or took too many restroom breaks; they became the arbiters of how we should treat the customers. One of the seniors wasn't above taking advantage of the special computer room codes to which he had access to give preferential treatment to attractive young females. When a guest called the front desk to ask for something, he would deliver it himself instead of notifying a porter to do this. He hoped to take for himself any tip the occupant might give!

In July I got sick. When my fever, nausea, and overwhelming malaise didn't subside, we decided to drive four hours to Billings, Montana. Our plan was to stay in a nice hotel for the weekend and get some rest in comfort-

able surroundings. But as my discomfort rose, we went to a nearby hospital emergency room. A CT scan found a kidney stone, but other tests indicated some liver damage caused by the medicine the Yellowstone Clinic doctor had wrongly prescribed. The emergency room physician made an appointment with a specialist, whom I would see on Monday. That evening, I called the front desk at the Lake Hotel and told a clerk that I wouldn't be in on Monday.

I reported to work on Tuesday, only to be confronted by a senior clerk. She berated me for my unannounced absence the day before. She said I was irresponsible and that she had reported me to the front desk manager. A sharp exchange followed. My absence had been noted, but she hadn't bothered to find this out. It was remarkable to me that she had so quickly assumed that I would simply not show up for work when I had been a model of dependability. When we were fellow clerks, we had treated each other in a friendly and respectful manner. She had always shown camaraderie with all of us. Now, however, she assumed the mantle of boss, acting as though I were a typical worker-slacker.

I have often thought about the senior clerks. There are lessons here for those of us who have been advocates of working-class struggle. If these workers would switch class loyalties for twenty-five-cents-an-hour, what might others do for higher "bribes?" When I was a teacher, I had a friend who taught English. I had been to his home often, given guest lectures in his classes, and he had invited me to attend a U.S. Open golf championship, in which a friend of his was competing. He was a strong advocate of more faculty power and never cravenly caved in to administration *fiat*, as did so many of our

colleagues. But when the academic dean retired and he was appointed interim dean, he became a regular Dr. Jekyll. He turned on his former friends with a vengeance, taking anti-faculty positions opposite to what he had professed just a few weeks before. At my father's factory workplace, men promoted to foreman became instant commanders, and suddenly members of a different social caste. It was remarkable how rapidly they became "company men." Since the earliest days of labor union formation in the United States, employers have routinely co-opted "troublemakers" by promoting them to management. Workers even have served as spies for their bosses, jeopardizing the livelihoods of their workmates.

Yet, the decision by the clerks to take the senior positions had to do with more than money. Twenty-five-cents constituted a token raise, not enough to turn on their friends. What really mattered was the power. We live in a world of order-givers and order-takers. We have become habituated to this state of affairs; it appears normal and natural, just an unalterable part of daily life. Given this, the senior clerks, like most people, understood that it is better to give orders than to obey them. And they no doubt believed, as most do, that if they were selected to tell others what to do, then they deserved this. It was a sign of their superiority and the inferiority of those not chosen. Further, economists and most other social scientists, as well as mainstream media, vigorously support the supervisors of the world; they tell us that a society structured hierarchically is necessary if we are to produce efficiently. They presume that everyone has an opportunity to rise above the lowest rungs of the hierarchy, so the inequality implicit in it is fair and just.

Most struggles by working people to improve their lives have accepted the employer's right to rule and have

limited their demands to wages, hours, and conditions of employment. Unions, with a few notable exceptions—the Industrial Workers of the World and some of the left-led unions—have done the same. However, what is really at issue here is the system that lies behind these efforts. Yes, it is good for workers to win higher wages, but these alone cannot challenge the power of capital, a power that can eventually undermine any pay increases. A fast-food wage rate of \$15-an-hour won't prevent an ambitious union-supporting counter clerk from taking a management job. No matter what workers do, if they do not challenge the wage system, they will always remain subservient to the profit-maximizing decisions of their employers. It is the hierarchy itself that must be abolished. To do this will require monumental determination. Not only will

we have to abolish private property and the ideology that makes a religion of it, we also will have to educate ourselves to learn how to manage our collective affairs. We will have to figure out how to produce useful goods and services democratically and make them available free to everyone. We must somehow create a system of production and distribution in which there are no "senior clerks," and a society that brings forth human beings who cannot imagine aspiring to be one.

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—counterpunch.org, October 24-26, 2014

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/10/24/order-givers-and-order-takers/>

Minimum wages around the world:

(in U.S. dollars)

 Denmark \$21/hr	 Australia \$15.81/hr
 Germany \$11/hr	 France \$12.35/hr
 United States \$7.25/hr	

Share if you agree we should catch up with the rest of the world!

"Like" us on Facebook by searching for "Raise the Minimum Wage."

More Money, More Money, More Money!

It happened again: how 14 people made more money than the entire food stamp budget for 50,000,000 people

BY PAUL BUCHHEIT

For the second year in a row, America's richest 14 individuals made more from their annual investments than the \$80 billion provided for people in need of food. Nearly half of the food-deprived are children. Perversely, the food stamp program was CUT because of a lack of federal funding.

In a testament to the inability—or unwillingness—of Congress to do anything about the incessant upward redistribution of America's wealth, the richest 14 Americans increased their wealth from \$507 billion to \$589 billion in ONE YEAR from their investment earnings. As stated by *Forbes*, "All together the 400 wealthiest Americans are worth a staggering \$2.29 trillion, up \$270 billion from a year ago."

The richest 14 made enough money to hire two million pre-school teachers or emergency medical technicians

Billions of dollars of wealth, derived from years of American productivity, have been transferred to a few financially savvy and well-connected individuals who have spent a generation shaping trading rules and tax laws to their own advantage. It's so inexplicably one-sided that the 2013 investment earnings of the richest one percent of Americans (\$1.8 trillion) was more than the entire budget for Social Security (\$860 billion), Medicare (\$524 billion), and Medicaid (\$304 billion).

Why does so little of our national wealth go to feed people or provide jobs?

The fruits of American productivity go to the richest Americans, who can afford to hold onto their fortunes, defer taxes indefinitely, and then pay a smaller capital gains rate when they eventually decide to cash in. Worse yet, they can stash their winnings overseas,

tax-free. It is estimated that \$7.6 trillion of personal wealth is hidden in tax havens. That means, stunningly, that \$1 of every \$12 of worldwide wealth is hidden in a haven.

America has no wealth tax, no financial speculation tax, no means of stopping the rampant redistribution of money to the rich. As Noam Chomsky said, "The concept of the Common Good that is being relentlessly driven into our heads demands that we focus on our own private gain, and suppress normal human emotions of solidarity, mutual support and concern for others."

Who are these people taking all the big money?

A review of the richest 20 shows that opportunism and ruthless business practices and tax avoidance, rather than entrepreneurship, vaulted these individuals to the top:

- Bill Gates used someone else's operating system to start Microsoft.
- According to the *New York Post*, Warren Buffett's company, Berkshire Hathaway, "openly admits that it owes back taxes since as long ago as 2002."
- Koch Industries is jeopardizing our clean air and water, moving its toxic waste to Detroit and Chicago, trying to take away the minimum wage, seeking to take down renewable energy initiatives, and laying off thousands of workers.
- Walmart makes \$13,000 in pre-tax profits per employee (after paying salaries), yet takes a taxpayer subsidy of \$5,815 per worker.
- Jeff Bezos has spent millions of dollars-per-year on lobbyists, lawyers, and political campaigns to maintain Amazon's tax-free sales in

order to undercut competitors and drive them out of business.

- Larry Page and Sergey Brin are the founders of Google, which has gained recognition as one of the world's biggest tax avoiders, a master at the "Double Irish" revenue shift to Bermuda tax havens, and a beneficiary of tax loopholes that bring money back to the U.S. without paying taxes on it.
- Zuckerberg, like Gates, was an opportunist, overcoming superior competition with his Harvard connection, gaining better financial support, and—allegedly—hacking competitors' computers to compromise their user data.

Job creators?

As for the argument that Microsoft, Google, *etc.* created products and jobs: It was the industry that did it, supported by decades of research and innovation, and involving tens-of-thousands of American workers, from scientists to database clerks. Our nation's winner-take-all philosophy makes it look like one person did the work of all these contributors. That's wrong as can be, especially for this year's version of the richest Americans.

Paul Buchheit is a college teacher, a writer for progressive publications, and the founder and developer of social justice and educational websites (UsAgainstGreed.org, PayUpNow.org, RappingHistory.org)

—AlterNet.org, October 5, 2014

http://www.alternet.org/economy/it-happened-again-how-14-people-made-more-money-entire-food-stamp-budget-50000000-people?akid=12330.229473.UBX098&rd=1&src=newsletter1022007&t=7&paging=off¤t_page=1#bookmark

Water is Life

Citizen advocates warn that the “whole world is watching” as Detroit cuts off water to thousands of most impoverished residents

By LAUREN MCCAULEY

Despite widespread public outcry and international condemnation, the city of Detroit on Tuesday, August 26, 2014, resumed shutting off the water supply to thousands of city residents.

Ending the month long moratorium on shutoffs, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) public affairs specialist Gregory Eno confirmed to *Common Dreams* that the city turned off the water to roughly 400 households that are delinquent on their water bills and have not yet set up a payment plan. More shutoffs are expected.

According to the citizens group Detroit Water Brigade, the only thing that changed since shutoffs began in March is that the city has lowered the required down payment water bills from 30 percent to ten percent. “The water is still too expensive for Detroit,” they said. Detroit is one of the poorest cities in the United States with over 38 percent of the population living below the poverty line, according to Census Bureau statistics.

Members of the Detroit Water Brigade are calling on the city to halt the shutoffs altogether and consider alternatives for helping people pay their bills, arguing that restricting access to water for the city’s poorest residents is “doing nothing more than hurting people,” DWB volunteer DeMeeko Williams told a local CBS affiliate.

“Today it is 90 degrees in the city of Detroit,” Williams continued. “Elderly

people need water, children need water to hydrate themselves—to stay cool.”

While the city says that the updated payment plan is working—pointing to the 15,000 households that have signed up for plans since shutoffs began—rights groups argue that the city’s policy of shutting off water is a violation of human rights.

Over the weekend, residents and civil rights attorneys filed papers asking the district court to block DWSD from terminating water service to any occupied residence, and to restore service to occupied residences without water.

“More than 17,000 homes have had their water cut off and water bills in Detroit are among the highest in the country and unaffordable to many Detroit residents,” said Kary Moss, ACLU of Michigan executive director. “The rush to resume shut offs when there are serious questions about the affordability plan, accuracy of bills, and issues with the water department’s ability to process disputes, means that the City of Detroit should get its house in order before turning off anyone else’s water.”

“Taking tap water away from people who cannot afford it is not only a public health emergency but also a blatant human rights violation,” said Maude Barlow, national chairwoman of the public advocacy group Council of Canadians, in a recent press statement. “We cannot stand by while countries abdicate their responsibility to protect our most vulnerable populations.”

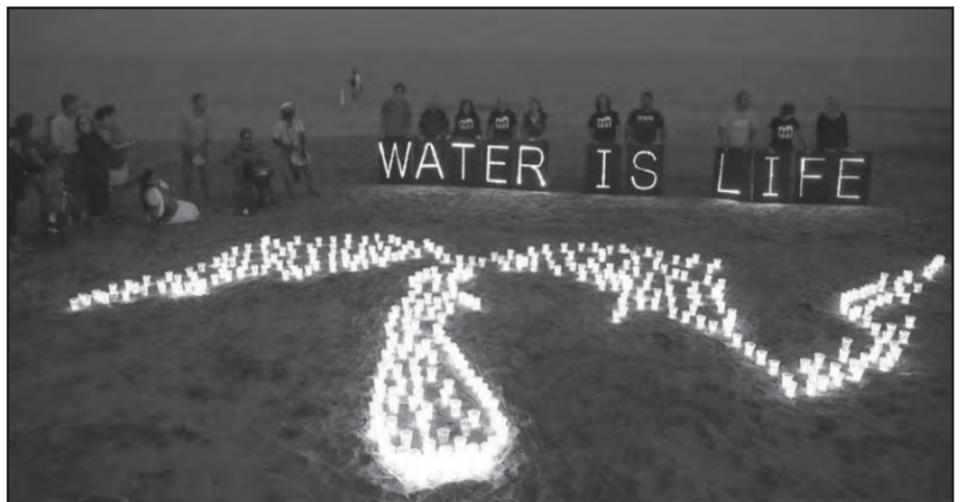
On August 15, a coalition of over fifty social justice groups including the Council of Canadians sent a letter to President Obama and Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell to declare the ongoing water crisis a public health emergency.

As the shutoffs resumed, Justin Wedes, an organizer with the Detroit Water Brigade, wrote:

“Today the Detroit Water Department resumes its cruel water shutoff program. And this time around the whole world is watching.

—*Common Dreams*, August 27, 2014

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2014/08/27/despite-calls-humanity-detroit-resumes-water-shutoffs>



Germany Just Made College Tuition Free!

Why won't our Black political class fight for free tuition here?

BY BRUCE A. DIXON

If you depend on TV and the corporate news outlets in your town you probably missed the news that this summer Germany made college tuition free for everybody, including foreign students. That's right, free. We're not talking about socialist Cuba here, or third world Sri Lanka here, we're talking Germany, the most capitalist of all European countries other than Britain. And we're talking free.

It says a lot that the news was not covered at all in the corporate press or broadcast media on this side of the water. Even more tellingly, the liberal academics and think tanks like the Center For American Progress and Black outfits like the United Negro College Fund, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, National Action Network and others have nothing to say on the subject.

Is free tuition even possible?

Of course it is. It's not just possible, free tuition at the nation's public colleges and universities would actually cost LESS than the federal government now pays to those institutions, according Department of Education stats quoted in two very useful articles by Jordan Weismann in *The Atlantic* in 2013 and 2014. Public colleges and universities, he points out, account for 75 percent of college grads while sub-prime, for-profit colleges, which are basically machines that capture low-income students and walk them through applications for subsidized guaranteed loans that account for a tiny percentage of grads but eat a full quarter of all the federal aid dollars.

The skyrocketing cost of tuition has hit nobody harder than African American families. Our glittering, successful and tirelessly self-promoting Black political class never tires of telling

the Black masses that education is the way out of poverty. But you have not and you will not hear a word from the Jesse Jacksons or the Al Sharptons, or the Urban League or the NAACP, and certainly not from Black college presidents, or the United Negro College Fund on how much our people have to gain by following the example of Germany. It's not even on their horizon.

What the eyes and hearts of Black college presidents, and civil rights leaders are fixed upon is not making higher education affordable for all who want it. They don't seem to care either about lifting the decades-long debt sentence that often goes with attempting a college education, whether you complete it or not. Key members of the Congressional Black Caucus sell their vote on a regular basis to the sub-prime, for-profit college racketeers, and under President Obama the Department of Education has become dependent on the billions each year that it collects in student loan repayment, a great chunk of it from the sub-prime, for-profit colleges which get paid for how many students they enroll, not how many they graduate.

Back in June, I wrote about how the United Negro College Fund, another tentacle of our Black political class, chose, instead of fighting the political decisions to continue cutbacks in direct aid and in loans that go to students attending historically Black colleges with a political campaign to make college tuition free for everyone, to double down on its dependence upon the charity of fickle white philanthropists, namely the infamous Koch Brothers.

Thanks to the United Negro College Fund, the Koch Brothers will literally be able to dictate what faculty are hired and promoted and which courses are

taught at historically Black colleges and universities. Other tentacles of the Koch Brothers vampire squid are pushing for the bans on teaching primary and secondary school students about climate change. What restrictions would folks like these apply to Black colleges and universities? What gags and limitations will the institutions put on themselves to keep the money?

The money is there to forgive all outstanding student loans and do as the Germans do, make public college tuition free for everybody. What's not there, is number one, the political will on the part of white and Black leadership, and number two, a long-term grassroots mobilization—a popular movement demanding the reallocation of the nation's resources in this way. It's do-able financially, it's advantageous socially. And it's not even remotely revolutionary. Germany is a capitalist country.

Why doesn't our Black political class see this as an opportunity?

That's an easy question. Our Black political class of politicians, preachers, business drones, academics and empowered wannabees are jelly makers, not tree shakers, selfish and short-sighted jelly makers at that. Their definition of an opportunity is something somebody in authority has already put on the table. This ain't on no table they know of, it's not even discussed in the building where they have that table, so for them it's not worth thinking about. Besides, a long-term self-aware, 24-7 grassroots movement is, as Glen Ford has observed, a mortal threat to their brand of leadership, which only wants the masses mobilized just enough to vote Democratic in election years and then go home.

Continued on page 15

Foreclosure Scam

BY TED NEWCOMEN

One story that the U.S. “lamestream” media is studiously ignoring is the public auction foreclosure scam that’s currently being practiced on the steps of thousands of courthouses across the nation. It’s a racket so egregious that nobody wants to talk about it because it continues to bail out the banksters with billions of tax-payer funded dollars and yet keeps millions of prospective home buyers from getting a foothold on the housing ladder.

By way of proof I offer an example of what’s happening in my sleepy little backwater of Kent County, Maryland (about an hour-and-a-half’s drive from DC). The property in question, a modern townhouse, had originally been purchased by the homeowner for \$170,100 in June of 2006 with a 30-year mortgage of \$136,080 from the Peoples Mortgage Corporation at an interest rate of 7.5 percent.

Continued from page 14

The opportunity for a successful mass movement is there. But it’s a challenge that can only be taken up by a new generation of Black leadership, not blinkered and bound by obligations to the existing political system, to corporate philanthropy, to our backward-thinking prosperity gospel preachers or our self-seeking Black business class. Free tuition won’t make anybody rich, but it will build collective wealth, community wealth—a concept outside the universe of the current Black political class.

The challenge is there. Who will take it up? Who will begin to organize for free tuition, for the right to an education? We already know who won’t.

—*Black Agenda Report*, October 8, 2014

<http://Blackagendareport.com/node/14448>

Sometime in 2008 the mortgage company went into voluntary liquidation and the business was subsequently taken over by a bank that later sold it to another financial institution.

Sadly, in 2012 the homeowner died, still owing over \$135,000 on the loan. Naturally all the mortgage payments stopped and the home was eventually foreclosed on by the mortgage holder.

Fast forward to 2014 and the mortgage lender is now on the hook for the original loan, plus over two years of missed monthly mortgage payments, Escrow fees, and insurance premiums but the house is now worth \$40,000 less than the original purchase price due to the collapse in the property market.

But thanks to the President and Congress (and remember that’s BOTH parties) the mortgage holder doesn’t lose a single cent as the government has promised to buy up all the financial industry’s toxic assets using your (read “tax-payer”) dollars.

This is achieved by selling the said property at a public foreclosure auction on the steps of Kent County Courthouse where the reserve price is set at \$167,000, over 30 percent more than the current market value of an identical adjacent home recently sold in the same development! Needless to say no local buyers were willing to bid up to this inflated price. However, the property was purchased by none other than the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae—a tax-payer backed Quango¹).

Not only did the original mortgage holder get back all its money from the loan, plus all missed payments, out of pocket expenses and various generous fees, it also made a very respectable profit on the convoluted but perfectly

“legal” slight of hand. All paid for by you—the U.S. taxpayer.

Before the end of the year Fannie Mae will put this property in the hands of a local realtor who will then sell it at the current market price. The subsequent approximate \$40,000 loss to the institution will also be covered by the U.S. taxpayer!

This is nothing less than a government sanctioned corporate welfare scam running at local, State, and national levels. Millions of foreclosed homes are going through an identical process across the country and we, the good old U.S. tax-payers, are making good the losses of the finance industry and its so-called “regulators.”

Back in April 2009, President Obama told a meeting of the nation’s top bankers that he was all that was “standing between you and the pitchforks.” Presumably he was trying to intimidate the one-percent who really run this nation and simultaneously placate the 99-percent who actually pay for everything? It’s nice to see he is still doing such a stellar job and that nothing has actually changed.

Our sham of a democracy has been hijacked by a political mafia and its corporate paymasters. Changing President or the control of Congress will not stop this and other corporate rackets. Voters need to start asking some serious questions of potential candidates for the 2016 elections unless they wish to keep subsidizing the financial losses of the establishment. Alternatively, they can just dust off their pitchforks.

¹ “...an organization to which a government has devolved power.”

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quango>

Criminal Neglect: The Death of Thomas Eric Duncan

BY LABOR FIGHTBACK NETWORK



Thomas Eric Duncan

On Friday, September 25, 2014, Thomas Eric Duncan went to the Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas. He had a high fever and stomach pains. He told the nurse he had recently been in Liberia, part of the Ebola zone. But he was a Black man with no health insurance, so he was released after being given antibiotics and Tylenol.

Two days later Duncan returned to the hospital in an ambulance. Two days after that, he was finally diagnosed with Ebola. Eight days later, he died alone in his hospital room.

The still unanswered question is why the hospital would send home a patient with a 103-degree fever and stomach pains, especially since the patient had informed the hospital that he had recently been in Liberia. And why was he sent back into the community when it was obvious that he was extremely ill and might well have a communicable disease?

Duncan was the first victim of Ebola in the U.S. to have died. Others who contracted the disease received the very best treatment and as of October 23, 2014, all are recovering from Ebola.

The Dallas hospital acknowledged that mistakes were made. But not yet explained is how this all happened in a situation which left no margin for error. A number of excuses have been offered: there were no protocols, there were protocols but they were not observed, there was a problem with the software, there was a breakdown in the hospital's communication system and the higher-ups were not informed, *etc.*

But someone decided that Duncan's condition did not warrant hospitalization during his first visit there, much less being isolated and quarantined. Who made that decision and on what basis? Was it medical people or administrative personnel who were motivated by Duncan's not having insurance?

According to members of Duncan's family, "the most humiliating part of this ordeal was the treatment we received from the hospital. For the ten days he was in the hospital, the staff not only refused to help us communicate with Thomas Eric, but also acted as an impediment. The day Thomas Eric died, we learned about it from the news media, not his doctors." (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 17, 2014)

Duncan was in the U.S. for the first time to visit his son. By being cut off from all communication with his family members, he had no way of knowing whether they even knew of his plight. And, as stated above, he was left to die alone.

[Note: National Nurses United is circulating a petition demanding that President Obama and Congress impose a uniform, optimal standard of care for all Ebola patients, their caregivers and the community.]¹

Lessons to be learned from this experience

Assume for the moment that Duncan was white and that he came

into the emergency room initially with an insurance card in his hand. Can anyone doubt that he would have been admitted and very likely would have received the same good treatment accorded the nurses who contracted Ebola? His nephew wrote that, "...our loved one could have been saved. From his botched release from the emergency room to his delayed testing and delayed treatment and the denial of experimental drugs that have been available to every other case of Ebola treated in the United States, the hospital invited death every step of the way." (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 17, 2014)

The inescapable conclusion that must be drawn is that it was the convergence of pernicious racism and the broken healthcare system in this country, which puts profits ahead of patients, that cost Duncan his life.

But there is another factor that helps explain what happened here and why many others should be held accountable for what transpired. That has to do with the federal government's role in cutting funding for education and research to deal with epidemics and critical diseases.

In an October 17, 2014 opinion piece by Dana Milbank, columnist for the *Washington Post*, titled, "The Nasty Politicalization of Ebola" (reproduced in the October 20, 2014 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* under the title "Absent NIH Funding Cuts, Ebola Vaccine Might Exist,") the author documents the cuts to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding between fiscal 2010 and fiscal 2014 of ten percent in real dollars—and vaccine research took a proportionate hit. Research on an Ebola vaccine funded at \$37 million in 2010 was halved to \$18 million in 2014. He notes, "With Ebola vaccines now entering clinical trials, it is not much of a

stretch to conclude that vaccines would now be on the market—potentially saving thousands of lives in Africa and avoiding panic in the United States.”

Budget cuts for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have only compounded the problem.

Conclusion

While the U.S. allocates some \$800 billion to a trillion dollars a year for the military—taking into consideration all related and derivative expenditures—it continues to reduce funds for vitally needed social programs like healthcare, education, unemployment compensation, food stamps and the environment. Cutting Medicare, Social Security and Medicaid remain top priorities for right-wing forces in this country.

While the major political parties blame each other for inadequate funding for Ebola and other contagious diseases, it is only through bipartisan budget deals passed by Congress and approved by the president that the cuts in funding were engineered. Thomas Eric Duncan is one of countless victims of the distorted priorities the government is imposing.

It's time for long overdue fundamental changes to be implemented in the nation's healthcare system that will put an end to discriminatory treatment based on ethnicity or insurance coverage. It's high time to recognize healthcare as a right, not a commodity, and guarantee all residents quality and comprehensive coverage, with the parasitic insurance companies eliminated from the system. This is what a single-payer system would bring about.

Finally, with the evident refusal of the two corporate parties to make needed changes, unions, joined by our progressive community partners, should run independent candidacies for political office in support of a program that would reflect the interests of

the great majority. Let's end the subservience to the political agenda of the one percent and build such a movement now!

The inescapable conclusion that must be drawn is that it was the convergence of pernicious racism and the broken healthcare system in this country, which puts profits ahead of patients, that cost Duncan his life.

Issued by the Labor Fightback Network. For more information, please

call 973-944-8975 or email conference@laborfightback.org or write Labor Fightback Network, P.O. Box 187, Flanders, NJ 07836 or visit our website at laborfightback.org. Donations to help fund the Labor Fightback Network based on its program of solidarity and labor-community unity are necessary for our work to continue and will be much appreciated. Please make checks payable to Labor Fightback Network and mail to the above P.O. Box or you can make a contribution online. Thanks!

—Labor Fightback Network, October 23, 2014

<http://laborfightback.wordpress.com/2014/10/23/criminal-neglect-the-death-of-thomas-eric-duncan/>

¹ http://www.nationalnursesunited.org/page/s/national-nurses-united-urges-you-to-take-action-now?utm_source=nnu&utm_medium=rot&utm_campaign=petition



ILWU International's Statements on ZIM Protests are Untrue

BY THE TRANSPORT WORKERS SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

Recent International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) press releases and public statements are misleading and conflict with well-established ILWU policies and positions on Palestine and Israel. The editor of the ILWU newspaper, *The Dispatcher*, at the direction of the ILWU President, cannot overturn those policies and positions without a vote by Convention delegates.

The Israeli Consulate's statement that the ZIM Pireaus sailed from the port of Oakland on August 20 after completing cargo operations is untrue. But for the ILWU Communications Director, Craig Merrilees, to make that same statement, reaffirming the Zionist's self-serving distortion places the ILWU on the side of those responsible for the recent slaughter of over 2,100 Palestinians, most of them innocent Gazan civilians. The false statement implies that the five days of picketing by thousands of protesters had no impact on cargo operations. The original call for a mass protest on August 16 and 17 mobilizing a few thousand, was made by a coalition, Block the Boat, initiated by the Arab Research and Organizing Committee. However, subsequent picketing on August 18, 19 and 20, that stopped the ship's cargo operations was done spontaneously by a smaller group of Bay Area activists, including the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee.

The truth is that after failing to get its cargo worked at the SSA (Stevedoring Services of America) terminal, ZIM Lines tried to fool protesters that the ship was sailing to Russia, but longshoremen knew otherwise. The ship departed August 19, headed out the Golden Gate at night then abruptly reversed course, made a Williamson turn and headed back to the Port of Oakland, this time to Berth 22. Ports

America, the employer, tried to shift longshore workers from another ship to work the ZIM Pireaus but there already was a picket line at the terminal gate. Some ILWU Local 10 members refused to work the ship. Those that reluctantly worked it, despite pressure from the employer and union officials, rebelled by slowing down cargo ops to a crawl. One crane operator boasted that barely one percent of containers was actually moved before the ZIM ship was forced to sail.

On September 27, another ZIM ship, the Shanghai, was picketed on the day and night shifts at SSA by 200 protesters mobilized by the Stop ZIM Action Committee and the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee. Three of the organizers were Local 10 retirees, veterans of ILWU's 1984 anti-apartheid action in San Francisco. Again, Merrilees put out untrue statements, claiming longshore workers were threatened by picketers and were standing by on safety. Actually, an appeal was made in the union hiring hall that morning asking longshoremen not to work the ZIM ship and informing them of a picket line. In a show of solidarity all longshoremen refused Zim jobs except for one. In the evening SSA agreed to remove police from the picketing area if the union would dispatch the jobs. With no police presence it was the picketers and longshore supporters *vs.* ZIM and SSA. We won hands down!

On September 27, the ILWU International issued a press release falsely stating, "...the leadership and membership of the ILWU have taken no position on the Israel/Gaza conflict." The truth is that ILWU passed a Convention resolution in 1988 characterizing Israeli oppression of Palestinians as "state-sponsored terrorism." ILWU's 1991 resolution con-

demns Zionist "suppression of basic freedoms of speech and assembly" of Palestinians and calls for the "right of self-determination."

Israel has blockaded the port of Gaza since 1967, stopping all ships and putting port workers and longshoremen out of work for nearly 50 years. In 2002, Local 10 officers signed a statement "For International Labor Solidarity to Stop Zionist Repression and Build a Just Peace" to protest the Zionist bombing of the headquarters of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions in the West Bank city of Nablus.

The *Journal of Commerce* (August 20), the maritime bosses' newspaper, quoted Communications Director Merrilees: "ILWU members felt threatened by the large number of demonstrators" and made a similar statement regarding the September dock protest. But the truth is the threat to longshoremen comes from the police not protesters. As Local 10 president Melvin Mackay told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, longshoremen would not work the ship "under armed police escort—not with our experience with the police..."

In a 2003 court case against the Oakland Police Department for shooting so-called "non-lethal" weapons at longshore workers and anti-war protesters, ILWU attorney Rob Remar meticulously documented coordinated police violence against longshore workers since the 1934 Maritime Strike in which two strikers were killed by cops, provoking the San Francisco General Strike. Nowadays ILWU International officers try to deny our militant history and undermine any semblance of class struggle on the docks, especially in the midst of the current contract negotiations. With no

contract in place longshoremen can take job actions during negotiations to bolster the union at the bargaining table but the “top down” bureaucracy has reigned in the ranks, preventing the union from flexing its muscle.

Nevertheless, Local 10 has tried to continue ILWU’s proud history of solidarity actions by introducing a resolution at the 2009 Convention “commending the South African dockworkers union for taking a strike action against an Israeli ship in Durban to protest the massacre of 1400 Palestinians by the Israeli army in Gaza.” A year after the Convention resolution passed unanimously, the Local 10 Executive Board voted to “call on the ILWU International officers to lend their voice in protest with other unions against this atrocity by issuing a policy statement in line with the ILWU’s past position on the question of Israeli repression of Palestinians and call for unions to protest by any action they choose to take.” That motion paved the way for Local 10 longshoremen in 2010 in collaboration with anti-Zionist demonstrators to conduct the first-ever job action by an American trade union protesting repressive Israeli government policies. Meanwhile, ILWU International officers have only reaffirmed Israel’s press statements and run a biased pro-Israel article in *The Dispatcher* (January 2007) by International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams with no mention of the plight of Palestinians. It’s time for ILWU International officers to get on board: Oppose apartheid in Israel just as we did in South Africa. The rank and file have shown the way.



Immigration Reform: Fact or Fiction?

By MIGUEL ANGEL

All this talk about urgent immigration reform between Democrats and Republicans is a cruel hoax. It is nothing but a continuation of the long-running U.S. policy directed at:

- Keeping Mexicans and Latin American undocumented workers disorganized and marginalized.
- Penetrating and manipulating the Mexican economy so as to make Mexico into a neo-colony of U.S. business for the exploitation of Mexican workers and natural resources.
- Neutralizing successive Mexican administrations through bribes, economic and banking intimidation and with the ever-present threat of military intervention.

American immigration policy is inherently racist. It places the greatest onus of undesirables on people of color, and therefore makes them the object of police apprehension and exclusion from the country. On the scale of unwanted ethnicity, Mexicans are number one, followed by Asian and Middle Easterners. Russians, Irish and other Europeans hardly get a wink from the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). Yet there are significant numbers of white undocumented immigrants coming into the U.S. but they are not subjected to profiling, neighborhood sweeps, detention centers, criminalization, or even discussions of them as a problem.

Immigration reform does not address the real reasons why undocumented workers from Mexico and Latin America are forced to leave their homelands. Conditions of poverty, environmental degradation by foreign corporations and oppressive local oligarchs supported historically by U.S. governments are the critical issues that propel emigration.

Politicians and their corporate sponsors continue to criminalize undocumented immigrants in the face of the overwhelming evidence of the benefits that the country receives in the form of cheap labor, which U.S. citizens refuse to do at that price.

The scope of discussion on immigration is so narrow that it is profoundly exclusionary. It focuses on who can come into the country and who can stay, and under what conditions. All the “push” factors are left out. This leads to the marginalization of the undocumented community who are forced to live in the shadows, stereotyped as robbers of jobs, burdens to society, with criminal tendencies and inferior values.

The last two administrations have built over 28 major detention centers to hold thousands of undocumented workers with their families for extended periods of time, much like the concentration camps which held Japanese Americans during World War II. Obama is deporting [at least 250,000¹] Mexicans and other Latinos per year and has encouraged the profiling of Mexicans as undesirable aliens. Most cynically, Obama continues to ignore the thousands of families who have been separated by undocumented immigration. His proposal to allow students to remain in the U.S. while deporting their parents is an attack on the very foundation of family unity and stability. In short, he is playing the youth against their parents. He says that his hands are tied because the Congress has not passed comprehensive immigration reform, thereby hindering his ability to use executive powers. However, massive deportations continue by executive order.

Undocumented immigrants cannot come into the U.S., but hundreds of U.S. companies have unrestricted

access to the Mexican economy with free rein to make super profits and to repatriate them back to the United States, thereby creating a severe capital drain for Mexico. The same scenario repeats itself throughout the continent. U.S. corporations now own over 500 of Mexico's largest companies with the ability to direct and control the economy in their interests.

The U.S. has pursued a vigorous outsourcing of manufacturing plants. Over 2,500 plants have moved to Mexico and Central America taking three million jobs with them. These *maquilas* (run-away shops) employ mostly women workers at slave wages with no labor rights and few political rights. They are making the highest rate of profit in modern history.

Super exploitation is pervasive throughout the Americas. In Haiti, where over 250 well-known U.S. clothing manufacturers have set up shops, the average wage of women employees is 14-cents-an-hour. Both Presidents Clinton and G.W. Bush conducted military *coups* (and a presidential kidnapping) of President Jean Bertrand Aristide who was attempting to curb the economic exploitation of his people, the poorest in the hemisphere.

Another seething unmentionable issue is the trade debt. This is the product of the unequal value of imports to exports. Underdeveloped countries sell cheap raw materials to the developed countries and buy costly manufactured goods from them. The difference in value is owed to the developed nation. Currently, Mexico must use 55 percent of its national income just to pay the interest on the debt. In addition, they must make payments to the International Monetary Fund, which provides loans to poor countries who have difficulty making payment on the debt. Most Latin American nations have monumental trade-debts, which keep them trapped in perpetual poverty in monetary terms and in underdevel-

opment, forcing people to emigrate. The trade debt is un-payable because the rules of the IMF insure perpetual control of the wealth of 3rd World countries. It has become an established practice to perpetuate the debt so as to exact more pillage of resources.

Undocumented immigrants cannot come into the U.S., but hundreds of U.S. companies have unrestricted access to the Mexican economy with free rein to make super profits and to repatriate them back to the United States, thereby creating a severe capital drain for Mexico.

In another egregious contradiction of who can be allowed into the U.S., the government has accepted thousands of murderers, torturers, terrorists and right wing dictators, who have carried out U.S. economic policy in countries like El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile under Pinochet, Nicaragua under Somoza and many others. Jose Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch, two Cuban terrorists working for the CIA, carried out the bombing of a Cuban airliner in 1976 killing 73 medical students and members of the Cuban fencing team returning from competition in Venezuela. They are now living comfortably in Florida as respected, legal residents, avoiding extradition back to Venezuela with the help of the U.S. government.

Another seldom talked about subject is the double standard of Cuban immigration verses Mexican and Latin American immigration. Since 1960, over a million Cubans have been

allowed into the U.S. with no restrictions and with automatic legal residence and even social services. Meanwhile, the United States has waged 50-plus years of economic warfare against the island of just 11 million people, depriving the Cuban nation of vital economic resources. The blockade, illegal according to international law, and condemned by the entire United Nations (except U.S. and Israel) is geared to destabilize Cuba and make the Cuban people suffer to the extent that they will overthrow their government. Economic deprivation, relentless psychological warfare and the threat of direct military intervention are ever present in the Cuban reality. They have resisted for over 50 years and have become a model of solidarity for many poor countries around the world. The ultimate contradiction is that every U.S. administration since the Cuban Revolution agrees that Cuba poses no economic or military threat to the U.S. or any other country.

None of this would happen if 3rd World political elites were not compliant partners of U.S. banking and corporate interests. In exchange for bribes and economic privileges, U.S. companies demand control of labor unions, keeping the cost of raw materials low, expanding the rules permitting exploitation, and reducing or eliminating the enforcement of environmental laws. NAFTA has been an economic disaster for Mexico but has been a boom for the U.S. and Canada.

The enormous contributions that immigrants make to the consumer and tax base have never been acknowledged by the American government. Immigrant workers pay taxes but cannot collect unemployment or receive social security or social services. All the monetary contributions that they make stay in the system to be exploited by all levels of government. They are often cheated by employers but cannot complain for fear of being deported.

The immigration “debate” will not include the most crucial contradictions. It will say nothing about alleviating poverty and deprivation. If Mexico and Latin America had viable economies, immigrants would stay home. U.S. immigration policy is not based on logical, humanitarian or sound economic development principles. Rather, U.S. economic elites have created a system of planned instability and crises in order to justify intervention and to extract economic demands. This is why poverty and disenfranchisement cannot be resolved. If Washington persists in maintaining a system with the underdeveloped world that is based on inequality and with an arrogance of superiority, economic and political relations will continue to deteriorate and further alienate the nations of the Americas.

Immigration reform must include:

- Full legalization and equal rights for all undocumented immigrant workers.
- The injection of massive economic aid to Mexican and Latin / American economies.
- Scrap NAFTA and CAFTA, two Free Trade arrangements that rob Mexicans and Central Americans of a living wage and humane living conditions.
- Stop supporting dictatorships and military *coups*.
- Normalize relations with Cuba.
- Adhere to human rights principles as stated in the Declaration of Human Rights.
- Stop all military aid to repressive governments.
- Initiate a climate of equal relations among Latin American States.

- Abolish the trade debt and the IMF conditions that enforce the rules of trade.

There are moral historical considerations for Chicanos/Hispanos. The values of our indigenous ancestors go back 17,000 years. In their view, the land belonged to everyone. The natural environment was zealously guarded from degradation and wanton exploitation. When the Europeans came with their concept of private ownership of nature, all ideas of peace, stability and mutual respect were eradicated. They engaged in a horrendous genocide of Native Americans, fostered practices that led to environmental degradation, and waged savage wars to takeover Indian lands. In the Southwest, both Chicanos and Indians were subjected to the notion of Manifest Destiny, that Anglo Saxon Americans were given God-sanctioned permission to own the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans. Wars and borders were the result.

Chicanos/Hispanos must reclaim their indigenous rights. It is a vital part of our human inheritance. It calls for establishing a serious connection with the Native American community in order to rediscover the culture that once was in our blood. It is our mandate for survival and change.

If the U.S. is not willing to drastically change the *status quo*, then the words of poet Henry David Thoreau at the time of the U.S. invasion of Mexico and the Southwest in 1846, “Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States,” will ring truer than ever.

Miguel Angel is Director of Casa de Cultura in Las Vegas, New Mexico

¹ The best estimate is that the Obama administration made its two millionth deportation in late March 2014.

www.vox.com/2014/4/9/5575006/2-million-immigrants-have-been-deported-under-obama



U.S. Love for Egyptian Tyranny

After feigning love for Egyptian Democracy, U.S. back to openly supporting tyranny

BY GLENN GREENWALD

It is, of course, very difficult to choose the single most extreme episode of misleading American media propaganda, but if forced to do so, coverage of the February 2011 Tahrir Square demonstrations in Egypt would be an excellent candidate. For weeks, U.S. media outlets openly positioned themselves on the side of the demonstrators, depicting the upheaval as a Manichean battle between the evil despot Hosni Mubarak's "three decades of iron rule" and the hordes of ordinary, oppressed Egyptians inspirationally yearning for American-style freedom and democracy.

Almost completely missing from this feel-good morality play was the terribly unpleasant fact that Mubarak was one of the U.S. Government's longest and closest allies and that his "three decades of iron rule"—featuring murder, torture and indefinite detention for dissidents—were enabled in multiple ways by American support.

Throughout Mubarak's rule, the U.S. fed his regime an average of \$2 billion each year, most of which was military aid. The tear gas canisters shot at protesters by Mubarak's police bore "Made in U.S.A." labels. A 2009 diplomatic cable published by *WikiLeaks* noted that "Egyptian democracy and human rights efforts...are being stymied" but described the benefits received by U.S. from support for the regime: "Egypt remains at peace with Israel, and the U.S. military enjoys priority access to the Suez Canal and Egyptian airspace." Another 2009 cable put it more bluntly: "the Egyptians appear more willing to confront the Iranian surrogates and to work closely with Israel."

That same year, Hillary Clinton pronounced: "I really consider

President and Mrs. Mubarak to be friends of my family." Another *WikiLeaks* cable, anticipating the first meeting between Obama and Mubarak in 2009, emphasized that "the Administration wants to restore the sense of warmth that has traditionally characterized the U.S.-Egyptian partnership" and that "the Egyptians want the visit to demonstrate that Egypt remains America's 'indispensable [sic] Arab ally.'" The cable dryly noted that "[intelligence] Chief Omar Soliman and Interior Minister al-Adly keep the domestic beasts at bay, and Mubarak is not one to lose sleep over their tactics." The Obama administration supported Mubarak right up to the point where his demise was inevitable, and even then, plotted to replace him with Soliman: an equally loyal and even more brutal autocrat, most appreciated in Washington circles for helpfully torturing people on behalf of the Americans.

During the gushing coverage of the Tahrir protests, Americans were told almost none of this (just as most Arab Spring coverage generally omitted long-standing U.S. support for most of the targeted tyrants in the region). Instead, they were led to believe that the U.S. political class was squarely on the side of democracy and freedom in Egypt, heralding Obama's statement that Egyptians have made clear that "nothing less than genuine democracy will carry the day."

That pro-democracy script is long forgotten, as though it never existed. The U.S. political and media class are right back to openly supporting military autocracy in Egypt as enthusiastically as they supported the Mubarak regime.

General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who last year led the military *coup* against the democratically elected Egyptian government of the Muslim Brotherhood, is now a Washington favorite, despite (or because of) his merciless killing and imprisonment of dissidents, including *Al Jazeera* journalists. In June, Human Rights Watch noted the post-*coup* era has included the "worst incident of mass unlawful killings in Egypt's recent history" and that "judicial authorities have handed down unprecedented large-scale death sentences and security forces have carried out mass arrests and torture that harken back to the darkest days of former President Hosni Mubarak's rule." The group documented just last week:

"Egyptian authorities have, by their own count, detained 22,000 people since the July 2013 military-backed ouster of the democratically elected president, Mohamed Morsy. The broad arrest sweep has caught up many people who were peacefully expressing political opposition to Morsy's overthrow and to the al-Sisi government. The actual number of arrests is probably higher. . . . There are credible accounts that a large number of detainees are being held incommunicado in military facilities, and that dozens have died in custody under circumstances of mistreatment or negligence that warrant investigation."

None of that has deterred U.S. support for the *coup* leaders. Months after the *coup*, Secretary of State John Kerry visited Cairo and praised the military regime, actions *The New York Times* said "reflected the Obama administration's determination to work with a military leadership that ruthlessly put

down protesters from the Muslim Brotherhood.” In July of this year, the U.S. released \$550 million to the regime. In August, Kerry seemed to praise the coup itself; as *The New York Times* put it: he “offered an unexpected lift to Egypt’s military leaders . . . saying they had been ‘restoring democracy’ when they deposed the country’s first freely elected president, Mohamed Morsi.” In mid-October, the Pentagon announced “that the U.S. plans to deliver 10 AH-64 Apache helicopters to Egypt.”

That was the background for Sisi’s meeting with Bill and Hillary Clinton in New York September 22, 2014. He also met with U.S. business leaders and the Chamber of Commerce, as well as former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and Madeleine Albright. Sisi then met with Obama himself, where the U.S. President “touted the longstanding relationship between the United States and Egypt as a cornerstone of American security policy in the Middle East.”

Perhaps nothing demonstrates the U.S. commitment to autocracy in Egypt as vividly as the new, coordinated attack in U.S. media and political circles on former U.S. darling Qatar. As *The Intercept* reported last week, much of that anti-Qatar campaign is driven by Israeli (along with Saudi, UAE and American neocon) anger over Doha’s alleged support for Hamas. But at least as significant is Qatar’s support for the Muslim Brotherhood, the party that won the post-Mubarak election; that has put Doha squarely at odds with the Saudis, the Emirates, and the U.S., all of whom strongly support the military *coup*. A widely cited anti-Qatar article this week in *Foreign Policy*—entitled “The Case Against Qatar”—made this division clear:

“For years, U.S. officials have been willing to shrug off Doha’s

proxy network—or even take advantage of it from time to time. Qatar’s neighbors, however, have not. Over the past year, fellow Gulf countries Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain have publicly rebuked Qatar for its support of political Islamists across the region. These countries have threatened to close land borders or suspend Qatar’s membership in the regional Gulf Cooperation Council unless the country backs down. After nearly a year of pressure, the first sign of a Qatari conces-

Throughout Mubarak’s rule, the U.S. fed his regime an average of \$2 billion each year, most of which was military aid. The tear gas canisters shot at protesters by Mubarak’s police bore “Made in U.S.A.” labels.

sion came on September 13, when seven senior Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood figures left Doha at the request of the Qatari government. . . . “Qatar’s Arab Spring strategy began to fail in the same place it was conceived, amid the masses of protesters in Cairo’s Tahrir Square. On July 3, 2013, demonstrators cheered on the Egyptian military’s ouster of Islamist leader Mohamed Morsi, whose government Qatar had backed to the tune of \$5 billion. Within days, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait welcomed the new military-backed government with combined pledges of \$13 billion in aid.”

In what universe is it morally preferable to support the Egyptian military *coup* regime (U.S./Saudi/UAE) rather

than the democratically elected faction (Qatar)? That Qatar is now depicted in D.C. foreign policy circles as the “bad actors in Cairo,” while the UAE and the Saudis are the “good and responsible parties for stability,” underscores how deeply committed Washington is to Egyptian despotism.

That is not a new development. The Obama administration has long viewed Egypt and the Saudis as the “moderates” in the region. The 2009 cable preparing for Mubarak’s visit put it this way: “The ongoing intra-Arab dispute, which pits Egypt and Saudi Arabia against Syria and Qatar and is primarily driven by Iran’s regional influence, is the current test for Mubarak. For the moment the Egyptian-Saudi moderate camp is holding.”

The U.S. has long been devoted to tyranny in the region precisely to ensure that the widespread views of the public—which overwhelmingly view the U.S. and Israel as the greatest threats to peace—remain suppressed by U.S.-loyal tyrants. That’s what made the U.S. media coverage of the Arab Spring generally and Tahrir specifically such an astounding feat of propaganda: it successfully let Americans feel good about cheering for democracy in the region while ignoring their government’s central role in suppressing it for decades. The way the U.S. political class so seamlessly and shamelessly shifted from pretending to support democracy in Egypt to reverting back to its decades-long, pro-tyranny posture is equally impressive.

—*The Intercept*, October 2, 2014

<https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2014/10/02/feigned-american-support-egyptian-democracy-lasting-roughly-six-weeks/>

Thousands in Mexico Demand Action over Missing Students

Public outrage over disappearance of 43 students swells

BY ALFONSO SERRANO

Public outrage over the disappearance of 43 students in Iguala, Mexico nearly two weeks ago, September 25, 2014, swelled on Wednesday as thousands of protestors jammed cities across the country to demand that the government of President Enrique Peña Nieto solve the case of the missing youths—who are widely believed to have been massacred by drug gangs with ties to local police—and force those responsible to face justice.

An estimated 15,000 protestors marched through Mexico City's streets carrying photos of the missing students and chanting slogans including "They were taken alive, we want them back alive," and "I think, therefore I'm disappeared." In Guerrero state, site of the disappearances, an estimated 50,000 demonstrators took to the streets, according to Mexican media outlets. In the state's capital, Chilpancingo, an estimated 7,000 protestors blocked a highway that leads to the beach resort of Acapulco.

"Mexico has become worse than a death camp," said Mariela López, a 56-year-old teacher who participated in the Mexico City march.

Protesters demanded that Guerrero state's Governor Ángel Aguirre Rivero resign and that Peña Nieto's government find the missing students and punish local politicians linked to organized crime in Guerrero.

"I think these types of atrocities happen because the people in power think that they will always be on top, and nobody will be able to touch them," said Marco, a 23-year-old university student who declined to provide his last name.

The 43 students, from a teachers college in the town of Ayotzinapa that caters to the poor and indigenous, went

missing after they clashed with police in Iguala on September 26. They had descended on the town to solicit donations and protest proposed government education reforms.

Guerrero Attorney General Iñaki Blanco said over the weekend that 28 bodies had been found at a mass grave outside Iguala, and that some of the missing 43 students were probably among the remains. Protesters on Wednesday demanded that an Argentinian forensic team be given complete independence to determine the identities of the bodies.¹

Blanco said local police officials had handed over 17 students to the drug gang Guerreros Unidos, a remnant of the Beltran Leyva Organization, a criminal group that was once powerful in the region and was recently decimated by the high-profile arrests of its leaders.

Nearly two-dozen local police have been arrested in connection with the disappearances. The town's mayor, José Luis Abarca, is a fugitive. He is being investigated for links to the crimes, as is the head of security for Iguala.

The students' disappearance is seen as part of the sustained violence in Mexico—an increasing problem for Peña Nieto, who has sought to shift attention from Mexico's gang violence to the economic reforms he has pushed through Congress. Peña Nieto took office two years ago, pledging to end a wave of violence that has killed about 100,000 people since the start of 2007. Homicides have fallen on his watch but other crimes, including extortion and kidnapping, have increased.

International pressure

An increasing number of international organizations have in recent days joined local nongovernment orga-

nizations in criticizing the Mexican government for inaction. They have berated the Peña Nieto administration for dragging its feet in the case, and they have called for the families of the missing students to receive security from federal authorities.

Human Rights Watch and the Washington Office on Latin America joined Amnesty International and Mexican NGOs in calling for a quick response from the federal government.

"We need to see an effective commitment in the search for these people," Perseo Quiróz, director of Amnesty International in Mexico, said during a Mexico City press conference. "What we have seen is a farce of a search, a pantomime in which there is no intelligence, in which there are no clear lines of investigation."

The backlash over the disappearances has hit Peña Nieto amid the lowest approval ratings of his presidency. On Monday he vowed to identify those behind the massacre, during a brief televised press conference strongly criticized for lacking specifics.

"More than his laments, we want action and results," Quiróz said in reference to Peña Nieto's speech. "What happened in Iguala does not occur in a vacuum. It happens within a Mexican state that for more than a decade has been negligent with respect to the disappeared and the use of government force."

—*Aljazeera America*, October 9, 2014

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/10/9/thousands-march-inmexicotodemandactionovermassacre.html>

¹ Editors note: October 31, 2014—This is a bit out of date. The mass grave referred to did not contain the bodies of any of the students. They are still searching. —Bonnie Weinstein

World Embraces Cuba Model—Slaps the Empire

BY GLEN FORD

Revolutionary Cuba has always been a miracle and gift to all humankind. This week, the nations of the world—with two savage exceptions—instructed their emissaries at the UN General Assembly to tell the world's self-designated "indispensable" country to end its 54-year-long trade embargo against Cuba. The virtually unanimous global rebuke to the American superpower, in combination with the extraordinary breadth and depth of acclamation accorded Havana, tells us that it is Cuba, not the U.S. that is the truly "exceptional" nation on the planet.

It was the 23rd time that the United Nations has rejected the embargo. The outcome was identical to last year's tally, with only the United States and Israel voting against the non-binding resolution. Although the list of American allies on the Cuban embargo issue could not possibly get any smaller—Israel, after all, can only exist if joined at the U.S. hip—this year's political environment was even less deferential to the reigning military colossus. In recognition of its singular commitment to the fight against Ebola in Africa, Cuba soared, once again—the hero nation.

Despite having suffered cumulative economic damages of more than \$1 trillion at U.S. hands over the last half-century, the island nation of 11 million people has made itself a medical superpower that shares its life-saving resources with the world. No country or combination of nations and NGOs comes close to the speed, size and quality of Cuba's response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa. With 461 doctors, nurses and other health professionals either already on site or soon to be sent to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, Cuba sets the standard for international first-response. The Cuban contingent of medical professionals pro-

viding direct treatment to sick people outnumbers that of the African Union and all individual countries and private organizations, including the Red Cross. (Few of the 4,000 U.S. military personnel to be deployed in the region will ever lay a well-protected hand on an Ebola patient. Instead, the troops build field hospitals for others to staff.)

Doctors Without Borders is second to Cuba in terms of health professionals. But the French NGO is a swiftly revolving door, churning doctors and nurses in and out every six weeks because of the extreme work and safety conditions. Cuba's health brigades are made of different stuff. Every volunteer is expected to remain on duty in the Ebola zone for six months. Moreover, if any of the Cubans contract Ebola or any other disease, they will be treated at the hospitals where they work, alongside their African patients, rather than sent home. (One Cuban died of cerebral malaria, in Guinea, last Sunday.)

It goes without saying that the Cubans are committed for the duration of the Ebola crisis; they have been at Africa's service since the first years of the revolution. President Raul Castro reports that 76,000 Cuban medical specialists have served in 39 African countries over the years. Four thousand were stationed in 32 African countries when the current Ebola epidemic broke out. (Worldwide, Cuba's "white-robed army" of care-givers numbers more than 50,000, in 66 countries—amid constant U.S. pressures on host countries to expel them.)

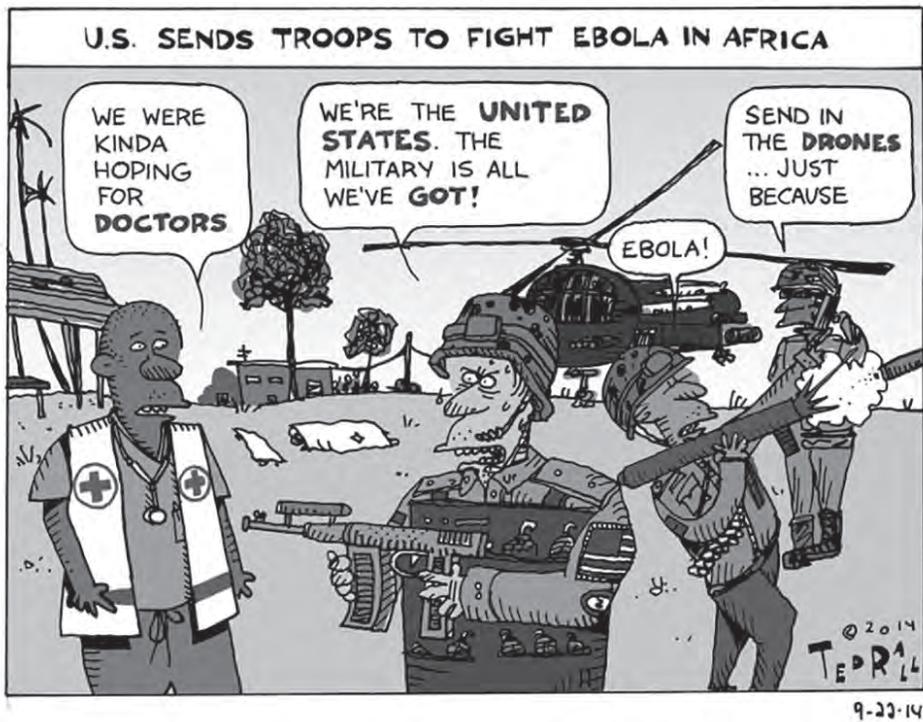
In sheer numbers, the Cuban medical posture in Africa is surpassed in scope only by the armed presence of AFRICOM, the U.S. military command, which has relationships with every country on the continent except Eritrea, Zimbabwe and Sudan. The governments

of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone collaborate militarily with AFRICOM, but the heavily-armed Americans were of no use when Ebola hit. (According to a Liberian newspaper account, the Americans caused the epidemic, a widely held belief in the region.)

Indeed, the Euro-American legacy in Africa, from colonialism (Liberia has been a *de facto* colony of the U.S. since the days of President Monroe) to western-imposed financial "structural adjustments" that starved public health systems, is the root reason Liberia and Guinea have only one doctor for every 100,000 people, and Sierra Leone has just two.

Cuba knows colonialism well, having seen its independence struggle from Spain aborted by the United States in 1898, followed by six decades as a U.S. semi-colony. For Cuba, service to oppressed and exploited peoples is a revolutionary act of the highest moral caliber. That's why, when the call went out, 15,000 Cubans competed for the honor to battle Ebola in Africa. As reported in *The Guardian*, doctors like Leonardo Fernandez were eager to fulfill their moral and professional mission. "We know that we are fighting against something that we don't totally understand," he said. "We know what can happen. We know we're going to a hostile environment. But it is our duty. That's how we've been educated."

In the same way and for the same reasons, 425,000 Cubans volunteered for military service in Angola, from 1975 to 1991, leaving only after Angola was secure, Namibia had held its first free elections and South Africa was firmly on the road to majority rule. These Cubans were preceded by the doctor and soldier Che Guevara and 100 other fighters who journeyed to



Congo in 1965 to join an unsuccessful guerilla war against the American-backed Mobutu regime.

Cuba has been selfless in defense of others, whether against marauding microbes or imperial aggression. “We never took any natural resources,” said Rodolfo Reyes Rodriguez, Cuba’s ambassador to the United Nations and a veteran of the war against white-ruled South Africa’s army in Angola. “We never took any salary, because in no way were we to be perceived to be mercenaries or on any kind of military adventure.”

For the United States, military adventure and the imperative to seize other countries’ natural resources or strangle their economies, are defining national characteristics—in complete contrast to Cuba. The U.S. embargo of its island neighbor is among the world’s longest-running morality

plays, with Washington as villain. On this issue, the world’s biggest economic and military power could neither buy nor bully a single ally other than the Zionist state deformity.

Even Djibouti, the wedge of a nation between Eritrea and Somalia that hosts the biggest U.S. (and French) military base in Africa, spoke against the embargo on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Lithuania, a rabidly anti-Russian Baltic state, voiced the European Union’s objections to the embargo. Ethiopia, Washington’s henchman in the Horn of Africa, nevertheless opposed U.S. policy toward Cuba on behalf of the UN’s “Africa Group.” Tiny Fiji articulated the Group of 77 and China’s opposition to the trade blockade. Venezuela, Cuba’s major health part-

ner in Latin America, voiced the anti-embargo position of Mercosur, the Common Market of the South.

Cuba’s neighbors in CARICOM, the Caribbean Economic Community, were represented by Saint Kitts and Nevis, whose ambassador pointed to Cuban-built hospitals and clinics throughout the region; the hundreds of Cuban doctors that have provided the only medical services available to many of Haiti’s poor before, during and after the catastrophic earthquake of 2010; and the thousands of Caribbean students that have benefited from free university education in Cuba.

Cuba’s exemplary conduct in the world has made the yearly UN vote on the U.S. embargo a singular opportunity for all the world body’s members, except one, to chastise the superpower that seeks full spectrum domination of the planet. It is the rarest of occasions, a time of virtual global unanimity on an evil in which the Empire is currently engaged. Once a year, the world—in both effect and intent—salutes the Cuban model. For a moment, humanity’s potential to organize itself for the common good illuminates the global forum.

This year, the model glows brightly in the darkness of microbial pestilence. When 15,000 Cuban healthcare workers do not hesitate to step into the Ebola pit, the New Man and Woman may already exist—and there is hope for the rest of us.

—*Black Agenda Report*, October 29, 2014

<http://blackagendareport.com/node/14493>



Gaza: Call to Action!

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

August 26, 2014—At a time when the workers and peoples of the whole world are gripped by the war of extermination being waged by Israel against the Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza... At a time when the rights of the Palestinian people are being trampled upon, everybody is asking themselves the same question: Is there a solution?

Sixty-six years ago, the Palestinian Trotskyist group said the following regarding the State of Israel in January 1948:

“Even leaving aside the question of the attitude of the great powers, this State has no historic future. Subject to permanent crises and convulsions—permanent civil war having been avoided only by the complete purging of all the Arab villages on its territory—it will collapse into terrible slaughter in a new stage of the Arab Revolution if the Jewish proletariat does not break with Zionist chauvinism in time. The task of Jewish revolutionaries in Israel is to prepare this break. Their political line should remain unwaveringly that of struggle against the partition of Palestine, for the reintegration of the territory of Israel into a united Palestine, within the framework of a Federation of Arab States of the Middle East which will guarantee the Jewish minority all the rights of national cultural autonomy.”

As far as the militant activists of the Fourth International are concerned, only the proletarian revolution—bringing down imperialism—will allow the national questions left outstanding by history to be resolved completely, including the aspirations of the Jewish population that has settled in Palestine which, as far as the Trotskyists are concerned, cannot in any way be counterpoised to the Arab masses’ aspiration for sovereignty.

The partition of Palestine in 1946 by the imperialisms that were victorious in the Second World War, supported by the Stalinist bureaucracy and ratified by the UN in 1947, and the founding of a so-called “Jewish State” in the very heart of the Middle East could only result in wars and acts of destruction for the peoples of the region, beginning with the Arab people of Palestine. The position of the Fourth International has been unequivocal since 1948:

“Down with the partition of Palestine! For a united independent Arab Palestine, with full national minority rights for the Jewish community. Down with the imperialist intervention in Palestine! All foreign troops, UN ‘mediators’ and ‘observers’ out now! For the right of the Arab masses to self-determination. For the election of a Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal secret suffrage! For revolution of the land! Down with the Arab League, the tool of imperialism! Down with the corrupt feudal exploiters! Long live the Arab socialist revolution in the Middle East!”

“There is no other solution than the democratic solution”

Some 70 years have passed, over the course of which so many leaders of the international labor movement, from the “Communist Parties” to the “Socialist International,” have explained to the workers and youth the world over that these slogans were not “realistic,” that the only “realistic” solution was a “two-state” solution in Palestine.

It was to this objection that the Fourth International leader, Comrade Pierre Lambert, responded during a rally called by the PCI (French section of the Fourth International) in June 1982—shortly before the Sabra and

Shatila massacre. Accusing Begin-Sharon, he said:

“Where have the realists, those who explained to us that our position and our fight were utopian, where have they led the people? Where are they leading that part of the world today, where fighting, massacres and destitution continue unabated? No, there is no other solution than the democratic solution, and the only democratic solution that can bring peace to that region involves the disappearance of the State of Israel; it involves the Palestinian Constituent Assembly, building the Palestinian nation with its two component parts. All the plans, all the solutions that do not have as their starting-point this democratic solution can only have as their reality one massacre after another. There was war in 1948, there was war in 1956, there was war in 1967, there was ‘Black September’ in 1970, that dark September which saw the King of Jordan use the strength provided to him by U.S. imperialism to crush, or attempt to crush, the Palestinians. There was war in 1973; there was Tal el-Zaatar in 1976. Maintaining the State of Israel can only lead to war.”

The settler state, the segregationist and theocratic state has never been so weak!

How is this question posed today, after a month-and-a-half of the worst kind of massacre organized against the Palestinian population of Gaza, continuing the practice of ethnic cleansing begun in 1948?

Of course, the military forces of the State of Israel have an overwhelming superiority. And yet, the truth of the matter is that the settler state, the segregationist and theocratic state has never been so weak!

By unleashing its unprecedented onslaught against the civilian population of Gaza, by indiscriminately killing women, children and elderly people, it has rallied the people of Palestine, from Gaza to the 1948 territories (State of Israel) *via* the West Bank and the refugee camps scattered throughout all the countries of the region. It has rallied the people of Palestine around resistance. It has delivered a major blow to the so-called two-state “solution”—and to what is left of the Oslo Accords (1993)—by turning Gaza into the model for that second state: a ghetto.

By unleashing its unprecedented onslaught, it has declared loud and clear to the whole world what maintaining the imperialist order, of which the State of Israel is an underling, means: the extermination of a people who refuse to bow down to oppression and exploitation.

By unleashing its unprecedented onslaught, in the eyes of the world it has shattered the State of Israel’s claim that it embodies the defense of democratic values—as pointed out in a dignified manner in a letter entitled “Not in Our Name!” written by hundreds of Jewish survivors of the Nazi concentration camps.¹

It has exposed the hypocrisy of the complicit imperialist governments, beginning with the Hollande, Cameron and Merkel governments, showing this to be their true nature.

Provoking the outrage of the world’s peoples, Netanyahu has forced Obama to go through the motions, for the world’s benefit, of wishing to “restrain” him, whilst continuing to supply him massively with weapons.

Hindered by Obama in his offensive of extermination, Netanyahu has triggered the most serious crisis in the history of his state and its military apparatus.

All the conditions are coming together for a major turning point

All the conditions are coming together for a major turning-point, so

that, in the near future, sectors of both societies will link up, especially among the youth, who have been condemned by the State of Israel to a war without end, to killings and acts of barbarism against the Palestinian people on both sides of the wall.

The resistance of the Palestinian fighters and their heroic struggle have delivered a fatal blow to the myth of the invincible Israeli army. They have delivered a fatal blow to the myth of “the army cementing together the Israeli nation” that was fed by the euphoria following the army’s successes. The Palestinian people have just forced a climb-down, with the ending of the bombardments triggering joyful demonstrations throughout Palestine, including among the Jewish population.

Of course, it was only a few hundred people who defied the military command and refused to serve in Gaza, and only a few thousand people who demonstrated, most notably in Tel Aviv. Nevertheless, by taking their courageous position they have opened up an important breach.

As for the layer of Palestinian activists engaged in struggle, a far-reaching movement is emerging among their ranks. They have experienced the treachery of the heads of Arab states, with the head of the Egyptian state foremost among them. They have experienced Fatah’s so-called “peace program,” they have seen what recognition of the State of Israel and renouncing the PLO Charter has meant. They have rejected every attempt to give up the refugees’ right of return. They understand that the two-state “solution” (including the Islamic state of Hamas) would shut them up in an open-air concentration camp, like in Gaza, forever. They are watching with a great deal of apprehension as U.S. imperialism employs makeshift grand maneuvers in an attempt to end the collapse it has triggered in Iraq. They understand the risk posed to

them by the closer ties between Iran and the United States, and by the closer ties being sought by the United States with Bashar al-Assad.

The idea is taking root that no solution can be delivered to the Palestinian people if it is subject to the current diplomatic-military maneuvers. It is in this sense that one can say today that the question of the struggle for a united Palestinian nation, a secular democratic Palestinian republic in which all citizens will enjoy equal rights irrespective of their religion or ethnic origin, is about to arise in a recognizable way in the near future.

In opposition to the Palestinian people gaining its sovereignty, on every side there are calls being made on the workers—including by their leaderships—in every country, especially in the imperialist countries, to support the campaign to “put Gaza under UN protection” and the crossing-points under the supervision of European Union inspectors, all in the name of “realism” and emergency humanitarian demands which trample underfoot the Palestinian demand for an “unconditional lifting of the blockade!”

On the contrary, concrete solidarity with the Palestinian people means the broadest possible unity of the democratic and labor organizations throughout the world for an immediate and unconditional end to the Israeli attack, and for the immediate, total and unconditional lifting of the blockade of Gaza.

This solidarity is part of the struggle to help our class bring down the governments acting on behalf of finance capital and the war policy of U.S. imperialism.

It is part of the struggle to strengthen the organization of the conscious vanguard of the working class.

It is part of the struggle to strengthen the Fourth International!

—IS, August 26, 2014

Continued on page 29

Ukraine Cease Fire

Despite the ceasefire the crisis in Ukraine is far from resolved

FEYZI ISMAIL INTERVIEWS RUSSIAN MARXIST AND DISSIDENT BORIS KAGARLITSKY

September 8, 2014—*Feyzi Ismail:* What are the origins of the crisis in Ukraine and why has the conflict erupted in recent months?

Boris Kagarlitsky: The origins of the crisis in Ukraine are threefold. The first thing is that Ukraine was designed by planners from Moscow as one element in a complex planned economy. The territories that form Ukraine were put together not because of any historical, cultural or ethnic reasons, but to organize complex planning—they wanted to link the industrial areas in the east with ports in the south, such as Odessa and Crimea, together with the agrarian west. That was the logic. Once this logic was destroyed with the end of the Soviet Union, this territory as an integrated unity started falling apart, and lost its *raison d'être*.

The end of the Soviet Union also allowed cultural divisions to flourish, which is the second source of the crisis. Differences over language, for example, became much more important than before. Nationalist policies to impose a single Ukrainian language were absurd, however, because there are far more Ukrainians who speak Russian than Ukrainian—about a third are ethnic Russians and another third identify themselves as Russian-speaking Ukrainians.

There are many people who speak both languages equally, but Russian is much more widespread than Ukrainian, and was even on the rise in the post-independence period. This is because the world market favors the dominant language, the language of business, trade and production. The market system increased existing contradictions within society and created the preconditions for more cultural conflicts. The liberal media, however, presents these conflicts as purely cultural, while in fact the underlying reasons are related to the economy and institutions.

The third aspect of the crisis relates to the Ukrainian economy. In the post-Soviet period, Ukraine became an oligarchy in the same way as Russia, but with fewer resources. The quantity of resources that Russia possessed allowed Putin to create a system of permanent and self-reproducing compromise. Putin's rule is based on permanent consensus-building, first among the elites and, once there is an elite consensus, then an attempt is made to ensure this consensus acceptable to the rest of the population through welfare measures and so on.

The idea is to focus on consumption—as compensation for a lack of political activity—and everybody is more or less happy. But the Ukrainian oligarchy has never had enough financial and material resources to facilitate such compromise.

Unlike Russian oil, Ukrainian steel is much more vulnerable on the world market. This has led to permanent conflict between different oligarchic clans for control over existing public resources, which was the basis of so-called Ukrainian democracy. In that sense Ukraine is a typical oligarchic republic, in that it denies access to politics for

ordinary people, but at the same time generates real pluralism for the oligarchy. This system had its crises, but after every single crisis they managed to establish one or another compromise, and these were not terminal for political stability. That is, until the global economic crisis in 2008.

This crisis not only undermined the capacity of the Ukrainian elite to achieve compromise but it also brought in new players such as the EU, the U.S. and NATO. Given the level of crisis in the West, the important factor for stabilizing the system became its expansion. And the EU is very much in trouble, especially in the south—the capacity of these societies to reproduce themselves is so undermined by neoliberal policies—that you can hardly say how to keep these societies functioning without moving away from neoliberalism. But this is precisely what the neoliberal elites are not going to allow. The only chance to escape or solve these contradictions is to expand the system, and shift more resources into the system.

Feyzi Ismail: What interests do the EU and U.S. have in Ukraine?

Boris Kagarlitsky: In previous global recessions, the U.S. was the locomotive that pulled other countries out of crisis. But now the American economy is so weak that instead of pulling other countries out of crisis, American recovery is based on pushing other economies deeper into crisis. The other side of the American equation is the expansion of military capacity, and in particular NATO expansion.

Western powers started becoming more interested in Ukraine as a place to access cheap resources, including a cheap, disciplined and a relatively well-educated workforce, which could be

Continued from page 28

<https://us-mg6.mail.yahoo.com/neo/launch?.rand=c3eqd3dt9r4na#3971697781>

1 "Jewish Survivors and Descendants of Survivors and Victims of Nazi Genocide Unequivocally Condemn the Massacre of Palestinians in Gaza," *Socialist Viewpoint*, Vol. 14, No. 5

http://www.socialistviewpoint.org/sepoct_14/sepoct_14_00.html

employed in the West, and particularly the EU, to undermine the welfare states in the West. Another 10,000 unemployed Ukrainians, who can be moved to the West as flexible workers, is useful for Western capital.

Ukraine could play the same role for the EU as Central Asia plays for the Russian economy—providing lots of workers with no guarantees, no labor rights, no citizenship, no protection and who are completely dependent on the employers. Ukrainians are in a position where they can be turned into this permanent army of migrant labor.

If you read the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine, the crux of it is about closing down most of Ukrainian industry. The agreement says the EU will provide some financial support to solve the financial problems of the state, but for that most industries have to close.

Compared to previous free trade agreements this is definitely the worst Association Agreement ever prepared by the EU. And of course the other aspect of it is that Ukraine has to be integrated into Western political and military structures, that it should become a de facto NATO member. Let's be clear.

The Ukrainian government would love to become an official NATO member, but becoming an official member would mean changing the Ukrainian constitution. Meanwhile, NATO is reluctant to make Ukraine a formal member, but on the other hand is very keen on getting Ukraine involved in every single war and strategic alliance possible.

For example, take Crimea. Even under Yanukovich, there were already discussions taking place about moving the Russians out and the Americans in. NATO had already announced a tender for building its headquarters in Sevastopol, replacing the Russian Black Sea Fleet there. But at the very last moment, some sections of the Ukrainian elite became worried

because they understood that they were going to lose their industry. It was a last minute U-turn—in September 2013—when Yanukovich decided not to sign the Association Agreement.

Feyzi Ismail: What exactly sparked the protests in Maidan Square last November?

Boris Kagarlitsky: In western Ukraine, people were massively unemployed and marginalized, while in eastern Ukraine, industry continued to work, and it was precisely over the resources of the east that the fight was being fought. The west didn't actually produce much and was only able to consume resources, but only at a very low level because they preferred not to invest resources in welfare.

The center, which is Kiev, was exploiting the east and developed a very parasitical economy, trying to develop itself into a real European capital, while giving meager hand outs to the west of the country and keeping them more or less under control. One can understand therefore why Kiev is in conflict with the rest of Ukraine. It's very much this parasitical economy of Kiev that is generating support for the new government that is now in place, and it is Kiev that needs to keep the country united, in order to continue to exploit the east.

The oligarchs who own companies in eastern Ukraine live in their luxurious palaces in Kiev, with armies of servants, including ideological servants. Whereas in the east you have a working-class population who are living on very low salaries, who are very frustrated and angry, and who are Russian speaking, which means they have been made to feel humiliated in economic, social and cultural terms. Eastern Ukraine is the most productive part of the country, producing about 80 percent of the GDP, but they get less than any other region.

This situation could continue while Yanukovich and his people, who were

also from the east, could keep control of the population through paternalistic and clientelistic networks. The general situation was deteriorating but at least something was given to the trade union bosses, and sometimes even to the workers, even if it was only promises. People in the east still hoped that as long as Yanukovich was in power, they would not be let down completely. But when the far right sided with the neoliberal elites in Kiev, things got out of control.

The protests were provoked by the sudden failure of Yanukovich to sign the Association Agreement, but they moved far beyond it. Crowds of people gathered at Maidan Square in November 2013. They didn't care much about ideology, it was pure politics. One oligarchic group wanted to take over from another. The important point for understanding the *coup d'état* that took place last February is that the economy of western Ukraine was ruined through the free market policies. Industrial production that was built there in order to fit this pan-Ukrainian planning system was wiped out post-1990 and most people became unemployed. There was a whole generation of young people who had never worked and were never going to get jobs. Or at best they would get precarious jobs. So they became very easy targets for the far right, who started to give them some kind meaning in their lives by organizing them and paying them to be part of these Nazi gangs.

About 10-15,000 unemployed youth from the west were brought over to Kiev and paid to live there, for months, in order to protest in Maidan Square. What must be understood is that for these people this was the only job they had ever had in their lives. Many of them didn't want to leave, and some even live there now because they have nowhere to go. Finally they took up arms. The violence was not part of the neoliberals' plan initially. There are lots of reasons to think that it happened spontaneously.

The Western powers did everything to support this *coup d'état*, without having a clear strategy of what to do next. At the moment when Yanukovich understood that the West really wanted him to go, he fled. In this power vacuum, the rival group took over.

But the U.S. had earlier backed Yanukovich too. That's exactly why Yanukovich became so weak. He was expecting to have sustained Western support, then all of a sudden he realized that the West stopped supporting him and started supporting his adversaries; he had his nerves broken, so he fled to Russia. And when Yanukovich fled, his political clientele collapsed, which was a tremendous achievement for the Ukrainian working class. Because once this system collapsed, there were millions of people out of control; not only thousands of mercenaries, but millions of workers. And that's something very different. There were rallies all over eastern Ukraine.

Interestingly, one of the slogans in Maidan Square was that the southeast must rise *i.e.*, the southeast must rise and support the rebellion against Yanukovich. Of course they did! And once that happened, Kiev sent tanks and aircraft and artillery against them. It was a peaceful uprising everywhere in the beginning, with demonstrations, rallies, the formation of councils, and with local deputies voting for no confidence in the Kiev government.

The problem was also that at that point, the new government of Poroshenko—formed by those who won the *coup d'état*—they also miscalculated, because they underestimated the capacity of the east to rise. The first thing they did was vote to cancel legislation guaranteeing language rights for non-Ukrainian speakers. This is not the same as banning Russian or other languages, but previously there were some legal guarantees, which are now abolished. This applies not just to Russian, but Hungarian, Polish,

Romanian—any non-Ukrainian language.

The irony is that nobody in the Ukrainian government speaks Ukrainian, except perhaps the leader of the fascist party. Many Ukrainian nationalists can hardly manage to say a few words in Ukrainian. People were laughing at the leaflets of the Right Sector, which is a coalition of far right groups, because these leaflets were calling for Ukrainian to be the only language in the country, but they were written with so many errors and with such poor grammar that Russian speakers were correcting these leaflets. The vote provoked enormous protests.

Feyzi Ismail: What was the nature of the uprising in eastern Ukraine? And who are the *opolchenie*?

Boris Kagarlitsky: First, there was an unarmed uprising, which was repressed militarily, in April. There had been a camp in Odessa organized by those calling for a federal Ukraine, but the camp was attacked by the far right. People were forced to flee into the trade union buildings next to the camp, but the building was then set on fire. People tried to escape but those who got out were killed on the street. The official estimate of those killed was 46, but the unofficial estimate was about a hundred or more. Those who escaped were arrested and put in jail, while those who did the killing were praised as heroes.

After that Donetsk and Lugansk created a self-defense force, taking over buildings and arms depots. The place is full of weapons since the Soviet times because it's one of the centers of military production and manufacturing.

The fighters are working class people, peasants, miners, and now more and more intellectuals are joining them, mostly coming from Russia and other parts of Ukraine. Initially they were fighting for more autonomy, but the two people's republics, Donetsk

and Lugansk, declared independence last April.

At first they were willing to negotiate to accept some kind of federal agreement with Ukraine. But when Ukrainian troops bombed and wreaked havoc on these territories, well, the last time we met with deputies from Donetsk and Lugansk, they said that after what Ukraine has done to us very it's clear that they don't see us as their co-citizens. They don't see these territories as their own. And we don't want to stay in this country, unless—unless—this government is dissolved.

So there were two turning points. The first was on May 2, 2014, when people were forced to take up arms. In a sense that was a success for the new government in Kiev because they localized the rebellion; it was initially a peaceful, unarmed rebellion all over eastern Ukraine, and they ultimately localized the rebellion in two regions. The second turning point was the election that was organized (actually it was bought) by one of the oligarchs, Poroshenko, the so-called “chocolate king” because he owns a big confectionary business. Poroshenko also appointed several other oligarchs to particular provinces. So each oligarch got the province where he had the most assets.

This is an extreme case of oligarchic rule, like a feudal country. Poroshenko got the majority in the elections because those who opposed the *coup* were not allowed to run. He also spent three times more money than everyone else put together, and it seems that he also bought the electoral committees. And finally he seemed most moderate among the candidates that were allowed to run.

Poroshenko has been in power since June, after which there has been a full-scale military attack on the east, comparable to a Second World War operation with hundreds of tanks, aviation, bombing, massive artillery shelling and so on. It's not like guerrilla warfare, it's full-

scale war. But the *opolchenie*—militia is the correct translation—they have actually created a formidable fighting force. Of course there are lots of Russian volunteers, and some of them have a great deal of military experience.

The Russian government of course allows ammunition and food to pass through the border, definitely, and also allows volunteers through. Some Russian military organizations of course co-operate with *opolchenie*, clearly, and there are Russian troops that moved into Donetsk and Lugansk and are stationed along the border to control both sides of it, but they are not taking part in active combat. On the other hand it's totally untrue that the Russian government manages these operations of *opolchenie*.

There is a permanent conflict among the Russian elites, especially after the first wave of sanctions against Ukraine. Sections of the Russian elite began to panic, and also they hate these people's republics because they are very threatening for the Russian state, raising debates about nationalization, overthrowing the oligarchy and so on.

Russian industry is also providing spare parts to the Ukrainian military and Poroshenko had to acknowledge that without the steady flow of spare parts and technicians from Russia it wouldn't have been possible for the Ukrainian army to continue fighting.

Feyzi Ismail: What is the nature of the people's republics of Donetsk and Lugansk and how is Russia relating to the republics?

Boris Kagarlitsky: Shortly after Donetsk and then Lugansk were declared republics, there developed a big struggle about their future. On the one hand, they emerged because of the mass support of working people, and on the other hand they cannot survive without some co-operation with Moscow and with the Russian government. And Russian elites use every opportunity to influence, manipulate and subvert these forces.

Inside the republics, there are also contradictory tendencies. The general demand is for welfare, the establishment of a social people's republic—not a socialist but a social republic—which means that a welfare state should be incorporated into the institutional structures of the system. There are lots of demands for nationalization and, for example, they stopped healthcare reforms towards marketization.

These are demands from fighters on the ground. At the same time, the republics are unstable and inefficient, and also their legitimacy is questioned. So there is a permanent political conflict within these republics.

While there are progressive demands on the one hand from the grassroots, there are also bourgeois elements within the republican leaderships, and also constant pressure from Moscow not to move in these more progressive directions, using its capacity to control the frontier and provide or stop supplies of food and ammunition to blackmail the republics. For example, they tried hard to block nationalization programs that were declared in both republics, unfortunately with some success. If they were to go forward, Moscow would cut supplies. So there is a constant struggle. But there is also a constant struggle inside Russia because there is a growing movement to defend these republics, and there's a growing movement to support these very demands. So it's a struggle that's continuing on both sides of the frontier.

The problem also for those who are trying to control Donetsk and Lugansk from Moscow is that *opolchenie* is becoming more radicalized, and it's supplied by volunteers who are very radical and left-wing, most of them. Of course they are nationalists, but even those who are nationalists, they basically support welfare demands.

So in a political sense, Moscow is fighting an uphill battle. But they still have very important tools. If they close

the border the republics would be defeated. That's why so far there is a political stalemate. Even those progressive measures that have been declared have not been implemented. Partly also because of the state of war, you have to concentrate militarily; but the fact that *opolchenie* is radicalizing is very important.

One of the most popular figures in *opolchenie* was Igor Strelkov, who was not a leftist at all—in fact he claims to be a monarchist, loves the Russian empire and is romantic about Russian Tsars and so on—but as commander of the *opolchenie* in Donetsk he was bringing along all sorts of left-wing radicals with him. He also managed to kick out many nationalists and right-wing people from *opolchenie*—but for technical reasons; he said these people were bad fighters, they didn't follow orders, they didn't respect the command of the people's republic and so on.

At some point, it started becoming visible that Strelkov was becoming far more popular in Russia than Putin. So Strelkov's popularity was increasing while Putin's popularity was diminishing because he hasn't been taking a firm stand against the West.

The conflict came to the fore in early July when Strelkov retreated from Sloviansk, when his troops were encircled by Ukrainian troops and where he was expected to be killed. He left Sloviansk, organized a defense of Donetsk, and suppressed a conspiracy to surrender Donetsk to Ukrainian troops, a conspiracy that was organized by pro-Kremlin figures there.

So it was very clear that they were going to surrender Donetsk, probably in agreement with Poroshenko, as a guarantee that Crimea would be safe in the hands of Russia. This conspiracy was defeated and all these pro-Kremlin people were thrown out of Donetsk. They didn't arrest anybody, they just asked them politely to leave the city and, as a result, Strelkov became the

enemy of the Kremlin. They finally managed to get rid of him by cutting his supplies, and when he was lacking ammunition and food, he was forced to go to Moscow. At that point, he seemed to be detained, and then we got his letter of resignation. Whether he signed it or was forced to sign it nobody knows, but then he disappeared and we don't know his whereabouts.

It's been about a month. Many legends emerged, including a fake video showing him in Ferguson. That just gives you an understanding of how intense the struggle is around these republics, and how the struggle is only just beginning.

Feyzi Ismail: How should we analyze the future of the republics in relation to the rest of Ukraine? Is the fight by the republics still over autonomy?

Boris Kagarlitsky: There will be a real need to form representative political leaderships. The people who are fighting see Novorossiia as much more than these two republics. Because Novorossiia is also Kharkiv, Odessa and the whole of the southeast.

Now when Putin is calling for a ceasefire, the question is whether *opolchenie* will stop fighting. Especially because they're winning. They managed to win against an army that had probably more than 60 times more tanks and so on, partly because they use guerrilla tactics. But also the morale of the Ukrainian troops is very low, they desert, and they don't want to go and fight. They sometimes desert with weapons and join the *opolchenie*, while others just run away. Thousands have defected. Hundreds have turned to the side of *opolchenie*, and they now are forming battalions of Ukrainian deserters. They want to form a regiment. So there are enough people to form a regiment, and probably there will be more.

On the other hand, the way Ukrainian generals behave is terrible because they are just sending people forward as cannon fodder. The losses

are incredible, similar to losses during the Second World War. The *opolchenie* is mostly composed of volunteers and of people who have had military training, many of whom fought in Chechnya or Afghanistan. These are fighters who are more or less competent to do the fighting. While on the Ukrainian side they are sending conscripts who didn't even get proper training. So the losses are very high, and that also undermines the morale of the Ukrainian troops and has led to a lot of discontent.

Now the Ukrainian generals behind the frontlines have to wear bulletproof vests to protect themselves from being shot by their own soldiers. I think that's why the movement will spread into the rest of Ukraine.

The fight is no longer about autonomy because of course now they are now calling for independence. I think if we got Novorossiia as a new country in Europe it would be a good thing. The common ground they have with the rest of Ukraine is that they want to get rid of the government in Kiev.

Once the Poroshenko government is defeated, they will negotiate. And they will have to decide whether they want a federation or an independent country—or perhaps Ukraine will disintegrate into a few different countries. In this case maybe the west will split on its own and maybe Hungary will take over some other region. But the common ground between people in the southeast and the movement is that first you have to get rid of the government in Kiev and then you have to find a way to negotiate peacefully and on a democratic basis.

If they manage to get rid of the current government then the possibility of Ukraine staying together is greater. Poroshenko will try to stay but he's losing ground, and the far right is increasingly against him. The army of Novorossiia is winning, his own army is less and less loyal, and he's dependent only on the intelligence services

and security services. But you can hardly stay in power with only the security services backing you. So his power base is shrinking very fast. His main card is that he has the backing of the U.S. and the EU. But that will not be enough if he doesn't have a measure of domestic support.

Feyzi Ismail: What have been the military advances by *opolchenie* in the last couple of weeks? Is this a turning point?

Boris Kagarlitsky: I think it is a turning point. Ukrainian troops have been in full flight and the *opolchenie* were progressing and moving forward all over the front line. Lots of Ukrainian troops were encircled and surrounded. The position of *opolchenie* has been to disarm these Ukrainian fighters and then let them go. They don't keep too many prisoners partly because there isn't enough food. But also they think it's very good propaganda for them. Sometimes they keep them for a few weeks, and then ask their parents to come to pick up the conscripts. Once the parents come they go back home with their kids. So we have had all these images of Ukrainian troops leaving, disarmed. Or they leave for Russia, and of course Russia sends them back to Ukraine. But what also happens is that after spending time with the *opolchenie*, many of them prefer to stay over and fight on the other side.

We are now seeing hundreds of troops retreating, disarmed, and it's a crushing moral defeat—it would be a total moral defeat for any army.

The frontiers between the republics and Russia are in the hands of insurgents, which means that there will be a flow of material—food and ammunition into the republics—and it's also much harder for the Russian government to control because as long you control the whole frontier there will always be incursions. The next target was Mariupol, which is a big port and which is already under siege, but the

opolchenie don't want to take the city because it would inflict heavy destruction and casualties among civilian population, which is something *opolchenie* is trying to avoid.

Back in April there was mass support for Donetsk in Mariupol, but there is growing skepticism amongst people because of the chaotic leadership in Donetsk. Nevertheless the insurgents were trying to convince Ukrainian troops to leave the city. Once they secure Mariupol—or even before that—they will move to Berdyansk, which is another important city, and which is already outside of the area of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics. As far as I know from their news service *Colonel Cassad*, the tendency is that they think Moscow sooner or later will force them to stop.

On September 6, 2014, there was already a ceasefire agreement forced upon the *opolchenie* by Moscow. But it's by no means certain that it will last. Insurgents are trying to go forward as much as possible to undermine the Poroshenko regime and undermine the chances of Moscow and Kiev to make a deal behind their backs.

Feyzi Ismail: What are the prospects for the movement to bring about

social change? And who is leading this movement?

Boris Kagarlitsky: What is happening in Novorossiia is a revolutionary movement, though it's not yet a revolution in terms of social change. But you have to win the war. If the war is won you still have to win the political slogan. But there is potential. You see, nowhere for so many years—perhaps since the Spanish revolution—have we seen thousands of workers, or even hundreds of thousands, mobilized.

There are thousands of workers in arms. And of course the Moscow oligarchs are scared of it spreading into Russia. Quite a lot of people speak about socialism. Others speak of a compromised version of a social republic, which means a welfare state, social priorities and some socialization of property, including factories, mines and railways. The current leadership of Donetsk republic was reluctant to implement even those changes that they themselves declared necessary. Instead of nationalizing the property of oligarchs, for example, they put up posters around Donetsk saying that the republic will fight the oligarchs.

It's quite normal that you have a bourgeois leadership of a movement

that is, in its composition and in its momentum, if not necessarily proletarian then plebeian; it's a popular movement. These bourgeois leaderships do everything to minimize the potential for social change, and limit the movement. But it may end up with these leaderships being replaced, as it was in the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution, which first began with very moderate leaderships. The important thing for the left is to create the political force and the political *cadre* to carry forward the next stage of the revolution.

But this isn't the Stalinist theory of stages; what I mean is that you have to make the revolution radical and move forward. And while there is a very strong presence of progressive forces it doesn't mean that everybody is on the left—there are also all sorts of conservative elements within the movement. For example, we had this project with political activists in Belgorod for almost three months and we discovered that in general these people are very progressive in social terms, towards the welfare state, towards social rights, towards people's power and so on, but at the same time they're very conservative culturally. They praise family values, they're positive about Christianity as a core system of values—though they're not necessarily practicing religion—and most of them are homophobic, *etc.*

At the same time, however, this is something that can be remedied. What else can you expect from a society that was showered with reactionary propaganda and that survived a terrible defeat of soviet style socialism? It's quite natural that people have all these illusions and contradictions and problems. We have to work with them and contribute to their struggles, because these problems can be overcome through practice.

I'm reminded of what Subcomandante Marcos said about all



these leftists who went to the jungle and tried to educate the Indians; they discovered there were lots of things they had to learn from the Indians. I don't see why intellectuals shouldn't learn from workers and peasants and lower middle class people in Donetsk or Kharkiv or Odessa. This is an ongoing struggle. But you cannot fight and win the struggle unless you express basic solidarity with the cause. Because what some of the left is doing is they are saying that the movement is not homogeneous, and they have to prove that the movement is genuinely progressive.

Why do they have to prove anything to a bunch of intellectuals in Moscow or Paris? It's exactly the other way around. The left has to prove to workers and miners and peasants and other toiling people that it deserves their attention.

Feyzi Ismail: What should the left in the West be doing and how should we be developing solidarity movements?

Boris Kagarlitsky: We have to build solidarity campaigns but they have to be linked up with other solidarity campaigns to broaden the struggle. I think it would be nice if we flew the flag of Novorossiia together with the flag of Palestine, for example. Solidarity campaigns shouldn't be isolated from one another, they have to be integrated. Non-military tasks are emerging, and doctors, engineers, solidarity workers and humanitarian programs are needed, like in other places.

People must go to the region to see how much damage has been caused by the war, and there must be material help provided, training and education and so on. We in Russia can help facilitate that. There are already volunteers from France and Spain but I don't think more fighters are needed; rather, solidarity workers are needed, people who will help with reconstruction, especially as government troops are pushed away and areas are liberated.

Going forward I think *opolchenie* must score more victories, and Russian society must develop more solidarity movements together with Western societies, which also have to do the same. I think we have to look at these events in the same way as we look at Palestine, for example. There are all sorts of contradictions inside the movement, just as in Palestine—it's not a homogeneous movement. Not every single element of the movement is progressive.

The same is true in Novorossiia. It's not a homogeneous, progressive, revolutionary movement; it's a coalition, which involves different elements. The movement started with people protecting the statues of Lenin, some of them fly red flags and so on but there are elements of Russian nationalism, and also there are more conservative elements who want Novorossiia to be like Ukraine before the crisis.

We have to support the left inside Novorossiia and inside *opolchenie*. They are getting stronger but they need our support and solidarity. And we must also import this Ukrainian revolutionary movement into Russia, which we are doing with some degree of success—because there are more and more people involved in the solidarity movement, which is becoming a force of its own and is already beginning to influence Russian politics and Russian public opinion.

That means that we have to build solidarity across the frontier, and we have to link up these solidarity movements in Russia with the antiwar, anti-NATO, and anti-imperialist movements in the West.

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—Counterfire, September 8, 2014

<http://www.counterfire.org/interview/17422-ukraine-s-uprising-against-nato-neoliberals-and-oligarchs-an-interview-with-boris-kagarlitsky>

1 Boris Yulyevich Kagarlitsky
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boris_Kagarlitsky



Nestora Salgado

Indigenous leader, U.S. citizen and political prisoner in Mexico



Nestora Salgado

Fact sheet

Her personal background

Nestora Salgado is a naturalized U.S. citizen who grew up in the small indigenous village of Olinalá in the state of Guerrero, Mexico. She moved to the United States in 1991 at the age of 20, working as a maid, nanny and waitress. She splits her time between Olinalá and Renton, Washington, where she lives with her husband José Luis Avila, a construction worker, her daughters, and grandchildren. Over the past four years, she made numerous trips to deliver clothing and supplies to the desperately poor residents of her hometown.

Fighting poverty and violence in Guerrero

Guerrero has the highest murder rate in Mexico and a history of state involvement in massacres of indigenous peasants. During her trips home to Mexico, Salgado witnessed increasing poverty and the rise in violent crime and political corruption. This led her to become a community activist for the human rights of indigenous people in Guerrero and neighboring

parts of Mexico. In particular, she became involved in the indigenous movement for community policing that has swept through the region during the past several years. Guerrero State Law 701 and Article 2.A of the Mexican Constitution guarantee the right of indigenous people to self-government and self-defense, including forming their own police forces.

Soon, Salgado was putting the laws into practice by organizing with others to form a community police force in Olinalá. Its officers formed patrols to defend residents against organized crime, particularly the Los Rojos gang. The gang had been terrorizing the community and operating with impunity due to the complicity of local officials, including the mayor.

The impetus for forming the community force was the murder of a local taxi cab driver who refused to pay protection money to Los Rojos. Salgado led a mobilization of village residents to drive the gang out of town and set up checkpoints to keep them from coming back. Last spring Salgado was elected “*comandante*” or coordinator. She has worked hard to develop the leadership of indigenous women and to empower them to stand up against domestic violence and child abuse.

Initially, Salgado was able to obtain the support of Angel Aguirre, the governor of Guerrero, who promised in writing to provide the force with uniforms, small arms, training and other support. The impact of the community policing, which relied on traditional means of accountability and social control, was dramatic—a 90 percent drop in the crime rate and no murders during the ten months that it was in operation. (In the first two months after the governor shut down community police, crime increased substan-

tially and there were four killings, despite the presence of hundreds of marines and soldiers as well as state and federal police. Government forces are used to harass and arrest community organizers, sometimes threatening to kill them, while protecting criminal activity.)

Nestora Salgado’s abduction and arrest

The official pretext for seizing her on August 21, 2013, was the arrest of the local sheriff and several teenage girls. Sheriff Armando Patrón Jiménez was detained for tampering with evidence at the crime scene of a double assassination. He had attempted to walk off with a cow, the property of the deceased. The girls were charged with dealing drugs. Salgado was arrested on charges of kidnapping in these cases, even though she was doing what she’d been elected to do.

At a meeting five days before her arrest between the mayor and Salgado, she refused to let the sheriff, a political crony of the mayor, go free without a trial in a peoples’ court. A few days later, she found herself surrounded by ten Humvees full of army and marine personnel. They seized her and transported her by private plane to a maximum-security prison 600 miles from Olinalá. While Salgado’s arrest appears to have been precipitated by the arrest of the sheriff, it was also in retaliation for a press release Salgado issued that outlined the mayor’s and other government figures’ ties to drug trafficking. This all took place in the context of the struggle by the people of Olinalá and its community police force to maintain their independence from the state-controlled rural police force.

Prosecuting indigenous leaders like Salgado and suppressing autonomous community police forces also serves a

larger purpose—silencing vocal opposition by indigenous communities to foreign mining companies that have large contracts to extract mineral wealth from the mountains of Guerrero.

Political persecution and mistreatment in jail

Salgado was seized without an arrest warrant by federal soldiers at a checkpoint while driving home. She had been harassed with death threats by marines for several days prior to her arrest. Since the day after her arrest, Salgado has been incarcerated in the high security detention center of El Rincon, in Tepic, Nayarit, several days travel from Olinalá. There is no basis for the government's claim that such extreme measures are warranted because Salgado—a grandmother and well-respected citizen with no criminal record—is a danger to society. Furthermore, kidnapping is not a federal crime in Mexico and those accused are normally held in local jails.

Isolating Salgado from her supporters and family by transporting her so far away, without legal justification, is evidence that she is a political prisoner. Efforts to organize support in Olinalá for Salgado's release and the revival of community policing are being suppressed by death threats and reprisals; Salgado's advocates are being cut-off from public assistance, especially needed since a severe storm in mid-October 2013.

For weeks, Salgado was held incommunicado. She was not allowed to see her attorney or family members, who had traveled the long distance to get to the penitentiary. She was only allowed a lawyer after the deadline had passed to petition for release while awaiting trial. Salgado was not allowed to meet in person with her attorney for almost a year. Only one of her daughters and a sister has been able to visit her on a regular basis. This persecution is all for performing her lawful duties as the coordinator of the community police force.

Several years ago, Salgado was injured in a car accident that left her temporarily paralyzed from the neck down. Through extensive physical therapy, she was able to regain 90 percent of her functioning but is still unable to work. To manage severe neuropathy in her hands and feet, she relies on pain medication and frequent exercise. In prison, she has been denied both, worsening her physical and mental condition. For months on end she has been subjected to virtual solitary confinement, denied all interaction with others.

At the end of March 2014, a federal judge in Mexico ruled that Salgado's actions as a coordinator of the Olinalá community police force was lawful under Guerrero state law and customs and traditions of indigenous people of the area. The judge ordered Salgado's release from custody, an order, which the state courts and the state Attorney General have refused to abide by.

After a year in jail, she has only been permitted to see her attorney one time for 45 minutes, despite repeated requests.

Efforts to negotiate a political solution to Ms. Salgado's plight have not produced any concrete results, not even a transfer to Mexico City so she could be closer to her attorneys and her family.

The assassination of another strong woman activist in Guerrero, Rocío Mesino Mesino, just days after she had been released from prison, is a reminder that Salgado's life is in jeopardy without close public scrutiny and strong support in Mexico and the United States.

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Pollution Inequality in America

Shocking new research shows pollution inequality in America even worse than income inequality

BY LYNN STUART PARRAMORE

James K. Boyce, professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, directs the environment program of the Political Economy Research Institute. His research focuses on the impacts of inequalities of wealth and power and the dynamics of conflict and includes the Toxic 100 Air Polluters, an index identifying the top U.S. air polluters among the world's largest corporations. A 2009 special report by USA Today drew upon Boyce's work, along with EPA data, to create a database exposing air toxicity in schools across the country. In a new study funded by the Institute for New Economic Thinking's Political Economy of Distribution Series, Boyce collaborates with Klara Zwickl and Michael Ash to compare disparities of exposure to industrial air pollution in U.S. states and congressional districts among the poor and non-poor, as well as whites and non-whites. They find that in America, inequality is in the very air we breathe.

I spoke to Boyce about his research and the impact of environmental inequality on politics, education, economics, and the shape of our society.

Lynn Parramore: What does your recent work add to the growing body of research on inequality and pollution?

James K. Boyce: We've been working with these data for several years now in a collaborative research project with researchers with University of Michigan, the University of Southern California, and several other institutions, and we've done a variety of studies that look, in particular, at patterns of environmental injustice in the U.S. along the lines of disproportionate exposure of people of color and low-income communities.

What's new is that we developed three different inequality measures and applied these both at the level of individual states and at the level of the 435 congressional districts in order to get a sense of how unequally exposure to industrial air toxins is distributed in these two political jurisdictions. To the best of my knowledge, no one has ever done that.

In addition to looking at the ratios of exposures of people of color versus whites and of people living below the federal poverty line versus the non-poor, we also developed an environmental version of the Gini coefficient, which basically ranks the population, in this case from the people with the cleanest air to the people with the dirtiest air, and measures how unequally air quality is distributed in the states and congressional districts. That was a new contribution.

Lynn Parramore: What stood out to you in the results?

James K. Boyce: One of the real take-home findings, is that if you look at how unequally environmental quality is distributed in the U.S., it actually makes inequality of the distribution of income look relatively modest. I wasn't entirely surprised to find that air quality is distributed even more unequally than income, but I was surprised at the magnitude of the difference. It's really striking.

Another thing that became clear is that how you look at inequality can have rather dramatic results on which communities stand out as being the most unequal. I was a bit surprised that states and congressional districts that ranked highest in terms of disproportionate exposures of people of color,

for example, did not necessarily rank highest in terms of the scale of disparities between the most exposed and the least exposed communities.

So from a methodological standpoint, I think our paper makes an important contribution in two ways. One is in showing that it's possible to measure inequality in the distribution of environmental quality, much as we measure inequality in the distribution of income and wealth. And the second methodological contribution is to show how different jurisdictions in the U.S. rank in terms of environmental inequality really depends on what specific measures of environmental inequality one is interested in.

If one is primarily interested in disparities in terms of race or ethnicity, then one can directly compare those measures that are relevant. If one is most interested in the extent of divergence between the most polluted and the least polluted communities or states, then a different measure is appropriate to use. Our study shows both that it's possible to look at these things, and that in doing so we need to be sensitive to the measures we employ.

Lynn Parramore: Do patterns of inequality differ across the country? How can a person of color or a poor person avoid air pollution?

James K. Boyce: Avoiding industrial air pollution is difficult, particularly if you're poor or a member of a racial or ethnic minority. That's partly because of housing prices. It's partly because of discrimination in housing and mortgage markets—the phenomenon of red-lining. And it's also partly because of the tendency for firms to site polluting facilities in relatively low-income

and relatively high-minority communities because they expect less political pushback.

Rather than thinking about trying to move somewhere else to escape this, which is an attempt to find an individual solution to the problem, what folks really need to do—and are doing—is to join together with other members of their communities and press the polluters and the regulators to reduce the exposures that result from the activities of industrial facilities near them.

That's what the environmental justice movement in the U.S. has been trying to do since the 1980s when it really got going. The EJ movement still has much that needs to be done, but it has accomplished a great deal both in terms of raising awareness of disproportionate exposures of people of color and low-income people to environmental hazards, and by pressing policy makers in both the public sector and the private sector to take remedial action.

Lynn Parramore: Three states—Illinois, Ohio and Pennsylvania—account for 40 percent of congressional districts that appear in your top-10 rankings for inequality in industrial air pollution. What factors are impacting residents in those areas? (See a complete list of U.S. congressional districts, ranked according to disparities in industrial air pollution exposure.¹)

James K. Boyce: Those states, broadly corresponding to the old industrial heartland of the country, are places where you both have relatively high levels of industrial air pollution and relatively high disparities between the exposure of minorities and that of whites. And so that makes them particularly problematic places to live in if you happen to be African American or Latino. It makes them areas in which environmental justice activism and enforcement activities should be high on the agenda of environmentalists, community activists, and public officials.

Lynn Parramore: Do you think your study will help activate politicians in those districts to address disparities?

James K. Boyce: I would hope so. In terms of the policy relevance of our work, the methods we developed help to provide information about where pollution abatement efforts ought to be concentrated. What are the most important places where we should try to reduce community exposure to industrial air pollution? And insofar as new pollution sources are going to be constructed, where should they be built so as not to exacerbate the disparities that already plague so many communities?

Lynn Parramore: What are some of the most concerning economic effects of industrial air pollution on communities?

James K. Boyce: Air pollution has adverse effects on people's health, and that means that they have to spend more on healthcare and they miss more days of work, either because they themselves are too ill to go to work or because their kids are sick and they have to stay home and take care of them. It also has adverse effects on property values, which vary with the levels of air pollution in the community.

On top of those outcome effects, it also impacts equality of opportunity, particularly for children. Because communities that are heavily burdened with air pollution tend to have higher incidence and greater severity of childhood asthma, the kids miss more days of school, and partly because they're missing school and perhaps partly because of the neurological impacts of air pollution on their young and developing cognitive function, there is an adverse effect on school performance.

If you believe, as I think most Americans believe, that every kid deserves an equal chance, that equality of opportunity for children is dear to our society for reasons of both equity and efficiency, then the impacts of disproportionate pollution burdens on the children in some communities—

the fact that the playing field is tilted against them through no fault of their own—is a troubling feature of our environmental landscape.

Lynn Parramore: You've noted that exposure contributes to student achievement gaps. Does this information challenge the assumption that the problems of education lie mostly with schools and teachers?

James K. Boyce: Of course it does. What it suggests is that the playing field is not level, and that not all teachers are teaching in the same environment. So even if teachers are equally qualified, and equally hard-working, educational outcomes will differ. A team of researchers led by Manuel Pastor of the University of Southern California looked at variations in school performance in the Los Angeles Unified School District. They controlled for the usual factors, such as parental income and education, class sizes, and teacher salaries, and found that when they plugged in data on variations on air quality, it had a significant adverse effect on school performance. What that implies is that even if one attended to every other educational problem, we'd still see disparities in educational outcomes as long as we have serious disparities in pollution exposure.

Lynn Parramore: How might we confront the environmental disparities you have highlighted?

James K. Boyce: Well, I think there are a variety of strategies for doing so. The first step is to measure and map the extent of disparities, so that we have a handle on what the problem really is. Once we've got that information, there are a variety of things that individuals and communities can do to try to improve the situation.

One is to press public officials to take steps to redress excessive pollution burdens. Executive Order 12898 issued by President Clinton in 1994, which remains in force, directs all federal agencies to take steps to identify and

rectify disproportionate health and environmental impacts resulting from their activities, policies, and programs on minorities and low-income populations. That policy is already on the books at the federal level. Some states have EJ policies, too, and states that don't have them, ought to have them. Communities can press officials to act on those mandates, both to prevent additional pollution and to reduce existing burdens.

Above and beyond that, communities can directly engage with, and when necessary confront, private sector actors that are creating the pollution. Most firms are not insensitive to public opinion. In fact, firms may voluntarily take steps to clean up their act, if and when they realize that their communities are aware of what's going on.

This is why the public's right to know about environmental hazards is so important. An informed public can press both public officials and private firms to curtail pollution and to reduce environmental disparities.

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—AlterNet.org, October 3, 2014

http://www.alternet.org/environment/shocking-new-research-shows-pollution-inequality-america-even-worse-income-inequality?akid=12333.229473.lHk5G5&rd=1&src=newsletter1022149&t=6&pagin g=off¤t_page=1#bookmark

¹ <http://ineteconomics.org/sites/inet.civaccations.net/files/Boyce%20environmental%20inequalities%20by%20Congressional%20District.pdf>

The Attack on El Salvador's Water

Clean water as an impediment to corporate profits

BY PETE DOLACK

An Australian mining company insists its "right" to a guaranteed profit is superior to the right of El Salvador to clean drinking water—and an unappealable World Bank secret tribunal will decide if that is so.

Drinking water is the underdog here. It might be thought that Salvadorans ought to have the right to decide on a question as fundamental as their source of water, but that is not so. It will be up to a secret tribunal controlled by corporate lawyers. And as an added bit of irony, the hearing began on El Salvador's Independence Day, September 15. Formal independence, and actual independence, alas, are not the same thing.

The case, officially known as *Pacific Rim Cayman LLC v. Republic of El Salvador*, pits the Australian gold-mining company OceanaGold Corporation against the government of El Salvador. OceanaGold is asking for an award of \$301 million because the Salvadoran government won't give it a permit to open a gold mine that would poison a critical source of drinking water on which millions depend.

OceanaGold—or, more specifically, its Pacific Rim subsidiary, which it bought in November 2013—has spent only a small fraction of the \$301 million. That sum isn't an attempt to recover an investment; it represents the amount of profits the corporation alleges it would have pocketed but for El Salvador's refusal to give the company a permit. (El Salvador has had a moratorium on new mining permits since 2008.)

So here we have an increasingly common scenario under "investor-state dispute mechanisms"—environmental laws designed to safeguard human and animal health are chal-

lenged as barriers to corporate profit. Not simply to recover an investment that didn't pan out, but supposed future profits that a company claims it would have earned. Should El Salvador prevail, it would still have lost because it will spend large sums of money to defend this case, money that could have been used for the welfare of its people.

An added insult in this case is that it is being heard not under one of the "free trade" agreements that elevate corporations to the level of (or above) a country, but under an El Salvador law passed by the former Right-wing government that has since been reversed. Pacific Rim originally sued El Salvador under the Central American Free Trade Agreement, but the case was dismissed because Canada, where Pacific Rim had been based before its acquisition by OceanaGold, is not a party to CAFTA. But the tribunal allowed the suit to be re-filed under an El Salvador law that granted corporations the same right to sue in secret tribunals ordinarily found only in "free trade" agreements.

Lawyers for corporations sit in judgment

The tribunal judging El Salvador is known as the International Center for the Settlement of Investor Disputes (ICSID)—an arm of the World Bank. Neither the public nor the press are allowed to witness ICSID hearings and there is no appeal to its decisions. Under the "investor-state dispute mechanism," governments legally bind themselves to settle "disputes" with "investors" in the secret tribunals. Cases are decided by a panel of three judges selected from a roster. The judges are appointed to the roster by the national governments that have signed on to ICSID.

Because ICSID, similar to other arbitration panels, does not have rules against conflicts of interest, most of the judges are corporate lawyers who specialize in representing corporations in these types of disputes. To provide just one example, one of New Zealand's selected judges is David A.R. Williams, who is currently representing Philip Morris in its suit seeking to force Australia to overturn its tobacco regulations, which were ruled legal by Australia's High Court.

The three judges in this week's hearing are V.V. Veeder of Britain, Brigitte Stern of France and Guido Santiago Tawil of Argentina. Mr. Veeder and Mr. Tawil are veteran corporate lawyers; the former has carefully omitted any mention of who his clients are in his CV (*Curriculum Vitae*), while the latter's bio page boasts he has assisted in the privatization of Argentina's assets while representing corporations in several industries. To put that in some perspective, an austerity program was imposed in the early 1990s in conjunction with selling off state enterprises at below-market prices. This fire sale yielded \$23 billion, but the proceeds went to pay foreign debt mostly accumulated by the military dictatorship—after completing these sales, Argentina's foreign debt had actually grown.

The third member of the tribunal, Ms. Stern, is an academic regularly called on to arbitrate investor-state disputes. One of her previous rulings awarded Occidental Petroleum Corporation \$2.3 billion against Ecuador because Ecuador had canceled an Occidental contract over a dispute in which the tribunal agreed that Ecuadoran law had been violated. The oil company was in the wrong but was given a windfall anyway!

Among the precedents these three ICSID judges will consider are separate rulings ordering Canada to reverse bans on PCBs and on the gasoline

additive MMT, both dangerous to human health, because the bans hurt corporate investments.

Didn't meet its obligations, but so what

The former Right-wing Arena government of El Salvador in 1999 passed a law enabling "investors" to sue the country in ICSID, thereby circumventing the local judiciary, as part of its effort to encourage foreign investment. A subsequent Right-wing government yielded to public pressure in 2008 by issuing the mining-permit moratorium, and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) administrations of Mauricio Funes (elected in 2009) and Salvador Sanchez Ceren (elected in 2014) have kept the moratorium in place.

In addition to the general moratorium, the Salvadoran government cites not only environmental and health concerns specific to the mine, but also says Pacific Rim has failed to meet its legal obligations nor has it secured more than a small fraction of the local permissions it must have to develop the land it seeks to mine. Some observers fear that a ruling in favor of OceanaGold could lead to violence in a country in which 70,000 were killed in a civil war a generation ago. Luke Danielson, a researcher with the Sustainable Development Studies Group, told the *Inter Press Service* news agency:

"This mining project was re-opening a lot of the wounds that existed during the civil war, and telling a country that they have to provoke a civil conflict in order to satisfy investors is very troublesome."

Local communities are shut out of arbitration forums like ICSID, but it is community organizing that is responsible for the, so far, successful push-back against environmentally destructive mining. The National Roundtable Against Metallic Mining, or "La Mesa," is an organization of civil society

groups that has led the opposition to OceanaGold. Several corporations have prospected in El Salvador's inland highlands areas since the Right-wing Arena government passed the law allowing investors to sue in ICSID.

A now closed mine in the area, on the San Sebastian River, operated by the U.S. company Commerce Group, left behind water too dangerous to touch, never mind drink. The El Salvador Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources tested the river and found cyanide levels nine times above the maximum allowable limit and iron levels more than 1,000 times the maximum allowable limit. So polluted is the river that it runs yellow, orange or red at times.

Mining for gold is a process that uses large amounts of dangerous chemicals in the extraction. A National Geographic blogger, Vladimir Pacheco, writing about OceanaGold's proposed mine, reports:

"The cyanide-leach processes at the company's El Dorado mine will use approximately 900,000 liters of water a day. In comparison, it would take 30 years for an average Salvadoran family to use that amount of water. ... Will water needed for the project aggravate the already perilous state of water access in the country? A study by the Ministry of Environment found that only two percent of the rivers contain water that can be made fit for human consumption, or used for irrigation or recreational activities and in another study the Global Water Partnership warns that water supply in El Salvador is hovering on the threshold of 1,700 cubic meters of water per-person per-year, the upper limit for the definition of water stress."

Fighting back but at a cost

La Mesa has continued its struggle against mining and for the ability to decide its own pattern of development



despite the violence that often seems to accompany mining. Three anti-mining activists were murdered in a six-month span in 2009. A report on Salvadoran activists published last year by Common Frontiers, a Canadian coalition, said:

“The fact that the government of El Salvador stopped issuing mining permits to companies was a real boost for their movement but at the same time it brought a significant shift in Pacific Rim’s tactics towards them. The company is accused of utilizing kidnapping, intimidation and even murder against community members opposed to the mining project.”

OceanaGold, which now owns Pacific Rim, did not address these charges in its glossy *Fact Book 2014*, but did have this to say:

“We have a staunch commitment to making sure our operations enrich, empower and improve the lives of our stakeholders, by creating a positive, long-lasting legacy that respects human rights and delivers enduring benefits and opportunities beyond the life cycle of our operations.” [page 28]

The Philippines Commission on Human Rights might beg to differ. In 2011, the commission recommended

that the Filipino government revoke OceanaGold’s license to operate because of “alleged violation of the rights of the indigenous people of

The El Salvador Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources tested the river and found cyanide levels nine times above the maximum allowable limit and iron levels more than 1,000 times the maximum allowable limit. So polluted is the river that it runs yellow, orange or red at times.

Barangay Didipio in Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya,” including forced evictions. (The license was not revoked, and the mine is operating.)

La Mesa calls OceanaGold’s suit a “direct attack against the sovereignty and legitimate right of the Salvadoran

population to reject an industry that is a threat to our lives.”

This history is not likely to be under consideration by the ICSID tribunal. It is not known when it will hand down a decision, although it is likely to be at least several months. Two fundamental questions that can’t be avoided are: Does a community have the right to make decisions on its own development? Do multi-national corporations have the right to a guaranteed profit without regard to the cost imposed on communities?

That such questions must be asked—and that “no” to the first question and “yes” to the second are increasingly common answers—is emblematic of dictatorship, not democracy.

Pete Dolack writes the Systemic Disorder blog. He has been an activist with several groups.

—*Counterpunch*, Weekend Edition
September 19-21, 2014

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/09/19/clean-water-as-an-impediment-to-corporate-profits/>



Police Censorship Defied!

Mumia Speaks at Goddard College

BY THE LABOR ACTION COMMITTEE TO FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL¹

On Sunday, October 5th, 2014 world-renowned revolutionary journalist and author Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent political prisoner known as the “voice of the voiceless,” was heard loud and clear at Goddard College, his alma mater. Though confined in a Pennsylvania state prison for life without parole for a crime he didn’t commit, Mumia’s recorded commencement address was heard because Goddard College students, having invited him to speak, defied the demands of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and right-wing politicians and media that his address be cancelled and he be silenced. Goddard’s Interim President, Robert Kenny backed up the students.

Mumia’s thought-provoking address was deeply moving, philosophical and generously considerate of the students he was addressing, as he urged them to work for progressive change. It was met with a standing ovation. As Noelle Hanrahan, of *Prison Radio*, the organization that records and makes available Mumia’s commentaries, said in a report from Goddard:

“As I stood in the front of the packed Haybarn Theater, the electricity, tension, and courage was palpable. The students were graceful, celebratory, and committed. Faculty College Chair Dr. Herukhuti and College President Robert Kenny stood up to the death threats and pressure and defended their and Mumia’s right to free speech.” (See, “Educate to Liberate,” at prisonradio.org)

Mumia’s presentation at Goddard is reprinted in its entirety in this issue of *Socialist Viewpoint*.

Students defy the mudslide of lies

To make this speech happen, Goddard students and the College’s President had to withstand a veritable mudslide of endless lies and innuendo against Mumia. The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), the leading cop “union” in the U.S., blasted Goddard College for its failure to cancel Mumia’s presentation, and denounced Mumia as “a remorseless killer who murdered Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner.” The Vermont Troopers Association (Goddard College is in Vermont), and the PA Department of Corrections chimed in with similar denunciations, though the Corrections Department head John Wetzel was forced to admit that he couldn’t deny Mumia’s right of free speech, much as he would have liked to.

Perhaps the most vile and opportunistic attack came from PA’s junior Senator, Patrick Toomey, a right-wing Republican who opposes abortion rights and government regulation, sucks up to the barons of finance capital, and undermines public schools with support for privatization and charters, among other things. Toomey’s letter to Goddard’s President fairly reeks of the worst falsehoods about Mumia’s case, that he “never expressed any regret for his heinous crime” (he always maintained his innocence), that multiple witnesses saw him “shoot multiple bullets into Officer Faulkner’s back, chest and face” (all witnesses who claimed to see the shooting either admitted they lied under police pressure, or were discredited later for lying), and that “three other eyewitnesses heard Abu-Jamal brag that he had shot Officer Faulkner” (a total after-the-fact

fabrication by cops and prosecutors, later admitted to be a lie by the civilian so-called “witnesses”).

Toomey even threw in the total fabrication that Mumia had “smirked” at Faulkner’s wife Maureen in court when Faulkner’s bloodied shirt was displayed—Mumia wasn’t even present in court at that time, having been excluded by the racist judge from his own trial!

The worst may be yet to come

Something even worse than Toomey’s lying rant is now being prepared. Philadelphia cops had the nerve to hold a vigil at 13th and Locust in Philadelphia, the site of the shooting of Officer Faulkner, which was most likely a police hit on one of their own (evidence shows that Faulkner was talking to the Feds about the rampant corruption of cops with the mob in center city Philadelphia). And a group of police officers holding pictures of Daniel Faulkner lined the entrance to Goddard on the day of Mumia’s address.

This sort of political mobilization of police has mushroomed repeatedly around Mumia Abu-Jamal (and others such as American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier, also in prison for a crime he didn’t commit), and a major escalation is now in the works. Egged on by the FOP cops in PA, suddenly there is a law in the Pennsylvania legislature designed to silence political prisoners like Mumia. As the Philadelphia Enquirer snarled,

“A day after Mumia Abu-Jamal addressed graduates of a Vermont college, a [PA] House committee advanced a bill to give the family of the police officer he was convicted of killing a way to shut him up.”

This blatantly unconstitutional bill, Signed into law by Governor Corbett, October 21, 2014, lets crime victims or their relatives seek injunctive relief “if the criminals that harmed them seek publicity from the crime in any way.” The bill’s author, Republican Mike Vereb, said it would allow crime victims or prosecutors “to bring a civil action to halt conduct by an offender if it causes the victim or the victim’s family severe mental anguish.” (*Philadelphia Enquirer*, October 6-7, 2014)

Silencing Mumia has long been the system’s goal

These outrageous attacks on Mumia’s free speech rights, and callous misrepresentations of the facts of Mumia’s case are not an accident: they are part of a long-standing, orchestrated attempt to silence Mumia, if not by the death penalty—that failed—then by other means. This police-driven system is determined to defend its frame-up of a victim of police racism, corruption, and murder (including the attempted murder of Mumia himself by police, and the murder of their own, which was likely Faulkner’s actual fate).

In 1994, after months of recordings by Noelle Hanrahan of *Prison Radio*, and several on air promotions by *National Public Radio* for “All Things Considered,” *NPR* executives abruptly cancelled Mumia’s “Live From Death Row” series of commentaries. *NPR* cancelled the planned series following an attack on the floor of Congress by then Senator Bob Dole, following an intensive lobbying campaign of lies by the FOP. Mumia’s commentaries were later taken up by *Democracy Now!*, on *Pacifica Radio*, although the carefully recorded commentaries due to air on *NPR* remain locked in their vaults—

silenced, by public radio! (See the book, *All Things Censored*, Seven Stories Press, 2000).

Oakland school board capitulates to police censorship

Earlier this year, the FOP struck again with an attack on the Oakland School system for a web site called “Urban Dreams,” which consisted of course material posted by teachers, and included one curriculum that compared the suppression of M.L. King’s last year of antiwar and other radical commentaries with the suppression of Mumia Abu-Jamal’s writings. *Fox News* snapped to attention with an on-air denunciation of the Oakland School Board, which was valiantly opposed by Johanna Fernandez of Educators for Mumia (EMAJ) in a *Fox* interview. Next, the School Board itself snapped to attention and took down the entire site (containing much course material from numerous teachers). Oakland teachers continue the struggle to reverse this police-censorship of the schools.

At bottom, these attacks on Mumia are an attempt to shore-up the fragile facade of the whole criminal “justice” system, which uses frame-ups, mass incarceration, militarization of police, and outright murder of Black and Latino youth as the first line of defense of a racist, capitalist system. Just as it was (and still is) during the rise of the labor movement, these attacks are directed against the masses—all of whom are potential suspects and revolutionaries.

The truth that unravels the lies

Today, FOP, media outlets like *Fox News*, and politicians of both capitalist parties are desperate to rescue the system from the bad publicity of police murder of young Black and Latino

males, such as Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO, Andy Lopez in Santa Rosa, CA, and so many others. But, tagged from the beginning as a revolutionary danger to the system, Mumia Abu-Jamal stands for all these victims as a conscious and vocal survivor of every lie and injustice that could be thrown at him. To us, Mumia is a symbol of the truth that unravels all their lies.

The growing police state in the U.S. is an essential part of an inherently oppressive and exploitative capitalist system, which is now increasingly on edge about its own survival. Officially sanctioned police review boards, petitioning the Justice Department for redress of grievances, and other reformist measures do not cut it. Working people and the oppressed must fight back with whatever means are available. Photographing police in the act of crimes and abuses has proven useful. The Labor Action Committee To Free Mumia Abu-Jamal uniquely sees action by the working class—such as the West Coast port shut down by longshore workers to free Mumia in 1999, and the unauthorized teach-in on Mumia and the death penalty held by Oakland teachers in the same year—as the way forward in the struggle to free Mumia, and others like him.

For the most thorough and up-to-date analysis of the fraudulent case against Mumia Abu-Jamal, see Rachel Wolkenstein, “The Issue Is Mumia Abu-Jamal: Innocent and Framed” found at <http://www.rachelwolkenstein.net/>

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Goddard College Commencement Speech

BY MUMIA ABU-JAMAL,



Mumia Abu-Jamal

Dear Fellow Goddard-ites, Students, Graduates, Parents, Professors,

I thank you for your kind invitation to join you in voice today. I've been away from Goddard College perhaps longer than most of you have been alive.

I last walked on campus during the late '70s. But although it was undoubtedly quite a long time ago, it still sits in memory, and sometimes even visits in dreams of the funky atmosphere that suffused the campus like a cloud of exhaled marijuana smoke. What really moved me however, was the green life, the abundance of grass, trees standing like ancient sentinels. The majestic mountains of Vermont which possessed a beauty that was, to a guy from the city, simply breathtaking. I remember with crystal clarity walking through woods back to our dorms, Third World Studies, and feeling pure rapture in the presence of those trees. How many centuries had those trees stood on this earth? My mind looked back to Indians who must've trod through these very same woods; my steps touching the ground that once crunched under their moccasin feet. Not only have these

surviving remnants of their once great numbers been vanished from the land of their fathers, but the reverence with which they held these lands, their collective embrace of Mother Earth, has been vanished as well.

That living immensity, more sacred than anything built by man, has never left me and rises up like a phoenix whenever I think of the campus. But of course what really matters here is not my experience, but yours. This is your commencement and as such, I will dwell on the world that you are about to enter into in habit, and true to Goddard's founding ideals, hopefully transform.

As we all know Goddard is rightfully famous for its non-traditional teaching methods focus. Here students stand at the center of the educational endeavor and they are urged and expected to follow that vibe in their hearts. That which gives them passion to determine not just what they will study, but how those studies can have impact and meaning in the larger society—Y'know, this aint a cookie cutter school. Goddard, deeply influenced by the ideas of John Dewey (1859-1952), strives to reach that happy and singular medium between the teacher and the taught. With one exploring with the other how best to achieve a meaningful resolution to questions that arise in the life of the mind. Quoting Dewey: "Education is not preparation for Life. It is Life itself."

Dear graduates, never have words such as these been truer to the hour that is upon us. For the nation is in deep trouble—largely because old thinking both domestically, and globally, has led us into the morass that the nation now faces. Which may be encapsulated by references to place names that ring in our minds: Gaza, Ferguson, and Iraq again! These are

some of the challenges that abide in the world, which it will be your destiny to try to analyze and resolve. As students of Goddard you know that these challenges are not easy, but they must be faced and addressed.

The Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire, and his groundbreaking *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* posits the power of literacy to transform psychology, to deepen and broaden one's place in the world. Moreover, when one seeks to interrogate one's radical beliefs, it draws one deeper into contact with the meaning of social change and social transformation. One is changed—the prerequisite to social change.

Goddard, because of its size and orientation, has given students the time and attention to find the focus to answer questions that few other places have even dared to entertain. In many ways it is issues such as these that make Goddard, Goddard—questions of power, of politics, of race, of gender, of place. Questions about where one stands in the world, and how to move, act—interact in a world awash in complexity. Essentially how does a young person, or for that matter even an older one, looking at the vast wide world with a quiet sense of terror, have a voice amidst that monstrous din? How does she find that voice that can create space to think, to be, to grow?

We know that it must come from the place within, that which moves you, that which stirs you, that which is your truest, deepest self. Goddard, unlike most such institutions of higher learning, quietly asks that you listen to and interrogate that voice, and when appropriate, amplify it. For who knows? Within that deepest you may dwell the very voice that is resonating within the nation if not the very world itself. Here social change and social transformation forms the *raison d'être* of Goddard.

We need new questions for the world of the 21st century. But more importantly we need new answers. We live in a world where massive wars can be launched by rumors and innuendo. Where the material interests of corporations are superior to the interests of working people, and remember corporations are people—so sayeth the Supreme Court. Where the ecological threats to fresh water supplies, clean air, and the environment in American cities, pulls challenges that seem beyond arcane.

Did I not say that we need new thinking? The present social, political, ecological and global course is, to say the least, unsustainable. Perhaps some of you, new graduates of Goddard, will think up ways to forestall some of the challenges facing the living and generations unborn.

I noted earlier my reverie in the woods of Goddard that exquisite freshness and the wintery air, the nighttime respiration of hundreds of magnificent evergreen trees has refreshed my mind even when miles and decades away from Goddard's sweet cool earth. Our cities, built during the heights of the industrial age and now engulfed in post-industrial *ennui* badly need a greening. Areas should be set aside where children and mothers can breathe and remember air loaded with

freshness delivered by green life, not air-conditioned. Think of the myriad of problems that beset this land and strive to make it better. That's Dewey's vision, and Goddard's.

Let me say something that I've never said before. When I came to Goddard, I was intimidated. Although teachers and adults told me that I could do the work, I rarely believed them. I felt woe-fully unprepared. But guess what? Goddard gave me confidence and I never lost that feeling. When I returned to Goddard many years later, I was a man on Death Row, with a date to die. I was able to transfer credits from Continuing Education and my final paper utilized the writings of Franz Fanon and Ignacio Martín-Baró, to examine the concepts both in liberation psychology and liberation theology. Only at Goddard. Only at Goddard!

Goddard reawakened in me my love of learning. In my mind I left Death Row to travel to France, where Fanon studied psychiatry. And on to Blida hospital, north of Algiers, where he practiced and later joined the Algerian revolution. By studying Martín-Baró, I traveled to El Salvador, where he worked as a priest and psychologist, teaching literacy to peasants when the nation groaned under military terror, supported by El Norte, the U.S. Empire. Who were these figures? Well, Fanon

was born in the Caribbean Island of Martinique, then a colony of France. When he witnessed the oppression of the Arabs in Algeria he felt compelled to join the revolution on the side of what he called "the wretched of the earth." Ignacio Martín-Baró was among six Jesuit priests, a housekeeper and her daughter slain by the U.S. trained Atlacatl Battalion, a notorious Salvadoran death squad.

Goddard supported those "trips abroad," if only in the mind, and I thank the school and many of my friends and alums there immensely for opening a door closed for decades. Goddard allowed me to really study what interested and moved me—revolutionary movements—and through that doorway, history, psychology, politics, and of course economics. In one of the most repressive environments on earth, Death Row, Goddard allowed me to study and research human liberation and anti-colonial struggles on two continents: Africa and Latin Central America. I thank you for that grand opportunity.

For you graduates, your studies—visits to lands beyond your own—were done to give you both insights and confidence to work in the world, to try to create social change. Your job isn't how to get a job. It's to make a difference. I thank my friends at Goddard for inviting me back.

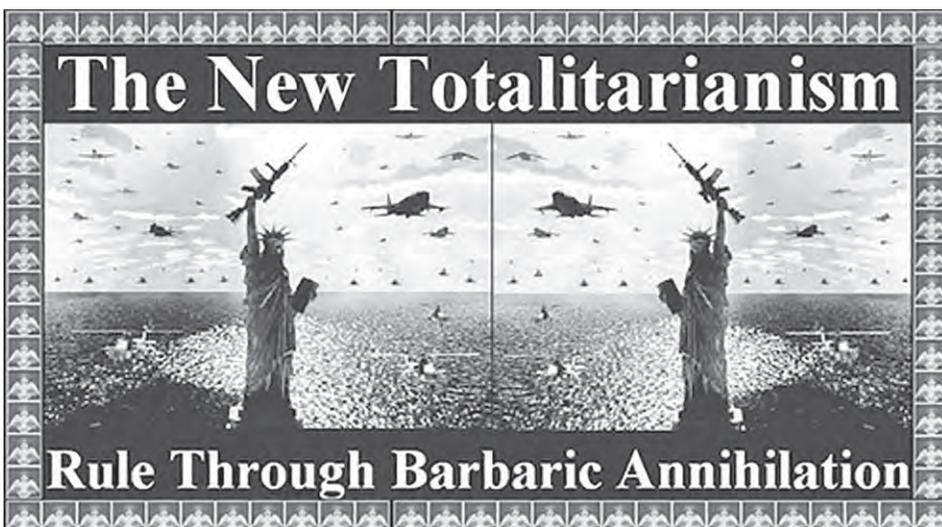
If it's done for you half of what it's done for me, I assure you, you will have been well served. Now take what you know and apply it in the real world. Help be the change you're seeking to make.

I thank you all.

For the class of 1996, Goddard, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

—PrisonRadio.org, October 4, 2014

<http://www.prisonradio.org/media/audio/mumia/transcript-mumia-abu-jamals-goddard-college-commencement-speech>



Another ‘Mumia Rule’

BY MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

Anyone even remotely familiar with my case knows about the “Mumia Rule.” That’s when the court or agency changes its rule or precedent to go against me.

When Amnesty International wrote about my case, that was its essential focus: that laws and precedents that applied to other cases, would be changed when it came to me.

In fact, when my *habeas corpus* case went before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, one judge, in dissent (Judge Ambro) essentially said, “I know of no reason why we don’t apply our precedents to Abu-Jamal.”

There was one reason: The Mumia Rule.

Now, the Mumia Rule has been enacted into law, the so-called Victim Revictimization Act, signed into law by unconstitutional Tom—Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett.

What makes this remarkable is that Corbett, a former attorney general, knows perfectly well that this is an unconstitutional law, in violation of the 1st Amendment to the Constitution. An unconstitutional law is like no law at all. He knows this for he’s a lawyer first.

Interestingly, he’s so much a politician, that he was busy running for governor when, under his very nose, children were being raped and abused in the Penn State scandal. As attorney general, he was on Penn State’s board of trustees at the time these rapes and molestations were happening, and did next to nothing, until the scandal broke.

Oh! He reportedly received a generous contribution from the chairman, and other board members of the foundation run by Jerry Sandusky, the central figure in the Penn State scandal.

Nice job, Tom. Too busy picking up campaign contributions to protect the kids?

Every politician and every lawyer who supported this so-called law did so by knowingly violating their oath of office to “protect and defend” the PA Constitution, Article 1; Section 7; and the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

They took an oath to honor the constitution—not their campaign contributors. They took an oath to protect the constitutional rights of all Pennsylvanians—not just their funders—the FOP (Fraternal Order of Pigs).

By violating their oaths they bring disrepute on their oath and office. By signing a law they knew to be unconstitutional they departed from the realm of lawmakers and became constitutional outlaws.

They passed a Mumia Rule—yes—but the damage they have done is greater to themselves than to me.

—PrisonRadio.org, October 22, 2014

Ebola and the Real Health Crisis in America

BY MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

With the death of Mr. Thomas Eric Duncan shortly after his arrival from Liberia, West Africa, the Ebola crisis has burst onto millions of news screens, generating deep levels of fear and xenophobia.

To be sure, Ebola is a serious health concern, for it has a 70 percent mortality rate (the African term, “Ebola,” named for a river in Congo after the first known outbreak in 1976, evokes the fear and anxiety of the foreign, but it is a tropical disease best known as haemorrhagic fever, where internal organs and systems break down, leading to massive bleeding).

But, to beat back the fear, public officials have been playing down the

threats posed by the virus, often armed with little more than hope and false confidence.

For politics, often more imagery than reality, is a poor barrier against the seriousness of viruses, disease and death.

This isn’t about the Ebola crisis, it’s about the American healthcare crisis, made possible by a flawed business model that prioritizes profit above all other things: even life itself.

Consider this: when Mr. Duncan first entered Texas Presbyterian Hospital, he was interviewed by a screener, prescribed antibiotics, and sent home. That person, (the screener) was, more likely than not, not a medi-

cally-trained healthcare professional, but a receptionist, perhaps armed with a checklist to cover. Chances are, she was perhaps the lowest-paid staff, until one considers the janitorial workers.

This business model, one followed by most institutions in America, is now exposed as ineffective, dangerous and the least health-conscious.

That was a business decision, driven by the bottom line, of money—not life.

Similarly, the recent crisis has exposed how vulnerable nurses are in this system, for the business perceives them as less valuable than doctors. Hence, they are paid less, trained less, protected less—and worked more.

Who spends more time with ailing patients; doctors or nurses? Who has the closest physical contact with patients?

But according to published accounts, nurses had their necks exposed, and when they complained, were told to use tape to cover up.

This is a system that protects profits—and prestige—not people!

For doctors get the most protection—nurses, the least.

When this latest Ebola outbreak first struck West Africa, the U.S. mobilized soldiers to go there.

Cuba, which has advanced biotechnical medical experience with tropical diseases, sent over 1,000 doctors, to help heal people.

Cuba, little, socialist Cuba, has sent over 135,000 healthcare professionals to 154 countries—more than the UN's World Health Organization (WHO).

Their Latin American Medical School in Havana trains thousands of poor medical students, from all over the world—for free.

Not much of a business model.

But one hell of a human model.

—*PrisonRadio.org*, October 15, 2014

Who is Christopher Abruzzo?

A STATEMENT BY LORENZO JOHNSON

For most people, the name Christopher Abruzzo is unknown. Although a state official for over two decades, his name is not a household word. But, to me, I'll never forget that name; he was the Pennsylvania Deputy Attorney General who presided over the false and malicious prosecution of two innocent men in 1996. How do I know that? I'm one of those men.

In 1997, AG Abruzzo allowed false testimony to be given repeatedly to a jury; testimony a new release of hidden records now shows, nineteen years later, that both the AG and police knew was false and misleading.

Unfortunately, the jury didn't know. If they knew what was withheld, there never could have been a false conviction or even an arrest.

But Abruzzo was ambitious. He wanted to make a case. He went to the extent of telling the jury that the chief witness had no reason to lie. What Abruzzo failed to do was tell the jury and defense lawyers that this witness was a suspect in this crime. He made a case; a bad one, a corrupt one.

Now, Abruzzo's name has surfaced again. This time, as a part of a government scandal of officials, circulating sexually explicit and racist materials *via* email.

Abruzzo accepted and sent dozens of such messages on his office computer; a violation of OAG guidelines. Pornographic emails? Hundreds of them?

What does this say about Abruzzo's judgment? His thinking? His character? But remember, he prosecuted two young men, Lorenzo Johnson and Corey Walker, with false testimony. What kind of character is that?

Free The Innocent

— October 7, 2014

Contribute to the campaign at:

<http://www.freelorenzojohnson.org/how-can-i-help.html>

Sign Lorenzo Johnson's Freedom Petition at:

<http://www.freelorenzojohnson.org/sign-the-petition.html>

www.FreeLorenzoJohnson.org

Write to Lorenzo Johnson at:

Lorenzo Johnson #DF1036

SCI Mahanoy

301 Morea Road

Frackville, PA 17932



Conviction to Convict

BY LINN WASHINGTON, JR.

Part I: The scandal hidden inside Pennsylvania sex scandal

Hidden inside the scandal involving pornographic emails currently rocking the top reaches of Pennsylvania's state government that has cast a shadow over PA Governor Tom Corbett and the state's judiciary including a state Supreme Court member, is another explosive scandal.

That hidden scandal involves the persecution of a PA inmate by prosecutors from the PA Attorney General's office—the same office that exposed the pornographic emails.

This inmate won court ordered release from a deeply flawed murder conviction after serving 16-years of a life sentence. But this inmate was forced to return to prison due to actions by PA's current Attorney General.

PA Governor Corbett headed the state AG's office when that office handled this inmate's tainted murder trial. Corbett later served as AG when that office vigorously opposed appellate relief for this inmate.

This hidden scandal exposes the pattern of PA state government officials blithely tolerating outrageously unjust criminal convictions. This hidden scandal also exposes the penchant of prosecutors to fight to preserve convictions obviously tainted by official misconduct.

Too many false convictions in PA and elsewhere involve documented misconduct by police and/or prosecutors—misconduct often covered-up for decades. This misconduct includes authorities improperly withholding evidence of innocence at trial—a gross violation of constitutional fair-trial rights. Withheld evidence is a core issue in the case of that persecuted PA inmate.

The sex-tinged scandal now rocking state government in Pennsylvania involves emails containing sexually explicit images (often accompanied by raunchy commentary) exchanged over state-owned computers by then ranking members of the state's Attorney General's office.

Conservative Republican Governor Corbett headed the AG's office when his ranking AG office members engaged in eager exchanges of those pornographic emails. (No evidence released to date links Corbett to pornographic emails.)

Fallout from this sex email scandal has forced the resignation of former AG office prosecutors, including a few who held top posts in Corbett's gubernatorial administration.

Those resignations included one man who Corbett appointed to the state's Parole Board—the body that determines prison release for inmates including those convicted of sex crimes. One former AG prosecutor, who was serving as a part-time county prosecutor, has resigned. And another former AG prosecutor resigned from the upscale law firm where he worked. However, another former AG prosecutor identified in the sex email scandal, who currently works for the DA's Office in Philadelphia, has refused to resign.

The man Corbett appointed to head the PA State Police—Frank Noonan—was identified as receiving 300-plus of those pornographic emails. But Corbett accepted representations from Noonan, a former AG criminal division chief turned PA's top cop, that Noonan neither opened nor forwarded pornographic emails. Yet, as a *Philadelphia Daily News* columnist noted, "Noonan apparently also never told Corbett he received" the explicit emails.

A spin-off of the investigation into misuse of state computers to exchange pornography revealed that PA Supreme Court Justice Seamus McCafferty sent sexually explicit emails this year to his brother, a judge in Philadelphia, according to published reports. AG investigators have informed the high court's Chief Justice that other judges and court personnel have shared graphic emails.

The scandal hidden within this porno email scandal involves the man Corbett appointed to head the state's Department of Environmental Protection—Chris Abruzzo—who resigned from that post after his public identification as a participant in the email scandal. (A top Abruzzo aide at the DEP—who was also in the AG's office—also resigned due to the email scandal.)

The scandal involving Abruzzo does not involve the scandalous elevation of this career criminal prosecutor with scant qualifications in environmental protection.

Abruzzo had caused a brief stir on the eve of his confirmation to head the DEP when he testified that he was unaware that climate change can cause environmental harm. Abruzzo's stated ignorance on an issue fundamental to environmental protection did not stop PA's Republican controlled State Senate from approving Abruzzo, who had served as Corbett's deputy chief of staff.

This other scandal surrounding Abruzzo involves his role as lead prosecutor in the controversial 1997 murder conviction of Lorenzo "Cat" Johnson. The state AG's office, during Corbett's first service as state AG, handled the prosecution of Johnson and a co-defendant for a 1995 murder in

Harrisburg, the capital city of Pennsylvania. No physical evidence or confession connected Johnson to that murder.

Documentation withheld by PA authorities during Johnson's murder trial confirm Johnson's alibi. Once suppressed documentation has confirmed that police coerced witnesses including the only witness who said Johnson was near the murder scene. Prosecutors never claimed Johnson was the killer only that he was present when the killing occurred.

Johnson has persistently claimed he was in New York City at the time of that 1995 fatal shooting. Supporters of Johnson claim he was arrested only after he rejected months-long police pressure to be an informant about drug dealing in Harrisburg.

The PA AG's office constantly battled against Johnson's appeals in state and federal courts despite the mounting (previously withheld) evidence of misconduct by police before Johnson's trial and prosecutors during his murder trial. Abruzzo failed to disclose a plea deal favorable to a witness against Johnson according to withheld evidence now included in Johnson's appeals.

In October 2011 the federal Third Circuit Court of Appeals overturned Johnson's conviction, stating in part that the "evidence simply does not permit any reasonable fact finder to find Johnson guilty on charges of aiding and abetting first degree murder."

Johnson left prison on bond in January 2012. He returned to his family in New York City, got a job and even engaged in public speaking about wrongful convictions including at law school classes.

But a last minute appeal by PA AG's office to the U.S. Supreme Court produced a reversal of that Third Circuit release. That U.S. Supreme Court ruling came without the standard procedure of permitting response from the defense before and after that ruling.

Current PA AG Kathleen Kane, a Democrat, has pursued the anti-Johnson/keep-a-conviction stance of her Republican AG predecessors, Corbett and Mike Fisher, who is now a judge on the federal Third Circuit Appeals Court. Kane is the AG who released information about the pornographic emails involving Corbett associates and PA state court judges.

That May 2012 U.S. Supreme Court ruling forced Johnson's return to prison in June 2012—after Johnson had experienced six months of freedom. Johnson continues his appeals to confirm his innocence and win release.

A year after Johnson's voluntary return to prison in 2012, the PA Innocence Project issued a statement condemning his re-imprisonment that concluded with the observation that "this tale of cruel tease of freedom is a heartbreak many would be unable to fathom."

Lorenzo Johnson is not exclusive in mistreatment from police, prosecutors and the judiciary.

A little known death-row case Corbett's AG office fought also spotlights the defend-the-indefensible stance prosecutors too often pursue.

The AG's office has opposed new trial appeals from inmate Roderick Johnson who challenges his conviction by using previously withheld official documents showing that police and prosecutors in Reading, PA coddled the drug dealer whose testimony secured Johnson's first-degree murder conviction. (Rod Johnson and Lorenzo Johnson are not related.)

Those Reading Police Department documents, improperly withheld by Reading police and prosecutors for nearly a decade, describe the drug dealer central to Johnson's conviction as smoking marijuana with a Reading detective. Documents detail that detective supplying that dealer with drugs. Documents also detail Reading detectives returning that dealer's stolen safe

despite it containing crack cocaine, cash and guns. Additionally, documents reveal Reading's then top prosecutor allowing that dealer to keep his gun permit, despite that dealer's guns being involved in numerous shooting incidents...incidents that never led to that dealer's arrest.

The disturbing documents unearthed in the Rod Johnson case provide ample evidence of improprieties by police and prosecutors. Those documents should have at least led state authorities to agree to a new trial—thus fulfilling their duties to ensure justice. But the state AG's office that prosecuted Rod Johnson has battled to block appeals for a new trial under Corbett and now Kane.

In Pennsylvania, too many state officials see sideshows like the sex emails as more important than injustices endured by inmates like Lorenzo Johnson, Roderick Johnson and Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The same Republican dominated state legislature that has turned a blind-eye to resource draining efforts by the state AG's office to deny justice to the imprisoned recently approved a measure to allow prosecutors to use lawsuits to silence Free Speech rights of inmates that crime victims deem as causing those victims "mental anguish."

The ACLU has condemned this hastily approved legislation as a blatant violation of First Amendment rights.

Part II: The PA legislative lynch mob

The serious injustice endured by Pennsylvania prison inmate Lorenzo "Cat" Johnson, detailed in Part I (above) is the subject of a website and numerous other postings on the Internet. Those Internet postings detail gross misconduct by police and prosecutors that have kept Johnson imprisoned for a murder that evidence indicates he neither committed nor had anything to do with.

Those websites supporting Johnson's release, which contain documents and other evidence detailing Johnson's wrongful conviction, are in danger of being wiped under terms of legislation recently approved by Pennsylvania's Republican-dominated House and Senate.

That legislation, fast-tracked through the legislature in an election-timed attempt to boost the hugely unpopular Republican Governor Corbett's flagging re-election bid, allows victims of crime to go to court for an injunction against the conduct of convicts "which perpetuates the continuing effects of the crime on the victim." This new law applies to all convicts: those currently incarcerated and even those who have completed their sentences.

This law gives prosecutors (state and country) the power to act on behalf of victims who simply claim they are suffering "mental anguish."

In the case of Lorenzo Johnson, the state AG's office whose misconduct perpetuates his unjust incarceration is empowered under this new law to silence the websites that detail the misconduct of AG office prosecutors.

Pennsylvania's new free-speech suppression law was signed into law by Corbett. "Nobody has the right to continually taunt the victims of their violent crimes," he says.

However, the ACLU of Pennsylvania has blasted this bill, noting that it "completely undermines the fundamental value of free speech" found in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

While this hastily conceived and passed bill gives unusual new powers to victims and prosecutors to limit the voice and activities of the incarcerated and those who have completed their prison terms, the bill's stunning lack of specifics creates further problems for its "fair" implementation. The lack of objective standards provided in its lan-

guage for proving "mental anguish" leaves enormous latitude for abusive implementation, critics contend.

The state ACLU's letter urging rejection of the law noted, victims of crime "have existing legal avenues available when they are truly being harassed and abused by an offender." That ACLU letter also noted that the new law could curtail activities by inmate advocacy groups, like the 200-year-old Pennsylvania Prison Society.

The PPS is an organization founded to monitor issues related to prisons and prisoners including ex-offenders. The PPS work of exposing problems inside prisons and also persons released from prison is ripe for target by a crime victim claiming to suffer "mental anguish." Imagine the irony of this new law silencing the PPS—a venerable organization actually founded by some of the very people who drafted the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution!

The same day that the state's lower chamber approved this speech-curtailing bill, thousands of high school students in Philadelphia had their dreams of attending college assaulted by lack of funding arising from deep public school funding cuts initiated by Corbett, who has been pouring money into the state's prison system.

The cash-strapped Philadelphia School District did not provide money for most high school students to take a prep test for the PSAT until hours before administering that test. That late notice of the test date left students unprepared and/or unavailable to take that test. The PSAT is a critical test that helps students prepare for the formal SAT. Most universities require high SAT scores for admission.

Over one-third of the 51,000-plus inmates in state prisons come from Philadelphia. Most of those Philadelphia inmates come from neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, unemployment and now featur-

ing schools closed by Philadelphia officials due to lack of funds. Many of the students caught in the PSAT fiasco live in neighborhoods that feed into the state's overcrowded prison system.

Public education advocates in Philadelphia link Corbett's public education funding cuts directly to the state's notorious classroom-to-cell pipeline. Those advocates could now have even their advocacy silenced by the new bill should some crime victim or alleged crime victim claim such advocacy causes him or her "mental anguish."

The bill known as the "Revictimization Relief Act" would impact state inmate activist/authors like Robert Saleem Holbrook.

Holbrook is one of the 500-plus teen-lifers languishing in Pennsylvania prisons. Pennsylvania imprisons the largest population in the U.S. of persons sentenced to life terms for crimes committed while a teen. Like most teen-lifers, Holbrook did not commit the murder that took place on his 16th birthday, which led to his life sentence. (In Pennsylvania life means in prison until death with no possibility of parole.)

Issues related to teen-lifers—from the penal propriety of permanently imprisoning children, to the enormous costs of caring for elderly inmates—are hotly debated nationwide. This is the very essence of free speech. But under Pennsylvania's draconian new law, an expert on that form of injustice, like Holbrook, can be silenced.

The U.S. Supreme Court outlawed sentencing teens to mandatory life in 2012, but in October 2013, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that teen-lifers sentenced before that federal high court ruling are not entitled to any relief from their life sentences—a ruling Holbrook has condemned in his writings.

"When judges and politicians allow the politics of injustice and vengeance to supersede justice then the prisoners

impacted by these decisions become political prisoners,” Holbrook wrote in a November 2013 essay.

Pennsylvania prison authorities placed Holbrook in solitary confinement in early September 2014 despite their having no documented infractions by him to justify this action. That solitary confinement, curiously, came in the wake of a federal judge rejecting attempts by prison authorities to kill a lawsuit Holbrook filed against prison authorities for their censorship of human rights literature.

Philadelphia’s police union, the Fraternal Order of Police, spearheaded the speech suppression law as part of its incessant campaign to silence activist/author Mumia Abu-Jamal. Governor Corbett signed this bill into law at the downtown Philadelphia site where Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner was killed in 1981—the incident that put Abu-Jamal in prison.

The FOP exploded in late September when news circulated that students at Goddard College in Vermont had selected Abu-Jamal as the speaker for their early October 2014 commencement ceremony. Abu-Jamal had attended Goddard in the early 1970s and he later graduated from that institution in 1996 *via* a correspondence course completed while he was on death row (Abu-Jamal’s death sentence was later vacated by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, and he is now serving a life sentence without chance of parole.)

Curiously, Abu-Jamal delivered a Goddard commencement address in 2008 without much of a ruckus from the FOP or politicians like Pennsylvania U.S. Senator Pat Toomey, a Tea Party Republican who has castigated Goddard about Abu-Jamal. But in 2008, brutality by police was not generating bad publicity nationwide. Now, thanks to incidents like the fatal shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and a growing number of

phone videos documenting an epidemic of police brutality, the issue of police militarization and brutality is on the front burner. Furthermore, in 2008, Governor Corbett was not running for re-election as he is this year, where he currently trails in the polls by double digits.

The FOP and other conservatives have for decades unleashed lynchmob-like onslaughts designed first to get Abu-Jamal executed, and then, since that was no longer possible, aimed at squelching this incarcerated journalist’s free speech, fair trial and other constitutional rights.

**This hidden scandal
exposes the pattern of
PA state government
officials blithely tolerat-
ing outrageously unjust
criminal convictions.**

A mid-1990s effort to block book writing by Abu-Jamal resulted in a federal appeals court ruling confirming that Abu-Jamal and all prisoners have a First Amendment right to write. One of the three judges in that unanimous appeals court ruling was Samuel Alito, who now serves on the U.S. Supreme Court, where he is staunchly in the court’s conservative camp.

That mid-1990s campaign also evidenced a gross assault on Abu-Jamal’s constitutional trial rights.

Pennsylvania prison authorities, under FOP pressure during that book publishing attack, opened Abu-Jamal’s correspondence with his attorneys and forwarded that mail to the office of then Governor Tom Ridge. That ’98 federal appeals ruling questioned why prison authorities had sent Abu-Jamal’s legal mail, which is supposed to have protected status, to the governor’s office.

Ridge issued an improper death warrant on the eve of a critical 1995 appeal hearing for Abu-Jamal based on information gleaned of Abu-Jamal’s illegally opened legal mail. While that official interference helped sabotage Abu-Jamal’s appeal hearing, by giving the biased Judge Albert Sabo an excuse to push the hearing forward and not allow delays for subpoenaing important witnesses, state and federal courts have refused to rule that deliberate disruption as an improper rights-robbing violation.

This history of depriving Abu-Jamal of his constitutional rights began at an early age.

In October 1968 Philadelphia police beat Abu-Jamal to a pulp when he was among hundreds exercising protest rights violations during the Philadelphia appearance of then presidential candidate George Wallace—the staunch segregationist governor of Alabama.

A news account of that Wallace rally stated that Philadelphia police had made the Alabama segregationist candidate feel “right at home” as police “wrestled and man-handled black and white protestors outside” the Wallace event. Wallace supporters assailed the protestors. But, that news article noted, horse mounted Philadelphia police only attacked the protestors as local Wallace’s supporters “roared their approval.”

That news account in *The Philadelphia Tribune* stated that when 14-year-old Abu-Jamal was hauled into court on false charges filed by the police who had beat him “his face was a mass of bruises.” Those charges were withdrawn in exchange for Abu-Jamal’s parents promising not to sue the Philadelphia Police Department for the assault on their son.

Philadelphia’s then FOP president, who also headed the national FOP, had endorsed the candidacy of Wallace. That Wallace endorsement outraged black Philadelphia police officers.

Tribune news articles detail the protests by black police against the FOP and its president. Black Philly cops in 1968 also battled the FOP over that organization's reflexive backing of officers accused of police brutality—a battle that is still being fought today.

This latest speech suppression law, which was introduced by Mike Vereb, a Republican legislator from a Philadelphia suburb, has ignited widespread criticism.

One critic is Tony Norman, a columnist for the conservative libertarian *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* newspaper, who, it should be noted, is convinced of Abu-Jamal's guilt.

"One can sympathize with the outrage generated by Abu-Jamal's invitation to speak without supporting [Vereb's] goofy effort to shred the First Amendment," Norman wrote recently. "Taking away anyone's right to free speech in a knee-jerk attempt to silence Abu-Jamal is a threat to us all."

—*This Can't Be Happening*, October 20/21, 2014

Part I: <http://thiscantbehappening.net/node/2508>

Part II: <http://thiscantbehappening.net/node/2518>



Kevin Cooper

Failed

BY KEVIN COOPER

Kevin Cooper is an innocent man on San Quentin's Death Row in California. He continues to struggle for exoneration and to abolish the death penalty in the whole U.S.

For centuries certain groups of people have been speaking to other groups of people concerning our humanity. This is still being done in order to try and convince those people to end the death penalty.

Yet it appears that no matter how long, or how hard, certain people tried to speak to other people about humanity, if they don't want to be spoken to, or don't see what they are doing as inhumane, or in fact they *are* inhumane themselves, they won't listen.

Nor can one speak to immoral people about morality, or shameless people about feeling shame for their acts. Nor can certain people speak to others about having a conscience when they are without a conscience.

Why? Because most, if not all death penalty supporters are coldblooded and coldhearted and mean spirited people! People like politicians, and those who support those types of people with that type of mindset! One can't speak to hypocrites about hypocrisy, because those words, like all the others, fall on deaf ears.

Not all, but the majority, of death penalty supporters in this day and age are Republicans, and every type of poll speaks to this fact.

Yet the Republican Party as a whole claims to be against the government. Especially any government that interferes in anyone's life, or tells them what to do, or what to think, or how to act, or what to believe or what not to believe. They want government out of people's lives!

That is until it comes to the penalty of death in this country, which can't take place without the involvement and approval of the government, be it state or federal.

The death penalty is at a crossroads in this country, especially in certain states. This is because it has been proven that the death penalty in America is broken. It's inhumane and downright torturous to the condemned who, by the way, happen to be citizens of this country, all poor.

In order for the death penalty to be brought to an end, there needs to be truth in the discussion of what this system of capital punishment really is. Even though for some people, the truth may be hard to accept. Because of this, they will continue to live in their world of fantasy and deny the truth, and the facts based on the truth that this is one of the most important human rights issues of our time!

This will not however change the fact that fantasy is not reality, not even in America, when it comes to this truth: The death penalty in America is just another failed government program. It's not just rotten; it's not just broken, it's not just inhumane, it's failed!

In Struggle from San Quentin Prison, Death Row

—November 2014

Write to Kevin Cooper at:

Kevin Cooper C-65304, 4 EB 82

San Quentin State Prison

San Quentin, CA 94974

Defend Rasmia Odeh!

Judge refuses to dismiss “baseless” charges against Rasmia Odeh, Palestinian-American

By ALI ABUNIMAH

Rasmia Odeh had her first hearing in open court on Thursday in front of the new judge who will preside over her trial on immigration fraud charges scheduled for next month.

As the Palestinian-American community leader and her lawyers sat at the defense table, supporters, many of whom had made the five-hour drive from Chicago, packed the Detroit federal courtroom.

Odeh had hoped that Judge Gershwin Drain would rule favorably on a defense motion to dismiss the charges against her, but the judge declined to do so, ensuring that the trial will go forward.

Illegal fruit

Michael Deutsch, Odeh’s lead attorney, argued that the indictment of Odeh was the “fruit of an illegal inves-

tigation” by the government targeting the Arab American Action Network (AAAN), the Chicago community organization at which Odeh is associate director.

Last October, Odeh was arrested and indicted for allegedly lying on her U.S. citizenship application a decade ago by failing to disclose her conviction in an Israeli military court for allegedly participating in two bombings in Jerusalem in 1969.

Odeh has pleaded not guilty to the U.S. immigration fraud charge and says the Israeli convictions were obtained in the unfair Israeli military court system based entirely on a confession extracted through prolonged, brutal torture including sexual assault.

If convicted Odeh could face prison time, as well as being stripped of her U.S. citizenship and deported.

Deutsch told the judge that Odeh was selectively investigated because of her protected First Amendment activities educating people about the situation in Palestine, and that it was based on evidence from the four-year-old investigation of the “Anti-War 23.”

In 2010, U.S. authorities raided the homes of several anti-war activists, including Hatem Abudayyeh, AAAN’s director, and summoned two-dozen activists before a federal grand jury.

Deutsch said the investigation had been a “fishing expedition”—none of those summoned to the grand jury testified. After four years no one had been charged with any crime and all the papers and property seized in the raid have now been returned.

“As far as we know, there is no ongoing investigation,” Deutsch told the court.

Deutsch argued that U.S. authorities in Chicago had nonetheless passed information from the investigation on to federal prosecutors in Michigan, who indicted Odeh.

Government prosecutor Jonathan Tukel told the judge that Odeh’s attorneys had not shown evidence that their client had been singled out.

But the judge also denied Deutsch’s request to compel U.S. attorneys in Chicago and Detroit to reveal their communications over the matter to the defense.

Speaking to reporters and supporters after the hearing, Deutsch expressed disappointment that the judge had allowed only ten minutes for oral arguments.



However, he said that he was not surprised that the judge declined to dismiss the charges “because the law is very restrictive on that.”

“I just wanted him [the judge] to hear about the history and about the context of this case.”

This week the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) added its voice to the calls on the U.S. to drop the charges.

In a letter to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, ADC called the charges against Odeh “baseless,” and said that the case “plays into the belief and perception that the U.S. federal government is intentionally targeting and prosecuting Arab American citizens.”

ADC is “outraged that the federal law enforcement agencies continue to waste resources by targeting nonviolent social activists such as Ms. Odeh, but have yet to bring charges against the Israeli suspects in the terrorist attack that killed Palestinian-American Alex Odeh in 1985,” the letter adds (Odeh was killed by a bomb left at the ADC office which he ran in Santa Ana, California).

Torture expert

Judge Drain did not issue a ruling on a second motion—a defense request to allow Mary Fabri, an expert on torture, to testify in the trial.

Fabri, a clinical psychologist at the world-renowned Kovler Center, already submitted an affidavit on July 18 detailing Odeh’s torture and subsequent post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Deutsch argued that Fabri’s testimony would provide the jury with crucial information about the long-term impact of Odeh’s torture that would help them to judge her state of mind when she allegedly failed to disclose the military court conviction in her citizenship application.

“This is at the heart of our defense,” Deutsch told the court. “The expert should be allowed to testify, and the jury should decide what it means.”

Drain’s ruling, which he promised within a week, will hinge on his reading of whether the law requires that a person had a “specific intent” to defraud the government at the time of their alleged crime.

Defense attorney Jim Fennerty told the court that the U.S. State Department had handed over dozens of boxes of records the defense had been seeking, which a defense researcher was currently sorting.

Odeh’s lawyers believe the records could shed light on what the U.S. government knew about the torture of Odeh, her father and others after their arrests by Israeli authorities.

Another hearing is scheduled for October 21, with the start of the trial set for November 4.

Rally and police harassment

As on previous occasions, Odeh’s supporters rallied outside the U.S. Courthouse on Detroit’s Lafayette Street before and after her hearing.

Sarah Martin, one of the Anti-War 23 who had traveled from Minneapolis, Minnesota, told supporters that solidarity rallies were being held simultaneously in Minneapolis, San Jose, California and Tampa, Florida, as hundreds of people telephoned prosecutors urging them to drop the charges.

“We’ll be back here for the trial,” Martin added, “and we’ll fill that courtroom.”

Since a hearing in September, some officers of the Department of Homeland Security police who protect federal facilities have taken a more aggressive stance toward the rallies.

Early on Thursday morning, this writer was briefly questioned by one officer for taking a photo of the courthouse, an entirely legal activity.

The incident was reported to National Lawyers Guild legal observers present on the scene.

After the hearing, Muhammad Sankari, a member of the national Rasmia Defense Committee, was told by police that he could not lead chants with a bullhorn on the sidewalk in front of the building.

He continued to lead chants from across the street. There is no sign that such petty harassment will deter Odeh’s supporters.

“We obviously believe that justice was not served today. Too many of our leaders, like Rasmia, are being targeted by the Justice Department for their activism in support of Palestinian liberation,” Sankari said in a press release from the Rasmia Defense Committee.

“This case is clearly going to be an indictment of Israel and its brutal policies. We will continue to make that argument as we work to get the charges dropped,” Sankari added.

—*The Electronic Intifada*, October 3, 2014

<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/judge-refuses-dismiss-baseless-charges-against-palestinian-american>



Rasmia Odeh

Defend Marissa Alexander!

Five more women testify calling Marissa Alexander's husband brutally abusive

BY LESLIE SALZILLO



Marissa Alexander

According to *First Coast News*, last week, in Jacksonville, Florida, five new witness may turn out to be the best news for Marissa Alexander, and the worst news for her abusive husband, Rico Gray.

In 2010, Marissa Alexander fired a shot into the air, to keep her husband from attacking her. Alexander had just given birth only ten days prior, and testified that Gray was in a jealous fury and threatened her life. In 2012, Marissa Alexander was sentenced to 20 years in prison, for firing that warning shot and harming no one.

In a sworn deposition, Gray said,

"I was in a rage. I called her a whore and bitch and ... I told her, you know, I used to always tell her that, if I can't have you, nobody going to have you. It was not the first time of ever saying it to her."

Ironically, according to Florida's "Stand Your Ground," Law if Alexander had killed Gray, she would have most likely gone free. (In states like South Carolina, *Think Progress* reports, Stand Your Ground doesn't apply to victims of domestic violence.)

First Coast News has extensively covered the Marissa Alexander case, and on October 10th they reported that five new witnesses came forth in a pretrial hearing, and testified against Rico Gray and his violent past:

"Witnesses Thursday included three women with whom Gray has had children, as well as two sisters-in-law. All accused Gray of physically intimidating or brutalizing them.

"One girlfriend, Shartrecia Anderson, testified that Gray was prone to violence. 'I know what he's capable of. He will attack if he's brought to that point,' she told the court.

"She also asserted that on at least one occasion, Gray stabbed himself

Once the original trial was overturned, rather than Angela Corey dropping the case, the District Attorney stated she will now go after a 60-year sentence in the new trial.

with a fork in order to feign injury to police, and instructed his son to lie to officers in order to back up his version of events."

The prosecution is calling Shartrecia Anderson a liar. Anderson denied Gray abused her in a previous testimony. Keep in mind, many women are afraid of legally accusing their abusers; fearing their abusers will kill them. And that is often the case. According to Gloria Steinem, and verified by *PolitiFact*,

"More women were killed by their husbands or boyfriends since

September 11 than 'all the Americans who were killed by 9/11 or in Afghanistan and Iraq.'" (Approximately 10,000)

Rico Gray did not take the stand on Thursday, and is due to give his side of the story(s) soon. It's uncertain whether Judge James Daniels will take the testimonies of these new witnesses into consideration when ruling on Marissa Alexander's new trial in December.

Florida District Attorney Angela Corey, the prosecuting attorney (and failed attorney in the Zimmerman/Martin trial) offered Alexander a three-years guilty plea. Alexander felt she was innocent, and after having only three hours to decide, turned down the plea. Angela Cory then slapped Alexander with a 20-year sentence. Twenty years, for hurting no one, yet George Zimmerman walks free after what many call the "murder" of Trayvon Martin.

After Alexander spent many months in jail, including time away from her newborn infant, her trial was overturned in September of 2013, reportedly due to jury misinformation. It should be mentioned, the overturn occurred after a very big national protest. Once the original trial was overturned, rather than Angela Corey dropping the case, the District Attorney stated she will now go after a 60-year sentence in the new trial. Hard to even type that. It's disgusting, merciless, unjust, and utterly ridiculous.

Another witness, former Gray wife Dashanna McGriff, alleged a raft of abuses, including being hit with a gun, having her nose broken, and being locked in a closet for hours.

After first seeing a Marissa Alexander headline via Katie Halper/*Alternet*, I have sworn to continue covering this

case until Marissa Alexander is free. I also hope to see a renewed national discourse, not only about victims of domestic violence, but also about those who survive the abuse defending themselves, and are then prosecuted. Many victims of domestic abuse are taken from their children, incarcerated, and left to rot in prison. It's no wonder so many women do not report domestic violence. Instead, they often stay in fear, and die horrific deaths.

—Daily Kos, October 17, 2014

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/10/17/1337149/-5-More-Women-Accuse-Marissa-Alexander-s-Abusive-Husband-Of-Extreme-Brutality>

Prison Assisted Suicide—the Texas Way

By KEVIN “RASHID” JOHNSON



Kevin “Rashid” Johnson

During the 1980s-90s, Dr. Jack Kevorkian’s name achieved nationwide notoriety. He advocated and participated in the medically-assisted suicides of terminally ill people. His motives, he said, were compassionate. The controversy surrounding Kevorkian led to changes in legislation and he was criminally convicted several times, culminating in a 1998 murder conviction and a 10-25 year prison term.

It is a twisted irony that the same sorts of deeds that put this professional pathologist in prison are carried out for sport rather than compassion by pathologists of a very different sort—these being ones who *run* the prisons.

Here is a case in point. On September 4, 2014, I was brought to my segregation cell door by other prisoners’ excited voices signaling that something was amiss. My attention was drawn to cell H109, which then housed another prisoner, Todd Hines. Todd, like over half of those confined at this Clements Unit in remote Amarillo, Texas, is a documented mentally ill prisoner who receives psychotropic medications daily. As such, he is illegally housed in administrative segregation, the conditions of which federal courts have unanimously found only exacerbates

mental illness, with Texas’ administrative segregation units among the worst.¹

I observed a guard, Julio Lucero, Jr., stick his hand into the open hatch of Todd’s cell door and spray a long burst of OC gas into the cell. In a matter of minutes the gas circulated into everyone else’s cell (64 cells in all) through the pod’s ventilation system. With nose and eyes burning, I continued to watch as the minutes ticked by.

Two sergeants entered the pod after a while, walking very slowly, approaching Todd’s cell. One sergeant, Ralph Chavez, looked in at Todd for a moment then asked casually, “What’s going on?” Hines was standing in the cell with several long deep gashes cut into his neck and temple. According to witnesses closer to the scene, blood was pulsing out the side of his neck from an obviously severed jugular vein and his face was a mask of red. Chavez told Todd several times with no particular urgency to “throw out the razor.”

In another few minutes a nurse, Tammy Williams, entered pushing a gurney, also walking very slowly, obvious in her effort to take as long as possible to reach Todd’s cell. She then looked in at him and asked, “What’s wrong with you?” I later overheard Lucero tell another prisoner that every time Todd would talk, blood would shoot out of his neck, which explained their standing at the cell inducing Todd to answer absurd questions, obviously stalling. A portable audio-video camera was brought in to record the situation.

Finally, Chavez directed Lucero and another guard to have Todd perform a full strip search even though he already kicked the razor blade under the cell door. Regardless, Lucero slowly walked Todd through the search; first directing him to hand out his blood-saturat-

**VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
JUSTICE NOW! 4 MARISSA
ALEXANDER**
MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SISTER, NEICE, FRIEND.
www.justice4marissa.com



Contact: Lincoln Alexander (641) 715-2900 Ext. 115615

STOOD HER GROUND

Fired A Warning Shot

No One Was Murdered

No One Was Injured

No Prior Criminal Record

Sentenced to 20 Years

TAKE ACTION TO

**FREE
MARISSA**

ed boxers which Lucero inspected with latex-gloved hands. Everything was done very slowly. Lucero instructed Todd, “open your mouth; run your finger between your lips and gums; run your hands through your hair; let me see behind your ears; move your tongue around; turn around; let me see the bottom of your left foot; wiggle your toes; now your right foot.” By then Todd, weak and dizzy from massive blood loss, leaned against his cell wall, so they made him start the search all over again, warning him that touching anything would cause them to start yet again. “Open your mouth; run your finger between your lips and gums. . . .” Had he collapsed, he’d likely have bled to death while they had a team of guards dress out in body riot armor and protective biohazard suits.

There was no disguising that all involved were trying to watch Todd bleed out and die. A prison-assisted suicide.

After he miraculously finished the search, Todd was made to put both hands out the door’s slot to be handcuffed from behind. A radio call was made to open the cell and he was ordered to crawl out into the pod backwards on his knees, while blood continued to pulse out of his neck onto the floor. He was then made to stand and walk unsteadily out of the pod.

That Todd survived at all defies logic. The guards and nurse were certainly not to be credited. In fact, the guards later openly expressed being quite entertained by the incident, as were several prisoners.

But some, like myself, were angry and disgusted. Several, not knowing if I’d seen it all, later sent me notes telling me what they’d witnessed, knowing I’d want to bring attention to it. Here’s what one—Jason Renard Walker #1532092—wrote:

“We got another inmate neglect. At 11:18 A.M., officer Lucero and that Mexican officer saw Hines, cell

109, bleeding. He cut at least a five-inch gash into his neck on the left side; he cut other parts of his neck as well. When they saw him there no urgency in getting him treatment. They watched him bleed for two minutes, asking, “where is the razor.” They then shoot gas (Lucero) in his cell and watched him for a few more minutes. He didn’t place the call until 11:22. Nobody responded until 11:30 as Sargent Gray, Sargent Chavez and officer Chavez (female on camera) responding, walking slowly to the cell and just looking in. They watched for a few minutes then called medical. At 11:35 the nurse came and she too slowly walked to the cell looked in and asked “what’s wrong?” At this point the cell literally looked like a slaughterhouse kill floor. They didn’t take him out of the cell until 11:41. They made him do a full strip search and at this point he was so weak he couldn’t stand and lift one leg up without leaning against the wall. So they made him do the search all over again. When he came out he was wobbling like a newborn calf. They had no urgency in getting him anywhere. He was covered in so much blood they wouldn’t know if he was concealing anything anyways. Our peers were no help as I heard a couple cheering him on. That’s what brought me to the door to witness the entire ordeal. It took them exactly 23 minutes to see him and get him out.”

Again, what’s even more problematic is prisoners like Todd are not supposed to be in segregation. It’s against the law, yet our captors imprison us for allegedly breaking laws. But, as Todd’s case shows, mentally ill prisoners are held illegally under conditions that drive them to the point of suicidal acts, which guards and medical staff try to help along.

I’ve actually witnessed this sort of thing more times than I can count. Several times the prisoners died. I recall once a mentally ill prisoner hung himself at Virginia’s Red Onion State Prison as guards watched coaxing him on. A few minutes later they, along

with a then-sergeant Travis McCoy, rushed into the cell as if to cut him down but instead began pulling on his legs to put more weight and pressure on his choked off neck.

Ironically, he didn’t die—the rope broke sending him and several of the guards tumbling to the floor.

Then there are the staged suicides where guards at this prison claim falsely that a prisoner is trying to hang or cut himself in order to justify spraying him down with OC gas and taking all his property. Mentally ill prisoners are typically the targets of this abuse.

It was done on the morning of August 26, 2014, by a Sergeant Dustin Anderson to a mentally ill prisoner (who also takes psychotropic medications daily) known only to myself and others as “Bay City.”

Anderson was called to his cell (#H105) by a guard, Rusty Milbern, because Bay City had his cell door’s windows covered and wouldn’t respond, which he immediately took down when Anderson came to his cell calling Bay City a series of “stupid motherfuckers,” “assholes” and other vulgar names. As a witnessing prisoner observed in a note he sent me, “Sargent Anderson acted like he was trying to hang himself, gassed him, then said, ‘you promised me you was gone chill out.’ He went on to explain, “Sargent Anderson set him up. Milbern was right there but she didn’t look in the cell. She stayed by the side of the door. When Sargent Anderson told him to take it off his neck, Bay City was walking in circles, neck free of any type of wrappings.”

I witnessed it done on April 9, 2014 to another mentally ill prisoner, Hoover Pugh #421307, who behaves much like the prisoner I described in a prior article, named Ellory Oliver.² And Hoover draws much the same reactions from guards and other prisoners.

On that date I witnessed a guard, Skyler Tidwell, tell another prisoner who openly disliked Hoover to give

him a razor, that he was going to drop it in front of Hoover's cell and then gas him saying he was trying to cut himself. Tidwell said it was his last day working at the prison and he wanted to get Hoover. The other prisoner went along with the scene and Tidwell sprayed a full can of gas in on Hoover.

However, because Hoover has filed a lot of complaints about staff abuse, he was housed in a cell that has a surveillance camera facing onto it, and staff are under direction to review the camera footage whenever he complains of abuses of force. When he was bought out with intentions of being placed on suicide watch he protested that Tidwell set him up. Apparently the video was reviewed and proved him true because Hoover was returned to his cell on regular status, but Tidwell did not return.

One guard, Desmond Finney, is among the most notoriously and cowardly abusive guards at this Clements Unit Prison. He makes it a point to openly boast of beating handcuffed prisoners, and, while working the pod I'm housed in on September 11, 2014, bragged to several other guards that, in just a couple of months of being assigned to the segregation unit he'd gone through eight new canisters of OC gas.

Finney often taunts prisoners that he's untouchable because he's "one of Major Clark's boys," and has ranking relatives working at the prison, including one lieutenant, Antonious Flannagan.

I witnessed a prisoner, Louis Johnson Jr. #1618910, who was moved to the suicide precaution building during November 2013 due to attempting suicide, return to the same segregation cell across from me a few days later with two black eyes and a badly bruised face. He reported, and numerous guards openly came to his cell to taunt him, that Finney and another guard beat him at length on November 9,

2013 while he was handcuffed from behind. Many others bear witness to Finney's abuses, including refusing prisoners' meals for days to weeks on end, slamming handcuffed prisoners for no reason, even knocking one's front tooth out.

These sorts of abuses targeted especially at mentally ill prisoners is why the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's (TDCJ) Clements Unit Prison has been reportedly featured in the mainstream media as having the TDCJ's highest rates of major uses of force and uses of chemical agents on prisoners by guards, while at the same time illegally housing over 1800 known mentally ill prisoners (a large proportion of whom are held in segregation).³ This too is what prompts numerous attempted and successful suicides, and often ones staged by guards to falsely justify physical abuses or outright murder (prison assisted suicide)! So while it was a crime for Jack Kevorkian to aid the suicides of the terminally ill, it's perfectly legal when it's prison officials and their victims are the mentally ill.

Apparently, Kevorkian chose the wrong occupation and the wrong type of pathology. A bright light must be shone inside Amerika's inhumane system of mass incarceration, which bears such a chilling similarity to the old German Nazi concentration camps in its brutality, hypocrisy and bigotry, that it's frightening.

Dare to Struggle Dare to Win!

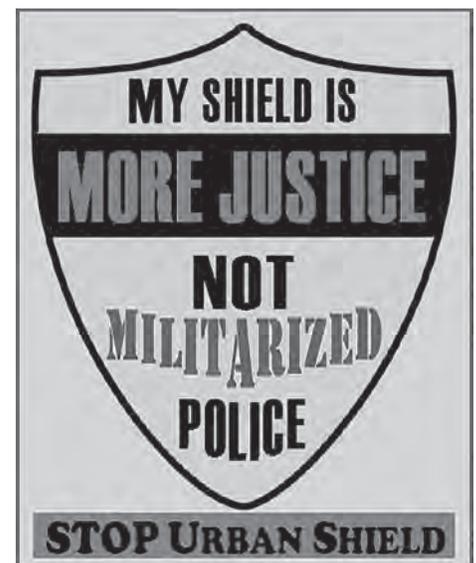
All Power to the People

1 The Texas federal courts have specifically ruled, "administrative segregation is being utilized unconstitutionally to house mentally ill inmates—inmates whose illness can only be exacerbated by the depravity of their confinement." *Ruiz v. Estelle*, 37 F. Supp. 2d 855, 915(S.D. Tex. 1999). "Texas' administrative segregation units are virtual incubators of psychoses-seeding illness in otherwise healthy

inmates and exacerbating illness in those already suffering from mental infirmities." Id. at 907. And as nationally accredited mental health experts testified before the Texas federal court: "... Dr. Jurczak testified that the administrative segregation system is destructive to all its occupants. "I think it's a very destructive system. And I've been in many, many systems. . . and I've never seen one as repressive as I've seen in TDCJ." Id. at 912.

2 Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, "Wasted Minds: An Insider's Look at the Torturous Effects of U.S. Solitary Confinement" (2013) available at rashidmod.com. Also available in *Socialist Viewpoint* magazine Vol. 13, No. 6 http://www.socialistviewpoint.org/novdec_13/novdec_13_30.html

3 Brandi Grissom, "A Tie to Mental Illness in the Violence Behind Bars," *New York Times*, Sept. 21, 2013; Brandi Grissom, "Violence Behind Bars: A Tie to Mental Illness," *The Texas Tribune*, Sept. 22, 2013; "Clements Unit Among the Most Violent Prisons," *KAMR-TV*, Sept. 23, 2013; "Son Murdered in Clements Unit by Staff Texas Prison," <http://www.prisonertalk.com/forums/archive/index.php/+266252.html>; "Force Against Texas Inmates on Rise," <http://www.texastribune.org>; "Texas Lockdown: Solitary Confinement in the Lone Star State," <http://solitarywatch.com/2011/07/06/solitary-confinement-in-texas-a-long-way-to-reform>; "Clements Unit Placed on Dubious List," <http://apublicview.wordpress.com/2013/09/26/clements-unit-placed-on-dubious-list/>



Alabama's Thrifty Jailers

Alabama jailers let prisoners die from easily treatable illnesses to save money

By TOM BOGGIONI

A 19-year-old died in jail as the result of a gangrenous wound in his foot.

Three lawsuits recently filed in federal court accuse the state of Alabama of denying prisoners with easily treatable illnesses or injuries proper medical care resulting in the prisoner's death.

According to *AL.com*, the lawsuits have been filed over the deaths of three inmates, including a 19-year-old who died naked on a cell floor from gangrene.

The three suits allege the jailers in Madison County withhold the basic medical care in order to save money, believing that the insurance carried by the out-sourced medical contractor will cover any lawsuits filed against them.

One of the lawsuits alleges that Deundrez Woods, a 19-year-old from Huntsville, died in jail in August as the result of a gangrenous wound in his foot that was left untreated.

According to court documents, Woods was being held for shoplifting Star Wars DVDs at Wal-Mart in June and then for passing a phony \$100 bill in July.

While in jail a wound in Woods' foot developed gangrene, the infection

causing him to begin hallucinating and unable to communicate. Woods was placed in a "medical observation cell" on August 6, 2013, however jail records show that he had no access to water after August 12, there is no record of him eating after August 14, and no nurses visited him after August 14. Once authorities noticed the smell from Woods' foot he was hosed down and moved into a different cell.

"Still, no correction officer or ACH nurse did anything to even check Woods, let alone help him," reads the complaint. The suit states that jail records show no one took his temperature, checked his blood sugar or assessed his condition. "The gangrenous wound on top of his right foot was clearly visible had anyone bothered to look."

"Woods went from normal, to aggressive and disruptive, to barely responsive, to all but dead as correction and medical staff watched."

According to the suit Woods was found on the floor of his cell, dead from a blood clot that originated in his gangrenous foot.

Tanyatta Woods, the mother of the teen, filed the suit stating that Madison County Sheriff Blake Dorning, jail administrator Steve Morrison, Dr. Arthur Williams, the director of medical care at the jail, and Dr. Norman Johnson, who is the CEO of Advanced Correctional Healthcare, are "part of an explicit or implicit agreement or plan to delay or deny necessary medical care to avoid having to pay for medical care."

The other two lawsuits refer to Tanisha Jefferson, 30, who died of an intestinal blockage after being denied medical care for 13 days after being jailed for harassment, and 61-year-old Nikki Listau, also in jail for harassment, who died from complications resulting from a broken femur sustained after she fell out of her prison bunk.

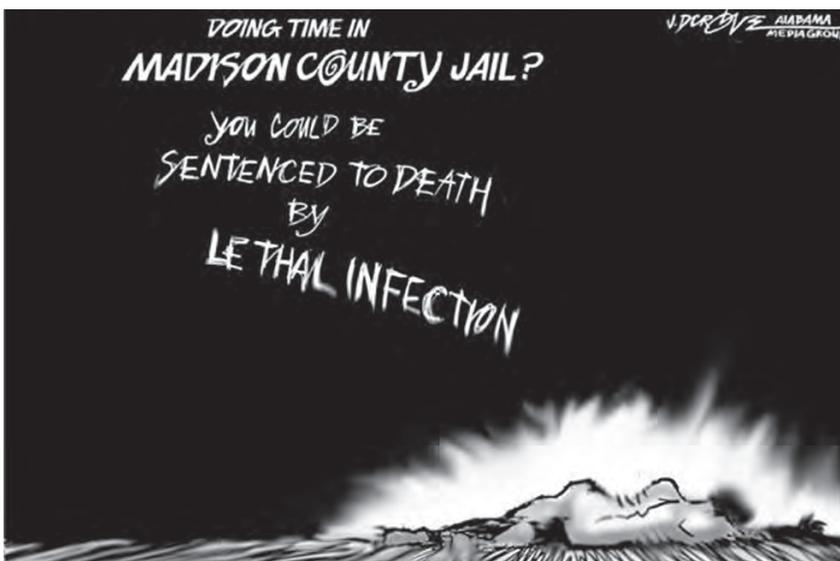
Civil rights attorney Hank Sherrod who filed all three lawsuits claims that the Madison County jailers are relying on the insurance coverage maintained by Advanced Correctional Healthcare to shield them from lawsuits, and to save money by not dealing with inmate medical problems.

"ACH's business model, reflected in the agreement, succeeds by underbidding the competition and implementing severe cost control measures," Sherrod said. "The necessary result of which is inmate suffering and liability claims (dealt with through liability insurance.)"

Jeff Rich, attorney for Madison County, would not comment on pending litigation, saying the three lawsuits are "being vigorously defended."

—AlterNet.org, October 19, 2014

<http://www.alternet.org/civil-liberties/alabama-jailers-let-prisoners-die-easily-treatable-illnesses-save-money?akid=12380.229473.L5aWS2&rd=1&src=newsletter1023836&t=23>



Starve the Beast

By TIM YOUNG

Plantation toil, penitentiary moil,
Where slavery ends
The Prison Industrial Complex begins
Check your history
1863 to the 21st century
Wanton misery, no mystery,
Statistics quite frightening
Fraught with disparity...

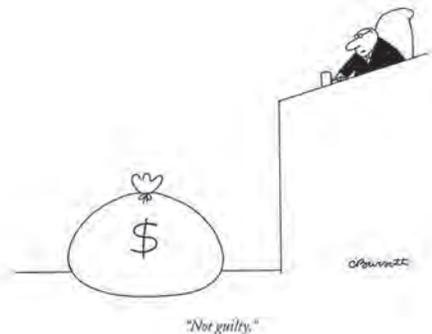
African Americans constitute 12 percent of the nation,
50 percent of the prison population.
That's mass incarceration
Modern day enslavement
Casting a wide net
Landing a big catch:
The poor, the black, the innocent..

Forever strange fruit
Courtrooms abound with black youth
Legal lynching ensues
The gavel is a noose
Freedom dismissed
American justice amiss
School to prison pipeline

Lucrative slave ship...
Dred Scott was the genesis
The aftermath stupendous
Millions of lost souls
Prison, probation, parole
Civil liberties on hold
Democracy untold
A dream deferred
Martin's nightmare has emerged...

A better world is possible
Prison abolition is logical
Society holds the key
Time to manifest some destiny
Organize, mobilize,
Act in solidarity
Accomplish the feat
Starve the belly of the beast.

Write to:
Tim Young #F23374
4 EY-23
San Quentin State Prison
San Quentin, CA 94974



1960s and '70s: Memoirs by Two Revolutionaries

BOOK REVIEWS BY BARRY SHEPPARD

An Impatient Life, a Political Memoir, by Daniel Bensaid, first published in French in 2004 under the title *Une Lente Impatience*. English translation published in 2013 by Verso, London.

Revolutionary Activism, in the 1950s and 60s, Volume Two, Britain 1965-1970, a Memoir, By Ernest Tate, Resistance Books, London, 2014

These books cover the impact of the worldwide youth radicalization that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s upon two sections of the Fourth International, one in France and the other in Britain. In both countries, this was a period of tumultuous events, including the American invasion of Vietnam and the international movement that erupted against it.

To present the context both books deal with, it is necessary to go back a bit and provide a brief explanation of the developments in the Fourth International during the 1950s and early 1960s. In 1953, a major split in the International saw its sections aligning themselves with two major international groupings, one led by the International Secretariat, and the other by the International Committee. In Britain, the Socialist Labor League (SLL), led by Gerry Healy, was a supporter of the International Committee while two, much smaller groups, adhered to the International Secretariat. In France, there were two groups of nearly equal size, which came to be known in the period these books cover as the International Communist Organization (OCI), led by Pierre Lambert, and the Internationalist Communist Party (PCI), led by Pierre Frank. The predecessor of the OCI supported the International

Committee, and the PCI, the International Secretariat.

The Fourth International's Canadian section, which Ernie Tate had joined in the 1950s, and the American Socialist Workers Party, supported the International Committee. Important political and organization questions were involved in the 1953 split, but were largely overcome by the early 1960s. This led to a rapprochement, discussions and a reunification in 1963 at a special World Congress. It elected an International Executive Committee with broad representation of the sections, and which in turn elected a smaller United Secretariat to meet more often. On both sides there were groupings that refused to join the reunified Fourth International. From the IC side the SLL and what became the OCI stayed out, as did the Latin American sections of the IS led by Juan Posadas.

These groups, and a few others who considered themselves Trotskyist, were not part of the reunified Fourth International, which organized the majority of Trotskyists worldwide. When I refer to the "Fourth International" in this review, I mean the reunified FI.

One of the political differences that emerged from the 1953 split concerned the tactic of "*entryism sui generis*"—*entryism* of a special type—practiced by sections of the International Secretariat, whereby these sections "entered" the mass social democratic or Communist parties in their respective countries, with very little or no public existence of their own. The International Committee argued the view that such "*deep entryism*" had the danger that the sections

would be swallowed up by the mass reformist parties, and could disappear. This in fact did happen in certain countries, such as India. In any case, in the IC view, the new tactic would make it difficult to recruit to the sections, since recruitment would come only from within the mass party, and would have to be done very carefully because these parties would likely expel Fourth Internationalists if they were ever found out.

The only adherents of the reunified International in Britain and France were the International Secretariat groups, due to the defection of the SLL and the OCI, and these were "deep entered" into the Labor Party and the Communist Party respectively. Bensaid's and Tate's books deal extensively with the overcoming of this legacy of "*deep entryism*." In both countries, challenging this tactic in the late sixties resulted in the establishing of strong public sections of the FI, with the formation of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) in France and the International Marxist Group (IMG) in Britain.

How this happened in Britain

Because of language, the United Secretariat decided that the American SWP and the Canadian section, the League for Socialist Action (LSA), would take on major responsibility to help rebuild a section in Britain. To this end, two members of the Canadian section, Alan and Connie Harris, who originally were from Britain, moved back there. With help from the SWP's publishing house, they set up a book distribution center to help circulate Trotskyist literature. Joe Hansen had been the SWP's representative on the new United Secretariat, but was forced

to return to the U.S. because of a severe illness, and was replaced by Ray Sparrow, shortly before Ernie arrived in Britain from Canada in 1965. His companion, Jess MacKenzie would arrive later in 1966 on assignment from the United Secretariat to work with the small IS groups to rebuild a viable organization. Ray would work closely with Ernie, visiting London often from Brussels, which was where a new FI center was being established. Ernie and Jess had been recruited in Canada, but Ernie was originally from Northern Ireland and Jess from Scotland.

What they faced upon arrival were the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL), led by Ted Grant, and the International Group (IG), led by Ken Coates and Pat Jordan, both claiming to support the FI, both small organizations. Ernie's assignment in part was to try to get these two groups together, but it soon became apparent that the RSL wasn't interested, and in fact pulled away from the FI altogether. So Ernie and Jess worked mainly with the IG group, which was centered in Nottingham, not London. The IG was deep in the Labor Party, and Ernie found that although it was doing quite good work there, it was sadly lacking in building a public face of the FI in Britain.

One of Ernie's assignments from the United Secretariat was to help further the work of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, headed by the great mathematician and philosopher. Russell's Secretary, Ralph Schoenman, a courageous, imaginative and prodigious organizer according to Ernie, was its central sparkplug. Pat Jordan and Ken Coates of the IG would soon become active in the Foundation. One of the Foundation's most important projects was to form an "international tribunal" to investigate U.S. war crimes in Vietnam. Another was to launch the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC) in Britain. Ernie provides documented detail from several archives about how these projects and the Foundation itself functioned, giving

an insider's view. These stories alone are worth the price of the book. It's the first time, to my knowledge, that this history has been told.

The Foundation faced massive opposition to the tribunal idea: the press in Britain was viciously hostile; the U.S., British, French and other governments consciously intervened through their security agencies to disrupt it; the Stalinists in Britain quietly sabotaged it; Moscow made trouble with the Vietnamese, whose cooperation would be essential to getting it off the ground and most of the revolutionary left in Britain didn't understand why Vietnam was important in the world class struggle. Under this pressure, there were squabbles internally, sometimes compounded by prickly personalities, and financial difficulties. But through all this, the Tribunal succeeded, and produced impressive findings that helped the antiwar movement throughout the world.

The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign took off. The leading role that Ernie and the IG comrades played in building the VSC led to the establishment of a viable section of the FI, with the IG changing its name to the International Marxist Group, and breaking out of its "deep entry" in the Labor Party. The successive demonstrations demanding the U.S. get out of Vietnam and for the reversal of British support of the war under a Labor Party government, became increasingly larger in a short few years, culminating in the biggest demonstration London had ever seen when over 100,000 gathered in Hyde Park in the autumn of 1968. The scope of these actions can be gleaned from some of the photos in Ernie's book, which are a surprising revelation in themselves. One shows Tariq Ali alongside the great actress Vanessa Redgrave and the world-renowned theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, in the front of one of these mass demonstrations. Another shows Tariq and Vanessa with Richard Branson in

tow—he would later found Virgin Airlines. Tariq Ali, already prominent in Britain as a left wing intellectual, would soon join the IMG as a result of its leading role in these events.

An interesting aspect of the VSC Ernie describes was the role of the British International Socialists (IS) led by Tony Cliff. While not as deeply involved as the IMG, especially at the leadership level, the IS, unlike other Trotskyist groups, gave their full support to the VSC. The IS was also increasing in size at that time, even faster than the IMG. Partly as a result of this common effort against the war, and the attraction of the IMG's sister organization in France—which had played a key role in the May-June 1968 student-worker revolt, Tony Cliff approached the IMG with a proposal to unite the two organizations. Reading Ernie's book was the first time I became aware of this offer. Cliff proposed that the IMG comrades be recognized as a tendency in the proposed new organization, and would be allowed to retain their affiliation to the Fourth International. Ernie was favorable to this proposal, but others in the IMG leadership rejected it, a blunder in my opinion. The whole situation of the revolutionary socialist left in Britain could have made an important step forward, as Phil Hearsay says in his preface to this volume.

The creation of the LCR in France

Daniel Bensaid, as he tells us in this, his last major work, was born into a family that was immersed in the milieu of the French Communist Party, one of the largest CPs in Western Europe. As he says, "Communism was something I fell into—unless it was communism that fell into me." He joined the CP student group as a youngster. Here his path would cross with young members of the PCI, "deep entered" in the CP.

CP-influenced young people were becoming increasingly critical of the party, especially around the issue of its

lukewarm attitude toward the Algerian revolution. The French had waged an extremely brutal war to retain Algeria as a colony. While France won the war militarily, it lost it politically, and was forced to grant independence to Algeria. A fascist die-hard group within the French army known as the Secret Army Organization even threatened to overthrow the government, and there were street battles where the CP youth gained experience that would later be useful in the May-June 1968 student-worker revolt. Another issue where the youth began to move to the left of the party was on the question of Vietnam. The French CP, like its British counterpart, under orders from Moscow, took the position that the war should be settled by negotiations with Washington, as against the forthright demand that the U.S. get out.

These and other differences led to the CP expelling its youth in 1965, leading to the formation of the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR). The JCR leadership was mainly comprised of Trotskyist youth, including Alain Krivine, Henri Weber, Jeannette Habel, and Gerard de Verbizier. Daniel was an example of those leaders of the JCR who were not in the PCI.

This development had begun as part of the PCI's deep entry in the CP. But the logic of the evolution of the CP youth, where the PCI young people rose to prominence, transformed the deep entry tactic into its opposite with the public emergence of a new organization, the JCR.

Another important issue that led to the formation of the JCR was the Cuban revolution. This section of the CP youth was ardently in support of the revolution and its young leadership, against the lukewarm and conservative positions of the adult party, reflecting Moscow's attitude. Indeed, the position adopted by the majority of Trotskyists worldwide in support of

the Cuban revolution and its leadership (while holding certain criticisms) was central to the unification of the majorities of the International Committee and the International Secretariat in 1963. The impact of the Cuban revolution in Canada is explained in volume one of Ernie's book. Our common position on Cuba led to close relations between the JCR and the American Young Socialist Alliance (YSA—youth group associated with the Socialist Workers Party). Daniel explains how Che Guevara's humanist socialism, expressed in his pamphlet *Socialism and Man* helped his generation to throw off the dead weight of Stalinism. He also credits Che's speech in Algiers, taking the Kremlin to task for its high-handed and bureaucratic relations with Cuba and Vietnam.

The formation of the JCR helped spur the process that led to the creation of the IMG in Britain, as Ernie explains. JCR leader Alain Krivine spoke many times at VSC demonstrations. Another example of this cross-fertilization was the holding of a conference of FI youth groups in Europe, which YSA leaders also attended. Part of all this was the very radical German Socialist Students Union (SDS—not to be confused with the organization with the same initials in the U.S.)

At the center of the student and youth radicalization, the JCR grew quickly, as Daniel explains in some detail. Early in 1968, Daniel, a student in Nanterre and a leader of the JCR there, worked closely with Daniel Cohn-Bendit, an anarchist, in the explosion of student struggles that would coalesce into the March 22 Movement, struggles which rapidly spread in the country. This led to the eruption of the "night of the barricades" in early May around the Sorbonne in Paris, as the riot police tried to suppress a meeting called by the JCR. The JCR led the fighting against the cops, and organized the student

youth of different political tendencies into a united front. No one could have predicted it, but the spectacle of young people fighting the cops to a standstill stirred sympathy in the French working class, suffering under the yoke of De Gaulle's authoritarian government. The workers' rapidly went into action, taking over and occupying factories, leading to the greatest general strike in history. The story of the May-June events is told elsewhere, but the role of the JCR gave it great prestige.

In November of 1968, Caroline Lund and I relocated to Brussels. I replaced Ray Sparrow as the SWP's representative on the United Secretariat, while Caroline represented the leadership of the YSA. Early in 1979, we went to Paris to observe a leadership meeting of the JCR, which discussed the JCR fusing with the PCI. I remember Daniel was still skeptical of joining the FI. There was also a mood in the meeting among these young people of disappointment in the older members of the PCI during the May-June events—"they didn't show up" was one remark I remember. But by April, the great majority of the JCR was won over to this perspective, and the result of the fusion was the creation of the Communist League (LC) as the French section of the FI. "*Entryism*" had come to an end in France. After being banned later, it would be renamed the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) in 1974. In referring to this organization in this review I use LCR, which it became widely known as in the subsequent decades.

The ultraleft turn of the FI in 1969

Both these memoirs discuss, Daniel briefly and Ernie more fully, the 1969 World Congress of the Fourth International, where a majority voted to launch rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period in Latin America. The focus was immediately on Bolivia and Argentina. A minority, including the SWP, opposed this orientation.

Ernie and Jess were at the Congress, as were Caroline Lund and I, and Daniel who was part of the French delegation, although he doesn't mention this.

The minority position was presented to the delegates by Joe Hansen of the SWP. The minority was not opposed in principle to peasant-based (rural) guerrilla warfare in the oppressed countries where the need for land reform was urgent, as a possible tactic, in certain situations, when coupled with building revolutionary working class parties in the urban centers through militants becoming rooted in the struggles of the workers. But any decision to launch such a guerrilla struggle would have to be based on a concrete analysis of the political situation in each country, and would have to include an assessment of the size of our forces, which were small. In any case, the minority considered it wrong for the FI to impose such a tactic on the sections, something only they were in a position to implement. The majority had made the error of a schematic analysis that in the situation of U.S.-backed military dictatorships (and there were many on the continent), there could be no democratic openings, and any worker uprising would be simply crushed. Therefore, the only strategy for the whole continent was rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period. The majority had elevated a possible tactic in some countries into a general line and strategy for a whole continent.

The representatives of the Bolivian section to the Congress were enthusiastic for the majority orientation, and were in fact, we found out, in the process of attempting to implement it. The Argentine section had split over the orientation before the Congress, with one group led by Roberto Santucho (although he was not at the Congress) supporting the majority and well on its way to implementing the proposal. The other side of the split, led by Hugo Moreno, supported the International minority. The young leaders of the LCR, including Daniel, were not only

enthusiastic for the majority, but actively lobbying for it in the corridors. A central motivating factor in winning the youth of the LCR and the many young people who were joining the European sections, especially after the May-June 1968 events, was the unreserved backing and vigorous arguments in favor of the guerrilla strategy presented by three older central leaders of the FI, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel and Pierre Frank. As the discussion unfolded, the mood was that the FI would soon lead liberated zones in many countries in Latin America. Livio Maitan even predicted that the next World Congress would be held in Bolivia. Ernie describes how the British delegation (except for Ernie and Jess), which had been inclined to support the minority before the Congress, was so swayed by this euphoria they switched sides.

The attempt to apply the new line on the ground in Bolivia was quickly crushed in a month or so after the Congress. In Argentina the process also led to disaster, but took some years to play out. Ironically, about this time, in both Bolivia and Argentina there were big democratic openings that led to massive worker's struggles. Those sections in each country that implemented the 1969 World Congress line, stood apart from these worker battles.

Daniel and the LCR played an important role in supporting the Argentine group led by Roberto Santucho in carrying out first the rural version of the tactic, then urban guerrilla war. Santucho's Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) embraced fully one postulate of the 1969 World Congress, which visualized peasants and urban intellectuals initiating armed actions outside of the workers' organizations. Some these ERP actions were spectacular, but futile. The horrible tragedy that ensued over time resulted in the slaughter by the armed forces of hundreds of wonderful and devoted but misguided comrades, many of whom Daniel personally

knew, as he describes concerning his many trips to Argentina to support the ERP. Reading his chapter about this tragedy, "Cry for Argentina," I was moved to tears remembering these fallen comrades. My impression is that while not saying so outright, Daniel felt great guilt about his role in their fate.

Ernie also has a chapter on what happened to the ERP in Argentina. While Daniel's account is beautifully written and personal, Ernie's is a powerful factual account based on scholarly sources.

The turn of the 1969 World Congress was not to be limited to Latin America, but signaled an ultraleft turn for many sections, especially in Europe. The idea for Europe was that the sections would undertake "minority actions" including in some cases "minority violence" that would draw in other groups to the left of the CPs and Social Democrats, and which in turn would galvanize the working class into action. Such wheels within wheels, with the smallest eventually turning the great wheel of the working class, left out the need for a mass revolutionary socialist party rooted in the working class. This was a misguided reading of the May-June events in France. Indeed, it was the lack of such a party that led to the dissipation of the pre-revolutionary situation that developed in France in May-June 1968. The majority predicted in 1971 that successful proletarian revolutions would take place in Europe within five years.

The result was that the differences that emerged at the 1969 World Congress deepened, and led in the next years to the formation of two factions, the International Majority Tendency (IMT) and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction (LTF). There were splits as well in many sections of our international movement, including in the U.S., with opposing groups lining up with one or the other international factions. This debilitating situation wasn't overcome until late in 1976, when the majority of

the IMT adopted a resolution, “Self Criticism on Latin America” that repudiated in detail the 1969 World Congress. By that time, the “Hasty Leninism,” as Bensaid characterized the ultraleftism of the LCR and many European sections in the first half of the 1970s, had also run its course. The way was open for the dissolution of the factions, and an attempt made to rebuild the International, which Caroline Lund and I were part of, along with other younger leaders from both the former IMT and LTF.

An account of this long faction fight is more completely told in my two-volume political memoir, *The Party*, which covers my years in the SWP and Fourth International, and deals with much of the period that Ernie and Daniel discuss. These three books are in fact complementary concerning this period, for better or worse. I say for better or worse because they are the only books, whatever their strengths and weaknesses, that are about this part of the history of the FI as a whole.

Daniel, in his brilliant work does in essence repudiate the ultraleftism of those years of “hasty Leninism” he was part of. Maybe it’s too much to expect, but I find fault with some of his attempts to gloss over the mistakes of the LCR leadership, including his own. I will give only one example, his reference to a document that became famous in the faction fight that was co-authored by him, titled, “Is the Question of Power Posed? Let’s Pose It!” The discussion of this document in Daniel’s book evades its content, which was none other than to propose guerrilla warfare for France, along the lines of the ERP in Argentina. To this end, it argued, the LCR should begin to prepare to go underground. Following closely the line of the ERP, the document affirms that the road forward for the LCR was *via* the French peasantry and “urban middle layers.” The majority of the LCR leadership quite wisely rejected this course.

There is much more of value in both volumes of Ernie’s and Daniel’s memoirs. In addition to their insights into all the personalities they were in contact with (many of whom I knew), as well as their personal journeys through the political struggles of the day, I would call attention to these valuable contributions.

In Ernie’s second volume, a chapter on Healy’s launching a physical attack on him for selling a pamphlet critical of the SLL. This not only showed the degeneration of Healy by the mid 1960s, but also the reaction of many on the left too frightened of Healy’s tactics to come to Ernie’s defense is telling.

There is also a chapter of how Ernie and Jess got to know Tamara and Isaac Deutscher, through Ernie and Deutscher’s work around the Russell Foundation. This sheds new (at least to me) insight into Deutscher, who is most well known for his three-volume biography of Trotsky. Ernie also mentions Deutscher’s work, *The Non-Jewish Jew*, which referenced figures such as Spinoza, Marx, Heine, Freud, Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky.

This leads me to Daniel’s own chapter dealing with this question, called “The Marriano Enigma,” on his own non-Jewish Jewishness, as well as the whole “Jewish question,” and Israel. It is a very good chapter. He recalls a joke I remember from that time, concerning the fact that many of the LCR’s leaders were Jewish: The only reason the LCR leadership meetings were not in Yiddish was because Daniel was Sephardic.

While not wanting to lessen the importance of Daniel’s other chapters, I would note especially the one on “Restrained Violence,” which in part comes to terms with the days of “hasty Leninism,” but expands further to discuss other forms of political violence, including that of imperialism. Also “Colour Rouge” which deals in part with the LCR’s launching of its paper,

Rouge, as a daily, which Daniel was at the center of. “Duck or Rabbit” deals more broadly with the press, including the left and the bourgeois press. These are thoughtful chapters. Another I liked was his musings inspired by being in Mexico at Trotsky’s “Blue House,” that has a good and eloquent outline of the Dewey Commission on the infamous Moscow Trials.

Another penetrating part is Daniel’s thumbnail sketch of the three volumes of Marx’s *Capital* and their relevance to the world today.

There is a main theme of Daniel’s book, which runs throughout text. He takes it up from many different viewpoints. He reveals it with observations about his own beliefs, held until his death, and in polemics with others. That theme is to sharply repudiate all those who have abandoned their youthful Marxist and revolutionary ideas, their politics and activism for the bourgeois life. He is especially dismissive of all those “soixante-huitars”—the “sixty-eighters”—who were in the streets in May-June, but have turned their backs on the best thing they had ever done in their lives. Some of these are former LCR members, including Daniel’s former mentor, Henri Weber, who became a Senator for the social democrats.

As we know, there has been a counter-revolution to “The Sixties” led by the bourgeoisie worldwide which has drawn into its wake many former fighters, intellectual and physical. Daniel, who became in his final decades one of France’s major public intellectuals, a position he attained without conceding anything to bourgeois opinion—all the while fully committed to building a revolutionary organization, takes them all on, from Foucault to the theoretical retreat by many from Marxism, under the system of ideas known as “Post-modernism.”

An example in Ernie’s book is David Horowitz, who worked with Ernie in

the Bertrand Russell foundation, and is known today as a neoconservative.

One excuse some of these renegades make is the following: “The ‘problem of generations’ has sometimes provided a clever pretext for replacing social classes with age classes,” Daniel writes. “A reassuring biased representation of antagonisms: ‘it’ll pass,’ this ‘it’ meaning revolt, insubordination, recalcitrance—since youth does indeed have to ‘pass.’ A happy ending. Everything ends up returning to order and rank. A question of biology. The *blasé* wisdom of sober old men.”

Daniel had to learn, as we all have to, to live with disappointments and setbacks. He had to learn to temper his youthful impatience with the way the world is into a “slow impatience”—which by the way is the correct translation of the title of his book.

Another quote from Daniel: “The Polish dissident Karol Modzelewski, when asked one day for the secret of his perseverance, despite disappointments and disillusion, simply replied: ‘loyalty to persons unknown’....these elective affinities, these molecular loyalties, this hidden community of sharing; this minuscule conspiracy and discreet conjuration whose ‘secret name,’ for Heine, was communism, transmitted from one person to another. Despite the infamies committed in its name, it remains the most pertinent word, the most freighted with memory, the most precise and most apt to name the historic issues of the present time.”

Daniel Bensaid remained true to this profound idea. The same can be said of Ernie Tate.

The Troy Davis Tragedy

BOOK REVIEW BY MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

I Am Troy Davis, by Jen Marlow, Martina Davis-Correia and Troy Anthony Davis, Haymarket Books.

The name of Troy Davis is known to most of us, largely because of media coverage.

But the details of his epic struggle, and the denial of the courts (state and federal) to seriously hear his claims are a lot lesser known.

Now, a recent book on the case, entitled, *I Am Troy Davis*, focuses on the Davis family, and reveals how the denial of justice tore the family apart.

It is a tale of misplaced vengeance, of political opportunism, judicial cowardice, and relentless struggle. It is the tale of courage against great adversity, tragedy and political betrayals (like the Black DA elected by Savannah, who echoed his white predecessors).

When Troy Davis was arrested on August 23, 1989, it was because he turned himself in (after being told about the case by his sister), certain that he would be cleared of the murder of a Savannah, Georgia cop.

But the City, using threats and fear, assembled an ignoble chorus of night people to sell their version of the events, and he was speedily convicted and sent to Georgia’s Death Row.

His sister, Martina Davis-Correia fought, virtually alone, to bring light to her younger brother’s innocence, and to find qualified lawyers to take the case, for long hard years.

When a team of lawyers took the case, it was in shambles, and it took digging to find the truth: that Troy Davis was indeed innocent, and police had forced people to testify falsely, or they would face charges of being accomplices to the killing.

Nonetheless, almost all the witnesses recanted, casting serious doubt on the conviction, telling of the threats they received at the station.

A turning point came on August 17, 2009, when the U.S. Supreme Court, in a rare ruling, sent the case back to Georgia’s federal court for an evidentiary hearing. At last, the evidence came in: mass recantations, including new witnesses attesting to Davis’s innocence.

Alas, it was not enough, for a Georgia federal judge, William Moore, tossed out most of the evidence, finding recanted testimony “unworthy of belief.”

The ups and downs of judicial fortune raised the hopes of his mother, Virginia, a deeply spiritual, prayerful woman, his sister, Martina, and the rest of the family, only to dash them against the rocks of despair.

On April 12, 2011, Virginia Davis passed away.

On September 21, 2011, Troy Anthony Davis was killed by the State of Georgia.

On December 1, 2011, Martina Davis-Correia died after a decade-long fight against cancer.

Virginia and Martina died of broken hearts.

Troy Davis died from a broken judicial system.

—*PrisonRadio.org*, October 13, 2014

Write to Mumia at:
Mumia Abu-Jamal AM-8335
SCI-Mahanoy
301 Morea Road
Frackville, PA 17932

The Barking Dog

BOOK REVIEW BY GREGG SHOTWELL

The Barking Dog, a collection of auto plant newsletters by Caroline Lund.

Full disclosure: I asked Caroline Lund's lifetime partner and comrade, Barry Sheppard, to collect and publish *The Barking Dog*, because I thought it was one of the best shop floor newsletters from an auto worker I had ever read.

I believed this collection would be an inspiration and a guide for the next generation of rank-and-file autoworkers. But I was wrong: *The Barking Dog* is much more than that.

The Barking Dog is a history lesson: an analysis of the machinations of The Machine That Changed the World, Toyota's lean production system, from inside the beast itself. Caroline worked at the NUMMI plant, celebrated for bringing Toyota's methods to U.S. manufacturing. (The system deskills work and chops it up into ever-smaller units, so that workers are interchangeable and easier to speed up or staff down. *Labor Notes* dubbed it "management-by-stress.")

The book is an *exposé* of corporate corruption and union capitulation, from the point of view of rank-and-filers. It's a study of ordinary workers pushed to the breaking point, who decided to push back.

It's a public record of the resistance and rebellion that grows in the hearts of workers who are often ignored and dismissed by media hacks and union office rats.

And it's the journal of a woman with the wit, fortitude, and drive to pursue her vision of what it meant to do the right thing, against all odds.

A people's podium

I was surprised by what *The Barking Dog* revealed. I didn't work at NUMMI with Caroline, but we were friends and

fellow militants. I didn't need to reread these old shop floor flyers, I thought—I had lived it.

But as I turned the pages, I realized that the times and struggles I lived were bigger than me, too big for me to absorb all at once. This was Caroline's special talent.

The Barking Dog is a people's podium. Caroline was the editor, not a soapbox orator. She stood up for the underdog.

She voiced unpopular but thoughtful opinions, confronted harassment head-on, and didn't back down when

Caroline Lund was a socialist of the old religion—like Eugene Debs, who once said, “I would not lead you out if I could; for if you could be led out, you could be led back again. I would have you make up your minds that there is nothing that you cannot do for yourselves.”

the company or the controlling union caucus tried to shut her down. But she devoted more space to voices of her fellow workers, and to struggles in other workplaces, than she did to herself.

All it takes is guts

The Barking Dog includes the voices of rank-and-file workers at Saturn, Caterpillar, Ford, Delphi, GM, and United Airlines; longshore workers; a fired Bart worker in San Francisco; let-

ters from Germany. This list is off the top of my head.

I read letters from women fighting harassment, disabled workers fighting persecution, and of course the voices of workers who feared to give their names but needed to tell their stories and hoped to rally their fellow workers to fight. *The Barking Dog* was no lone wolf.

Caroline Lund was a socialist of the old religion—like Eugene Debs, who once said, “I would not lead you out if I could; for if you could be led out, you could be led back again. I would have you make up your minds that there is nothing that you cannot do for yourselves.”

Young workers and activists looking for ways to connect and invigorate a new generation of militant workers can use *The Barking Dog* as a template. It's simple. All it takes is guts.

Gregg Shotwell is a retired UAW-GM member and author of *Autoworkers Under the Gun*.

To order, write Barry Sheppard at atlundshep@att.net, \$20 in the U.S., \$25 elsewhere.

—*Labor Notes*, October 28, 2014

<http://www.labornotes.org/blogs/2014/10/review-shop-floor-newsletter-voice-barking-underdog>



The Assassination of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.

BOOK REVIEW BY ROGER HOLLANDER

Why the U.S. Government Assassinated Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.

By Roland Sheppard

ReMarx Publishing, 2014

The question of who ordered the assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. is a vital one, and thousands of pages have been written on the issue. Those who dismiss the notion that the United States Government would engage in assassination (by characterizing those who believe this as “conspiracy nuts”) will fully ignore the 1975 Church Committee Report (that exposed covert, illegal government activities) and the many CIA-orchestrated assassinations and *coups d’etat* from Africa to Latin America.

The CIA’s experience with overseas assassinations has given it more than enough expertise to conduct domestic assassinations, with the added advantage of having control over investigating agencies at the local, state, and national levels.

Deciding criminal guilt is largely based on proving means, motive, and opportunity. When it comes to political assassination, the key question is motive.

Powerful government institutions possess, or can easily obtain, the means and the opportunity to conduct an assassination and divert attention to “a lone gunman,” or a patsy like Lee Harvey Oswald. The mainstream media conveniently forget this fact as they rush to legitimize wacky theories that take the heat off the CIA, FBI, NSA, and police.

In *Why the U.S. Government Assassinated Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Roland Sheppard exposes the U.S. Government’s motive

for assassinating Malcolm X in New York’s Audubon Ballroom on February 21, 1965 and Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis on April 4, 1968. The fact that Sheppard is one of the few remaining eyewitnesses to the assassination of Malcolm X adds a note of immediacy and authenticity to his analysis.

Sheppard describes the unusual absence of security on the day of Malcolm X’s assassination, and he recounts his personal observations of what happened in the crucial moments. He tells of a second suspect apprehended that day by the New York Police, a man whose existence later disappeared from the official version of events. However, when Sheppard was interrogated at the Harlem Police Station, he saw this man walking freely into one of the offices. Sheppard recognized him as the assassin.

In 1999, the King family launched a civil suit to expose the facts surrounding the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

“After considering all the evidence, a Memphis jury ruled that someone other than James Earl Ray had been the shooter ... that the City of Memphis, the State of Tennessee, and federal government agencies were all involved in the assassination.”

Motive

The heart of Sheppard’s work is his analysis of the motive for these two government assassinations.

There is nothing more threatening to the U.S. corporate elite, the government, the military, and the mass media than the prospect of revolution. Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. were developing beyond their original Black liberation philosophies. They were emerging as powerful advocates

and organizers for revolutionary change in the American economic and political system.

In his final years, Malcolm X expanded the fight against racism to include the fight against poverty and war. In 1962, he supported striking hospital workers in New York City. And he was the first mass leader in the United States to publically oppose America’s war against Vietnam.

In his speech at the Oxford Union in 1964, Malcolm X gives Shakespeare a revolutionary twist. He begins with the famous question: “Whether it was nobler in the mind of man to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take up arms against a sea of troubles and, by opposing, end them.” His answer, “And I go for that. If you take up arms you’ll end it, but if you sit around and wait for the one who’s in power to make up his mind that he should end it, you’ll be waiting a long time.”

The U.S. Government also feared Malcolm X’s growing international stature and the political connections he was making in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Sheppard reminds us that Malcolm X met with Che Guevara and the Cuban delegation to the United Nations in New York, in December of 1964. He was invited by Ahmed Ben Bella, the leader of the Algerian revolution, to participate along with Che and other independence movement leaders at a conference in Bandung beginning March 3, 1965. He had also arranged for the issue of human rights violations against Afro-Americans to be considered on March 12, 1965, by the International Court of Justice at The Hague. His assassination put an end to all of this. (Ben Bella was assassinated just four months later.)

Fighting words

Martin Luther King, Jr. was also beginning to challenge a political system that profits from racism. Sheppard cites King's speech at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Convention in August 1967,

“Why are there forty million poor people in America? ...when you begin to ask that question, you are raising a question about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth...you begin to question the capitalist economy.”

King pointed out that the Northern Liberals, who had given moral and financial support to end Jim Crow laws in the South, would not support the effort to eliminate economic segregation. As Sheppard states, “Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated to subvert the Poor People's Campaign. King was building a mass movement against poverty, and those who profit from poverty were determined to stop him.”

King's opposition to the U.S. war against Vietnam sent shivers down the back of the military-industrial complex. In his historic sermon at the Riverside Church in New York on April 4, 1967, sometimes referred to as the greatest MLK speech you never heard of, King exclaimed:

“Money that should have been spent on Johnson's War on Poverty was being lost in Vietnam's killing fields...A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death...We are taking the Black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them 8,000 miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in Southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools.”

King called for a coalition of labor, anti-racist, anti-poverty, and anti-war activists; and a united movement poses the greatest threat to the *status quo*.

Marxists?

In his books on Malcolm X, George Breitman states, “Malcolm was not yet a Marxist.” A reviewer of Breitman's work added, “Not yet! But it was only a matter of time.”

Malcolm X wrote:

“It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck. Capitalism used to be like an eagle, but now it's more like a vulture. It used to be strong enough to go and suck anybody's blood whether they were strong or not. But now it has become more cowardly, like the vulture, and it can only suck the blood of the helpless. As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker. It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely.”

Martin Luther King, Jr., may not have been as far along the road of rejecting capitalism for socialism. Nevertheless, I believe that this was also a matter of time. In a 1966 speech to his staff, King explained: “...something is wrong...with capitalism... There must be a better distribution of wealth and maybe America must move toward a democratic socialism.”

The U.S. Government was determined that neither of these fighters should be allowed to have that time. However, before moving to assassinate them, it tried to “neutralize” them.

Sheppard describes the activities of COINTELPRO, the FBI's program to infiltrate, disrupt, and destroy the Civil Rights Movement, the Anti-Vietnam-War movement, and any other threat to the *status quo*.

FBI boss, J. Edgar Hoover, called King “the most dangerous Negro” and

tried to blackmail him into silence. To discredit Malcolm X, the FBI paid an informer inside the Nation of Islam. When these efforts failed, assassination was the final option.

The U.S. Government assassinated Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. because they rightly came to understand and challenge the capitalist economic system, its social impact (war, poverty, injustice, environmental disaster), and its reliance on racism to divide-and-conquer.

Sheppard concludes with an appeal to action; we must learn the truth about Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. so we can carry their vision forward and conclude the struggle they so bravely began.

—*Black Agenda Report*, September 24, 2014

<http://www.blackagendareport.com/node/14434>



Letter to the Editors

Dear Editors,

My uncle was Chief of Police in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin when the town of 10,000 was a rowdy lumberjack town, which had 23 bars and houses of ill repute on one block. He kept order in that situation yet never took his gun out of its holster.

Now the town is about the same size, but most of the bars are gone, and all of the lumberjacks. The town is now made up of retired farmers and workers at the computer factories in the area.

A front-page article by Chris Vetter from the October 21, 2014 *Leader-Telegram* titled, "Chippewa County Sheriff's Office Buys Drone," says, "...a mechanized device equipped with video and photographic equipment can monitor potentially dangerous situations without risking officers' lives."¹

Clearly, the militarization of the police is spreading even to small communities like mine.

With warm comradely greetings,

Joe Johnson

¹ http://www.leadertelegram.com/news/front_page/article_79e8fea4-59a1-11e4-ae99-67abf55f0473.html

Dear Editors,

For some time now, there has been a campaign to abolish or severely limit the use of solitary confinement due to the proven detrimental effects it has on inmates. There have been noteworthy changes in the policies of a number of corrections departments. Even Pennsylvania, where I am imprisoned, has made changes. Vulnerable groups, like the mentally ill, have seen significant reductions in the amount of time they spend in solitary confinement. From the outside, it looks like progress.

But those of us on the inside see something different. There has been no reduction in the number of cells used for solitary confinement. Prisons are overcrowded so every cell must be used. If prison officials cannot fill solitary confinement cells with the mentally ill, they will fill them with other inmates. Beds in restricted housing units (RHU's) will not go unfilled. We are no closer to the goal of shutting down solitary confinement. What has happened is that its burden has been shifted onto other inmates.

Prison officials have appeased the reformers by limiting the amount of time mentally ill inmates can spend in an RHU. But those beds will not stay empty. Those inmates with no reported mental illness now find themselves facing more misconduct reports and longer sentences in the RHU. The number of beds dedicated to solitary confinement have not been reduced so they must be filled.

At SCI-Smithfield, where I am housed, there are over 1300 inmates. The RHU holds 300 beds. There isn't enough bed space in general population for everyone to be placed there. Some inmates must be housed in the RHU.

Another method being used at SCI-Smithfield is the increased use of administrative custody, a supposedly non-punitive status under which inmates are held in the RHU. Currently, more than 30 percent of SCI-Smithfield's RHU are being held in administrative (protective) custody. These inmates are held indefinitely in the RHU. They're not in the RHU for breaking a prison rule, but they bear the burden of solitary confinement nonetheless.

Sometimes, prison reformers call for changes in policies and practices

and don't reflect upon the practical effect these changes will have on the entire prison population. By focusing upon certain groups and limiting their time spent in solitary confinement, these reformers have inadvertently placed the burden of solitary confinement on other inmates. If reformers would have pushed for a reduction in the total number of beds dedicated to solitary confinement and not just an exemption for certain groups, real progress could have been achieved. For now, all that has occurred is a shift in the insidious effects of solitary confinement, not its elimination.

Limiting the number of beds used for solitary confinement is a better solution. Smaller RHUs force the administration to limit the amount of time anyone, mentally ill or not, could spend there. Fewer beds in the RHU mean less time for everyone. It means the elimination of torture. That's the goal.

As long as there are beds in the RHU, prison officials will fill them by increasing the number of misconduct reports issued or by placing inmates under administrative custody. It's called "population management." Eliminating those beds or significantly reducing their number would force prison officials to use alternative disciplinary measures, less tortuous ones. If the goal is the curtailment or abolition of solitary confinement, then seeking a reduction in the number of beds in RHUs is a definite way to achieve that goal. Without a reduction in the number of beds in the RHU's, all that will be achieved is a shifting of torture, not its cessation.

Write to:

Stephen Wilson # LB8480

P.O. Box 999

1120 Pike Street

Huntingdon, PA 16652

Dear Editors,

Prison conditions in Texas are horrible. Now we are delving into the deep nuances of the “Happy Slave” mentality, which is so very pervasive in Texas and is counter to any movement which seeks to liberate us. In order to liberate our bodies, we must first liberate our minds.

Some years ago when the Federal authorities took over the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, a question was put to the prisoners by the USDOJ (Department of INjustice). “Would you like to get paid for work you perform in Texas prison, or would you rather receive ‘good time’ and ‘work time’ credits that could be counted for reducing your sentence?” Prisoners given such a choice would opt for early release. But the prisoners were bamboozled and hoodwinked. I have seen numerous men who had prison time-slips that showed an accrued combination of flat time (actual time served), good time (awarded for good behavior), and work time (credit awarded for working) that had exceeded their official sentence length by almost two times!

What I am saying is that there are men and women in Texas prisons who have been “credited” time which exceeds their actual sentence by five percent and in some cases 100 percent. That means on paper they have served up to 200 percent of their sentences! Why are they still in prison? The Texas Department of Criminal Injustice told “Uncle Sam” they would honor a prisoner’s good time and work credits instead of paying for the work. Comrades, we have been lied to! The oppressors who run the Texas government have attached a numeric monetary value to prisoners, and so there is no way the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles will ever honor these bullshit credits and release us.

So with this and many other relevant factors considered, we must ask ourselves—“When is enough, enough?” How many more comrades must we see murdered before our eyes? How many times will we allow the Office of Inspector General in Texas to rule these homicides to be accidents, or suicides, or justified? How much longer must we wait for journalists in

Texas to give fair, honest and equal coverage to our suffering? When will we all come together in order to resist and rebel against an oppressive system, which has no interest in our success or future happiness? Can we, the lumpen-underclass in Texas, match or surpass the efforts of 33,000 determined and single-minded prisoners housed in the state of California who finally had enough and, with their 2013 hunger strike, took their destiny into their own hands? Our path to freedom in Texas starts with proper education. Grasping the concepts set forth by Mao, Lenin and Marx is a start.

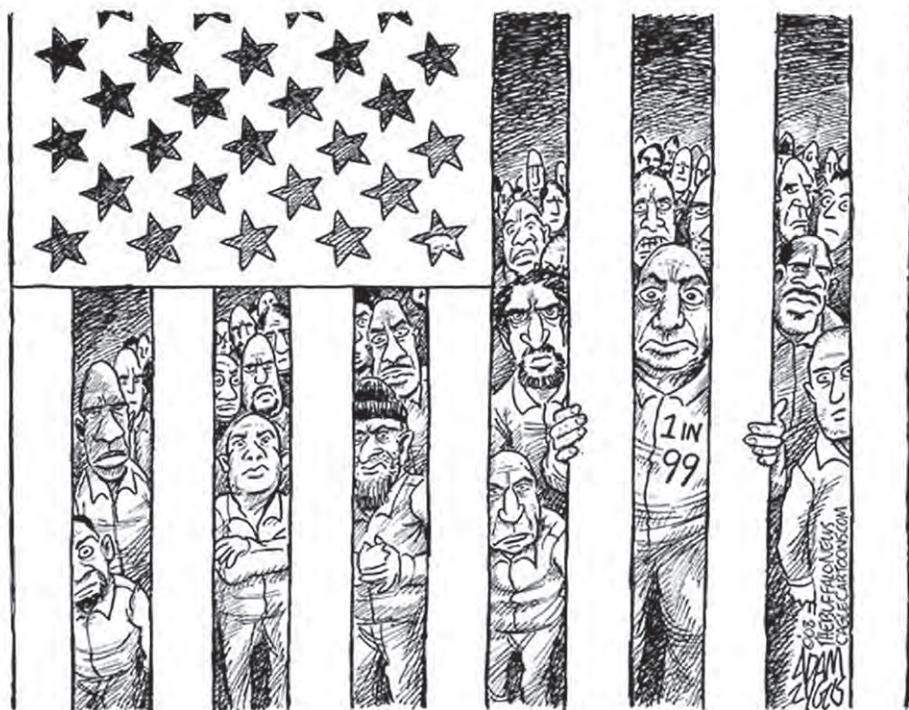
In “Liberation or Gangsterism Part I and II” Comrade Russell Maroon Shoatz tells us that the imperialist oppressor will initiate and implement programs to sabotage the success of a revolutionary movement or destroy it from the inside out: cooptation, fear, or as in the case of Comrade Kevin ‘Rashid’ Johnson, separating the most advanced revolutionary element from the people.

Serving the people is a big part of being a New Afrikan Black Panther. Educating the lumpen, our fellow prisoners, and “free-world” supporters and comrades is one aspect of serving; awakening the lumpen is another. There is something exciting going on in Texas! I encourage you to learn more about us and the work we are doing in Texas and beyond. We definitely could use all of your help and support.

Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win! All Power to the People!

Keith “Malik” Washington

Write to Keith “Malik” Washington:
Keith “Malik” Washington, TDC #1487958
Ramsey I
1100 FM 655
Rosharon, TX 77583



'LAND OF THE FREE'

Nat Weinstein—An Oral History

EDITED BY SOPHIE HAGEN, BASED ON AN INTERVIEW WITH NAT WEINSTEIN IN NOVEMBER 2007 BY CONOR CASEY

In November 2007, Nat Weinstein sat down with Conor Casey, an intern at the Holt Labor Library, to talk about his life as a trade unionist and revolutionary socialist. Nat had a chance to review the transcript once and append his comments, but his political and family commitments and declining health prevented him from further preparing the text for publication. Following his death on May 9, 2014, Socialist Viewpoint now presents Nat's reflections on his life in order to illuminate the conflicts, intellectual evolution, and moments of both deepest disappointment and sweetest victory in a life of socialist struggle. This is the second of three installments of "Nat Weinstein—An Oral History." All efforts have been made to preserve both the content and style of Nat's remarks.

Part IV: The 1940s

Joining the painting profession

I became a painter; I was working for my wife Sylvia's uncle. He was doing jobs of his own and paying me a good wage and I was learning. I didn't know how to paint, but I had to go the hard way, painting fire escapes. I was ice-cold in the winter—it was freezing. I had to work: I had a wife. I had a baby.

I was young. In 1946, I was 21, I guess, on my way to being 22. I always looked younger than my age and I dressed like a kid: I wore dungarees, which painters don't wear—they wear a suit to work. It's a culture. Of course, it was mostly Jews and Italians in New York. In my day, in the teens and twenties, they were still immigrants. Earlier painters were Germans who had been an earlier migration. There weren't many Irish painters in New York for some reason.

They used to have "language locals"—locals that were authorized to conduct their proceedings in their

native language, so locals were all German, all Italian, and so on.

That was naturally phased out as the immigrants became integrated into the United States.

The Painters Union

My local was 892 in District Council 9. It was really one big unit with ten or eleven different locals—Manhattan and the Bronx. The women painters were in a separate district council. We had about ten or eleven thousand of the district council, about a thousand members of Local 892 at the time. Their meetings were two hundred people every week. The level of union activity was very high at the end of the war, in 1946. We ran a comrade for secretary treasurer of the district council and he won. The first time he ran was before I got into the union and he lost by 13 votes. Then I joined—I was recruited—I was colonized. In 1946, the party wanted to reinforce our faction. We had about three people in the union. The guy who was running for secretary treasurer won by 113 votes. That's a lot of the ten thousand—maybe six or seven thousand—votes. So that was a "squeaky" victory, just like the loss was a "squeaky" loss.

So an SWP member held office in a local AFL union in New York. He was the secretary treasurer, and we had comrades who were elected to labor offices—district council and local unions. In fact, we had a caucus and I was made the secretary of the caucus. I had to take minutes and mimeograph the postcards. We did that in the party headquarters at 116 University Place. I had just come into a union, then. I think the guy who was my comrade had to explain why he picked me to be the recording secretary because it's kind of a privileged post. It's somebody representing the authority of the union,

but he said I was his brother-in-law, and I didn't find out until I heard people saying, "Oh, yes—Marty's brother in law!"

Actually, he degenerated very quickly with the power, privilege, and so on. If you have family or people, you have to be pretty strong to stick it out under those circumstances. A lot of people go bad when they have positions of privilege and power. So it fell to the party to discipline him, too. We did it, but it was very difficult. Life is hard for revolutionists and for a revolutionary party.

Getting involved in the Socialist Workers Party

I was pretty good at recruiting people when I was young, winning people over in personal conversations. But they had to be ready. You can't win somebody over if they're not ready. When they're ready, they're easy, because they keep asking questions.

I was a pretty good street corner speaker, even though I didn't start out eloquently. The first time I tried to speak in a union hall, it was very stupid. It was a seaman's meeting, a meeting of the SIU, in New York. There were about a thousand workers there and I got up. I tried to sound like an old sailor. I don't even want to try to reproduce what I said, but they were all smiling at this young radical that they all heard and knew about. In those days, there was lots of socialists, Stalinists, Trotskyists around.

When I joined the party, a lot of your education came from discussion with other members and from going to classes at 116 University Place. (That's where I was the organizer from 1960 until about 1965.)

We began recruiting youth, student youth. In a way, they learned faster than workers do because that's what

they do. They're dealing with ideas, they're college students.

The Goldman/Cannon split

I listened to the debate in the SWP between Goldman and Cannon in 1945. It was over the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. Goldman and Morrow had taken the position that once the Stalin-Hitler Pact had occurred, the revolution was no longer worthy of defense. That's pretty much their position, so the debate was over the question of the defense of the Soviet Union, which was pretty hard to do in those days, with the Stalin-Hitler Pact still fresh in mind and the reactionary role played by the Soviet Union, the Stalinist bureaucracy, during the war. That role was contradictory, but just like everything in life is contradictory. They did some good things and they did many bad things, but the bad outweighed, on the balance sheet, the good.

That split recurred when the Goldman/Morrow faction proposed unity with the Workers' Party in 1946, after the debate between Goldman and Cannon. The Workers' Party was unity-mongering the SWP, and we went through a relationship with them to see if unity would work. Goldman said, "I can argue just as well as you can argue about the defense of the Soviet Union, but it's not important now and you should unify with the Workers' Party." That was their line. We actually were testing them—they had been asking us about unifying the two Trotskyist groups. The question of the defense of the Soviet Union was not that important right now and we had lived in the same organization, so we took them up on it after a while because it was very hard to oppose it.

The party leadership took it on in good faith—they didn't say it was a test. They just said "Okay, let's try it. Let's see if it will work." Later on it became clear to me that they had no confidence that it would work but they said they had no choice but to make it

a test, to make it visible to the comrades that it wouldn't work.

So the only thing we did with that unity is we organized a bazaar—we used to organize bazaars to raise money. We had a unit that we called the New York School of Social Science and the businesses of the area would think that it had something to do with the New School of Social Research. We were a community organization; we went to the neighborhood stores and asked for donations, and then sold them. Comrades would bring their junk. I used to bring my little paintings and stuff and sell them.

Anyway, we organized a bazaar together, the two groups. We worked on that and we worked with them on the committee to raise money for the Trotskyist victims of fascist occupation in Europe that were in dire straits and needed financial help. The unity project never got any further than that. They lost interest because they didn't want to be part of a democratic centralist organization. We had a bigger organization than them, you see. They took 40 percent of the party and we grew more than they did during the war.

They argued that the Soviet Union was no longer a degenerated workers' state. They had two positions in the Schachtmanite group. One was that it was a new kind of state called "bureaucratic collectivism" and the other faction argued that it was state capitalism. What state capitalism means is that it's capitalist. There's no such thing as "state capitalism" except the Soviet Union could be described as state capitalist, but it's a superficial analysis. There's never been such a thing and that doesn't mean it can't happen, but we found too many contradictions to such a conclusion.

Part V: the 1950s

The civil rights movement

In the 1950s, both Nat and Sylvia played a prominent role in the party's

involvement in the civil rights struggle.

We played a big role. Sylvia and I were active in the Black movement, which was unusual. All our comrades were a little bit interested, participated in demonstrations, and played some kind of a role—usually in white organizations in support of the Black struggle. But Sylvia and I joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and comrades were urged to do things like that. It's hard for the whites to work in an organization like the NAACP, but we found we were able to. The racial crisis in the United States made them suspicious of all whites, including those that came over, because a lot of whites would come in with the wrong attitude, like they're there to teach more than help—usually socialists, Stalinists, social democrats, and so on.

I joined the NAACP in '53, right after Emmett Till¹. Of course I tried to recruit to the SWP, but there was a line I didn't cross. We've always had an orientation to the Black struggle for freedom.

The Khrushchev revelations and the Hungarian revolution

There was a marked increase in SWP members after the 1956 Khrushchev revelations about Stalinism. That was a big conquest for us, for the reputation and everything that Trotsky stood for, even though Khrushchev didn't tell it all, by any means. But he told a lot. He punctured the balloon of Stalin's image. Of course, the Soviet CP party leadership split, and the U.S. Communist Party was split. The CP was always oriented to the Democratic Party, at least since the 1930s, since Roosevelt.

We recruited a few former CP members—not many. We won over a lot of influence with people, including somebody who was pretty prominent in the "fellow travelers" of the Communist Party, who were affected because they were all Stalinist oriented. They were affected more than the members of the

CP, who just got demoralized and dropped out, the ones that were quickly affected by that information.

We won over—as a supporter—Clifford T. McAvoy, a guy who had been the head of the American Labor Party in New York, which was a Stalinist-dominated or “front” organization. They elected a lot of people—local city officials—but they also supported the Democratic Party, which labor parties are not supposed to do! At least principled labor parties. Because a party that says it defends the workers against capitalists can’t support “good capitalists.” ’Cause there ain’t no good capitalists from the point of view of their policies that they have, the consistency of their positions.

McAvoy died around the time of the Krushchev revelations. He came close to us then. He wasn’t close to us before. He was close enough that his wife joining the party after he died was a reflection of the impact it had on him.

The Hungarian Revolution in 1956 shook up the Communist Party, too. That was the turning point where Khrushchev, I think, got back on the Stalinist line and was soon replaced. We had some influence in the CP, as you would expect, and the Trotskyists in England made big headway. We won a lot of top leaders of the CP at that time (not the uppermost leaders). They were horrified by the role of the CP in crushing the Hungarian Revolution, because they created soviets! It was modeled on the Bolshevik Revolution!

The CP had a larger cadre of workers, as well as being the larger organization, so they had a lot more workers in industry, especially in the industrial unions, but we had a small, solid cadre.

Ebbs and flows in membership and the Cochran split

We recruited a lot of students, beginning in the 1950s with the civil rights movement and the Cuban revolution. Then the Vietnam War and the

draft gave students an even more compelling reason to rise up and become part of a broader movement. Then there was the women’s liberation movement, and of course the civil rights movement played a powerful role at that time.

At our height in 1946, we probably had fifteen or sixteen hundred members. The decline began with the McCarthy witch-hunt. It was very, very effective in silencing the militants inside the unions and, of course, our comrades. That’s why we lost the United Auto Workers fraction as a result of their orientation during the Cochran Split, in 1953. We had a large auto worker fraction, and we lost them because one of their leaders—Cochran himself—or maybe it was Mike Bartell, one of the other leaders of their faction—said that “the labor bureaucracy is to the left of the working class.” The leader, Bert Cochran, was an experienced autoworker intellectual. He was an intellectual who became a worker—he wasn’t a worker who became an intellectual, see. The labor bureaucracy was leading the campaign against communists and the Reds inside the union!

The orientation of the Cochranites was a kind of a mixed bag. You had two factions, or two currents that united around a program that was advanced by Cochran and a guy by the name of George Clarke; that was his party name. He had been in Europe representing the party in the Fourth International for a couple years around that time. Michel Pablo, a Greek, was a leader of the Fourth International in the ’50s. What appeared to be an approaching imperialist war against the Soviet Union, rolling back the recent occupation of Eastern Europe, led Pablo to the conclusion that they would be forced to take a revolutionary stand to defend the Soviet Union. Of course, there was a certain logic to that but to say that they would move to the left would be a legitimate proposition to have advanced. But the approach that he

came up with was the “*Entrism Sui Generis*” or entry of a special kind. [Pablo proposed that the Trotskyists actually become members of the Communist Parties.]

The FBI

During that period, the FBI visited constantly! They’d come knocking on your door. Sylvia was mostly at home—I was never at home or was working, and Sylvia didn’t tell them anything, wouldn’t talk to them. They’d go and visit her where she was working, which means that they had followed her to see where she was working. She was a waitress, and they would come into the restaurant, sit at one of the tables wherever she was working, and sit down and talk and leave a big tip. Well, a big tip in those days in a restaurant—you know—a diner—a working man’s restaurant. She wouldn’t tell them anything and couldn’t talk because she had work and she couldn’t sit down and talk to them and she wouldn’t. So they visited her constantly and they would have visited me if they could find out where I worked, but I worked in a different place almost week to week.

Recruiting

I used to be a pretty good public speaker. I’d get up on a soapbox in Greenwich Village in New York. We went through a period where we did a lot of recruiting of people that way. We had big meetings, so sometimes a couple hundred people in the street. We used to have a street meeting on 6th Avenue and 8th Street. It was the heart of the business district of Greenwich Village. That was around the time just before the Cuban Revolution—’59 and immediately after.

We had a meeting, in fact, a couple days after the Bay of Pigs and the hysteria was very much anti-Cuban, because it looked like World War III was about to begin. Really. That’s the way it looked. If you were alive then and walking down the streets, people

would look at each other like: “Have you heard anything new? Have the Russian ships arrived yet?”

We had a street meeting. We were defending the Cuban Revolution against the invasion, and we had a very friendly crowd but there was one guy there yelling, “Castro-Oil!” He was drunk. “Castro-Oil!” He was a drunken fool being provocative. He knew enough of what was happening that he knew he hated it, and it was scary. The crowd didn’t respond, although you could see they were under pressure. We were able to hold the street meeting, but we had to end it prematurely, if I remember right. At any rate, I tried to get my kids to leave; they were in their teens in those days, and they wouldn’t go. I tried to say, “Get out of here because there’s going to be trouble!” They wouldn’t go. They stayed there. That’s my kids! Red diaper babies. Both of my daughters joined the Young Socialist Alliance when they were 15 or 16 and so you can call them “red diaper babies.” They’re still socialists.

Part VI: The 1960s

New York forums

Nat organized Militant Labor Forums at 116 University Place every week, in order to share the ideas of revolutionary socialism with a broader audience.

We had a lot of social events. We kept ourselves busy during the worst period by having forums every week, one night a week. We used to have forums only in the wintertime, not in the summer. In the late ’50s, early ’60s, I instituted the policy of forums every week throughout the year, no matter what. We had forums every week with a social every week. Friday night social, Saturday night forum. We would make a little bit of money for the party from the socials by selling beer and liquor, which was illegal. We tried to circumvent the legality by buying little tickets from the 5- and 10-cent store, you know, that had numbers on it. They

were little tickets that people could charge for drinking, so no money would be exchanged.

We got raided once at Mountain Spring Camp. Some guy came in and pretended to be a visitor and sat at the bar and ordered a drink and we took his money. We told him what to do and they came in with axes and they chucked up everything. The people who were technically in charge who identified themselves were arrested. They spent the night in jail. I think we won that case, if I’m not mistaken. Well, that was democracy in the United States!

Malcolm X

We had organized three or four forums for Malcolm X. We were the only white organization to do so. I was the organizer when we did it. I was the one that established a relationship with him. I reported what I had seen and heard when I went to the meetings when he split from the Nation of Islam and he formed the Organization for African American Unity. All his meetings were in the place where he was ultimately assassinated, the Audubon Ballroom. I reported what he was saying and it was shocking because he was way in advance of everybody else in the leadership of the Black movement at the time.

The first time I heard him was at a street meeting in Brooklyn. That’s why when he broke with the Nation of Islam I knew something about him. I didn’t know how good he was until I went to this meeting and I was fascinated by everything he was saying. It was revolutionary. It was revolutionary nationalism, but it had a working-class thrust to it, and I’m listening to him and I make no notes. I was there to make notes! I had nothing to write; I was just so absorbed in what he was saying. I couldn’t make any notes. I was listening, I just wanted to get it all in. Then he said something about the Jews, because the Nation of Islam was very anti-Semitic at the time. It wasn’t that bad, but I felt compelled to make a

note of it and he saw me—I was sitting right up in front. He says: “There’s a reporter here. A white man. He’s listened to this speech up until now and the only time he got a pencil on paper was when I said something about the Jews.” That’s in one of his speeches, and nobody knows that it was me.

Anyway, I reported these things—not the part about him mentioning me—but I mentioned everything that he was saying. The party trusted me, the comrades trusted me, and they took it and began to come to the meetings. They saw for themselves and I didn’t have to explain anymore. That’s what I mean by “he had a proletarian thrust to everything that he said.” The things he said and what he stood for made a big impression and I think will be around for a long time, long after he’s dead. He said things like: “For a capitalist to be revolutionary is like a turkey laying a chicken egg”—or something like that. He said it beautifully.

[Malcolm X’s quotation reads as follows: “People will realize that it’s impossible for a chicken to produce a duck egg—even though they both belong to the same family of fowl. A chicken just doesn’t have it within its system to produce a duck egg. It can’t do it. It can only produce according to what that particular system was constructed to produce. The system in this country cannot produce freedom for an Afro-American. It is impossible for this system, this economic system, this political system, this social system, this system, period. It’s impossible for this system, as it stands, to produce freedom right now for the Black man in this country.

“And if ever a chicken did produce a duck egg, I’m quite sure you would say it was certainly a revolutionary chicken!”]

At one point, before he went to Africa, we contacted him and invited him to speak at a meeting that we had organized in Harlem someplace; we didn’t think we had a big enough hall for him to speak in our meeting hall.

We could hold 120, 130 people in our meeting hall, 116 University Place.

Making ends meet

I was the organizer at 116 University Place from 1960 until about 1965. I think I was acting organizer in '60 and I became organizer in 1961.

I think we were getting \$35 a week when I was the organizer. Of course, I couldn't live on \$35 a week; Sylvia worked, and I would work periodically and I earned enough to collect unemployment insurance. So I went through one period where I worked, I collected unemployment insurance, I would stop collecting unemployment insurance, I went back to work, and then I went back to full time in the party. Other times, I'd take off for a couple of jobs and do a job here and there.

I began to find people that I'd worked for as a contractor who liked the work I did and called me. You're not supposed to do that, but they called me—rich people: people living on 5th Avenue right across from Central Park and places like that. I worked in a house for the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. You know, the ex-king of the United Kingdom. They were living in an apartment I worked on.

The union wage was, let's say, a hundred dollars a day. I would charge two or three hundred for a day's work. That way, I was able to get by putting in a day or two here and a day or two there. Other comrades, their wife would be working or their companion would be working, whoever their companion was. Sylvia was working—though she went to work full time for the party before I did as a secretary in the office and she worked in the business office of *The Militant*. I was getting \$35 and she was getting \$15, plus the unemployment insurance and the other things. That was only \$57.50, for us, but we were able to get by. We had an apartment, a rent-controlled apartment. New York rent control is not like it is in San Francisco. Not anymore! It

used to be. When we were there, it was really rigid rent control. We were able to get by.

The SWP was the dominant force in the anti-war movement. Democratic centralism is what made the party strong and during the anti-war movement we met as a faction, as a party caucus in the movement. Our policy throughout the anti-war movement was very simple and easily understood because our policy was class independence—independence of the anti-war movement from the Democratic and Republican parties. At the same time, we didn't exclude people who were for the Democrats—that was our policy. We didn't say, "If you're part of this movement, we insist that you not support the Democratic Party." We advocated a policy that was in the best interests of the movement against the war.

We have an organizational principle that we call "democratic centralism." It sounds like a contradiction in terms, but it's not. It's a real contradiction. In other words, what "democratic centralism" means is democracy informing the positions of establishing policies of worth. It's centralism in action. Once the party decides some course of action, you can't violate it. But you don't have to defend it if you don't agree with it. See, that would be a mistake. The Stalinists did that. They forced those that disagreed, who voted against it, to defend it, but they said they practiced democratic centralism.

That was Lenin, the Bolsheviks, Trotsky, and so on. It was their methodology. That's what made Lenin's party different from the other parties—it was democratic centralist. It was disciplined, but it was also democratic. Everybody understood that you had the right to say whatever you think in the course of the discussion and in talking to people who were comrades or informally, to argue about the politics. You could say anything you wanted and you wrote anywhere you want-

ed, but once the decision is made, you're obligated to support it in action. You're not obligated, as I said, to defend it. That's a very subtle thing. It doesn't seem like much, but it's designed to make sure that nobody feels that their independence has been abridged. That's important. It gives you freedom and confidence in the leadership of the party that allows this to happen, that wants this to happen, that organizes the party so that this happens. Everybody understands.

Unions don't follow democratic centralism, of course, but in practice, once there's a strike, once the majority has voted for a strike, everybody is supposed to abide by that decision and not cross the picket line.

You've got to follow the decision made by the majority. See, that's a very important concept. In a democratic organization that doesn't follow that policy, that permits the leadership to do anything that they want, you see the effects. It also means that you can't take the rank and file seriously, because they keep arguing and they keep saying what they think. Especially if you're allowed to violate it in action.

Say there's a vote in your local union. Well, everybody is expected to vote with what the party decision is.

So we had factions, we had meetings. We'd decide what our policy would be.

We had a democratic discussion over tactics. It doesn't come from the top. The only people who could make the decision are the people in the situation. I'm talking also about program. I'm also talking about in practice the tactical application of democratic centralism. It works in principal the same way, and it's a really effective method.

The policy of the Stalinists and social democrats and liberals in the early stages of the war was negotiation; the advocacy, the demand, that the United States negotiate in Vietnam. Well, that's the same as saying that

Vietnam wants to negotiate their control of their country with the United States! “Negotiate Now” is a counter-revolutionary slogan because it violates the rights of not only of Americans but of the Vietnamese. You’re demanding that the Vietnamese negotiate with the United States. Why should they if they don’t want to? We’re going to negotiate with you about whether you should stay in this country or not? Whether they should be killing Vietnamese or not? Absurd!

For a while during the anti-war movement, our tactical statement was to support the proposal by others to end the war. At the same time, we said we would go further and when we marched on demonstrations, we carried signs that said, “Bring the Troops Home Now” before it was adopted by the movement as a whole, because that’s the principle of a united front-type demonstration. We had very little support for it at first but they compromised and accepted the slogan at the end of the war as against negotiation.

That’s how the Russian Revolution was made with a workers united front. That was the strategy of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution—a united front. The soviets are a united front. Every general strike is a united front. The anti-war movement is not a united front in the sense that it wasn’t big organizations united, but it was individuals representing currents that were welcome to participate, so it was a united front-type formation. We used that formulation to describe it succinctly. People might not have known what “united front” means, but we explained it that way.

Most anti-war movements are in principle united front-type demonstrations. They’re not workers’ united fronts because those are agreements between mass organizations: the old CIO unions, AF L unions, in a united action in their common interest during the general strike, for example. A gen-

eral strike is like a soviet, and a soviet is a general strike. A general strike in a revolutionary period is a thing that stays; it’s permanent until you’ve got a plan. In other words, say all the different political parties and unions are part of the strike committee. That means not just the leaders, but also the rank and file comes to those meetings.

It doesn’t mean that everybody must go on a demonstration, just like being in a strike doesn’t mean that everybody has to go on a picket line. They have to be ready to go on the picket line, but they’re not obligated to go on the picket line. So it’s a voluntary thing. You can’t make it involuntary. A union can’t make its workers be on a picket line when everybody knows there’s going to be a fight between strikebreakers—scabs—on one side and unionists on the other. There has to be the spirit; if you don’t have that spirit, you can’t win the strike. There’s no way you can enforce it.

Once the rank and file get into motion, you can’t stop them! It’s hard to get them in motion—it can’t happen unless the workers want it to happen. Leaders have to understand the level of consciousness of the workers at that very moment. You can’t live in the abstract; you have to be there, you have to be part of it. You have to feel it. Then you can make a judgment: “This is what we’ve got to do. Let’s have a strike.” If you don’t think there is that mood there, then you have to limit it. If there’s going to be a strike, it has to be limited. You can’t bite off more than you can chew because you won’t be able to get the membership to put up the fight that’s necessary to make it stick.

So it just shows what happens when workers are in motion. When workers are in motion, they begin to think different. That’s what explains why the revolutionary Marxist movement has splintered all over the place. They never had mass support in the United States. But the loss of the influence they’ve had

is because the workers have not been in motion for a long time. Not as workers, not through their own institutions—the workers as part of the anti-war movement. Who made up the anti-war movement? Most of them are workers. Not organized workers, not trade union, so much—though there was some union support in the anti-war movement, and more as time went on—but that’s because the whole population is against this war now. But they are against this war in a way that is not what it would be like if the organized workers’ movement was against the war, as it would be in a different situation, in a more advanced political situation.

You see, everything is rational. There are no mysteries about it, but there is a lot that you need to know, and what you need to know you don’t only get from books. You’ve got to get it from experience. That’s why we had a cadre—that’s what we call people who have absorbed the politics and methodology of revolutionary Marxism. Trotskyism is not something separate and independent—it’s just revolutionary Marxism of today.

Membership changes

In the ’60s, with the influx of students and recruits from the New Left, there was a shift in the membership of the party.

That’s where the degeneration of the party came in. There’s nothing wrong with the recruiting of students; that’s what we do. When workers are not in motion, you’ve got to try to keep the party alive and have cadres so that when the opportunity to lead working class struggles arises you’re in a position to do it. You have people to do it. So we recruited lots of youth, and they were trained not in the unions but in the anti-war movement. We taught them how to function in the anti-war movement, how democratic centralist policies and principles function and how we put them into effect. It makes sense, so it was easy for people to grasp and understand and become used to

it—it became normal. It’s just the way you did things. It was effective and it was reasonable and it was democratic. You expected comrades to vote, but if they didn’t vote with us, with the majority—every now and then, for instance, they voted with friends—we didn’t make them.

Moving to the West Coast

Nat took a party assignment to rebuild the Seattle branch after it split with members forming the Freedom Socialist Party.

I was asked to move to another city. I was given a choice of San Francisco or Seattle and I didn’t understand what was really involved and I said I’d go to Seattle. Tom Kerry told me, that was a big mistake. He didn’t tell me in so many words, because he was too smart a politician to tell a comrade something that would be treated as a violation of discipline, so he just said that it was a mistake, but it was too late; I had agreed to go.

They sent six of us to Seattle to reconstitute the branch. Sylvia and I, another couple, and two other single men.

Tom Kerry was the National Organizational Secretary of the SWP, along with Farrell Dobbs, who was National Secretary. They were a team, Farrell Dobbs and Tom Kerry.

Tom Kerry told me to stop off in San Francisco on my way to Seattle. We drove a Volkswagen there with a trailer with a few possessions. I wanted to see comrades: My daughter, Debbie, was married to Peter Camejo who was the party leader at the time and they were living in Berkeley. We stopped off to see Sylvia’s mother on the way in Arizona and we saw Debbie in Berkeley and my daughter Bonnie and her husband Roland went to San Francisco.

I stayed a total of two and a half months in Seattle and helped build the branch. I reported to Farrell Dobbs and to Tom Kerry. After a while, after I was there, they called me and told me

to go down and talk to them again. Tom Kerry told me that while I had been stopping off in San Francisco, the leader of the International Brotherhood of Painters, Local 4 in San Francisco, Dow Wilson, had been assassinated.

Wilson was the head of the Bay Area movement. He put up a good fight at first, for about a year. Then, when the contract expired, and they had to negotiate a new contract, they made big concessions to the employers. One of the things that Dow Wilson was noted for is fighting for control over the tools. The employers allowed rollers to be used, but only on old work. New work, you had to use the paintbrush. The employers wanted to add the stick, which is a paint roller with an extension, so you could paint the ceiling from the floor and not have to get up on a ladder. It saves a lot of time.

I told the Local 4 leaders who I was, but I didn’t say I was coming to San Francisco. I had that wrong. I just went ahead. I didn’t ask them. I just said, I’ve always wanted to know what happened and so on and so forth and what was their estimate of the situation, and they told me everything. They were under the impression that it was the leaders in the International Brotherhood of Painters that had Dow Wilson assassinated.

They were ex-Stalinists—no longer Stalinists. They were seamen and I was a seaman, so we got along famously; I told them that I was a Trotskyist and they welcomed me. I said, “What would you think if I came here to help?” Me and another comrade? That was my son-in-law, Roland Sheppard.

So I told Farrell and Tom what happened and I reported the discussion I had with the Local 4 leaders, and they said, “We think you should go move to San Francisco.” Tom wanted me out of Seattle. They hadn’t recommended Seattle; they were forced. Tom apparently had told them, “Don’t send them to Seattle. Send them to San Francisco

if you need help. That’s where you can do more good.” San Francisco had a big trade union movement, or used to have it. Now the union is dead in San Francisco. It doesn’t exist. In fact, they don’t even have a local here anymore. They’ve got a local for all of the Bay Area in Oakland someplace. You hear nothing about them; there’s no sign of the existence of the painter’s union in San Francisco.

So I moved to San Francisco. At one point, I ran for recording secretary, which was the highest position in Local 4. Dow Wilson didn’t want to be a high official—he was a recording secretary, which is usually an unpaid job in the union. The big positions are business agent and financial secretary, so that’s why a lot of union heads are titled “secretary treasurer”—they’re the recording secretary, full-time, and the treasurer.

I ran and I think I got 150 votes out of about 500, which was not that good. In fact, Roland Sheppard got elected some years after this, but he wasn’t part of any opposition. There wasn’t any opposition; there was no central leadership. The whole thing began degenerating after they gave up tools. You see? Because that was their way of making peace with the bosses and the International. They capitulated, in effect. They tried to con us.

Morris Evenson was the leader of Local 4 and he very much wanted, valued, our help and support. I could have been his “right-hand man” and eventually been a business agent, and go the way of all flesh, you know? Of course, I wasn’t interested in that, and I wasn’t too anxious to get a full-time job because I was afraid of what would happen to me. I had Roland to watch over me. He wouldn’t let me sell out on the job.

¹ Emmett Louis Till (July 25, 1941 – August 28, 1955) was an African-American boy who was murdered in Mississippi at the age of 14 after reportedly flirting with a white woman.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmett_Till

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Note to Readers:

Socialist Viewpoint magazine has been edited and distributed by a group of revolutionaries who share a common political outlook stemming from the old Socialist Workers Party of James P. Cannon, and Socialist Action from 1984 through 1999.

After being expelled from Socialist Action in 1999, we formed Socialist Workers Organization in an attempt to carry on the project of building a nucleus of a revolutionary party true to the historic teachings and program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

What we have found is that our numbers are insufficient for this crucial project of party building. This problem is not ours alone; it is a problem flowing from the division and fragmentation that has plagued the revolutionary movement in capitalist America and the world since the 1980s.

What we intend to do is to continue to promote the idea of building a revolutionary Marxist working class political party through the pages of *Socialist Viewpoint* magazine. We continue to have an optimistic outlook about the revolutionary potential of the world working class to rule society in its own name—socialism. We are optimistic that the working class, united across borders, and acting in its own class interests can solve the devastating crises of war, poverty, oppression, and environmental destruction that capitalism is responsible for.

We expect that revolutionaries from many different organizations, traditions, and backgrounds will respond to the opportunities that will arise, as workers resist the attacks of the capitalist system and government, to build a new revolutionary political party. Just as we join with others to build every response to war and oppression, we look forward to joining with others in the most important work of building a new mass revolutionary socialist workers' party as it becomes possible to do so.

Mississippi Incarceration Rate

Report: Mississippi incarcerates more people *per capita* than Russia and China . . . combined

By JONATHAN TURLEY

There is a rather shocking statistic out of the International Centre for Prison Studies this week: Mississippi locks up more people *per capita* than China and Russia combined. It turns out the “Hospitality State” may continue to have one of the lowest rankings in public education and employment but they will put you in jail faster than Vladimir Putin can say *do svidaniya*.

Here are the stats: Mississippi reports 686 inmates per 10,000 population in 2013. In comparison, China incarcerates 121 while Russia incarcerates 475 per 10,000.

The state has moved recently to give more power to judges to hand down alternative sentences. There are good reasons for sentencing guidelines, but they work best as guidelines. When you impose mandatory minimums, it tends

to drive up incarceration and denies judges the ability to tailor sentencing to fit actual cases. I once testified with the judge who said that he was surprised by the lack of discretion in the federal system. After all, he said, he was selected because he had done well in law school, done well in practice, accumulated decades of experience . . . only to be told that he could not use any of that accumulated experience in sentencing offenders.

Critics have charged that the new law actually will magnify the problem because, while allowing more discretion, it also classified those convicted of drug sales, burglary of an occupied dwelling and arson as “violent” offenders. A case where a woman was just a month from release as a drug dealer when her parole was cancelled is one

result of the new law. The law also imposes habitual offender sentencing which will prolong incarceration. Yet, beyond these two changes, the added discretion should help with first offenders and other categories of crime.

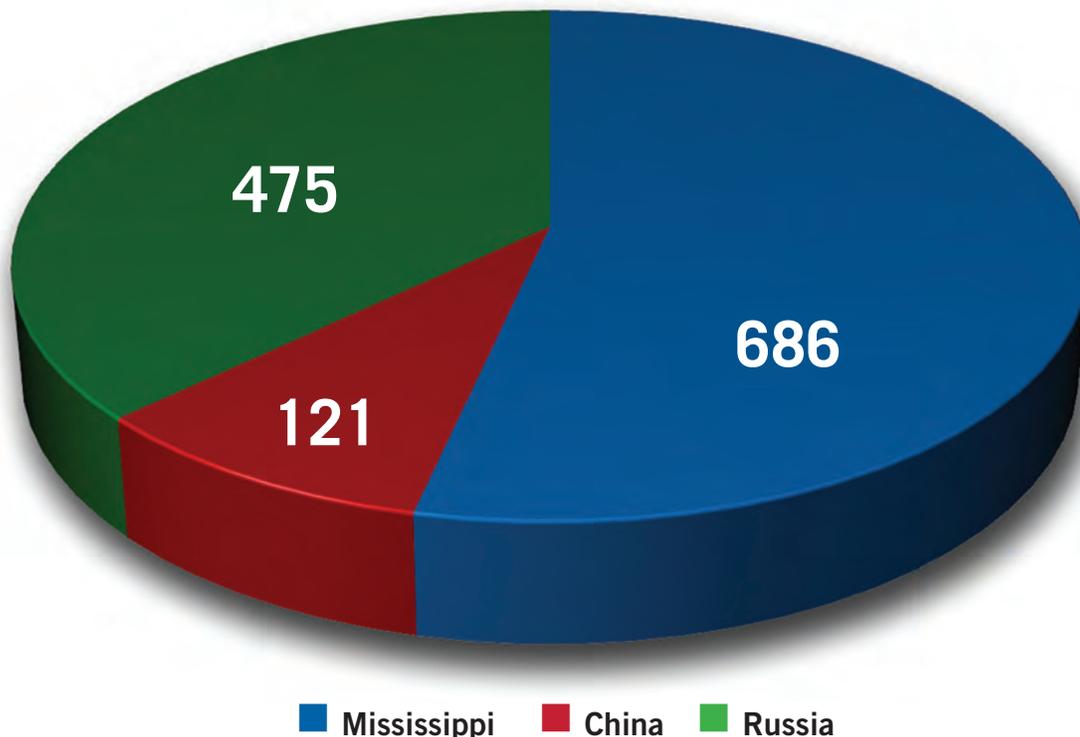
With 19,811 people behind bars, Mississippi is still not the top incarcerating state. That distinction rests with Louisiana at 39,147 and Oklahoma at 26,927. Presumably, these states also top Russian and China combined in *per capita* incarceration rates.

Source: *Clarion Ledger*

—Jonathan Turley, October 20, 2014

<http://jonathanturley.org/2014/10/20/report-mississippi-incarcerates-more-people-per-capita-than-russia-and-china-combined/>

Incarceration Rate Per 10,000





Zim ship entering the Port of Oakland. Read *ILWU International's Statements on Zim Protests are Untrue* on page 18.

On the Front Cover: Cuba's 461 doctors and medical professionals who were sent to Liberia to provide direct treatment to sick people outnumbered those of the African Union and all individual countries and private organizations, including the Red Cross. Read *World Embraces Cuban Model—Slaps the Empire* on page 25. ►



A pro-Russian villager argued with Ukrainian soldiers after troops were blocked by residents at a checkpoint in Andreyevka. Read *Ukraine Cease Fire* on page 29.



Pernicious racism and the broken healthcare system in this country, which puts profits ahead of patients, cost Thomas Eric Duncan his life.. Read *Criminal Neglect: The Death of Thomas Eric Duncan* on page 16.



Why do courts change their precedents to oppose Mumia Abu-Jamal? Read *Another 'Mumia Rule'* on page 47.