

Why Edward Snowden has already won

BY JEFF MACKLER

Edward Joseph Snowden, 30, former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor and the world's most ardent whistleblower, continues to be the bane of U.S. government surveillance and spy operations. Rarely does a week pass when government denials of gross spying operations are not almost instantly refuted by a Snowden release of damning classified texts that he acquired during his stint with the NSA and several associated private surveillance corporations.

Based on hundreds of classified documents that Snowden has released since May 2013, few people—with the exception of a handful of NSA obfuscators and President Obama himself—today deny that the myriad of government and private spy agencies collect virtually all phone, e-mail, and other communications of everyone in the United States—if not the entire world! An estimated \$50 billion yearly is expended from the secret and nearly unregulated Congressional “black budget” for these operations, which employ 1.3 million agents certified with government national security clearances.

Just six months after the Obama administration's flat denial of Snowden's exposés, two Federal District Court judges confirmed his revelations, but with opposed conclusions. On Dec. 16, Washington, D.C.-based Federal District Court Judge Richard J. Leon ordered the government to cease collecting data on the phone calls of two plaintiffs and to destroy all records of their call history.

In a 68-page opinion, the 2002 Bush appointee wrote, “I cannot imagine a more indiscriminate and arbitrary invasion than this systematic and high-tech collection and retention of personal data on virtually every single citizen for the purposes of querying and analyzing it without *prior judicial approval*” (emphasis added).

I couldn't help but note here the judge's concluding phrase, “without prior judicial approval,” implying that perhaps *with* such approval, the government's massive spy operations would be okay. The Justice Department has insisted that the legality of its spying stemmed from having the approval of 15 separate judges on 35 occasions. But these were FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) judges, essentially acting in secret and without any requirement that their victims, or anyone else, be accorded the right to refute the secret charges made



against them.

The lead article on Judge Leon's decision in the Dec. 17 *New York Times* opened: “A federal district judge ruled on Monday that the National Security Agency program that is systematically keeping records on all Americans' phone calls most likely violates the Constitution, describing its technology as ‘almost Orwellian’ and suggesting that James Madison would be ‘aghast’ to learn that the government was encroaching on liberty in such a way.” Leon nevertheless stayed his own ruling, noting that it was likely to be appealed by the government.

A few days later, New York District Court Judge William H. Pauley III considered the same arguments brought in a suit by the ACLU. In contrast to Leon, Pauley approved the government's collection of metadata on all Americans. His 54-page opinion concluded: “No doubt, the bulk telephony metadata collection program vacuums up information about virtually every telephone call to, from, or within the United States. That is by design, as it allows the NSA to detect relationships so attenuated and ephemeral they would otherwise escape notice.

“As the September 11 attacks demonstrate, the cost of missing such a thread can be horrific. Technology allowed al-Qaeda to operate decentralized and plot international terrorist attacks remotely.

Lynne Stewart is free!

See page 5.

Marty Goodman / Socialist Action



Lynne arrives at La Guardia airport, Jan. 1, after her release from prison.

The bulk telephony metadata collection program represents the government's counter-punch: connecting fragmented and fleeting communications to reconstruct and eliminate al-Qaeda's secret network.”

No doubt both decisions will, in time, be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, where the “majesty” of American law will be finally enunciated by the appointed high legal spokespeople for American capitalism! And no doubt, as has been the case with virtually all ruling classes throughout history, the “national security” interests of the state

power will supersede the constitutionally or otherwise protected rights of its citizens.

Edward Snowden has repeatedly denied spurious government accusations that he defected to Russia (where he now resides as a temporary resident) or China, that he was engaged in espionage, or that he did great harm to the United States. Indeed, *Washington Post* reporter Bart Gellman aptly quoted Snowden's response to his detractors: “If I defected at all,” he said, “I defected from the government to the public.”

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Outrage at NY police chief appointment



Tony Savino / Socialist Action

By MARTY GOODMAN

Shock and outrage greeted the appointment of New York City's former Chief of Police Bill Bratton as top cop under newly elected Mayor Bill de Blasio, a Democrat. Bratton was the city's police chief in 1994-1996, during the conservative administration of Rudy Giuliani, which was notorious for police murders of Blacks and Hispanics.

The new administration took office on Jan. 1, replacing the three-term billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a fervent stop-and-frisk supporter. Bratton replaces outgoing police commissioner Ray Kelly, another stop-and-frisk supporter. The racist police practice of "stop and frisk," which studies have shown is based on racial profiling, is at the heart of the controversy. De Blasio had campaigned for mayor as a critic of the policy—seeking to reform but not abolish it.

According to the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights, the policy is "military-style occupation" and "above the law." Based on 2012 NYPD data compiled by the American Civil Liberties Union, New Yorkers were stopped by cops 533,042 times; 55% of the people were Black, 32% Hispanic, and 10% white. About 89% were found totally innocent.

The May 6 *Labor Press* asked de Blasio how he would reform stop and frisk, short of abolishing it. De Blasio answered, "I think you can't eliminate the basic police tactic of stop and frisk because it's a valid policing tactic—pursuing a suspect description, for example, but doing it in a constitutional and appropriate manner. But the notion that we can fundamentally reform the approach; we can make it fair. So I disagree with anyone who says abolish a tactic we need."

Jose LaSalle, of the Stop Stop and Frisk Freedom Fighters, told *Socialist Action*, "On Dec. 5, Bill De Blasio decided to appoint Bill Bratton as police commissioner. He will continue the regime of stop and frisk. Bratton is 10 times worse than [Ray] Kelly because he left the template behind."

Under Giuliani, Bratton's elite "Street Crime Unit" was formed to supposedly remove guns from the street. But it found a weapon in only 2.5% of all stops, according to a study cited in "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander. Under Bratton the notorious unit tripled in size.

Moreover, Bratton applied the "broken windows" theory against minor "quality-of-life offenses" in sync with the war on the poor waged by Mayor Giuliani. These included arrests for "offenses" such as public drunkenness, loitering, vandalism, littering, public urination, panhandling, turnstile jumping, prostitution, and so-called "squeegee men" who were targeted cleaning car windows at traffic lights. Arrests on minor charges left African American and Hispanic youth with police records that caught many in a police web they could not escape.

A 1996 Amnesty International report on Bratton's NYPD found "a serious problem of police brutality and excessive force. Racial disparities appear to be most marked in cases involving deaths in custody and questionable shootings."

A Dec. 5 *New Yorker* article noted that in an interview with Bratton in 2013, "Bratton emphatically endorsed stop-and-frisk as a police tactic." Bratton told the reporter, "Stop-and-frisk is such a basic tool of policing. If cops are not doing stop-and-frisk, they are not doing their jobs. If you do away with stop-and-frisk, this city will go down the chute as fast as anything you can imagine."

Bratton was also chief of police in Los Angeles from 2002 to 2009. A Harvard study of police tactics commissioned by Bratton himself found that "over 70 percent of 2008 LAPD stops in inner-city precincts were of African Americans and Latinos, a ration similar to New York's," according to *The Nation* of Dec. 6.

In August 2013, Federal Court Judge Shira Scheindlin ruled on a suit submitted by the Center for Constitutional Rights and the ACLU. The court found the NYPD liable for unconstitutional practices. In addition, Scheindlin ordered a court-appointed monitor to oversee reforms and a joint remedial process. On Nov. 22, the U.S. Court of appeals, Second Circuit, denied Bloomberg's motion to vacate the Scheindlin ruling, and the new mayor has promised to drop the city's appeal. It remains to be seen how this process will impact communities of color.

Both Bratton and stop and frisk are despised in communities of color. A June 2012 protest against stop and frisk, sponsored by the NAACP and several unions, marched to Mayor Bloomberg's home on the exclusive Upper East Side. It attracted a diverse crowd

of over 5000.

On Dec. 27 a protest against the Bratton appointment was held on 125th Street in Harlem, sponsored by Parents Against Police Brutality and the October 22nd Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation (NY Committee). One protester was Nicholas Heywood Sr., whose son Nicholas (13) was shot by a NYPD cop when Bratton was chief of police. Said Heywood, "For Bill de Blasio to make Bill Bratton the chief again was a slap in the face for me. It's a painful feeling for me, personally. It just shows the type of person Bill de Blasio is."

"Blasio said he read Bratton's record. What about the record when police killed all of these innocent people? ... We need to keep the pressure on. [For the inauguration] we all need to be at [the protest] at City Hall on Jan. 1. We do not need Bratton as police commissioner of New York City!"

Socialist Action spoke with Harlem Tenant Council activist Nellie Bailey about the new mayor and his selection of Bratton. Said Bailey, "This is a confirmation of the neoliberal pact that Mayor De Blasio will pursue. This reassures the plutocrats that he has matters firmly in hand with the Black community and people of color. Even though the election got a small turnout, 25% overall, 97% of Blacks voted for De Blasio. But, the Blacks that voted for him are not fooled. Bratton was the architect of stop and frisk in New York. De Blasio has fired the first Obama-style bullet. This will be a law-and-order administration."

Bailey commented on the high profile role of the Rev. Al Sharpton, particularly after he had welcomed Bratton to the Harlem headquarters of Sharpton's National Action Network. Said Bailey, "Al Sharpton is being used to placate the rising anger that is building in the Black community with the appointment of Bratton. Sharpton's role is crucial for the De Blasio administration, as it is for the Democratic Party. That is, to placate the inevitable anger in the Black community."

Opponents of racist police tactics need a mass united front of community and labor forces to mobilize effectively against NYPD racism. The Democratic Party and capitalism are part of the problem, not the solution. Socialists demand that stop and frisk end now! Jail killer cops! NYPD out of the Black and Hispanic communities!

A 'fiscal conservative'

Bratton's appointment was not the only shock for those seeking meaningful change after Bloomberg. The appointment of Goldman Sachs executive Alicia Glen as the Deputy Mayor of Housing and Economic Development perplexed supporters. Goldman Sachs's image as Wall Street super-crooks didn't faze De Blasio, who said, "I don't care about any stereotypes or assumptions."

As budget director, De Blasio chose Dean Fulsein, budget "guru" to long-time New York State House Democratic Party leader Sheldon Silver. Silver and Fulsein negotiated many cutbacks in public services for Democratic and Republican governors. Fulsein will begin negotiations with city unions, which are seeking \$7 billion in retroactive pay on long-expired contracts. While playing soft cop at the moment, De Blasio has demanded union concessions in any deal, as did Bloomberg. De Blasio proclaimed himself "a fiscal conservative" at a meeting of business leaders. — M.G.

SOCIALIST ACTION'S PROGRAM TO FIGHT THE CRISIS

We propose an EMERGENCY CONGRESS OF LABOR to discuss and take steps to implement the following demands —

- 1) Bail out the people, not the bankers! Open the account books of the banks to full public inspection. Nationalize the banks to be supervised by workers' committees.
- 2) No foreclosures! No forced evictions! Cancel usurious debt payments, and reduce mortgage payments in proportion to their capitalist-caused decline in value.
- 3) Full employment at union wages! An emergency public works program to employ all jobless workers and youth! Employ people to build what we need — low-cost quality housing, efficient mass transportation, cheap and renewable sources of power, schools, clinics — and to conserve our water, forests, farmland, and open space.
- 4) Immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops and mercenaries from Iraq & Afghanistan! No war on Iran! Close all U.S. bases abroad! No money for the military — use funds instead for public works! Convert the war industries to making products for people's needs and to combat global warming.
- 5) Reduce the workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay, and cut the retirement age

to 55. Provide unemployment and retirement payments at the level of union wages and benefits.

6) To combat inflation: A sliding scale of wages and pensions that matches the rises in consumer prices. To combat high medical costs: A free, universal, public health-care system.

7) Immediate citizenship for all undocumented workers. No job discrimination; equal pay for equal work — regardless of gender, sexual orientation, skin color, or national origin.

8) Nationalize manufacturing, big agribusiness, energy, and transportation corporations and place them under the control of elected committees of workers.

9) To mobilize support for the demands it adopts, the EMERGENCY CONGRESS should organize ACTION COMMITTEES in every workplace and neighborhood threatened by the crisis. These committees can draw up more concrete demands than the ones outlined above.

10) To put all these measures into effect, we need a LABOR PARTY — based on a fighting union movement and all people who are oppressed and exploited. For a workers' government!

Haitian workers battle starvation wage

By MARTY GOODMAN

It seems like a nightmare. Haiti's 30,000 assembly workers, working mostly in textiles, will actually face a wage cut as part of a new \$5.23 a day minimum wage (225 Haitian gourdes), which goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2014. That's far short of the \$11.63 a day (500 Haitian gourdes) demanded by unions.

Feeding the profit frenzy in textiles is international capitalism. U.S. corporations such as Walmart, Levi's, the Gap, Hanes, and others reap super-profits at the price of Haitian misery. Haitian bosses answered recent protests with the need to "keep Haiti competitive."

Haitian president Michel Martelly, elected in 2011 under intense U.S. manipulation, has shamelessly declared, "Haiti is Open for Business." The notoriously corrupt president has a daily spending account of \$20,000, with massive financial perks for family members in shadowy government projects. In contrast, workers and the unemployed (some 80% country-wide) widely complain of having the "Clorox hunger" to describe the pain of starvation in their stomachs.

On Nov. 29, the Supreme Council on Wages (CSS), composed of business, labor, and government representatives, voted to approve a 12% increase in the official minimum for most workers, from \$4.65 to \$5.23 a day (225 gourdes) or from 58 cents to 65 cents an hour. Eight of the nine members of the CSS, including all three union representatives, approved the 225-gourde wage.

"We think it is a shame that the CSS union representatives agreed to the miserable wage of 225 gourdes. At a meeting the night before, we requested that they refuse to sign any agreement that was less than 300 gourdes," said Yannick Etienne of the leftist Batay Ouvriye (Workers Struggle), a sweatshop-organizing group that is part of the KOSIT coalition of textile unions.

However, for assembly workers, mostly women, the official wage was about 87 cents an hour or \$7 a day. Pay will now be legally reduced to the \$5.23 a day rate.

Doubly enraging sweatshop workers is the fact that bosses have ignored the



(Left) Protesters say that the new minimum wage would not be enough to adequately feed their families.

According to documents released by Wikileaks to *The Nation* and *Haiti Liberté* magazines, U.S. corporations were lobbying heavily to lower the Haitian minimum wage in 2008. Moreover, key players of the sweatshop economic development strategy are Bill and Hillary Clinton.

Since the strike, an ominous call to action went out from a Haitian business website called "Economic Forum of the Private Sector." It said, "This situation, created by armchair revolutionaries and manipulative politicians, gives the advantage to our foreign competitors, who will win back the orders that cannot be fulfilled by factories in the metropolitan region. The Haitian Nation and State must not tolerate these troublemakers!"

In related news, four years after the Jan. 2010 earthquake, which killed over 200,000 Haitians, 300,000 still languish in hellish unsanitary and dangerous conditions in tent cities around the capital. After a major cholera outbreak, which killed 8000 in late 2010, Haiti had over 1100 cholera cases a week in 2013. Cholera is a water-borne disease preventable by clean potable water.

Yet, according to CNN, only 37% of the \$4.6 billion pledged for Haiti in post-earthquake relief has been dispersed.

In few places on earth are the cruelty and anarchy of capitalism and U.S. imperialism as apparent as it is in Haiti. The solidarity of U.S. and international labor is vital.

It has been apparent for many years that the "Fanmi Lavalas" (the Lavalas Party) of former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide has proven incapable of solving the crisis or to even move the struggle forward. Advancing beyond middle-class populist leadership is essential. Haitian workers need to organize their own working-class party armed with class-struggle politics for a revolutionary break with occupation and misery. ■

higher legal rate since it was passed by parliament in 2009. In an October 2013 report, the UN connected International Labor Organization found that all 23 factories surveyed were "non-compliant" with the law. In addition, according to an Oct 2013 report from the Washington-based Workers Rights Consortium, Haitian workers were regularly cheated out of overtime pay.

"If I hear there is going to be a demonstration, I'll be there," one woman told International Press Service. "I cannot make it with this pocket change. The bosses know that. They are just cruel."

In the lead-up to the Nov. 29 CSS decision, 5000 marched near a "free trade zone" in Ouanaminthe on Nov. 7, chanting "500 gourdes!" near the Dominican border. Hundreds marched in the capital.

On Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day, three days of strikes and mass protests began in Port-au-Prince, the capital. Hundreds, maybe thousands according to some, of garment workers walked off their jobs in Port-au-Prince. Strikers and supporters marched on the Parliament Building, chanting, "Down with the CSS." The marchers, largely young women,

called for a daily minimum wage of 500 gourdes.

Said one sympathetic parliamentarian, Fritz Gérald Bourjolly, "These days a person can't eat and drink on 225 gourdes." On Dec. 11, protesters headed to the comparatively wealthy Port-au-Prince suburb of Pétienville, where the CSS was said to be holding a meeting. Riot police blocked their way, and the marchers eventually returned to the large Sonapi Industrial Park.

On Dec. 12 factory owners responded to the wildcat strikes by closing their plants. The factories reopened on Dec. 13, but some activists were suspended or fired. The actions were the largest demonstrations by assembly workers since August 2009, when workers mobilized in the thousands for passage of a new minimum wage. Protesters were met with gunfire from the U.S./UN occupation force known as MINUSTAH.

A 2011 study by the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center found that a factory worker living in the capital and supporting two children would need to earn about 29 dollars per day (1152 gourdes), six days a week, to support his or her family.

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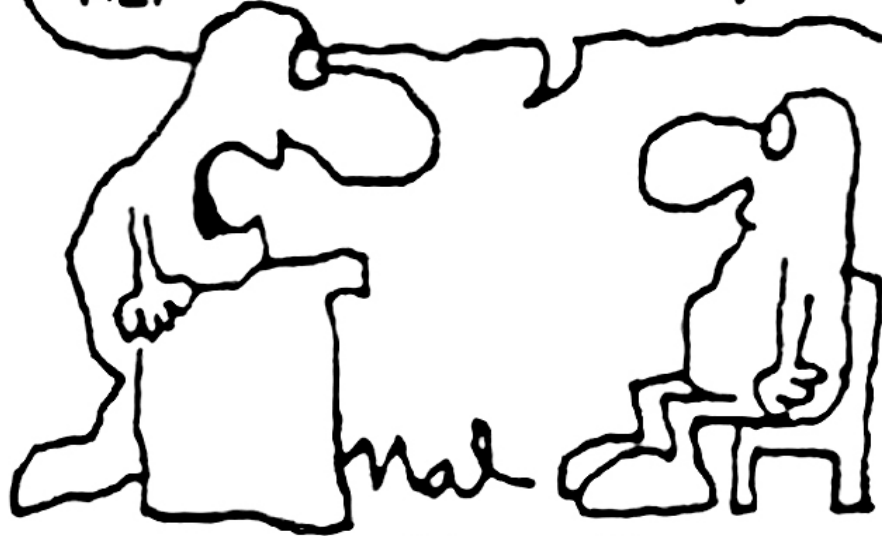
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Associated Features

‘Green capitalism’ has no solution for the climate

By IAN ANGUS

Daniel Tanuro: *“Green Capitalism: Why it can’t work,”* translated by Jane Ennis. Merlin Press, in association with Resistance Books and the International Institute for Research and Education. ISBN 978-0-85036-646-4. London, 2013

Roughly speaking, there are four schools of thought about how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avert climate catastrophe. The *consumer behavior* school wants individuals to travel less, recycle more, eat locally-grown food and have fewer babies. The *economic reform* school proposes taxes, trading schemes, and sometimes regulations. The *technology substitution* school calls for new kinds of equipment. And the *social change* school advocates changes in the dominant system of producing and distributing material goods.

The four schools include many subdivisions. Advocates of *social change*, for example, include anarchists, autonomists, social ecologists, Marxists, and more, and there are debates within and between each of those currents. This is entirely positive: frank discussion of different views is an essential part of building an effective movement for radical social and environmental change.

“Green Capitalism: Why it can’t work,” by the noted Belgian ecosocialist Daniel Tanuro, is an important contribution to these ongoing discussions. Originally published in French as *“L’impossible capitalisme vert”* (La Découverte, 2009), it speaks to two separate audiences, challenging greens to recognize that environmental destruction cannot be stopped so long as capitalism continues, and challenging Marxists to change their views and behavior, to take into account limits to growth.

Tanuro is most successful in his challenge to mainstream greens. He rebuts the common view that pollution is caused by humanity in general—“it would be infinitely more accurate to refer to capitalist climate change instead of ‘anthropogenic’ climate change.” (p. 43) Then, in an effective argument that mostly avoids abstract economic theory, he demonstrates the *practical impossibility* of stopping the climate crisis by carbon taxes, emissions trading, green subsidies, or any other means short of radical social change.

The best scientific knowledge available shows that catastrophic climate change can only be avoided if greenhouse gas emissions are reduced quickly and drastically, but that can only be done by breaking the wealth and power of the world’s most powerful corporations.

More broadly, a global energy revolution is re-

quired, replacing very profitable fossil fuel systems with renewables that are not yet cost-effective in capitalist terms. An economy in which investors demand short-term profits simply can’t carry through such a sweeping change: “in the short period of 40 years which is left to us, one cannot envisage how the system could instigate a transition in energy use at the necessary or possible level with its mechanisms of price, competition and the market.” (70)

“If by ‘green capitalism’ we understand a system in which the qualitative, social and ecological parameters are taken in account by the numerous competing capitals, that is to say even within economic activity as an endogenous mechanism, then we are completely deluded. In fact, we would be talking about a form of capitalism in which the law of value was no longer in operation, which is a contradiction in terms.” (112)

But, Tanuro says, the need for a global energy revolution also challenges the view defended by many socialists in the 20th Century, that socialism will initiate an era of increased material abundance, in which the means of production, freed from the fetters of profit, would expand to meet all human needs. Massive public investment in renewables can meet our energy needs, but at a cost: “The snag is that these investments call for material production, thus an energy source which, at least in the first phase of transition, must be mostly fossil fuel – which is a source of increased greenhouse gas emissions. ...

“The conclusion is inescapable. The constraints [on greenhouse gas emissions] cannot be respected unless the investments necessary for a new energy system go hand in hand with a radical reduction of energy consumption in developed countries.” (71-2)

In other words, new technology alone won’t protect the climate, because the very process of manufacturing and installing it will increase emissions during the transition. That important insight is rarely mentioned by the technology substitution crowd.

Tanuro estimates that a 40-year global conversion to renewables, combined with necessary emission reductions and phasing out nuclear, will require a 50-75 percent reduction in energy consumption in Europe and North America. The cuts must be even greater if the transition also involves—as it surely must—substantial improvements in the living standards of the three billion people who now live in absolute poverty in the global South. Much of the energy reduction can be achieved by eliminating useless or harmful activities such as advertising and arms manufacture.

Surprisingly, since he has insisted that only radical social and economic change can save the planet, he

then says that ecosocialists should initiate energy reductions today, by encouraging changes in consumer behavior. “These modifications—travelling differently, eating less meat and more seasonal vegetables, for instance—should be undertaken immediately, because time is short and there are immediate implications.” (73)

This call for immediate lifestyle changes—unlike Tanuro’s well-documented account of the social roots of the climate crisis—is brief and impressionistic. He dismisses out of hand any idea that eliminating polluting industries and stopping hyper-consumption by the rich could by themselves achieve our goals. He simply asserts, without proof, that the transition requires working people to reduce their living standards. He may be right, but he doesn’t make his case.

Nor does he explain how a call for sacrifice could contribute to building effective mass movements to replace capitalism and implement massive global energy changes. He may not intend it, but he appears to be calling for an ecosocialist austerity movement, and that would seem to be a non-starter.

As he admits in the Preface to this English translation, “this strategic direction—the greening of struggles—should have been amplified in ‘L’impossible capitalisme vert.’” (18) That’s a major weakness: having been convinced that green capitalism is a contradiction in terms, readers have a right to expect a more convincing account of the ecosocialist alternative—what it may be like, and how it can be achieved.

In his final chapter, Tanuro says Marxism needs revision because Marx and Engels didn’t understand the difference between renewable and fossil energy. That questionable claim requires a more complete response than is possible here: I will discuss it in a future article.

Although some aspects are open to challenge, *“Green Capitalism: Why it can’t work”* is an important contribution to the fight against climate change and for ecosocialism. Tanuro isn’t just a writer, he’s a leading environmental activist, and it shows—he provides a wealth of concrete information and analysis that we can actually use in the struggle against capitalist ecocide. I hope it is widely read, and that it stimulates further debate and discussion, as we continue with the essential task of building a movement that agrees with Tanuro’s concluding words:

“The only possible socialism is ecosocialism which is a focused expression of the fight against the exploitation of human labour and the destruction of natural resources by capitalism—from now on these two strands are indivisible. Ecosocialism does not stem from a romantic vision of establishing ‘harmony’ between humanity and nature, but from the conviction that true wealth resides in creative activity, in free time, in social relations, and in the contemplation of the world with wonder.” (143)

Postscript: Lost in translation

After many negative experiences, I approach translations of left-wing books with trepidation, so I was very pleased to find that for the most part *“Green Capitalism”* is clear and eminently readable. Unfortunately, however, someone decided to *retranslate* quotations that were originally published in English or that are available in authoritative English editions, rather than going to the sources. That’s contrary to good translation practice, because it results in “quotes” that don’t match the authors’ actual words.

For example, on page 41 the American Marxist philosopher Bertell Ollman is quoted in a confusing translation of a French translation: “In order to understand each specific problem, it is necessary to abstract a level of generality which reveals the characteristics which bear the greatest responsibility.”

Here’s what Ollman actually wrote: “It is essential, in order to understand any particular problem, to abstract a level of generality that brings the characteristics chiefly responsible for this problem into focus.”

More seriously, some of the English-to-French-to-English translations are simply wrong. On page 44, for example, economist Nicholas Stern’s famous description of climate change as a “market failure” is rendered as a “setback to the market.” That entirely misses the specific meaning of “market failure” in economics. Stern wrote that the market allows harmful emissions, not that emissions harm the market.

This reliance on double translations is made worse by the fact that many of the book’s footnotes lack essential information. It’s virtually impossible to check quotes that are identified only as “Marx, Capital, Vol. 3” or “Marx, The Grundrisse,” or “UNDP (2007-2008),” with no edition or page number.

“Green Capitalism” is a valuable book. It would have been much better with original quotations and proper references.

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Victory! Lynne Stewart is free!

Tony Savino / Socialist Action



By JEFF MACKLER

Jeff Mackler is the West Coast coordinator of the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee.

Lynne Stewart is free! With almost 100 family and supporters chanting, “We love you, Lynne,” she rose from a wheelchair and bravely walked forward for a half-hour rally at New York’s LaGuardia Airport. She landed at 1:10 p.m. on New Year’s Day after a whirlwind, if not unexpected turn of events. “How does freedom feel, a bevy of reporters asked? “It’s the best,” Stewart replied, as she explained why all prisoners desperately need the kind of solidarity that she received. “I’m here to fight,” said Stewart undaunted.

On Dec. 31, Federal District Court Judge John Koeltl ordered that the crusading attorney be released from prison. The judge’s order stated, “The defendant’s terminal medical condition and very limited life expectancy constitute extraordinary and compelling reasons that warrant the requested reduction” in the time she must serve of her sentence.

Stewart’s attorney, Bob Boyle, noted that the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) had at long last certified the recommendation for compassionate release by FMC Carswell prison officials, and that the Justice Department then gave the stamp of approval needed for Judge Koeltl’s final action. Koeltl had stated in court several months earlier that if the BOP/Justice Department made such a recom-

mendation he would be inclined to approve it. And he did, almost instantly.

Lynne’s husband, Ralph Poynter, en route to a routine visit to Lynne at the time, was unaware of these developments until he landed at the Fort Worth, Texas, airport. Poynter immediately contacted prison officials, who agreed to Lynne’s immediate release. Poynter met Lynne, still in prison-issued clothing, at the door to Carswell’s visiting room, and off they went, a few boxes of medical and other materials in hand, to a local hotel for a few moments of exhilarating relaxation and to book the first flight home. After three years at Carswell, an ecstatic Lynne told me that evening, it was like jumping into a “parallel universe.”

Prison doctors have predicted that Lynne’s Stage 4 metastasized breast cancer may allow her some 12-18 months to live. But Sloan Kettering Hospital has pledged to do their best to retard her incurable cancer, in an effort to extend her life even longer. Lynne is set to visit a parole officer in the next few weeks, where she will learn if any restrictions are placed on her political activities.

A million thanks to everyone who joined the international effort to press the BOP to grant compassionate release. We have always believed in Lynne’s total innocence and fought against the malicious 10-year sentence imposed on her for faithfully representing her client, the “blind sheik” Omar Abdel Rachman, an Egyptian cleric who was similarly a victim of a U.S. government frame-up on terrorism charges.

Lynne was originally convicted on charges of conspiracy to aid and abet terrorism stemming from her release of a press statement on behalf of Rachman. This alleged violation of a government-issued Special Administrator Measure (SAM), even if valid, usually carries with it the most minor of punishments—perhaps a letter of reprimand from a government official and a ban on attorney-client visits for a few months. In Lynne’s case, Judge Koeltl, who originally had sentenced her to 28 months in prison in 2005, extended the sentence to 10 years after federal prosecutors appealed to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals with the argument that 28 months was too lenient.

Lynne should not have served a single day in prison.



Having made that clear, her impending freedom will be nevertheless our collective victory. Having her home, safe, and in the care of family and friends is the best that we could have hoped for in these times when civil liberties are being trashed as never before in recent memory.

Lynne’s release did not come easy, Tens, if not hundreds of thousands of people demanded it—repeatedly calling, writing, and e-mailing the BOP and Justice Department head Eric Holder. We celebrate this victory and wish everyone well for a fighting New Year, when we must continue the battle for justice for all political prisoners and all who suffer the plagues of oppression that the U.S. government spreads around the world. ■

... Snowden

(continued from page 1)

Gellman’s Dec. 23 *Post* article recounting his interview is a treasure trove of critical information reviewing the evolution of Snowden’s impact on U.S. and world politics. The *Washington Post*, along with the British *Guardian* and *The New York Times*, have been among the leading newspapers whose staff regularly receive classified material from Snowden, whose trove has now been estimated to be 1.7 million documents, only a tiny fraction of which have been released to date.

The volume of the government’s “vacuuming” the personal communications of Americans and people around the world is astounding. Gellman reports: “With assistance from private communications firms, the NSA had learned to capture enormous flows of data at the speed of light from fiber-optic cables that carried Internet and telephone traffic over continents and under seas. According to one document in Snowden’s cache, the agency’s Special Source Operations group, which as early as 2006 was said to be ingesting ‘one Library of Congress every 14.4 seconds,’ had an official seal that might have been parody: an eagle with all the world’s cables in its grasp.

“Each year,” Gellman continues, “NSA systems collected hundreds of millions of e-mail address books, hundreds of billions of cell phone location records and trillions of domestic call logs.”

Referring to the standard non-disclosure form that Snowden signed upon taking a job with the NSA, Snowden told the *Post*, “The oath of allegiance is not an oath of secrecy. That is an oath to the Constitution. That is the oath that I kept that Keith Alexander [NSA director] and James Clapper [National Intelligence director] did not.”

Gellman adds: “Snowden likened the NSA’s powers to those used by Brit-



Tony Savino / Socialist Action

ish authorities in Colonial America, when ‘general warrants’ allowed for anyone to be searched. The FISA court, Snowden said, ‘is authorizing general warrants for the entire country’s metadata. The last time that happened, we fought a war [referring to the American Revolution of 1776] over it,’ he said.”

Meanwhile two panels, one appointed by Obama and another, supposedly independent, have recommended that the NSA’s surveillance power be curtailed to one extent or another. The so-called independent panel, consisting of five “intelligence and legal experts,” recommended on Dec. 18 that the metadata remain in the hands of private telecommunications companies or a “private consortium.” “Mining the data” from these groups, the “experts” suggest, should require a court order—as opposed to the NSA’s simply stealing the data, as it virtually does today, or getting a secret judge to sign on to its never denied “requests.”

In this view, the NSA’s unlimited spy power would be a bit restricted and

supposedly placed under some form of judicial or Congressional review. This would, the experts conclude, “safeguard the privacy and dignity of American citizens and promote public trust while allowing the intelligence community to do what must be done to respond to genuine threats.”

Leaving aside the rhetoric employed to assuage public outrage, the decisions of the two district court judges, as well as the panels advising the president, all accept the proposition that the state power—the government of the United States—acts in the public interest, as opposed to the interests of the minority corporate ruling class. The so-called national-security interests of the state power, which functions as the executive committee of the corporate elite, have nothing in common with the interests of the American or world’s working people, who yearn for freedom, dignity, democracy, and a decent life.

Today, every U.S. war is justified in the name of defending “national security” interests—that is, the right of the

(Photo) Nov. 17 Socialist Action forum in New York City discussed Snowden and U.S. government spying.

Panelists were (from left) Jeff Mackler, civil rights attorney Michael Smith, antiwar (UNAC) co-coordinator Joe Lombardo, and Ralph Poynter of the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee.

corporate owning class to wage war to steal the resources of oppressed people and nations everywhere. The oil wars of the Middle East and North Africa today are deemed “national security wars,” as are the deportations of one million immigrants since Obama came to office, or the persecution, interrogation, and investigation of 700,000 American Muslims since 9/11—all to defend the “national security” state, in the name of fighting the “war on terrorism.”

“For me,” said a proud Snowden to Gellman, “in terms of personal satisfaction, the mission’s already accomplished. I already won. As soon as the journalists were able to work, everything that I had been trying to do was validated. Because, remember, I didn’t want to change society. I wanted to give society a chance to determine if it should change itself.”

Snowden’s unending revelations have stirred the ire of top military and other government officials, who have called for his head. Court proceedings are underway to charge him with espionage and felony theft of document documents. Others speculate, with no evidence, that Snowden may have downloaded his material to Russia and China, a charge that he categorically denies.

But with 99 percent of his material not yet released, others have thought twice about how to resolve Snowden’s ongoing threat to the government’s credibility. No one knows when the next timely Snowden missile will be launched.

NSA Deputy Security Director Rick Ledgett told CBS’s “60 Minutes” that he favored negotiating an amnesty with

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Who won and who lost?

By JACK RASMUS

This article is excerpted from The Green Shadow Cabinet website, greenshadowcabinet.org, with permission of the author.

Last month the U.S. House of Representatives voted 332 to 94 in favor of changes to the federal budget for 2014. The House vote in effect adopted the proposals of the “Joint Congressional Committee,” chaired by Tea Party House leader Paul Ryan and Senate Democrat Patty Murray, set up in October as part of the interim agreement between the two parties to end the more than two-week shutdown of the federal government that month.

The October interim agreement called for the Ryan-Murray committee to provide budget change proposals by December 2013 for a Congressional vote on Dec. 13. Last month 169 Republicans and 163 Democrats in the House voted for the Ryan-Murray proposed changes to the 2014 budget; 62 Republicans voted no, as did 32 Democrats. The measure now goes to the Senate for what will likely be a formal vote of adoption, and then in January to the Congressional Appropriations Committee in time for meeting the mid-January 2014 deadline date agreed to last October.

The official “spin”

The deal agreed by both wings of the single Party of Corporate America (POCA)—aka Democrats and Republicans—has been hailed as a pragmatic, albeit “narrow” agreement that shows the two wings can once again agree on fiscal changes and deficit cut matters, thus ending an era of dysfunction that has characterized U.S. government since 2010. The narrow budget deal, amounting to only \$85 billion over the next two fiscal years, 2014-2015, is also being defined as the end of efforts to reach a “grand bargain” on taxes and deficit cutting, as well as the end of the Republican wing Tea Party faction’s ability to disrupt government to promote its own interests, and Tea Party candidates in Republican primaries. However, none of these arguments “spinning” the budget deal are accurate.

The dysfunctionality may have ended for the interests of corporations, investors, and wealthy Americans, i.e., the 1%, but it hasn’t for the remainder of households, as the details of the recent deal clearly illustrate. The Ryan-Murray deal clearly promotes the interests of defense corporations, the Pentagon, and the wealthy—at the direct expense of millions of U.S. government workers, millions more unemployed, veterans, retirees, and tens of millions of Americans on food stamps.

The deal furthermore represents not the reversal of “austerity,” as is claimed, but rather a clever restructuring and continuing of austerity in new forms. It reflects a “grand bargain,” but a bargain achieved in

stages, piecemeal, rather than in an “all in” form that might generate more severe and resentful public political reaction.

Not least, the deal just concluded represents not the “taming” of the Tea Party faction in the Republican wing, but instead the realization by the rest of the two traditional wings of POCA that, in the 2014 midterm Congressional election year about to begin, they had better go slower on austerity in 2014—as they had done previously during the 2012 national elections year. The deal is thus a “politicians deal,” and neither a fiscal stimulus nor a deficit cutting exercise.

Restoring the sequester defense cuts

In 2011 House Republicans and the Obama administration agreed to cut \$1 trillion in discretionary social spending programs, mostly education, plus another \$1.2 trillion of discretionary cuts deferred until 2013 called the “sequester,” about half of which represented defense spending cuts.

The 2012 election year that followed was a hiatus in terms of austerity and new deficit cutting. However, once the November 2012 elections were over, both wings of the POCA immediately proceeded to the “fiscal cliff” deal of Jan. 2, 2013, which raised taxes on wage earners while allowing \$4 trillion in Bush tax cuts to continue for another decade.

However, the fiscal cliff deal conveniently left the matter of the “sequester” spending cuts for a later date, including the \$600 billion in defense cuts. That segmenting of tax issues from spending issues, and especially defense spending, was necessary to enable the full passage of the \$4 trillion in tax cuts for the rich. A more complicated deal, including spending reductions, would have risked the passage of the tax cuts.

Beginning March 1, 2013, the \$1.2 trillion “sequester” spending cuts were allowed in 2013 to take full effect for non-defense spending, while defense spending cuts called for in the sequester were shielded and offset in various ways by the Obama administration, with the concurrence of Congress, during 2013. Pentagon spending this past year continued at the \$518 billion level (not counting another \$100 billion or so for “overseas contingency operations”—i.e., direct war spending).

That both the House Republicans and Senate controlled by Democrats had every intention throughout the past year to restore the Defense spending cuts called for in the sequester, was evident in the House Budget and Senate budget proposals, both of which called for increasing Pentagon spending to \$552 billion in 2014, according to a *New York Times* front-page article of Dec. 11, 2013.

The just concluded Ryan-Murray budget deal is also primarily about addressing (and reversing) those defense spending cuts and continuing to shield defense from current and future spending reductions. Were

the sequester defense spending cuts allowed to go into effect in 2014, Pentagon spending would have declined from current \$518 billion in 2013 to \$498 billion in 2014. The Ryan-Murray budget deal sets Pentagon spending for the coming year at \$520.5 billion.

As the *Washington Post* indicated in a lead article on Dec. 12, with the recent budget deal the U.S. House has temporarily retreated from deficit cutting “in favor of Republican concerns about the Pentagon budget,” with *The Wall Street Journal* adding on Dec. 13 that the budget deal is “nearly erasing the impact of sequestration on the military”.

That the budget deal is primarily about restoring defense cuts was further evident in that the same day the budget deal was passed by the House, it immediately voted to pass the National Defense Authorization Act, NDAA, thus locking in the restoration of Pentagon spending in 2014 at a level above 2013.

Non-defense spending: smoke & mirrors

While the proposed sequester defense cuts have been essentially restored for 2014-15, and effectively removed from further deficit spending cuts in the future (as had tax hikes on the rich with last year’s fiscal cliff deal), the cuts to discretionary non-military spending programs have not fared as well.

The budget deal calls for restoring \$63 billion in total scheduled sequester cuts for the two years, 2014-15. Non-defense program spending restoration is reportedly \$31 billion of that. It thus appears that a \$31 billion increase in non-defense spending is part of the deal. But domestic spending the past two years, 2011-2013, has declined from a total of \$514 billion to \$469 billion, or \$45 billion. The budget deal raises that to \$492 billion. That’s \$23 billion, not the reported \$31 billion.

Moreover, the \$31 billion restoration is predicated on the continuation in the budget of the reductions in payments to Medicare doctors and health providers. If the reductions in payments are rescinded, as they have been every consecutive year thus far for more than a decade, then the \$31 billion non-defense spending restoration might very well also be taken away or significantly reduced.

Moreover, what Congress and Obama appear to restore in the \$31 billion discretionary social spending on the one hand, they are taking away—plus more—with the other. This will occur two ways: first by raising \$26 billion in fees (i.e., de facto taxes) on consumers and by taking money from federal workers and veterans pensions; second, by taking \$25 billion from the unemployed. So the net effect is a reduction of \$20 billion, not a restoration of \$31 billion.

Some \$6 billion of the \$26 billion in additional fees comes in the form of raising federal employees’ pension contributions, and another \$6 billion by cutting military cost of living increases for military pensions. Another \$12.6 billion comes from raising government taxes on airline travel. Thus retirees, government workers, and middle-class households will pay \$26 billion more as part of the budget deal. But that’s not all.

The budget deal cleverly does not include the \$25 billion in cuts to unemployment benefits in its calculation of spending \$31 billion more in domestic spending. When deducted from the \$31 billion, it’s only a net \$6 billion in domestic spending. And when the \$26 billion in fees (taxes) are added in, that’s a total of -\$20 billion in domestic spending.

Another way of looking at it is that the \$25 billion in cuts to unemployment benefits is just about the same amount of restored defense spending cuts. The unemployed are effectively paying for the defense corporations’ continuation of defense contracts at prior levels.

More than 1.3 million workers will immediately lose their unemployment benefits on Dec. 28, 2013. Another 1.9 million who were projected to continue benefits in 2014 will also now lose them. Emergency benefits that up to now included extended benefits from 40-73 weeks, will now revert back to only 26 weeks. This occurs at a time when 4.1 million workers are considered long-term unemployed, jobless for more than 26 weeks.

Knocking millions off of benefits will likely result in 2014 in even more millions of workers’ leaving the labor force, which will technically also reduce the unemployment rate. That’s one way to manipulate statistics to formally reduce unemployment, but it’s not a true reduction of unemployment by actual jobs creation, the latter of which is increasingly a problem of the U.S. economy for more than a decade now.

The failure of the budget deal to extend unemployment benefits, and the net -\$20 billion in unemployment benefit cuts plus fee hikes, is an indication of the

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By MARK T. HARRIS

Not long ago I watched an online video segment from conservative writer William F. Buckley, Jr.'s old TV public affairs program, "Firing Line" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkiN3_OyXc).

The year was 1968 and Buckley's guests were two socialists, Fred Halstead and Paul Boutelle, who were then running as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) candidates for President and Vice President of the United States.

They were the minor-party candidates, while Buckley was the well-known founder of the conservative magazine, *National Review*. Son of a wealthy oil man, Buckley liked to cultivate an image as one of conservatism's more erudite minds, the "civilized" intellectual who enjoyed sailing and Bach and clever raillery in pursuit of "the truth." Of course, Buckley wasn't all that civilized. His political track record included defending both white supremacy in the South and Sen. Joseph McCarthy's witch-hunt against communists in the 1950s. He was also a defender of that orgy of violence known as the U.S. government's war in Vietnam.

His socialist guests were cut from a different cloth. In fact, Halstead, a garment cutter by trade, was a prominent figure in the American peace movement (He would later write an impressive history of the anti-Vietnam War movement.) Boutelle (now known as Kwame Somburu) was an articulate young civil rights activist who had been involved in the Freedom Now Party.

The show's viewers may not have known this, but Buckley was certainly already familiar with the SWP. One of his colleagues at *National Review* was James Burnham, a philosophy professor, founding member of the SWP in 1938, and later author of a 1940s best seller, "The Managerial Revolution." On the eve of World War II, Burnham had a change of heart about socialism, beginning a political turn that by the 1950s would lead to his transformation into a right-wing Cold Warrior and supporter of McCarthyism.

Explaining unfamiliar ideas in a clear way

On the 1968 show Buckley's first question to Halstead was whether his political doctrine instructs him when making public appearances "to act in any particular way toward the 'bourgeois imperialists' he finds himself confronting." Politically inspired by the ideas of Russian Marxist Leon Trotsky, Halstead and Boutelle would have nothing to do with Buckley's condescending attempt to bait them as exotic, infantile political characters. Instead, Halstead calmly replied that our object is simply to get our political ideas across to as many people as possible, and to do so in a clear way.

Of course, to express ideas in a clear way ought to be goal of every legitimate political movement guided by ideals of social justice. Yet how difficult that challenge has proven to be over the years. In a society where popular media and politics are overwhelmingly controlled by corporate power, with two established political parties dedicated in their essential outlook to maintaining the "free enterprise" status quo, those who advocate radical social change face an inherently uphill battle to get a fair hearing for their ideas.

Now, 45 years later, the task hasn't gotten much easier. Mainstream politics remains effectively in the vice grip of the two established parties. But in other ways these are also different times. American capitalism is long past its expansionist, post-war heyday. The standard of living for working-class Americans has been in decline for decades. Indeed, five years past the economic crash of 2008, the economics of everyday life remains strained and bleak for many Americans. As even *Forbes* magazine acknowledges, the real (i.e., not official) unemployment rate hovers around 14 percent (and for minorities is much higher). Meanwhile, many millions of Americans are underemployed or working for low-wage service industries with dismal benefits.

As political scientist Sheldon Wolin describes in "Democracy Incorporated" (Princeton University Press, 2008), "democracy" in the United States is effectively not much more than a management concept favored by the elites who hold real political and economic power. The 1 percent will always rule, declares the prevailing assumption of mainstream political wisdom, while the rest of the populace are manipulated to keep their mouths quiet, stay depoliticized, and work without complaint for their wealthy employers.

The peace movement

In 1968, one of the ideas espoused by Halstead and Boutelle was opposition to the Vietnam War. The American people had no interest in supporting the government's war in Vietnam, they declared. The United States was at war not to promote "freedom" and "democracy," but to destroy through genocidal war a national independence movement considered a threat to its economic interests. That's not just hyper-

Socialism, Then and Now



(Above) Fred Halstead in 1968.

When William F. Buckley Jr. debated the Marxists

bole. In "Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War In Vietnam," (Macmillan Publishers, 2013), investigative journalist Nick Turse documents from records held in the National Archives how intentional killing of civilians was de facto policy of many U.S. military units in Vietnam.

The results of the American war were a stark and bloody legacy. By the time the war ended in 1975, approximately 58,000 U.S. military personnel had died in the war. For the Vietnamese, the death toll was much higher: 2 million Vietnamese civilians killed and another 5.3 million wounded. Some 11 million Vietnamese were made refugees. Another 4 million may have been exposed to toxic defoliants such as Agent Orange. I mention these facts in case anyone wants to maintain, as Buckley did, that it was the socialists who were "extremists."

This might surprise today's young activists, who, if they've even heard of the SWP, are likely to equate it with the sterile political grouping they occasionally see selling *The Militant* newspaper at public events. Led by Jack Barnes, the self-styled (Dear) leader of "proletarian communism" in the United States, the SWP has devolved into a dreary little cult of worker-sycophants, one whose long, steady decline in membership is matched only by its political irrelevance and authoritarian internal life.

In 1968, however, the SWP was a small, well-organized left-wing group that played a pivotal role in the era's Vietnam War protests. Indeed, the group promoted united-front coalitions that helped transform the peace movement from a politically unpopular force in its early days into by decade's end one of the largest grassroots political movements in U.S. history. It's a story aptly told in Halstead's nearly 900-page "Out Now! A Participant's Account of the Movement in the United States Against the Vietnam War," and more recently in the highly informative two-volume political memoir, "The Party," by former SWP leader Barry Sheppard.

Of course, these days popular media, when it even bothers to reflect on the peace movement of the 1960s, tends to highlight a few dramatic moments to tell the story. The focus is on the riots at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, the theatrical personalities of the Yippies, or that temper tantrum of infantile politics known as the Weather Underground. In fact, it was the steady, day-to-day efforts by many thousands of peace activists to turn broad public opinion against

the war that constitutes the larger story of the antiwar movement. It's a story told in the history of the many peaceful marches, teach-ins, student strikes, draft resistance campaigns and other organizing efforts.

Mainstream media—then and now

As I watched the "Firing Line" show with Halstead and Boutelle, I was thinking first how unusual such a media debate would be today. Buckley was a pretentious boor, but

he was a wise old sage on the mountain compared to the likes of Bill O'Reilly, Sean Hannity, Sarah Palin, and other bloviators of today's right-wing media. Buckley allowed left-wing guests and radicals on his show (Noam Chomsky, Saul Alinsky, Ed Sanders, and others were guests), and, if the guests could rise above the host's posturing and condescension, a real debate might take place.

Today, serious debate in the mainstream media with ideological opponents of capitalism is rare. If it does happen, it's usually reduced to a few minutes of sound-bite jabs, loudly delivered and in which egotistical hosts feel free to interrupt or shout down their guests. Certainly it's far past time for socialist ideas to be taken seriously in American politics.

Ironically, it's only been the relegation of genuine socialist views to a locked drawer marked taboo that's enabled the Republican right to ludicrously label the moderate, corporatist politics of Barack Obama as "socialist," or the Affordable Care Act as "socialized medicine."

It's a positive sign at least of the potential for political change that a left-wing socialist, Kshama Sawant, was recently elected to Seattle's city council. Remarkably, Sawant is the first socialist elected to city office in Seattle since Anna Louise Strong won election to the school board in 1916. The Socialist Alternative leader defeated a liberal (i.e. corporate-friendly) city council veteran, winning over 90,000 votes on a platform of support for raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, unionizing low-paid service workers, implementing a "Millionaire's Tax" to fund and expand education and social services, and rent control.

Obviously, organized socialist groups and left politics generally remains a relatively small political force in the United States. Nor is fighting spirit exactly the phrase associated with most U.S. labor leaders, for whom standing up to corporate greed mostly involves giving occasional speeches on economic injustice at annual conventions held at upscale hotels.

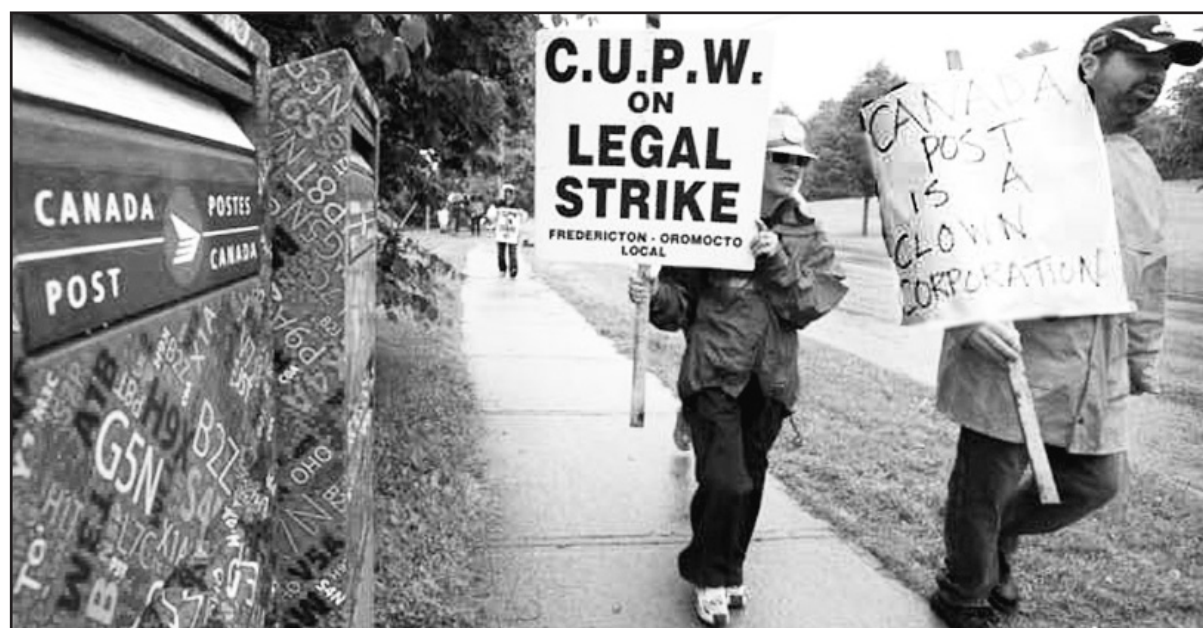
Whatever the obstacles, signs of change are in the air. The widening economic divide between rich and poor represents a tinderbox of explosive political potential. In New York City, there are now as many as 55,000 fast food workers living, for the most part, on less than \$9 per hour, and often for a minimum wage

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Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada
website: <http://socialistaction.ca>

(Photo) CUPW picketers during 2011 strike/lock-out.



Defend the Postal Service!

By BARRY WEISLEDER

The scheme to curtail home mail delivery is part of a plan to gut the federal public sector, to shrink postal workers' pensions, to break a progressive, democratic union, and to sell-off lucrative remnants of Canada Post Corporation (CPC) to private sector vultures.

This attack must be stopped. It is a watershed moment for the workers' movement across the Canadian state. The need for mass resistance is urgent. The first step is to expose the many lies of the Stephen Harper Conservative government and CPC management.

One lie concerns the present postal service. CPC disingenuously claims that the further shift to community boxes is no big deal because only 25 per cent of residences now get their mail at home. The truth is 58 per cent do. Denis Lemelin, President of the 55,000 member Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), set the record straight. Citing CPC's own 2012 report, he told a House of Commons committee on Dec. 11 that one-third of the population gets mail delivered to their doors, 25 per cent to their apartment lobby mailboxes, 12 per cent at general delivery counters, and 5 per cent at rural mailboxes.

That means 25 per cent rely on the outdoor super-mailboxes—already far too many. CPC proposes to double that number by 2018, to deprive over five million people of home delivery. It would make Canada the only industrialized country to abolish door-to-door mail service.

CPC President Deepak Chopra is not a geriatrician. But he actually stated that seniors would benefit from the exercise of walking a distance outdoors (regardless of the weather) to retrieve their mail. The danger this poses to people with mobility challenges is no joke. And in addition to the gross inconvenience, there is the garbage. Piles of litter accumulate around these boxes. Canada Post profits from delivering junk mail but won't put paper-recycling bins at its mega-box locations. And instead of improving postal security, the outdoor boxes are known to attract thieves and vandals. Soon to be sorely missed is the essential role postal delivery workers play to help keep people safer and in touch with one another.

Canada Post announced, also on the eve of the holidays, a whopping increase in the price of stamps—up 35 per cent for booklet purchases, or a 59 per cent hike for

individual stamps (it will cost \$1 to mail a letter). The impact on small businesses will be severe. Paying more for less service seems to be the formula designed to make the postal service increasingly unpopular and seemingly expendable.

Another lie is about the burden of postal workers' pensions. CPC claims that the problem is that "people are healthier and living longer," and that "long-term interest rates have been chronically low." A much bigger factor is that CPC, like many other public and private corporations in Canada, grossly underfunded its employee pension plan—to the point that it is \$6.5 billion under the water line, according to the *Toronto Star*. Twice over the past six months, Canada Post unilaterally raised the pension contributions paid by its workers.

The federal government has condoned the decisions of many of Canada's major public and private corporations to violate their legal obligations to fund their pension plans. General Motors and Air Canada are among the many firms that have received special dispensation. The government is now intervening to ease Canada Post's obligations. CPC spokesperson Jon Hamilton said the intention to cut door-to-door delivery is part of a plan "to transform the company and transform the pension plan."

Then there is the cost of running the post office itself. Its letter mail volumes may be shrinking. But it has posted a profit every year, except one, since 1994. It still has more retail outlets across Canada than any other company. Why has CPC spent more than \$2 billion in the past few years to modernize mail processing and delivery if the post office is failing? The opposite is the case. The profits of UPS, FedEx, Pitney Bowes, and other giant corporations in the communications sector have been steadily rising. (Deepak Chopra was a top executive at Pitney Bowes.)

The demand for the privatization and deregulation of Canada Post is not due to its failure. To the contrary, the elimination of the public post office is a potential source of super-profits for the private sector.

CPC is moving into new areas of business. CUPW argues that one of those new areas should be banking. A research paper published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives last Fall shows that postal savings banks are money makers world-wide. New Zealand's postal banking system, which was revived eight years ago, now ac-

counts for 70 per cent of the profit earned by that country's post office. The comparable figure for Italy is 67 per cent. France's postal savings bank accounts for 36 per cent of its postal service's pre-tax earnings. Even though Britain is privatizing mail delivery, it is not privatizing its system of post offices and postal savings banks. They're too lucrative.

The present assault on the postal service occurs in a broad anti-worker context. The disappearance of thousands of full-time, decent-paying jobs puts pressure on unions to grant wage and benefit concessions. The layoffs at Electro-Motive Diesel and the planned closures of the Heinz and Kellogg's plants in southern Ontario, add to the malaise—as will the elimination of 10,000 letter-carrier jobs if home delivery is cut.

Laws hostile to the rights and conditions of education workers, Bill 22 in British Columbia and Bill 115 in Ontario, roused student protests and broad public dissent, but union leaders gave way to the governments' will.

In 2011, the first year of the Stephen Harper majority government, there was a flood of back-to-work legislation against postal workers, Air Canada service workers, flight attendants, ground crew and pilots, and Canadian Pacific rail engineers. Wildcat actions by Air Canada ground crew in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and Quebec City in March 2012, and the following month when Air Canada pilots organized a "sick-out" not sanctioned by their union, did not generate an anti-worker backlash, despite the best efforts of the business media.

The Canadian Labour Congress, confronted by a staggering array of legislative attacks, responds with feel-good TV ads (the Fairness Works campaign). But the assault continues and deepens: the restrictive changes to Employment Insurance; the expansion of the highly exploitative, racist Temporary Foreign Worker program; Ottawa's ongoing resistance to Canada Pension Plan reform; and the punitive anti-union Bills C-377 and C-525, and C-4 with their arbitrary rules on financial disclosure to harass unions, their obstacles to union organizing, and a dramatic rollback of federal health and safety regulation.

Desperately needed is a cross-country rallying cause to be the pivot for turning back this tide of reaction. Defence of postal services can be that pivot. Here's why:

CUPW is renowned as one of the most militant and democratic unions in the Canadian state. By means of an illegal wildcat strike in 1965, it won the right to collective bargaining for all public sector employees. It won above-average wage increases with strikes and walkouts in 1969 and the early 1970s. Further strikes in 1974 and 1975 succeeded in gaining job security in the face of new technology at the post office. In a 1981 strike it won the right to maternity leave for its members, a gain that eventually spread to virtually all organized workers. CUPW has been in the forefront of solidarity campaigns with workers' struggles domestically and internationally for generations. It has legions of social allies, and a personal presence in every city and town.

Now is the time to return the generous and exemplary solidarity of postal workers, and to stop the onslaught against public services and workers' rights. It is also a golden opportunity to chase the Harper Conservatives from office, and to bust up the employers' offensive. The dire need, and the very real possibility of turning this attack around on the corporate elite is posed. This is the occasion to convene meetings across the country, in every workplace, school, labour union, NDP district association, social justice movement, and community.

Urgently needed is a massive information campaign. It should be accompanied by mass rallies, picketing at federal buildings, petitioning at public squares, the occupation of government MP offices, walk-outs at workplaces and schools, and rotating strikes, leading up to a general strike. The choice is stark: Defend home mail delivery and public services, or watch the descent into the hell of capitalist austerity accelerate. ■

Inquiry puts Ontario Premier Wynne on trial

By MALU BAUMGARTEN

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne ended 2013 nearly tied in popularity with her main opponent on the left, New Democratic Party Leader Andrea Horwath, according to a recent Abacus Data Poll. But 2014 may be the year when the public image of the self-proclaimed "social justice premier" Wynne will be forever changed.

On Feb. 19, an event called A Poor People's Inquiry will put the premier of Ontario on trial in the court of public opinion. Wynne will be charged with knowingly misleading the public by saying social justice is her top priority. Details of the Toronto trial location and agenda will be announced early in January.

A Poor People's Inquiry is an initiative of

Put Food in the Budget (PFIB), "a grassroots activist group working to hold the Ontario Government's feet to the fire on promises made—but not kept—to reduce poverty," according to its website, www.putfoodinthebudget.ca. Starting in September 2013, PFIB held community hearings across Ontario and Toronto neighbourhoods. PFIB is known by campaigns like the Do the Math Challenge—inviting people to live on a "food bank diet" for one week, and the Dear Mr. Premier Tour, in which people in 25 communities in Ontario were video-taped telling a life-size mannequin of former Premier McGuinty what they thought of his austerity budget.

A Poor People's Inquiry is very timely. People living on social assistance still have the recommendations of commissioners

Frances Lankin and Munir Sheikh, of the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario, hanging over their heads. The report, ironically called Brighter Prospects, was released in October 2012. Among other changes, it proposed a merger of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Programme, both to be administered by the municipalities. The ODSP Action Coalition, a Toronto based advocacy group for people with disabilities commented on the merger:

"Combining the programs may mean that the unique needs of people with disabilities would stop being recognized by the program that is supposed to be there to help them; and delivering the programs locally could well result in greater inequity across the province, as local towns and cities get to decide who in their community would be

eligible for which supports, and even which supports would be available."

The Liberal government of Ontario seems to be big on promises, but not so good at keeping them. In 2008 former Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty promised a strategy to reduce poverty in the province. Instead he cut corporate taxes, increasing the size of the provincial deficit; and introduced an "austerity budget" that threatened to reduce spending on social assistance and vital community and public services. In 2012 his successor, Kathleen Wynne, acceded to the top job calling herself the "social justice Premier." Since then the Liberal government has effectively cut social assistance, with rate increases lower than inflation.

Let's remember that a worker, even a middle-class worker, in times of such uncertainty may be only a step away from falling into the social assistance system, as many testified at the Inquiry. ■

By GAETANA CALDWELL-SMITH

The Good Fight: Dallas Buyers Club

Some of the scenes from director Jean Marc Vallée's "The Dallas Buyers Club" may be hard to watch, but don't let this stop you from seeing this important film.

People born after 1982 have little conception of what life was like for gay men suffering from HIV/AIDS in the 1980s. Today, HIV/AIDS is still a global pandemic—although it is no longer an automatic death sentence, at least in the United States. As of 2012, approximately 35.3 million people have HIV worldwide, with the number of new infections that year being about 2.3 million. This is down from 3.1 million new infections in 2001.

Vallée focused on true events of seven years in the life of Ron Woodroof, a heterosexual, homophobic Texas cowboy. One day in 1985, he ends up in the hospital because of a work-related injury (he was an electrician). Dr. Sevard (Denis O'Hare) tells him he has HIV/AIDS and has 30 days to live. He reacts as you would expect, shouting, "I ain't no faggot!" and then tells the doctor to "fuck off" as he stomps out.

Matthew McConaughey plays Woodroof. He made a brave choice in accepting the role, making you feel for Ron every moment. He lost about 30 pounds to play Woodroof and comes off as totally believable. He looks dangerously thin, but it no way detracts from his swaggering cowboy studliness.

Ron is a schemer. He works the rodeos, readying steer riders before they are shot out of the chutes. He bets on rides and events, usually winning, and appears to have a lot of money.



Soon, word gets around about Ron. His friends and co-workers ostracize him; he's evicted from his home in a trailer park: "Faggot Blood" had been spray-painted on his trailer.

An altercation in which he's seriously injured attracts the police, one of whom, luckily, happens to be his tolerant, caring brother, Tucker (Steve Zahn). Tucker drives him to the hospital, where he meets his transgender roommate, Rayon, beautifully played by Jared Leto (lead singer and guitarist from 30 Seconds to Mars, who also shed pounds for the film). After some homophobic remarks, Ron gradually accepts Ray into his life. Finally dealing with the fact that he's infected, he researches the disease.

Jennifer Garner plays a sympathetic Dr. Eva Saks. She and Sevard tell Ron about blind AZT clinical trials and that it could be years before he could participate. He connects with a hospital orderly who steals the drug for him. When the hospital starts keeping track, the orderly gives Ron the address of Dr. Vass (bearded, scruffy Griffin Dunne) in Mexico. Vass warns him of the dangers of AZT and gives him supplies of "safe" drugs.

Woodroof and Rayon set up a kind of dispensary in a motel to sell the contraband drugs and make a lot of money. His lawyer, David Wayne (Dallas Roberts of "The Good Wife"), advises him to set up his "business" as a club and charge a membership fee, otherwise, the IRS would

get on his case—hence, The Dallas Buyers Club.

A scene of Woodroof and Rayon shopping in a supermarket lends a light touch to the film and allows us to experience their caring relationship and respect. He reaches a breakthrough when he realizes that he not only wants to save his own life, but those of others he has come to know and care about, especially Rayon.

Soon, he is hounded by the FDA, his "club" shut down, stock and supplies confiscated. In a well-tailored black suit and black cowboy hat, he flies to Japan following leads to obtain drugs that are illegal in the U.S. Dr. Vass prescribes a protein supplement, but his condition worsens—his hair thins, his skin turns flakey, sunken eyes and cheeks—as he continues to be harassed by FDA officials and the hospital staff.

In one heartbreaking scene, we witness him driving to Mexico where he experiences the onset of dementia, a condition suffered by a majority of AIDS sufferers. His disoriented, confused actions alert the border patrol. Tucker comes for him and takes him to the hospital. Later, Woodroof and Wayne sue the FDA. The case eventually makes it to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. Back in Texas, he finds he has won and can legally take the protein supplement.

Ron Woodroof died of AIDS in 1992, seven years after his diagnosis.

There are a lot of films and actors up for Academy Awards; Matthew McConaughey deserves one for Best Actor. ■

OCAP says no to welfare merger cuts

By JOHN WILSON

On New Year's Day 2014 there's not much to celebrate for those who are unemployed, low-waged, who rely on welfare, or live on disability benefits in Ontario. To make matters worse, only 35 per cent of the unemployed even qualify for Employment Insurance benefits (which have been reduced), compared to 74 per cent eligible in 1990. Two priority campaigns of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) highlight this reality.

The first is the campaign to "raise the rates." The rates paid by Ontario Works (welfare) were brutally slashed by nearly 22% by the notorious regime of Mike Harris in the mid-1990s. Since then, for single claimants, the payments have lost a staggering 56 per cent of their spending power.

These rates were frozen since 1995, until the advent of the present Liberal

regime, but any increases have been miniscule—only 15% over the last 10 years, far less than the rate of inflation.

OCAP demands an immediate 55% increase. It is common knowledge that welfare recipients have little left over after paying rent. They rely on food banks to survive and have almost nothing for other needs. Supplementary benefits have been under continuous attack, despite the laughable "poverty reduction" mantra of the austerity-mongering Wynne government.

As OCAP organizer John Clarke wrote in the *Bullet* (May 2013): "The fundamental nature of the welfare system can be traced all the way back to its roots in the old English Poor Laws. The system has always been there to reluctantly provide enough assistance to stave off unrest and social dislocation, but to do so at levels and in forms that maximize the flow of labour into the lowest paying and most ex-

plorative jobs on offer." "Ontario Works" says it all.

The same approach to disability benefits leads into a second major campaign to prevent the merger of Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

At a Nov. 20 rally in Toronto, attended by over 120 people, speakers outlined their concerns. Historically, disability and welfare rates have been separate. If combined, from where will any increases for disability come?

With downloading to municipalities, will "reassessment" of disability claimants follow the notorious British model? Rally participants learned about the savage cuts to disability programs by the reactionary coalition government in Britain, which has handed this process over to ATOS, a private company.

Huge numbers of people there have been disqualified on incredibly specious

grounds. A video showed a large field of flowers, each representing a disabled person who died within a short period of being disqualified, often by suicide.

It is hardly "alarmist" to think that the same could happen here, since the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) has already privatized re-assessment with a stupefying increase in disqualifications. The austerity agenda, which has particularly targeted disabled people, is *international*, as is the capitalist system, which promotes it in the interest of ever-cheaper labour platforms.

These two campaigns by OCAP clearly merit the unqualified support of labour, the left and social movements. Attacks on welfare and disability benefits will not only further impoverish poor people, but everyone.

The greater the number of people desperate enough to accept the most wretched jobs, the more downward pressure there will be on wage levels, and the more intense will be the attacks on unions. ■

... Socialism

(continued from page 7)

of \$7.25 an hour, as a recent *New York Times* report documented. Notably, the number of such jobs in the city has increased by more than 50 percent since 2000.

For the McDonald's worker earning \$8.25 an hour in 2013, he or she would have to work more than 100 years to earn the \$8.75 million the company's CEO earned in 2011. More generally, it's reported that nearly half of all New Yorkers were considered poor or almost-poor in 2011. Is all this a sign of a healthy, just economy? Yet where are the elected politicians who stand in uncompromising opposition to the grotesque, expanding reality of poverty under capitalism? Who among Democrats and Republicans even talks any more about a "war on poverty"?

From 1968 to 2013 and Beyond

This is not our war; the people of Vietnam are not our enemy, declared the socialist message of 1968. Likewise, the message of the Occupy Wall Street protests of 2011 rejected the competitiveness, greed, and inequality of modern capitalism, asserting a vision of a society based on human solidarity, equality,

and an end to violence and war. And, the Occupy voices dared to declare, we believe this vision is realistic and possible.

In retrospect, the Occupy movement represented almost a kind of utopian moment in the American political story, a precious few months when many thousands of Americans, mostly young, came together in the streets and in the parks to decry the injustice and absurdities of life under capitalism, to assert their humanity and vision for a better future. Life should be so much more than just a grubby, competitive rat race, they declared, one in which privileged elites feed at the trough of their own unending sense of entitlement, while so many more struggle just to get by.

In this sense, Buckley's political and social vision, the air of upper-class polish notwithstanding, remained essentially a grubby one, at least for anyone whose social status as a rule wasn't based on inherited wealth. For "free market" capitalism even at its best has only structural inequality, permanent war, and economic instability to offer the majority of the people.

How much better the words and vision of Albert Einstein, who in the inaugural issue of *Monthly Review* in 1949 declared: "I am convinced there is only one way to eliminate (the) grave evils (of capitalism), namely through the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system which would be

oriented toward social goals. In such an economy, the means of production are owned by society itself and are utilized in a planned fashion."

When Buckley in his 1968 show remarked that he represents a country that went to war a hundred years ago to liberate Black people, Boutelle responded that there were a lot of Black people in Mississippi and Alabama who would be very curious to hear him say that. He suggested Buckley take a trip down South to tell them directly. Buckley responded, "Let me put it this way, Mr. Boutelle. I'm sure if I ran for office in Mississippi, I'd have more Negroes voting for me than for you."

Boutelle's retort was well-aimed. "I'm sure of one thing," he replied. "If you went down to Mississippi and told Black people they were 'free,' you would be running, but it wouldn't be for office."

As clever as William F. Buckley Jr. was supposed to be, the flimsy façade of argument and opinion upon which he built his endless apologies for the status quo were often surprisingly easy to disassemble. For, strip away the oil stocks and the erudite pose, and what we were left with was just another grubby salesman with a bad product. In this case what was being sold was the bankrupt ideology of "free enterprise," a system that then as well as now offers no future to humanity; at least not a peaceful, just future. ■



(Left) NUMSA members block garage in strike affecting 30,000 workers, which ended in October.

and controlled by workers and their communities. Only the self-empowerment of the working class can decisively undo the inherited structures and systems of neo-apartheid, ecological destruction, capitalism, and the limited liberal democracy presently being eroded by the ANC government.

The NUMSA Congress resolved to i) explore the building of a socialist workers' party, ii) to mobilise for both a United Front and a Movement for Socialism, iii) to reclaim COSATU from below, iv) to actively unite worker and community struggles through coordinated mass mobilisation on socio-economic demands, and v) to consolidate NUMSA as a worker-controlled union that organises along entire value chains and that provides the best service to its members. At this moment there can be no stronger foundation to radically transform South Africa

Delegates at the NUMSA congress have rejected the claims of the South African Communist Party (SACP) that it is the vanguard of the working class. It has rightly argued that such titles are only earned through the process of struggle. The first and most important duty of anyone who claims to be a socialist is to work towards the maximum unity of the working class. The SACP leadership has failed dismally in this regard and has made a conscious decision to side with the state, government and the ruling party against our class at every turn over the past few years.

We call on genuine socialists still inside the SACP to leave the party and embrace the NUMSA-led initiative. We appeal to others that seek to present themselves as the political vanguard of the working class to put aside such misplaced arrogance and join the United Front of workers and communities and work towards building the Movement for Socialism.

The NUMSA Congress have stated in no uncertain terms the future must rest in the organised and class conscious power of the working class, working poor, and the dispossessed, united in action to challenge capitalism by building the struggle for the socialist alternative in the here and now.

The DLF believes that the post-Congress process must build on the bottom-up worker driven process and tradition of democratic debate, solidarity and mass struggle that NUMSA followed. This would lay a strong foundation for bottom-up, democratic left renewal. Important in this regard is the need to recognise and integrate struggles against multiple oppressions reinforced by capitalism: racial oppression and reproduced white supremacy, gender oppression, oppressive rule by the tribal elites, the social oppression of people with non-heterosexual sexual orientations, cultural alienation, 'new imperialism', ecological destruction, and so on.

As the social movements, independent trade unions and left groups that constitute the Democratic Left Front, we will engage in this process humbly, genuinely and with modesty, conscious that sustained, united, non-sectarian and principled political action from below is the only solid rock upon which to find mutual, shared and collective socialist alternatives to the complex challenges facing South Africa and indeed wider humanity. We will contribute to this process a perspective for the socialist transformation of South Africa on the basis of deep participatory democracy.

All this requires the maximum unity of the working class and those who are open and willing to side with it. The Democratic Left Front calls on mass movements, workers, the unemployed, women, youth, shack dwellers, backyarders, the landless, other rural dwellers, independent trade unions, trade unions affiliated to COSATU, NACTU and FEDUSA, the broad left, progressive civil society and individuals committed to a people-driven transformation of South Africa to all embrace the NUMSA moment through democratic political debate, sustained mass action, solidarity and the building of a socialist working class alternative. ■

S. Africa's Democratic Left Front comments on NUMSA initiatives

There is a spectre haunting the ruling class and government in South Africa: it is the radical anti-capitalist movement that the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) has given birth to at its historic Special National Congress held last week. The Democratic Left Front (DLF) congratulates NUMSA for this, Congress that united metalworkers in spite of the sustained attempts to divide NUMSA.

As the most highly organised section of the working class, NUMSA has taken a decisive step. It has responded in an unequivocal manner to the role of the ANC and its government in sustaining capitalist exploitation in South Africa. NUMSA has decisively rejected the cold-blooded murder of workers in Marikana. As the DLF, we were inspired by the moving and concrete solidarity expressed by NUMSA Congress delegates as each of them donated R100 to the Marikana solidarity fund and as they collectively embraced the Marikana rep-

resentatives who addressed the Congress. NUMSA is picking up the baton from the strike wave that followed in the mining, farming and other sectors. By insisting on the need for political and organisational independence, it has shown its commitment to the continued struggle of the working class to chart its own destiny.

South Africa can never be the same again. The historic decisions made by the NUMSA Special Congress reverberate through the length and breadth of South Africa's organised and unorganised working class. These decisions inspire hope and confidence in the imminent possibility of a transformed South Africa, where people come before profits and where democracy becomes a daily-lived experience.

This NUMSA Congress marks a decisive end to the era of national liberation politics. NUMSA has broken new ground and has thereby opened space for a genuine mass-based political alternative to emerge, led

... Mandela

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leadership. It was being organized primarily, he said, as a source of pressure "to break the deadlock" in CODESA negotiations.

But *Newsweek* described the purpose even more bluntly in its July 27, 1992, issue: "In an effort to catch up with rising militancy in the ranks, [the ANC's] leaders have escalated their rhetoric—while at the same time sending the government conciliatory messages."

In any case, the Mass Action campaign did not last long; soon ANC and union leaders sought to cool things down by offering even more concessions. A year later, when the former ANC guerrilla leader and current head of the Communist Party Chris Hani was murdered, Nelson Mandela intervened to stem angry protests; in his address to the nation on the issue, he said that the current crisis demanded that national elections not be put off any further.

In 1994, the African National Congress received a majority vote in the new National Assembly. Nelson Mandela formed a "national unity government," giving former apartheid head of state de Klerk the post of second deputy vice president. From that time, a series of neoliberal reform programs ensued that bowed deeper and deeper to the demands of big corporate interests.

In a guarantee to the international banks, for example, Mandela and his government agreed to continue paying the "apartheid debt," which was owed for items that included military supplies and prisons that the previous white government had used to repress the Black masses.

Andrew Ross Sorkin, business columnist for *The New York Times*, provided details (Dec. 9, 2013) of how Mandela was persuaded to forsake the vague calls of the ANC's founding document, the Freedom Charter, to nationalize the mines, banks, and monopoly industries—and to instead choose the path of unfettered capitalism. "The story of Mr. Mandela's evolving economic view is eye-opening: It happened in January 1992 during a trip to Davos, Switzerland, for the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum. Mr. Mandela was persuaded to support an economic framework for South Africa based on capitalism and globalization after a series of conver-

sations with other world leaders.

"They changed my views altogether," Mr. Mandela told Anthony Sampson, his friend and the author of *Mandela: The Authorized Biography*. "I came home to say: 'Chaps, we have to choose. We either keep nationalization and get no investment, or we modify our own attitude and get investment.'" ...

"[A]s the five-day conference of high-level speed-dating wore on, Mr. Mandela soon decided he needed to reconsider his long-held views: 'Madiba then had some very interesting meetings with the leaders of the Communist Parties of China and Vietnam,' Mr. [Tito] Mboweni wrote, using Mr. Mandela's clan name. 'They told him frankly as follows: "We are currently striving to privatize state enterprises and invite private enterprise into our economies. We are Communist Party governments, and you are a leader of a national liberation movement. Why are you talking about nationalization?"'"

Ronnie Kasrils, former intelligence minister in the ANC government, and a long-time member of the Communist Party, told "Democracy Now!" that once Mandela had made up his mind on the rapprochement with big business, he remained firm with it, and was instrumental in convincing the "left wing" of the ANC—which Kasrils identified with the Communist Party—to go along.

"There was no real debate or argument about this," said Kasrils. But that should be no surprise. The South African Communist Party, trained by the representatives of Joseph Stalin, had long been urging the liberation movement to restrain its activity and limit its demands, under the misapprehension that working-class rule and socialism would not be "on the table" for many decades.

Kasrils justified Mandela's pro-capitalist policies to *Democracy Now!* listeners by expressing the view that he had no other alternative under the extreme conditions of the day, with attacks from what was called the "third force" (undercover police, Afrikaner white nationalists, Inkatha, etc.): "We could have had a civil war at the time. There could have been enormous bloodshed!"

Kasrils, like Mandela and the ANC, had no confidence that mass mobilizations could effectively counter the "third force" death squads. But lasting success in such a campaign would have required leadership and a program that could rally the oppressed masses in an unstoppable movement for social liberation and working-class political power.

Nevertheless, Kasrils conceded, "This is where I say our Faustian pact or bargain stems from. ... we push the economic issues onto that back burner, and they successively become distant, so that nationalization, command of the hearts of the economy, this becomes a no-no. And once that sets in, and you get the gates open for a nouveau comprador bourgeoisie to come to the fore, junior partners of big capital and the corporates and the international connections, then we embrace the neoliberal economy of the world today, with all its corruption, with its cronyism, as its patronage."

Today, the ANC reeks with cronyism and corruption. The selfish mentality of many in the organization's top leadership is symbolized by Cyril Ramaphosa, deputy president of the ANC and former leader of the National Union of Mineworkers, who has become a multi-billionaire capitalist, with investments in platinum mining. To their shame, Ramaphosa and the current ANC leadership abetted and then tried to cover up the horrible police massacre of protesting platinum miners at Marikana in 2012.

At the Dec. 10 memorial rally for Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg, the crowd booted each time that the image of South African President Jacob Zuma appeared on the big screen. It was left to his deputy, billionaire Ramaphosa, to attempt to hush them, exclaiming, "We should show the same level of discipline as Madiba [Mandela] exuded!" It is an ugly fact, however, that part of Mandela's legacy is Zuma, Ramaphosa, and their like—former radical activists who have now grown fat and cynical.

Disaffection with the ANC is growing. Significantly, the metalworkers' union, NACTU, the largest component of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), has cut its ties with the ANC, and has been urging a thorough shift in policy for COSATU.

If the ANC continues to sabotage the liberation movement and to line up with its class enemies, we can expect that the South African masses will elect to follow one road that Nelson Mandela laid out for them long ago, in one of his true statements of political wisdom. In his speech to the COSATU national trade-union conference of 1993, Mandela told the assembly, "If the ANC does to you what the apartheid government did to you, then you must do to the ANC what you did to the apartheid government." ■

... Budget

(continued from page 6)

budget deal's continuing "austerity" focus. But that's not all. Other "off-track" discretionary spending cuts about to occur involve cuts to food stamps for millions of recipients, scheduled to occur by February 2014.

Today one in eight households receive food stamps, the result of the deep decline in jobs since 2008, the failure to create jobs at a normal rate since then, and the fact that jobs that have been created since 2008 are predominantly low paid. The cost of the food stamp program, SNAP, has doubled to \$80 billion during the so-called Obama economic recovery and the abysmal record of job creation the past five years. Both wings of the POCA are concurrently proposing cuts to SNAP, ranging from \$24 billion for the Demo wing and \$52 billion for the Teapublican (traditional republicans + Tea Party faction) wing.

An increase in food stamps that was scheduled for Nov. 1, 2013, has already been put aside. Further reductions are being negotiated to conclude by February 2014 that will likely reduce food stamp spending by \$8-\$10 billion over the two-year period, 2014-2015, of the recent budget deal period. As in the case of the \$25 billion in cuts to unemployment benefits, the \$8 billion more in food stamps spending cuts are conveniently ignored in the budget deal calculations.

The real budget deal thus amounts to \$31 billion in domestic spending cuts restored from the sequester—offset by \$26 billion paid for by government workers, retirees and vets, by another \$25 billion paid



Doug Brown / Cleveland Scene

(Left) Protest in Cleveland against plans in Congress to cut food stamps.

for by the unemployed, and still another \$8 billion by the poor and working poor in food stamp cuts. What the budget deal gives (+\$31 billion) with one hand, it takes away double (-\$59 billion) with the other. The net result is a -\$28 billion reduction for workers, retirees, vets, and the unemployed, while the Pentagon and defense corporations get off free.

Strategic significance of the 2013 budget deal

The budget deal just concluded fundamentally represents a continuation of deficit cutting for the rest of us, while letting defense corporations and spending off the sequester hook. ... Contrary to the media spin, there is a grand bargain in progress. It's just dispersed, implemented over the course of several years since 2011 and in stages.

And the game of smoke and mirrors is not over. ...

that sufficient for a "first bite of the apple." But they'll be back for more in the final stage of the grand bargain by increments.

But entitlement cuts will not be addressed during the election year of 2014. That comes later, and after corporate tax cuts in 2014—which for some time both Obama and the Republicans have been on record for proposing.

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Blue Book as a guide for revolutionaries

By DON PTAK

"The Little Blue Book: The Essential Guide to Thinking and Talking Democratic." Simon and Schuster 2012.

While reading *Monthly Review* some time ago, I read the following quote by Howard J. Sherman: "The object of radicals should not be to impress their colleagues with their brilliance. Rather the purpose should be to communicate important views to as large a grassroots audience as possible." My thought was, "Okay, how do I do this?" George Lakoff, Professor of Cognitive Science and Linguistics, and Elisabeth Wehling, political strategist, have provided the answer in "The Little Blue Book."

This short book (139 pages) spells out key strategies in communicating political ideas. It is directed at liberal Democrats, but revolutionary socialists will find highly useful. The book is very practical and intelligently structured.

The first section lays the foundation for the rest of the book. It introduces the idea that all politics are moral and that conservatives and liberals have different views on the world; the concept of frames and framing, which is

defined as "structures and ideas that we use to understand the world (p. 6)," and cascades, which link the moral views and the frames together logically. Lakoff and Wehling provide examples (both positive and negative, as well as from both conservative and liberal viewpoints), corrections to the mistakes made (by the left), and checklists of key points of each chapter, which are decidedly short to help keep the book practical.

The second section of the book deals with the conservative mindset (insert your own joke here. Then be aware that they have been beating us at this game—for how long?) This is important to understand because if you can understand your opponent's mind, you can better plan your actions against them. It also deals with the implications of the conservative mindset and the negative impact that they have on people, our communities, and our status in the world.

The fourth section, which really should be read next, addresses a fundamental flaw that leftists often fall into—conservative ideas and language. This section shows where and how conservative language has crept into common

usage and suggests language to replace it. The key point of this section is that if we use the language of conservatives, we reinforce their ideas and, logically, undermine our own goals.

This section gives us a start with some suggestions. We will need to write our own language and define ourselves by our own ideas instead of by the ideas of the reactionaries. This is one "flaw" that I found in the book. It made more sense to me to read the fourth section before the third.

The third section, the longest and the meatiest of all three, ties the other sections together in a practical manner. Lakoff and Wehling provide examples on many general issues (democracy, the public, food, education, corporations and their rule, and economics) that we as revolutionary socialists need to use to bring change to the world.

Each chapter gives a short introduction to each topic, the conservative and liberal views, and then samples of talking points that the left can also use to advance its cause. With minor changes, these go from being Democratic talking points to revolutionary socialist ideas for action.

The sub-title of the book is "The es-

ential guide to thinking and talking Democratic." I made it a point of using a lower case "d" and taking the information and talking points as a starting point for socialist discussion. While the Democrats like to use populist and sometimes seemingly radical language, they are not interested in changing the capitalist system that we struggle against. By following the examples given, we can develop these ideas into the tools to help the cause of revolution.

Another point to take notice of is that Frank Luntz makes it a point to read everything that Professor Lakoff writes because he understands that it works. Luntz is the man that has engineered many Republican policy coups and election campaigns. If he is such a fan of Professor Lakoff, it would be wise for us to take heed.

As revolutionary socialists we need to get our message out, and "The Little Blue Book" is an essential tool in our toolbox. By using the ideas in this book we will be better able to reach out to people who are sympathetic to our goals and program, plant seeds in the minds of the fence sitters, and better defend against the reactionaries. At \$11 (\$13 Canadian), it is highly affordable and will help us in revolutionary action when the people finally get sick of the ruling regime.

... Snowden

(continued from page 5)

Snowden in return for a pledge that the remaining material would be returned with no further releases. But Obama's national security adviser, Susan Rice, later nixed the idea.

Snowden, who is still pursuing permanent residency in several countries, especially Brazil, and who is fully justified in his concern for a secure future, not to mention his life itself, has not rejected such a negotiated solution. There is no longer any doubt that he has deeply shaken the credibility of the U.S. on several critical fronts. The Snowden blowback daily plaguing government officials at every level has compelled several agencies and top officials as well as the hierarchy in the now compromised telecommunications industry to at least pay lip service to token reform.

In the meantime, heads of state in Germany and Brazil have sharply condemned

U.S. spy operations against them, including NSA eavesdropping on their personal cell phone calls. Obama's apologies notwithstanding, the president refused to exclude all other German and Brazilian officials from U.S. spy operations. Weeks later, Snowden released a list of some 1000 top government and economic officials across the globe who have been U.S. targets, drawing additional outrage.

Nothing is safe from U.S. spy agencies. The Nov. 3 *New York Times* front-page headline, "No Morsel Too Minuscule For All-Consuming N.S.A.," said it well. The article said: "From thousands of classified documents, [released by Snowden] the National Security Agency emerges as an electronic omnivore of staggering capabilities, eavesdropping and hacking its way around the world to strip government and other targets of their secrets, all the while enforcing the utmost secrecy about its own operations. It spies routinely on friends as well as foes, as has become obvious in recent weeks; the agency's official mission list includes using its surveillance powers to achieve

'diplomatic advantage' over such allies France and Germany and 'economic advantage' over Japan and Brazil among other countries."

When confronted with Snowden's stark truths that almost daily strip away layer after layer of the carefully crafted veneer of civility attendant to U.S. government functioning, the best that its top officials can say is that U.S. spying is no different than what all other nations do as a matter of course—a truth from the mouth of the most accomplished spy nation on earth! Spying on every competitor is indeed the norm—the rule—in capitalism's dog-eat-dog world, where no means are excluded in the pursuit of profit and power. Massive surveillance is an inherent part of capitalism—as are war, racism, sexism, and austerity.

Perhaps Edward Snowden's most important contribution to society's wellbeing is his exposure of the simple fact that the interests of the government (and the corporate powers that it represents) are qualitatively different from those of the people.

Obama's National Security State Exposed —

The Meaning of the Edward Snowden Leaks

A Socialist Action pamphlet by Jeff Mackler

\$3 (plus \$1 postage) Send to P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610.

Snowden is entirely correct when he states that on this front he had already won. He has opened the eyes of millions everywhere and made a profound contribution in helping to close the gap between the anger and frustration that millions harbor against an oppressive social system and their present reticence to organize to dismantle it in favor of a social order in which the majority truly rule for the benefit of all.

The fractured legacy of Nelson Mandela

Mike Hutchings / Reuters



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

On Dec. 10, dignitaries from around the world made a pilgrimage to Johannesburg to pay respects to Nelson Mandela, who died five days earlier at the age of 95.

U.S. President Obama was one of the visiting heads of state who took full advantage of the photo opportunity that the occasion afforded. At a time when the imperialist nations are engaged in a headlong competition to further humble and exploit the African continent, Obama saw fit to hail Mandela as a “liberator” and advised the young people of Africa to “make his life’s work your own.”

Obama chose to neglect the fact that for years the government that he represents in Washington had collaborated with South Africa’s apartheid regime in acts of repression against Mandela, his African National Congress (ANC), and other Black liberation organizations. The CIA gave information to South African authorities in 1962 that helped them to capture Mandela and send him to prison for over 27 years. And Mandela remained on the U.S. “terrorist” watch list until 2008.

People around the world revere Nelson Mandela for his courage and quiet wisdom. And they revere him, as they do Martin Luther King, for his dream of “a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.” But the element of Mandela’s character that Obama and other imperialist leaders—and the compliant big-business media—have chosen to highlight is his so-called ability to forgive the oppressors of South Africa’s Black population. That quality is the one that they call on the youth of Africa to emulate.

History shows, unfortunately, that Mandela and the ANC went beyond mere moral “forgiveness” toward the oppressors, and instead fell into the trap of offering them deep political and social concessions—an escalating process that ultimately betrayed apartheid’s victims. The shell of apartheid was dismantled, but the core of the exploitive social system was allowed to remain.

South Africa today displays one of the steepest divisions between wealth and poverty in the world. Since the ANC first formed the government, almost 20 years ago, the number of people living in poverty has risen. While the number of millionaires in the country has doubled in that period, so has the number of people earning less than a dollar a day. The average white family earns six times what Black families earn.

Joblessness has also risen. According to Goldman Sachs, as many as 35 percent are unemployed, when people who have given up looking for work are factored in. This rises to 70 percent among Black youth. Millions live in shacks—often without electricity, sanitation, or

South Africa today displays one of the steepest divisions between wealth and poverty in the world.

water—and generally in segregated townships in which Black people continue to be further subdivided by apartheid-era racial categories (African, coloured, Indian). And at the same time, even some shack cities have been wantonly demolished by ANC governmental authorities, leaving the inhabitants homeless. This has spurred a new movement of people protesting in the streets with banners that cry, “Give us back our land!” as in the days of apartheid.

Meanwhile, a layer of billionaire capitalists, residing in suburban mansions behind locked gates, scoop up the lion’s share of the country’s mining and industrial wealth in private profits. Most of these super-rich, as during apartheid, are white—with a handful of Black capitalists newly added to their number.

Mandela, South Africa’s first Black president, had the authority and prestige to mobilize the country in a true emergency campaign to eliminate poverty. This could have been accomplished by carrying out revolutionary measures aimed at completely transforming the capitalist social system, and remaking it in the interests of working people and the poor. Instead, he and his comrades in the African National Congress settled for accommodations with big capital, in vain hopes that the proceeds of capitalist growth would trickle down to the masses.

As University of Capetown Professor Robert Schrire put it (as cited in Bloomberg Businessweek): Nelson Mandela “recognized that for the poor to prosper, the rich had to feel they had a future in this country.” And true to design, the rich were greatly mollified, as giant multinational corporations swept into the country—often to gobble up weaker South African enterprises. But the poor benefited only minimally, and the unemployment checks that many workers received from the state hardly made up for the jobs they had lost.

Mandela played the central role in formulating the initial agreements between the liberation movement and the apartheid regime. At first, talks were carried out in secret—even when Mandela was still in prison. Later, the process was formalized in the CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) conferences of 1991-92. Joe Slovo of the South African Communist Party is credited

(Right) Some of the 12,000 miners laid off by the Anglo America corporation in October 2012. The men are protesting continued murders of union activists—two months after police massacred 34 at the Marikana platinum mine.

at CODESA with offering the key compromise of a “sunset clause,” which guaranteed that a white-Black coalition capitalist government would remain in power for at least five years.

In the midst of these negotiations, in June 1992, I visited South Africa as a reporter for Socialist Action newspaper. The ANC had been legalized two years earlier, and its national offices now filled the skyscraper office building in Johannesburg that had once served the Shell Oil corporation. It appeared evident to me that the leaders of the ANC whom I met, and their legions of clerks and secretaries, no longer saw themselves as part of a popular liberation movement but instead had their eyes on portfolios in the upcoming coalition government.

I wrote at the time: “With the establishment of a transitional government, the [F.W.] de Klerk regime expects to give up very little in return for what it will gain. South Africa’s rulers hope to take their place once again as full members of the capitalist ‘family of nations,’ with full international trading rights. They also hope for a relatively placid domestic situation, with non-political American-style trade unions and a toothless opposition willing to participate in a parliamentary debating society.

“From the government’s point of view, a major—if not the major—purpose of the negotiations process is to co-opt a segment of the Black leadership, to pull them into compliance with the dictates of the ruling circles, and thus to demobilize the mass movement and trade unions.”

Negotiations, regulatory commissions, and even a share of governmental power were the “carrot” that the apartheid regime offered the ANC and its allies in that period. The “stick” was a wave of vigilante massacres carried out mainly by the breakaway Inkatha Freedom Party, but supported behind the scenes by government security forces. In response to the violence and to perceived inaction by government negotiators, the ANC and major trade unions seemingly made a shift toward militancy by undertaking what they termed the Mass Action campaign. A general strike was called to address the continuing epidemic of job lay-offs and the need for a “living wage.”

Nelson Mandela expressed the major intent of the Mass Action campaign from the point of view of the ANC

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